

How valid is this article: oodegr.co/english/ekklisia/eksousia1.htm? This site claims that only the Christian Orthodoxy is the correct Christian church. In this article, it claims that all Protestant elders officiate arbitrarily; they have no historical continuance and no authority to officiate. It also gives some biblical evidence for apostolic succession. Are these claims true? How should a Christian view them?

The author of this article asks the reader to consider:

“With what authority am I creating a new religion?”

God gave the world one religion—Judaism. Christ came to live a perfect life which men could not live (Ga 4:4) to be a propitiation for sinners (1 Pet. 1:18, 19) reconciling God and man (2 Cor. 5:18, 19). No religion can save men (Ro 3:20). The just shall live by faith (Hab 2:4). Jesus saves men from their sins (Mt 1:21). Anyone who calls on him will be saved (Ro 10:13). There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Ti 2:5). James wrote: “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world (Jas 1:27).

The author continues:

“With what right do I baptize, or distribute bread and wine, or ordain Elders? Is it really alright for one to proceed with such actions? Who put me in charge, who made me an Elder, so that I too can superintend over a new congregation?”

Adrian Rogers said, “When I speak from the word of God, I speak with the authority of any apostle or prophet [of God].” The apostle John wrote: The anointing you received from Him remains in you and you don’t need anyone to teach you. Instead, His anointing teaches you about all things and is true and is not a lie; just as He has taught you, remain in Him (1 Jn 2:27). The Holy Spirit indwells a believer (Rom. 8:11) and guides him into all truth (Jn 16:13). Elders are ordained in the church (Ac 14:21, 23). The qualifications for elders are listed in Titus 1:5–14. A building is not a church—the people inside who trust in Christ are the church (1 Cor. 12:27, 28). Once believers leave a building, it is no longer a church—it’s just a building (Rom. 16:5). Once in Christ a believer is no longer called a gentile (Ga 3:28). He is referred to as a member of the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23). Christ (not men) leads his church (Eph. 1:22) and the gates of hell will not overcome them (Mt 16:18). Jesus said: Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation (Mk 16:15). Christians plant new churches as the Spirit (not men) leads them (1 Cor. 2:10–16; 1 Jn 4:1–6).

The author continues:

“...[T]hose who are “independent” of religions should ask themselves: “Is it possible for me to be following - as I claim- the paradigm of the apostles and the first Christians, when I don’t belong to any Church the way they did? Where are the Elders of my congregation? When was someone of us ordained, by someone who had this authority? With what authority do I baptize? Is my participation in the supper of the Lord a valid one, when it is an arbitrary participation? How can I be a part of the worldwide and all-time body of the Church, when I have no communion with any of the other Churches of the Lord? Or is my team, or my person, perhaps the only one that is Christian? So, which are the Churches of the Lord, according to the paradigm of the apostles?”

Apostolic succession as taught by Roman Catholics is not biblical. Peter was not a Pope. Christ is and always has been the only Head of His true church (Eph 1:22). The body of Christ is an organic body of believers throughout the world. Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there among them." Mt 18:20.

The first act of obedience by a believer is his being baptized (Matt. 28:19, 20). Baptism does not *save* an individual. Rather, it is an expression of his dying to himself and being made alive in Christ. His life is no longer his own (1 Co 15:31). His new life reflects (Jn 3:7) Jesus' work in him (Gal. 5:22, 23). The Holy Spirit from the point of justification (Ro 5:9): teaches him precept upon precept (Is 28:10); He will be sanctified (Heb 9:14), and one day glorified (2 Co 3:18).

To participate in the Lord's Supper (Ac 2:42, 46), one should come rightly before the Lord (1 Co 11:30).

The author continues:

"...[N]o-one with such authority ever ordained Luther or Calvin as Elders in their new religion."

The Protestant Reformation was essential to expose the false teaching of the Roman Catholic religion. Constantine was not a Christian. The Psalmist wrote: For You have magnified Your word above all Your name (Ps 138:2)--the word of God (not Rome) is authoritative. Every believer may approach God's throne of grace boldly (Heb 4:16). The Christian is to stand firm in the grace of God (1 Pe 5:12). The apostle Paul wrote: Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage (Ga 5).

The author continues:

"It is no wonder, that all affiliated Protestant groups act in a similar way; they just haven't realized that what they do is impermissible."

Believers are called to expose false teaching (Eph 5:11) and root out error (Ga 5:9). Rome had every opportunity to repent during the Reformation. She never did (Re 17:5). Reformers courageously fought to restore true teaching of God's word.

Regarding Roman Catholicism vs historical, biblical Christianity Mike Gendron wrote:

"We have different authorities, we believe different gospels, we worship different Christs, we are led by different spirits and we are on different paths to eternity. Compare this with the unity the apostle Paul described with those who are in one body and oneSpirit, with one hope; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, on God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all (Eph 4:4-6)..."

...According to many Reformers, Satan's crown jewel is the Roman Catholic religion. It is his most seductive and deceptive form of counterfeit Christianity in the world. Granted, there are many other apostate churches, but none compare in the size, power, influence and wealth to the apostate church headquartered in Rome. The problem most Catholics have is they have been indoctrinated from birth with the lie that they belong to the one true Church. By believing

this lie, they have no incentive to read God's word and therefore they cannot discern truth from error..."¹

Men are saved: by grace alone (Eph 2:8-9), through faith alone (Eph 1:13; 2Ti 1:10), in Christ alone (Isa 45:21,22; 59:16; Ac 4:12). Roman Catholics deny this (Jude 1:11). God's word is the final word.

¹ Proclaiming the Gospel Ministries Newsletter Vol 18 no. 4. Pro-Gospel.org