

Theologian: God Doesn't Need Christians

Last week I raised the question of whether or not the “[feel good](#)” approach to religion was leading to the steady decline of America’s churches. Such an approach attempts to bring hoards of people to church, making them comfortable in order to swell the ranks of those who follow God.

Not surprisingly, a few readers took issue with this claim and suggested that those who advance such critiques are “unbelievers” who never set foot in a church.

But I was reminded this week that such a supposition isn’t always the case. In fact, sometimes the best self-examination and critiques can come from those who are thoroughly immersed in the church and unafraid to speak up about its problems.

Take A.W. Tozer for instance. A Christian author and preacher from the early to mid-twentieth century, Tozer didn’t mince words when it came to describing the problem of the modern church. According to him, one of the church’s major flaws was that it had a high opinion of herself and believed she was “necessary” to God. Nothing, [Tozer wrote](#), could be farther from the truth:

“Almighty God, just because He is almighty, needs no support. The picture of a nervous, ingratiating God fawning over men to win their favor is not a pleasant one; yet if we look at the popular conception of God that is precisely what we see. Twentieth-century Christianity has put God on charity. So lofty is our opinion of ourselves that we find it quite easy, not to say enjoyable, to believe that we are necessary to God. But the truth is that God is not greater for our being, nor would He be less if we did not exist. That we do exist is altogether of God’s free determination, not by our desert nor

by divine necessity.

Probably the hardest thought of all for our natural egotism to entertain is that God does not need our help. We commonly represent Him as a busy, eager, somewhat frustrated Father hurrying about seeking help to carry out His benevolent plan to bring peace and salvation to the world.... The God who worketh all things surely needs no help and no helpers."

Is Tozer right in his diagnosis? Is one of the church's main problems the fact that she has made herself self-important and, as a result, has a diminished view of God? Furthermore, would today's churches see a turnaround if they had more individuals like Tozer who were willing to conduct difficult self-examination and assessment from within?