

# PARK HEIGHTS CHURCH OF CHRIST

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*Thus Saith the Lord*

## A TITLE

By Jeff Sweeten

It boggles the mind that some will do so much for a title, perhaps believing they cannot define themselves outside of some pompous appellation that confers artificial credibility. In a well- documented book entitled *The Natural History of Stupidity*, Paul Tabori states: "Naturally, titles and addresses are necessary. It is only when they become shibboleths and subjects of hair-splitting snobbery that they belong to the history of human stupidity." Here is one example:

The title the rulers of Burma wore proudly was "The King of Kings Whom all other princes obey; Regulator of the Seasons; the Almighty Director of Ebb and Flow; the Younger Brother of the Sun; the Proprietor of the Twenty Four Umbrellas." (Tabori, p. 82)

German nobility, not to be outdone, went from *Grossmächtigster* ("Most All Powerful") in the 1400s but by 1624, it became *Wohledler, gestrenger, vesterund mannhafter grossgünstiger Junker, mächtiger Förderer* (for those of you that don't speak German, this means: "Most noble, high-principled, manly, much-favored nobleman, mighty patron"). A morning greeting might take 15 minutes if there were more than two people present. Oh, how some folks love to be somebody!

Jesus dealt with the same vanity in His day, even though it was not quite as Burmese or German on the "somebody" scale. Speaking of the religious leaders in His day, He said: "*But all their works they do to be seen by men... and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi'*" (Matthew 23:5-7). Ah-Ha! There's the true motivation embarrassingly revealed: they want to be better than you! Even today, men (and lately, women) bandy about their religious titles as a sign of superiority. It is "Father" this and "Pastor" that, with a side order of "Reverend" So-and-So for the more pretentious. Some are even given to robes and sashes to distinguish the congregants from the choir (the more holy from the "just" holy) or bask in the distinctions of "worship leader" or "involvement minister." Such haughty arrogance must anger the Most High God.

Jesus counters this class cupidity by putting Christianity into perspective. "*But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted*" (Matthew 23:11-12). Picture it: the Son of the Living God bowing to wash His disciples feet! How not Christ-like is an arrogant title.

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