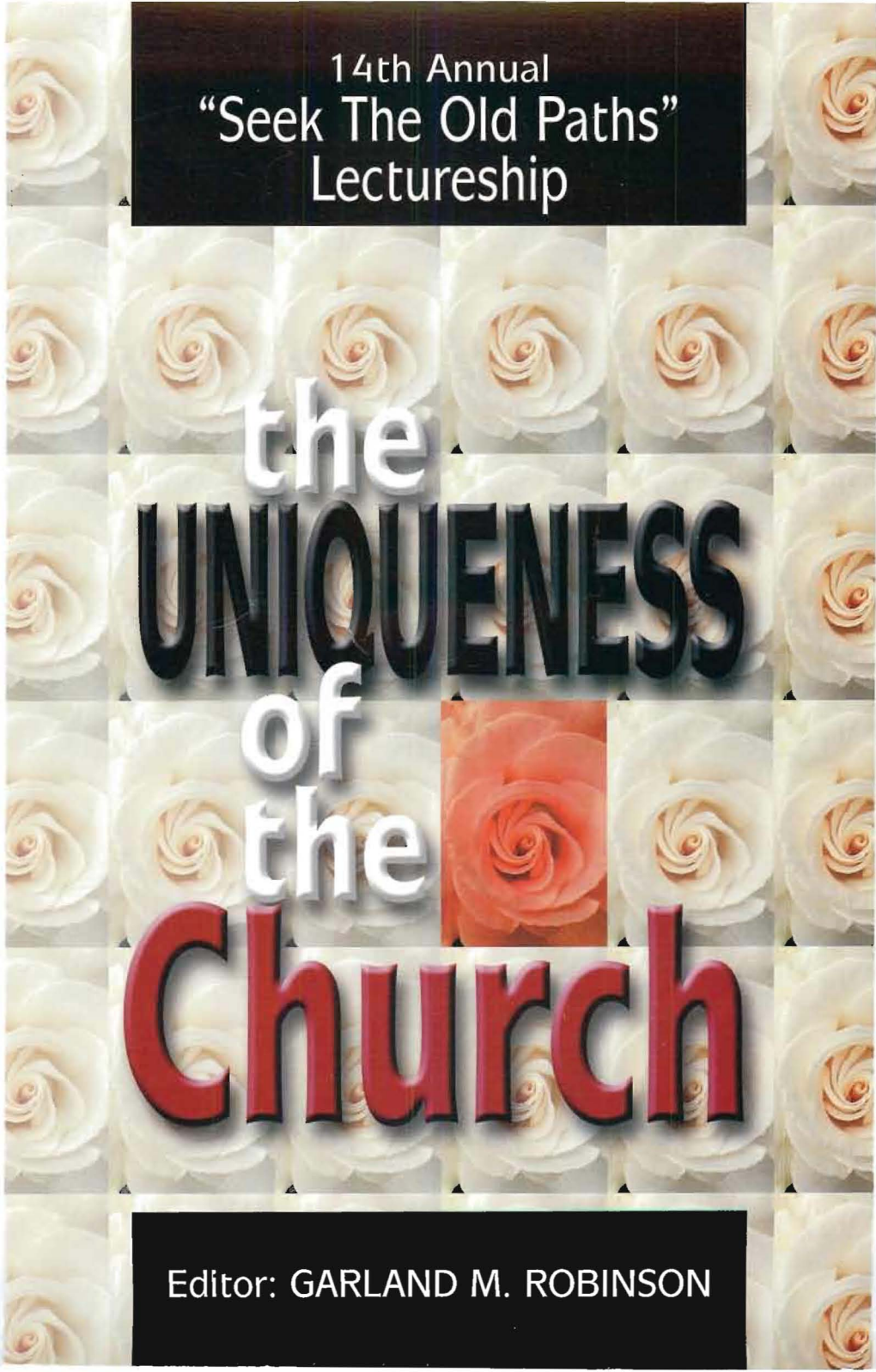


The background of the entire cover is a grid of white roses. In the center of the grid, where the word "of" is located, there is a single red rose. The roses are arranged in a repeating pattern, creating a textured, floral background.

14th Annual
"Seek The Old Paths"
Lectureship

the
UNIQUENESS
of
the
Church

Editor: GARLAND M. ROBINSON

FOURTEENTH ANNUAL
"SEEK THE OLD PATHS"
LECTURESHIP

JULY 25 — 29, 1999

THEME:

**The Uniqueness
of the Church**

Editor:
Garland M. Robinson

Held at the
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1801 Cruise St.
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FORWARD

The Annual **Seek The Old Paths** Lectureship is held each year at the East Corinth Church of Christ in Corinth, Mississippi, the week of the fourth Sunday in July.

The theme of the 1999 lectureship was **THE UNIQUENESS OF THE CHURCH**. Surely there has never been a time in history where the plain and unadulterated teaching of the Bible was needed more than it is now. Every generation must learn and know the Truth. Every generation must hear God's plain distinctive Word. God's arrangement is unique. It is unlike all the affairs and endeavors of man. It is timeless. It is unalterable. All men everywhere must adhere to it in order to be saved. This book is sent forth in an effort to educate people in the precious Word of God. It will go around the world many times. It will provide lesson material for many and encourage thousands, perhaps millions, to obey and cling to God's eternal hand. It certainly is not the Bible, but directs men to the Bible. You will profit from the decades of study, experience and wisdom of its authors. We encourage each one to learn and obey the Truth while you have the opportunity. Remain faithful in the Lord's church and you will receive a crown of life that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

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*Garland M. Robinson
July, 1999*

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The Kingdom Of God The Kingdom of Heaven

Chuck Northrop

1. There are a number of descriptive phrases or designations that are given to the church.
 - a. Some have referred to these as "similitudes" because they are similar, having a visible likeness and correspond in kind or quality.
 - b. Each designation speaks of some nature or characteristic of the church.
 - c. Among other things, they show in various ways the relationship that God and/or Christ has with His people.
2. Some examples of these designations are:
 - a. The body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23).
 - b. The bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:1-2).
 - c. The temple of God (Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Peter 2:5).
 - d. The flock or fold of God (John 10).
 - e. The family of God (Gal. 3:26-29).
 - f. The Vineyard of God (John 15:1-8).
 - g. The kingdom of God.
3. In this lesson, we are concerned with the kingdom of God.
4. A kingdom is the dominion over which a king rules.
5. Thus, the most basic idea or concept of the kingdom of God is the rule, dominion, or reign of God.
 - a. Each time the term is used, it is speaking of this basic concept.
 - b. As with a number of these other designations, the kingdom can be viewed in a variety of ways.
 - c. Nonetheless, the basic concept of God's dominion must be there.

DISCUSSION:

I. HOW THE TERM "KINGDOM OF GOD" IS USED.

- A. The term is used from the perspectives of the past, present, and future.
 1. In the **past**, the term "kingdom of God" was used of the nation of Israel.
 - a. Exod. 19:6, "*And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.*"

- b. In the parable of the vineyard, Jesus told the Jews, *"Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof"* (Matt. 21:43).
 - c. Matt. 8:10-12, *"And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. ¹²But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*
2. In **present** tense, the term "kingdom of God" was/is used of the church.
- a. During Jesus' ministry, the kingdom was in the future.
 - 1) Jesus, John the baptizer, and the disciples preached *"the kingdom of God is at hand"* (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7).
 - 2) Jesus taught the disciples to pray *"thy kingdom come"* (Matt. 6:10).
 - 3) Jesus' instruction concerning the Lord's supper shows the kingdom was in the future. *"For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come"* (Luke 22:18; see also Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:25).
 - 4) Joseph of Arimathea waited for the kingdom of God (Mark 15:43).
 - 5) The disciples waited in Jerusalem for the kingdom (Acts 1:6).
 - b. Beginning in the book of Acts, the kingdom is present tense.
 - 1) Acts 8:12, *"But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."*
 - 2) Col. 1:13, *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"*
 - 3) 1 Thess. 2:12, *"That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."*
 - 4) Heb. 12:28, *"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, where*

by we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:"

- 5) Rev. 1:9, *"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."*
3. In speaking of the future, the term "kingdom of God" was/is used of heaven.
 - a. In describing the judgment day, Jesus said, *"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"* (Matt. 25:34).
 - b. 2 Tim. 4:18, *"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."*
 - c. 1 Cor. 15:50, *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."*
- B. How can we know which idea of the kingdom of God is being used in a particular section of scripture?
 1. The same way we understand other words and terms with various meanings.
 2. The context usually provides which meaning is being used.
 3. So, as we read, we ask ourselves, "Is the writer speaking of the nation of Israel, the church, or heaven, or a combination of these?"
- C. Other considerations:
 1. The term "kingdom of heaven."
 - a. This term is uniquely used by Matthew 39 times.
 - b. We can be sure that it is equivalent to the term "kingdom of God" by comparing the Gospel records.

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
4:17, "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for <i>the kingdom of heaven</i> is at hand."	1:14-15, "...Jesus came...preaching the gospel of <i>the kingdom of God</i> , And saying, The time is fulfilled, and <i>the kingdom of God</i> is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."	
5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is <i>the kingdom of heaven</i> ."		6:20, "...Blessed be ye poor: for yours is <i>the kingdom of God</i> ."
11:11, "...Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in <i>the kingdom of heaven</i> is greater than he."		7:28, "For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in <i>the kingdom of God</i> is greater than he."
13:11, "He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of <i>the kingdom of heaven</i> , but to them it is not given."	4:11, "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of <i>the kingdom of God</i> : but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:"	8:10, "...Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of <i>the kingdom of God</i> : but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand."
19:14, "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is <i>the kingdom of heaven</i> ."	10:14, "...when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is <i>the kingdom of God</i> ."	18:16, "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is <i>the kingdom of God</i> ."

- c. Matthew himself also uses the terms "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" interchangeably. Matt. 19:23-24. *²³Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."*
- d. Since they are synonymous terms, then the definitions must apply in the same way.
- 2. We can be sure that the premillennial definition of the kingdom is not correct.
 - a. Jesus did not promise to establish a military kingdom of this world. John 18:36, *"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."*
 - b. Jesus did not fail in establishing His kingdom because the Christians in Colosse were translated into it. Col. 1:13
 - c. Jesus is currently reigning as King upon David's throne (Acts 2:29-34).
- 3. We can be sure that God's Messianic Kingdom is the church because of various prophecies.
 - a. The kingdom of God was prophesied to come with power (Mark 9:1) — the church came with power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:2-4).
 - b. The kingdom of God was prophesied to come in the days of the Roman Empire (Daniel 2:44) — the church was established in the days of the Roman Empire (Acts 2:5).
 - c. The kingdom of God was prophesied to come in the lifetime of some of the contemporaries of Jesus (Luke 9:27) — the church came in the lifetime of some of Jesus' contemporaries (Acts 2:1).
 - d. The kingdom of God was prophesied to be established in the city of Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-4) — the church was established in Jerusalem (Acts 2:5,14).
 - e. The kingdom of God was prophesied to be opened by Peter and the apostles (Matt. 16:19; 18:18) — Peter and the other apostles opened or established the

church with the first preaching of the gospel (Acts 2:14, 47).

II. THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

- A. As with all kingdoms, there must be a **king** in the kingdom of God.
 1. From an Old Testament perspective, *God was the king*.
 - a. The original form of government under the Mosaic covenant was a theocracy.
 - b. God ruled and reigned over Israel. 1 Sam. 12:12, "*And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the LORD your God was your king.*"
 - c. When the nation of Israel requested a human king, they rejected God as king. 1 Sam. 8:7, "*And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.*"
 2. From a New Testament perspective, *Christ is the king*.
 - a. He was prophesied to be king, for Daniel wrote that "*one like the Son of God*" would come in "*the Ancient of days*," and "*there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed*" (Daniel 7:13-14).
 - b. The fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy is seen in the following New Testament passages:
 - 1) Acts 17:7, "*Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.*"
 - 2) 1 Tim. 6:15, "*Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.*"
 - c. Keep in mind, though Jesus reigns as king, He does so from God's right hand. 1 Pet. 3:22, "*Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.*"
 3. From a heavenly perspective, *Christ will reign as King*.

- a. Rev. 15:3, "*And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.*"
 - b. Rev. 17:14, "*These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*"
 - c. Rev. 19:16, "*And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*"
- B. As with all kingdoms, there must be **subjects** or **citizens** in the kingdom of God.
1. From an Old Testament perspective, *the children of Israel* were citizens in God's kingdom. (That is, as long as they were subject unto God, they were God's kingdom.)
 2. From a New Testament perspective, *true believers in Christ* (Christians) are the subjects or citizens of the kingdom. Eph. 2:19, "*Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.*"
 3. From a "heavenly" perspective, the citizens of the kingdom are *the redeemed of all ages*. Matt. 7:21, "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*"
- C. As with all kingdoms, there must be a **territory** in the kingdom of God.
1. From an Old Testament perspective, the territory was the *promised land*.
 - a. The promise land extended from the river of Egypt in the south to the Euphrates river in the north (Gen. 15:18).
 - b. Though some do not believe this promise was ever fulfilled, listen to what the Bible says.
 - c. Josh. 21:43, "*And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.*"
 2. From a New Testament perspective, the territory is the *hearts of men*. Luke 17:20-21, ²⁰"*And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God*

should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: ²¹Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

3. From a heavenly perspective, the territory is *heaven* as described in Rev. 22.
- D. As with all kingdoms, there must be **laws to rule over** the kingdom of God.
 1. From an Old Testament perspective, the law was the *patriarchal* and *Mosaic laws*.
 2. From a New Testament perspective, the law is the *law of Christ*.
 - a. Rom. 8:2, "*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*"
 - b. Gal. 6:2, "*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*"
 - c. Jam. 1:25, "*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*"
 3. From a heavenly perspective, the law is also the *law of Christ* because it is eternal. 1 Pet. 1:25, "*But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*"
- E. As with all kingdoms, there must be **privileges afforded to the citizens** of the kingdom of God.
 1. A privilege afforded to all citizens of the kingdom of God (from all perspectives — past, present, and future) is the privilege of *true worship* and *service*.
 - a. This is true whether in patriarchy, or under the Mosaic covenant, or today under the Gospel age.
 - b. It is also true in heaven as the redeemed from the earth sing praises unto God and the Lamb before His throne (Rev. 14:1-3).
 - c. An application to consider is this: If we do not enjoy worshipping God in this life, why would anyone think we will enjoy heaven where we will be worshipping God forever?
 2. Also, all citizens of the kingdom whether past, present, or future have the privilege of *the forgiveness of sins*.
 - a. The terms or conditions are different under different dispensations of time.

- b. However, under all covenants, God requires *faith and obedience*.
 - c. Furthermore, forgiveness of sins required the sacrifice of Jesus, and, thus, by faith the saints of the Old Testament looked forward to the cross of Jesus, and we look back.
- 3. Another privilege is *true and lasting happiness and a fulfilled life*.
 - a. The world offers happiness, but it is not true and lasting, and they cannot offer a truly fulfilled life.
 - b. God offers true and lasting happiness in every dispensation. Beatitudes — also John 10:10, *"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."*
 - c. Also, God offers true meaning of life. Eccl. 12:13, *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."*
- 4. Concerning privileges, consider what Jesus taught in Luke 18:29-30, ²⁹*"And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, ³⁰Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."*
- 5. No doubt the greatest privilege is heaven itself, but such privilege as grace, mercy, joy, happiness, assurance and hope are afforded the citizens of the kingdom of God.
 - a. 2 Peter 1:11, *"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."*
 - b. 1 Cor. 15:24, *"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."*
 - c. 1 Cor. 15:50, *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."*

III. THE CHURCH AND GOD'S MESSIANIC KINGDOM.

- A. Because of Jesus' interchangeable use of "church" and "kingdom," we can be sure that God's Messianic kingdom is the church. Matt. 16:18-19, ¹⁸*"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."*
- B. Notice also some other considerations that show that God's Messianic kingdom is the church.
 1. Both have the *same terms of entrance* — baptism.
 - a. The kingdom — John 3:3-5, ³*"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ⁴Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? ⁵Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."*
 - b. The church — 1 Cor. 12:13, *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."*
 2. Both have the *same head* — Christ.
 - a. Jesus is king over His kingdom — 1 Tim. 6:15, *"Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords."*
 - b. Jesus is head over His church — Eph. 1:22-23, ²²*"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, ²³Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."*
 3. Both have the *same law* — "the perfect law of liberty."
 - a. 2 Peter 1:3, *"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:"*
 - b. If either the church or the kingdom had even one thing that the other did not have, then the one

- lacking would not have all things pertaining to life and godliness.
- c. However, if both the church and the kingdom have all things pertaining to life and godliness, then both has the same law.
 4. Both have the *same subjects* — Christians.
 - a. Christians are citizens of the kingdom — Eph. 2:19, *"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God."*
 - b. Christians are members of the church — Acts 11:26, *"...And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."*
 - c. Notice that the Christians in Ephesus were "of the household of God" which is the church (1 Tim. 3:15).
 5. Both have the *same seed* — the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - a. In the parable of the sower, all heard the word of the kingdom (Matt. 13:19) which is the word of God (Luke 8:11).
 - b. In order to be a member of the church, one must first hear the word spoken (Acts 18:8; see also 1 Cor. 4:15).
 - c. If God's Messianic kingdom and the church are not the same, then we have one seed producing two kinds of fruits.
 - C. As subjects or citizens of the kingdom, we as Christians have **certain responsibilities**.
 1. In order to be a citizen of the kingdom, one must do God's will. Matt. 7:21, *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."*
 2. In order to be a citizen of the kingdom, one must be born again. John 3:3-5, ³*"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ⁴Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? ⁵Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."*

3. Citizens of the kingdom must become as little children. Mark 10:15, *"Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."*
4. Citizens of the kingdom must have unity. Luke 11:17, *"But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth."*
5. Citizens of the kingdom must render sacrifice. 1 Peter 2:5, *"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."*

CONCLUSION:

1. A full understanding of the term "kingdom of God" is complex.
 2. Some have tried to simplify it as always being identical with the church which is probably a reaction to the premillennialists.
 3. Because of passages that do not fit this definition, others have tried to make it something other than the church.
 4. Neither are completely in error, but neither definition fits all references to the kingdom of God.
 5. The kingdom of God is God's dominion, reign, and rule.
 6. In order to be under God's dominion, reign, and rule today — the kingdom of God, and in order to receive the privileges of citizenship, one must be a member of the Lord's church.
 7. Are you a citizen in God's kingdom?
-

Putting The Kingdom First

Jimmy W. Bates

1. *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"* (Matt. 6:33).
 - a. Jesus makes clear what the top priority in our lives must be — **the kingdom of God and his righteousness!**
 - b. Compare Matt. 22:36-40; Col. 3:1,2.
2. Many in the church do not understand what the word **"FIRST"** means in this passage.

- a. Many believe there are exceptions, such as: job, family, sports, etc.
- b. Some believe they can have God on the throne in their lives without putting the kingdom first.
3. Materialism and worldliness have blinded the minds of many church members.
 - a. Jesus' statement in Matt. 6:33 is in response to the danger of materialism discussed in verses 19-34.
 - b. Compare Luke 8:14; 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4.
4. Our study will center on Matt. 6:33 and the context to determine what is involved in "putting the kingdom first!"

DISCUSSION:

I. "BUT SEEK YE...."

- A. "BUT" (*de*): "a conjunctive particle, marking the super-addition of a clause, whether in opposition or in continuation, to what has preceded, and it may be variously rendered but, on the other hand, and, also, now, etc." (The Analytical Greek Lexicon, p.85)
 1. This word is used several times in the context of Matt. 6 to introduce statements that are opposed to preceding statements; showing a contrast between what should not be done and what should be done.
 - a. Matt. 6:19-21, Don't lay up treasures on earth, "but" lay up treasures in heaven.
 - b. Matt. 6:22-24, Don't try to serve two masters, "but" serve God with a "single eye."
 - c. Matt. 6:25-33, Don't seek after material things, "but" seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.
 2. "But," here's what you are to do as opposed to what you are not to do.
- B. "SEEK" (*zateite* from *zateo*): "to seek after, seek for, aim at, strive after." (Thayer p. 272)
 1. Present imperative – "keep on seeking" – a continual effort (Phil. 3:12-14; 2 Peter 1:10,11).
 2. Seek with heart (Matt. 6:21; 15:8) and affections (Col. 3:1,2).
 3. To "strive" after.
 - a. Luke 13:24, strive (agonize) to enter in at the strait gate.
 - b. Not just a casual, half-hearted effort, but an agonizing, toilsome, sacrificial effort.

- C. **"YE"** (part of the word "seek"): individual responsibility.
1. No one can seek for you.
 2. Rom. 14:12; Phil. 2:12; 1 Cor. 15:58; Gal. 5:6; John 9:4

II. LET US SEEK (aim at, strive after) WHAT?

A. **"The Kingdom of God."**

1. Foretold: Dan.2:44; Isa. 2:2,3; Micah 4:1-3.
2. John the Baptist and Jesus both spoke of it as being "at hand" (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Mark 9:1).
3. This kingdom is the same as the church.
 - a. **Keys** of kingdom opened doors of the church (Matt. 16:18,19; Acts 2).
 - b. Lord's supper placed in the kingdom, but observed in the church (Matt. 26:29; 1 Cor. 11:23-29).
 - c. Those in the church were in the kingdom (Col. 1:13-18).
 - d. To seek the kingdom of God is to seek the Lord's church.
4. It's worthy of our heart's affections and first place in our lives (Acts 20:28; Matt. 13:44-46; 6:33).
 - a. All should seek to enter the kingdom (John 3:3-5; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:22-25; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 13:3; Acts 8:37; 2:38; Rom. 6:1-5; 2 Cor. 5:17).
 - b. All should seek the growth and well-being of the kingdom of God.

B. **"And his righteousness"**

1. All of God's commandments are righteous (Psalm 119:172).
2. Righteousness requires obedience to the commands of God (Matt. 7:21; Luke 6:46).
3. To seek His righteousness is to:
 - a. Hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matt. 5:6).
 - b. Seek knowledge of the will of God (1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18).
 - c. Strive to **DO** the will of God (1 John 2:29; 3:7).

III. MUST SEEK **"FIRST"** THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

- A. **"FIRST"** (*protos*): "either in time or place, in any succession of things or persons...first in rank, influence, honor; chief; principal...before anything else...first of all." (Thayer p. 555)

1. The "kingdom of God and his righteousness" must be our chief aim—first in time and importance.
2. We may seek other things but all such things must be secondary and subordinate. We must set priorities and put "first things first!"
- B. Putting the kingdom **FIRST** is putting spiritual things **above** material things.
 1. The context of Matt. 6:19-34.
 2. Rom. 8:1-6
 3. 2 Cor. 4:16-5:11
- C. Some specific areas in which we must put the kingdom **FIRST**:
 1. **In decision-making (choices):**
 - a. Choose the right master, God (Matt. 6:24; Rom. 6:16; Joshua 24:15; Eccl. 12:1,13,14).
 - b. Job, Career
 - 1) Decision must not be based solely on money, fringe benefits, etc.
 - 2) Will it help or hinder your service to God?
 - c. In choosing friends/companions.
 - 1) Will have great influence on your character.
 - 2) 1 Cor. 15:33
 - 3) Seek the friendship of Christ **FIRST** (John 15:13, 14; Prov. 18:24).
 - d. In choosing a marriage partner.
 - 1) Choose one who is eligible, compatible, and spiritual.
 - 2) One who will help you put the kingdom first.
 - e. Every decision one makes should reflect the priority (first place) of the kingdom of God and His righteousness in his/her life.
 2. In the **Worship** of the Church.
 - a. Scriptural worship (John 4:24; Matt. 4:10).
 - b. Faithful attendance (Heb. 10:25).
 - c. Participation, reverence, etc.
 3. In the **Work** of the church.
 - a. Must have a genuine desire for what's best for the church.
 - b. Putting the kingdom first means one is supporting the work and mission of the church in every way possible:
 - 1) Financially (1 Cor. 16:1,2; 2 Cor. 9:6,7).

- 2) With steadfast work (1 Cor. 15:58; Titus 2:7,14; 3:1; Matt. 25:14-30).
- 3) Opposing its enemies (Phil. 1:17; Acts 20:26-32; Jude 3; Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9-11).
- 4) Maintaining its purity in godly living (Eph. 5:25-27; Titus 2:11,12).

CONCLUSION:

1. Are you putting the kingdom **FIRST** in your life?
 - a. Upon which do you place greater emphasis—material things or spiritual things?
 - b. Has the church ever been truly **FIRST** in your life?
 2. Entrance into the kingdom should be the first priority of all outside of Christ (Acts 2:36-47; Col. 1:13).
 3. Putting the kingdom first should be the first priority of all Christians who desire an entrance into the **everlasting kingdom** (heaven) (2 Peter 1:5-11).
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Misconceptions Of The Church

Garland M. Robinson

1. The God whom we serve is eternal, all wise, benevolent, loving.
 - a. He knows what is best for his creation.
 - b. He designed it and sustains it. Col. 1:16-17
2. Before the foundation of the world, God prepared a glorious kingdom for his people.
 - a. Matt. 25:34, *"Then shall the king say unto them... Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."*
3. The kingdom of God and the church of Christ are one and the same! Matt. 16:18-19
4. Eph. 3:10-11, 21, The church of Christ is the eternal purpose of God.
5. There's so much misconception today regarding the Lord's kingdom/church.
 - a. *Misconception* means: "the act or result of misconceiving," "a wrong or inaccurate conception," "a wrong notion," "misunderstanding."

- b. All kinds of things are believed about it: from the belief that it has not yet been established to the idea the Lord has already come the second time!
- c. Why would people have such wrong notions concerning the church?
- d. Is the Bible not plain enough so people can properly understand the nature and characteristics of the church?
- 6. The Bible was written to be understood, Eph. 3:4.
 - a. Men misunderstand it because they do not rightly divide the word of truth, 2 Tim. 2:15.
 - b. 1 Cor. 14:33, *"God is not the author of confusion"*
 - c. Some misunderstand it because they do not intend to do what it says.
- 7. What are some misconceptions people have about the church?

DISCUSSION:

I. THAT THE CHURCH IS A BUILDING.

- A. The church is the people, not a building.
 - 1. A building is simply a place where the church meets.
 - 2. Heb. 10:25, an assembly demands a place to assemble.
- B. The word church means "called out."
 - 1. Col. 1:13, The church is composed of those who have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom.

II. THAT THE CHURCH IS A TEMPORARY SUBSTITUTE FOR THE KINGDOM.

- A. Some people say Jesus came to establish his kingdom but was rejected in doing so by the Jews so he established the church instead.
 - 1. This suggestion comes from not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God (cf. Mark 12:24).
 - 2. When Jesus had fed about 5,000 men (beside women and children), some of that number tried to make him their king.
 - 3. John 6:14-15, *"Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. ¹⁵When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone."*
- B. The context of Eph. 3:11 clearly points out the church was not an accident nor was it only a temporary substitute for

the kingdom. It is exactly what Jesus had planned! *"According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

1. 1 Peter 1:10-12, the prophets prophesied of the days of the church!
 2. Acts 2:16, Peter made this clear on the day of Pentecost when he said, *"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel."*
- C. The kingdom Christ came to establish was instituted just as was prophesied. It is the church. Mark 9:1

III. THAT THE CHURCH IS NOT ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION.

- A. Jesus believed the church was important enough to die for.
1. Acts 20:28, *"...the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."*
 2. If the church is not essential, then Jesus died in vain.
- B. Jesus taught it would stand until the end of the world.
1. Matt. 16:18, *"I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*
 2. 1 Cor. 15:24, *"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."*
 3. A building built by man, no matter how strong, is subject to decay and will eventually fall.
- C. The Lord adds the saved to the church.
1. He does not add them to a building.
 2. Acts 2:41,47, *"there were added unto them about three thousand souls...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."*
 3. 1 Cor. 12:13, *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."*
- D. People think they can live a good life and go to heaven without being a member of the church.
1. When the Lord comes again it will be to save his body, the church, not a building.
 2. Eph. 5:23, *"he is the savior of the body"*
 3. Matt. 22:11-12, those without a wedding garment will be cast out.
 4. The church IS the saved. There are no saved individuals that are not in the church of Christ.

IV. THAT THE CHURCH IS MADE UP OF ALL THE VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS.

- A. People believe that one church is as good as another.
 - 1. John 15:1-8 is used in support of this belief. However, notice the use of words that refer to individuals, not groups of people: *he, him, ye, a man*.
 - 2. Men's beliefs have always been contrary to inspired Truth.
 - 3. It's not what men believe, but what the Bible says that matters.
- B. The truth is: "one denomination is just as good as another."
 - 1. None of them are supported by the Bible!
 - 2. None existed in the first century.
 - 3. They all were founded by men, centuries after the Lord established His church.
- C. The New Testament speaks of ONLY ONE BODY.
 - 1. Matt. 16:18, "*I will build my church*"
 - 2. Eph. 4:4, "*There is one body*"
 - 3. Eph. 4:5, "*one faith*"
 - 4. Eph. 5:23, the Lord will save "*his body*"

V. THAT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST DOES NOT BELIEVE THE OLD TESTAMENT.

- A. Rom. 15:4, It was written for our learning.
 - 1. We profit from it by learning that when men obeyed God they were blessed and when they disobeyed God, they were punished. cf. Deut. 11:26-28
 - 2. All the great stories and events of the Old Testament illustrate the great Truth of the New Testament.
 - 3. New Testament preachers constantly referred to it!
 - 4. 2 Tim. 3:16-17, all Scripture is inspired of God.
- B. The Truth is, the church of Christ, the church of the New Testament, does not follow the Old Testament in respect to learning and knowing how to worship God.
 - 1. It was for another people (Israel) at another time (before Christ).
 - 2. Col. 2:14, Jesus died in order to take it out of the way.
 - 3. Heb. 10:9-10, He took away the first (Old Testament) that he might establish the second (New Testament).
 - 4. Gal. 3:19,16, It was only temporary and would last until Christ came.
 - 5. Gal. 3:24, People are no longer under it.

- C. Men today will be judged by the words of Jesus, John 12:48. cf. James 1:21; Rev. 20:12

VI. THAT THE CHURCH IS A SOCIAL ORGANIZATION.

- A. The idea of "fun and games" is the concept many have.
1. People see the church as healing the physical and social needs of the public.
 2. Many programs sponsored by liberal churches are geared to furnish and satisfy the physical and social needs of its members!
 3. Gymnasiums (called family life centers, multipurpose buildings), ball teams, recreational events, entertainment bonanzas. "Gymnastics to the glory of God," "Annual fishing tournaments," skating parties, Opry-land trips, fun and games, is the order of the day.
- B. The work and purpose of the church is not found in any of these things! Mark 16:15-16
1. The drawing power of God is not "fun and games." It is the Word of God, Rom. 1:16; John 6:44-45.
 2. If it takes candy to make a disciple this week, it will take a Big Mac next week.
 3. If it takes a ball team to get people to church in the summer it will take hunting trips in the winter.
 4. BUT, when people are drawn to the church by the Gospel (God's power unto salvation), they will be there every time the doors open!
- C. Christians can have fun and do have fun.
1. There is time for recreation and social activities in our personal lives.
 2. But, these things are not the work of the church. They are works of individuals, of families, not the church.

VII. THAT THE CHURCH IS DEPENDENT ON THE COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES FOR ITS PREACHERS.

- A. The church of the Lord is "self perpetuating."
1. It is responsible for training its own preachers. 2 Tim. 2:2
 - a. What better place can you think of to get the job done?
 - b. Where else would you find the dedication to TRUTH and SOUNDNESS than in the Lord's church?
 2. The church, not the college, has the responsibility of evangelizing the world. Mark 16:15; Eph. 3:10,21

- B. Notice many great things said about the church that is not said about colleges.
1. Matt. 16:18, The gates of hades shall not prevail against the church, not the college.
 2. Eph. 5:29, The Lord nourishes and cherishes the church, not the college.
 3. 1 Tim. 3:15, The church is the pillar and ground of the Truth, not the college.
 4. Matt. 18:15-18, Wayward brethren are to be reported to the church, not the college.
 5. Eph. 3:21, Jesus receives glory in the church, not the college.
 6. Eph. 5:25, Jesus died for the church, not the college!
 7. Acts 2:47, The Lord adds the saved to the church, not the college.
 8. Eph. 5:23, Jesus is the Savior of the church, not the college.
 9. Rev. 21:2,9; Rom. 7:4, The church is the bride of Christ, not the college.
 10. Eph. 5:27, Jesus will present the church to himself without blemish or spot, not the college.
 11. 1 Cor. 15:24; 1 Thess. 4:13-18, Jesus is coming for the church, not the college.
- C. The church existed nearly 1900 years before so-called "Christian" colleges came on the scene.
1. The college is here because of the church. The church is not here because of the college.
 2. The colleges could cease to exist tomorrow and the church of Christ would still be here.
 3. The church has no connection with them.
 4. The Colleges are an extension of the HOME, not the CHURCH! It's a secular business that happens to be run by some who are members of the church.
 5. The church of Christ does not own or operate colleges.
- D. Colleges and Universities are the source of much of the digression among us.
1. I'm convinced the church today would not be in the apostasy it's in if it were not for the colleges.
 2. People like to say, "but look at all the good they've done."
 - a. Good people, the good does not out way the bad.
 - b. We must remember, the schools are not divine.
 - 1) They are built by man, not God.

- 2) They will perish along with all the other works by man.
3. They like to hide behind the saying that it is not their job to expose false teachers.
4. They like to offer students both sides of the issue without clearly pointing out the Right Way.
5. They use the church when it is to their advantage and run from it when they get caught in error.
 - a. They love to get their hands into the church treasury.
 - b. They love to send their representatives to promote their agenda.
6. The colleges are NOT the work of the church.

VIII. THAT THE CHURCH MUST HAVE PROFESSIONAL MINISTERS.

- A. Many congregations would not consider having a preacher work with them unless he had a college or masters degree.
 1. Example: "The Bellevue church of Christ is in need of a second evangelist as Personal Involvement Minister in the area of education... College degree required. Married, 30-yr old man with experience desired. Send resume..." (Gospel Advocate, 3/19/87).
 2. Some congregations now have a pulpit minister, associate minister, youth minister, personal involvement minister, educational minister, singles minister, single again minister, family services minister, parking minister, etc.
- B. Gal. 1:2, Paul said, "*all the brethren that are with me.*" Why didn't Paul say, "Dr. Luke" is with me?
 1. Here was a golden opportunity for Paul to commend all the prestigious titles of his fellow workers unto the brethren of Galatia.
 2. Jesus said, "*all ye are brethren*" (Matt. 23:8-10).
 3. There's no room for titles of honor and distinction in the church.

CONCLUSION:

1. There's no need to have all these misconceptions if people would simply follow the Bible!
 2. Let's be careful of doing Bible things in Bible ways and calling Bible things by Bible names!
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The Church's Founder And Purchase Price

Nat Evans

1. Our study involves a discussion of what the church is and is not.
2. Who was the *builder* of the church?
3. What is the *foundation* of the church?
4. What is the *true value* of the church in light of its purchase price?
5. How should *elders view their work* in light of the value of the church?

DISCUSSION:

I. THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.

A. What, then, *is the church*?

1. It is composed of "the called out." The word "church" comes from the Greek word *ekklesia* which means "called out." As we are using it here, it refers to those who have been called out of the world by the Gospel of Christ (2 Thess. 2:13-14). Guy N. Woods gave the following definition of the church. "The church may be properly defined as a body of baptized believers over which Christ rules and reigns as head, and in which the Spirit dwells." (*Sermons On Salvation*, Woods; pp. 172-ff)
2. The church is composed of those who have been saved through their obedience to the Gospel of Christ (Acts 2:37-38, 40-41, 47).
 - a. Salvation is in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10), but we must understand that a person cannot be in Christ without at the same time being in the Lord's church.
 - b. Since the same process that makes one a Christian (a saved person) also puts one into the church (1 Cor. 12:13), and since the Lord adds those that are being saved to the church (Acts 2:47), then those who believe that a man can be saved out of the church, or that a man can be saved and then later join some denomination are simply mistaken. This simply indicates that many people just do not understand what the church really is.
3. The church is *God's family*. It is the "house of God" (1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 2:19). God is our Heavenly Father,

Christians are His children, and as children in His family, we are brothers and sisters together in the Lord. People need to understand that one cannot just join God's family (the church). All who have entered into God's family since the day of Pentecost have been born into it. No one can get into God's family (the New Testament church) without being "born again" of water and of the Spirit (John 3:3,5; Titus 3:5; Eph. 5:25-27).

B. Next, let us observe "*What the church is not!*"

1. It is not *a material building or house* (Acts 17:24). The church is a spiritual house or institution (1 Peter 2:5).
2. It is not *a denomination*. It came into existence on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two, hundreds of years before all the denominations we see about us today. The church of Christ is undenominational. The Lord's church is neither denominational nor is it inter-denominational. New Testament congregations were of the same faith and practice.
3. It is not "my church" or "your church" or "mom and dad's church." It is Christ's church (Matt. 16:18). So please keep in mind in our study that I am talking about the church you read about when you open the pages of your New Testament. I am not a member of any denomination. I do not preach for any denomination. I am a preacher of the Gospel of Christ and I am proud to be *just a Christian*, and a member of the church of Christ, the one we read about in the Bible (1 Peter 4:16; Rom. 16:16).

C. Some *Misconceptions* About The Church.

1. Some say, "It makes no difference what a person believes in religion as long as he is sincere."
2. Another is heard to say, "One church is as good as another."
3. Still others have said, "You can be a Christian (you can be saved), and not be a member of any church."
4. Some think of the church only in denominational terms.
5. Some say, "You get saved, and then you go and join a church."

D. *Common Sense* and the church.

1. Surely you would agree that Peter, James, John, Paul and all the other first century Christians were members of the New Testament church (the church of Christ) without being members of any human denomination.

This would have to be the case since obviously none of the religious denominations of our day existed then.

2. Now here is a question for you. Would it be possible today for a person to study and follow the New Testament, to do just what it says to do to be saved, and thus become a Christian, nothing more and nothing less, and let the Lord add him to His church just as he did those in Acts 2:47? Keep in mind that this person is only content to follow the New Testament. He refuses the creeds of men, and he refuses to "join" any of the denominations of our day. Now, if the people of the first century could do this, why can't I do it today? I take the position that one can do this. Because, the "Bible only" makes "Christians only" and the only Christians. My friend, it takes error believed and obeyed for one to wind up in a denomination. The only thing the Truth will make, when believed and obeyed, is a New Testament Christian — a member of the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 12:13; John 3:3,5; Acts 2:47).
 3. Will you, my friend, be content to simply follow the Bible as your only guide in religion? Why not obey the Gospel of Christ today, and know Christ will add you to His church, then strive to live a faithful Christian life to His honor and glory?
- E. Distinguishing *Characteristics* of the New Testament church
1. Christ Himself is its Head (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18,24).
 2. Its members wear His name (Christians) (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16; Acts 26:28).
 3. The Bible is its only rule of faith and practice (Deut. 4:2-4; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19; 1 Peter 4:11).
 4. It is organized according to the New Testament pattern (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20; Heb. 13).
 5. It worships according to the divine pattern (Phil. 3:16; John 4:23-24; 1 Thess. 5:21; John 8:31-32; Prov. 23:23).
 6. It teaches what the New Testament teaches about how to become a Christian.
 - a. **Hear** the Word (Rom. 10:17).
 - b. **Believe** the Word and in Jesus the Christ (John 8:21,24; Heb. 11:6).

- c. **Repent** of sins (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30-31; Acts 3:19).
- d. **Confess** faith in Christ (Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10).
- e. **Be baptized** into Christ for the remission of sins (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27; Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21).
- 7. The church of Christ may be observed in the Bible in:
 - a. Purpose (Eph. 3:10-11).
 - b. Promise (Gen. 3:15; 12:1-3; 22:22; Gal. 3:16-29).
 - c. Prophecy (Dan. 2:44; Isa. 2:2-4).
 - d. Preparation (Isa. 40:1-3; Matt. 3:1-5).
 - e. Perfection — in reality (Acts 2).
 - f. Perpetuity (Through the seed of the kingdom which is the Word of God, Luke 8:11; 1 Thess. 2:12-13).
 - g. Paradise (the church finally victorious through Christ in Heaven (2 Peter 1:11; 2 Tim. 4:18; Rev. 21 and 22). (Credit is given to Perry B. Cotham for these 7 points).

II. WHO BUILT THE CHURCH?

- A. *Christ* is the founder or builder of the church (Matt. 16:18).
- B. If a church was founded by an unscriptural builder, that church would have to be unscriptural (Matt. 15:9,13).
- C. If a church was founded by John Wesley, John Calvin, Joseph Smith, Jr., or any other human being for that matter, that church would have to be unscriptural, and there would be no salvation in it. The Bible says, "*Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it*" (Psa. 127:1).
- D. The church is God's house. Paul spoke of, "*The house of God, which is the church of the living God*" (1 Tim. 3:15). It is a "*spiritual house*" (1 Peter 2:5). The church is God's "*building*" (1 Cor. 3:9). The church is "*the temple of God*" (1 Cor. 3:16-17).
- E. "*Behold the man whose name is THE BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both*" (Zech. 6:12-13). Christ said, "...upon this rock I will build my

church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

F. Since Christ built the church, He would not have built a non-essential institution (Eph. 5:23).

G. Gus Nichols wrote, "In the days of the apostles each congregation of Christians was to be so patterned after the will of Christ that it would be a church 'OF CHRIST' and not a human organization (Heb. 8:5). The congregations belonged to Christ, being authorized by him, and constructed according to his Divine Will. Hence, Paul said, 'The churches of Christ salute you' (Rom. 16:16). To be 'churches of Christ' back there, those congregations had to believe in and follow Christ (Matt. 16:24). They had to accept Christ as their great head and lawgiver (Col. 1:18, 24; Eph. 5:23). They had to accept his doctrine and guidance in all religious activity, else they could not have been 'churches of Christ' (Rom. 16:16)."

Brother Nichols also said, "Any church not built by Christ is not his church. Any church built by some man would be in competition with the church built by Christ. No man has any divine authority to build a church. And it is presumptuous sin for any man to think he could build a better church than the Lord. ... We can take the seed, the word of God, and reproduce congregations like those in the New Testament (Luke 8:11; Mark 4:14). But no man has any right to start a religious body. Christ prayed for the unity of all who believe on him (John 17:20-22). Certainly he did not want us to start the more than two hundred sects and parties called churches in our country. There is a call to return to the church built by Christ and unite in it (Eph. 4:3-6)." (From *Sermons by Gus Nichols*, pp. 1-3).

H. Jesus said, "*I will build MY church.*" Jesus, the divine Son of God, was the builder of His church. Why should anyone want to be a part of some religious group of human origin when he could be a member of Christ's church that is of divine origin? Men have built hundreds of religious organizations that are based on the doctrines of men rather than the Bible. But Christ is the one who built His church. He built His church upon the solid rock of truth that Jesus is the divine Son of God.

III. THE FOUNDATION UPON WHICH THE CHURCH IS BUILT.

A. The church of Christ is built upon the foundation of the eternal truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (Matt. 16:13-18).

1. A discussion of Matthew 16:18. *"And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."* A great deal of controversy surrounds the question as to *what* or *who* the term "this rock" refers in this text.

2. What is the Rock upon which the church is built? Guy N. Woods wrote, "Jesus Christ, our Lord, or what is essentially the same, the truth of His Deity, and fundamental facts touching His Person, is the foundation upon which the church is built."

J. W. McGarvey commented: "This truth, that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God, is the most fundamental truth in the Christian system — it is that on which the whole superstructure depends: and it is therefore most appropriately represented by the rock in the Savior's picture."

3. The setting and context of Matthew 16:13-19 help us to determine what the "rock" refers to in verse 18. Take a close look at the circumstances which led up to the Lord's statement in verse 18. In verse 13, Jesus had asked his disciples the question, *"Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"* After the answer was given to that question, Jesus then asked them what they thought of him: *"But whom say you that I am?"* It was in answer to this question that Peter made the great confession: *"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."* This is the great truth that anchors our faith. It is the rock of truth upon which we rest our hope.

4. Isaiah 28:14-18 is to be connected with Matthew 16:18. Foy E. Wallace, Jr. wrote, "The words of Jesus, 'Upon this rock I will build my church,' looked to Pentecost. Here is the connection with the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah 28:14. In verse 16 the prophet said: 'Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.' The preceding verses foretold the covenant with death that

was made between the Jewish rulers and the Gentile authorities, and the agreement with hades, which meant to consign the Christ to the tomb, or the hadean world. But the prophet said, 'Your covenant with death shall be disannulled and your agreement with hell (or hades) shall not stand.' That meant the destruction of a death covenant and a dissolution of a hadean agreement. When Christ arose from the dead, the covenant with death was destroyed and the agreement with hades was dissolved. If Christ had not risen from the dead, the agreement with hades would have stood; if Christ had not risen from the dead, the covenant with death could not have been annulled. The prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled in the words of Christ in Matthew 16:18: 'Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell (hades) shall not prevail against it.' There is not any difference in saying the agreement with hades shall not stand, and in saying the gates of hades shall not prevail. If Jesus had not risen from the dead, neither of these statements could have been fulfilled. But Isaiah said, 'I lay in Zion a sure foundation.' And Jesus said, 'Upon this rock I will build my church.' There has been an age-old argument over what the rock is in Matthew 16:18. The argument turns on two Greek words, *petros* and *petra*, the masculine and feminine genders of one word. ... But if you do not know a Greek letter from a chicken track, you can know what the rock is in Matthew 16. It is the same thing that the foundation is in Isaiah 28. The covenant with death and the agreement with hell referred to the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ; and 'the gates of hell shall not prevail' is the same thing as 'the agreement with hell shall not stand.' The two things are parallel in the prophecy and in the Lord's statement. Then, when the prophet said, 'I will lay in Zion a sure foundation,' and Jesus said, 'Upon this rock I will build my church' — the rock and the foundation are the same thing." (*Number One Gospel Sermons*; by Foy E. Wallace, Jr., pp. 35-37 and from pp. 49-53).

5. Let us hear from the apostle Paul. "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he

buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:10-11).

B. Some teach that the church was built upon Peter.

1. Guy N. Woods wrote, "The words *petros* translated 'Peter,' and *petra* translated 'rock,' though closely related, are of different and distinct significance. *Petra*, translated 'rock' in the passage, means a massive living rock; whereas *petros*, translated 'Peter,' means a detached fragment (cf. Thayer, page 507). Moreover, the words differ in gender. *Petros* translated 'Peter,' is masculine; *petra* rendered 'rock,' is feminine gender. To indicate the force of the different genders, translate thus: 'Peter, you are a he-rock; but upon this she-rock I will build my church.' ... Peter, though you are a rock, you are a mere pebble, comparatively speaking; upon this solid bed-rock, this massive truth you have confessed, that I am the Christ, the Son of the living God, I will build my church. The church was thus founded, not upon Peter, a weak, fallible man, but upon the infallible truth he acknowledged — Jesus is indeed the Christ (the Messiah), the one the prophets of old pointed to. This was the same foundation Paul laid in Corinth when he proved from the Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ, the Divine Son of God. Both Peter and Paul then built upon the same foundation. The foundation upon which the church is built is the Deity of Jesus the Christ." (*The Second Coming And Other Sermons* by Guy N. Woods, pp. 83-ff).
2. Fred A. Amick gave some excellent comments upon this matter. He wrote, "The rock upon which Jesus would build his church, friends, is the rock of eternal truth, the truth that he is the divine Son of God. The apostle Peter was not this rock. One of the most vicious and destructive dogmas ever conceived is the theory that Peter, a mere man, is this age-lasting foundation. To teach that a frail, erring, vacillating, mortal was the eternal foundation of the eternal institution, the church, is to make immortality dependant on mortality; it is to make the Spirit dependant on mortality; it is to make the Spirit dependant on the flesh; it is to put God in bondage to man. What monstrous folly! The play

often made on the word 'rock' is the basis for this error. Both the grammatical construction and the contextual meaning of the statement prove that the use of the two rocks is a contrast. The word 'Peter' comes from the Greek word '*petros*,' and means a rock, or a stone. This noun is masculine in gender. The noun 'rock,' as employed by Jesus, comes from the Greek word '*petra*,' and is feminine in gender. It signifies a bedrock, a solid ledge of stone. This, the word '*petros*' does not signify. Peter was in no sense a solid foundation on which to build. He later denied the Lord three times, and he defaulted in other respects. Peter himself said that he was not the foundation; he affirmed that Christ was this sure foundation (1 Peter 2:3-8). Paul testified that there was only one foundation, and that it was not any mortal: 'For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ' (1 Cor. 3:11). All the apostles were stones in the foundation (Eph. 2:19-22), but Jesus Christ is 'the chief corner stone.' To try to make the man, Simon Peter, the foundation of the church, is to blaspheme against the word of truth."

"Had Jesus been conferring such an honor upon his outspoken apostle, he would have said, 'And I say also unto you, You are Peter; and upon YOU will I build my church.' This is not what he said. Here is his statement: 'You are a stone; and upon this rock will I build my church.' The difference is shown in his use of the pronoun 'you,' and the adjective 'this.' It is the difference between a mortal man, and an immortal truth. The blessing was pronounced because the mortal man had, by divine revelation, just spoken an immortal truth. The everlasting truth that Jesus is the divine Son of God is the foundation of this everlasting church.

"...The very man who is sometimes called 'the foundation of the church,' the apostle Peter, referred to the prophecy of Isaiah in Isaiah 28:14-18 and applied it to Christ (1 Peter 2:3-8). If the Lord had designated him (Peter) as the foundation, surely he would have known it." (From *Hearing For Eternity* by Fred A. Amick, Vol. 15, pp. 65-ff).

- C. No building or institution can be stronger than the foundation upon which it rests (Matt. 7:24-27). If what a man believes and does is based upon the authority of Christ,

then he is building on a solid foundation. If his religion depends upon the doctrines of men, he is building on the sand. No building can long stand with a faulty foundation (Matt. 7:24-27; 15:9,13). Psalm 118:22 says, "*The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.*" Jesus applied this prophecy to himself in Matthew 21:42. Peter also applied this prophecy to Christ in Acts 4:11.

Leroy Brownlow well said, "The institutions founded upon men are resting upon the sand; the foundations are weak and they will ultimately fall. Christ's church will come through triumphantly, for it is resting on a tried stone, a sure foundation." (*Why I Am A Member Of The Church Of Christ* by Leroy Brownlow, p. 12).

IV. THE PURCHASE PRICE OF THE CHURCH.

- A. Acts 20:28, "*Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.*"
1. "Purchase" means to acquire or gain or procure anything by the payment of a price. Surely we are able to see the unique value of the church as we see the tremendous price that was paid for it. The above passage tells us that Jesus purchased the church with his own blood. The church is the purchased thing and the blood is the purchase price. My friend, that makes the church equal in value with the blood of Jesus Christ.
 2. McGarvey says, in speaking of the elders of the church, "They were reminded that this church was purchased by God with his own blood shed in the person of his Son, in order that they might be willing, on account of the price God paid for it, to make all needed sacrifices for its good."
 3. G. Campbell Morgan wrote, "That central declaration concerning the church of God is a most remarkable one: 'The Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.' The church is the *ecclesia*, the called-out company of people. In what does the difference or separation of its members consist? They are purchased...It is a word which is always used of a single act, and never of a continual practice. The reference

then is to some act by which God acquired the Church for Himself He purchased it with blood that was His own Here we have a people, redeemed by a Priest, Who has acquired them with blood which is His own. The suggestiveness of that merging of Deity and humanity in the Person of Christ is very important. We cannot consider the death of Christ as the death of an ordinary man, because the Person is so entirely different, that His very blood is spoken of here as being that of God Himself. In the history of the race, God came into such relationship with humanity that it was possible for Him to bear, in the Person of His Son, all the issue of the sin and failure of a race; and so to ransom, to purchase, to acquire a people for Himself... The Church is the society of those who are purchased by God, acquired by His own blood. The mystery and the marvel and the might of God being in Christ, whereby He did reconcile us unto Himself, is the foundation truth concerning the Church." (Taken from *Morgan's Commentary on Acts*, pp. 470-474).

4. Albert Barnes in his commentary on Acts makes some very interesting observations on this passage (pp. 296-297).
 - a. "Which he hath purchased" — The word purchase properly means to acquire or gain anything; to make it ours. This may be done by a price, or by labor. In this place it means that Christ had acquired, gained, or procured, the church for himself by paying his own life as the price. The church is often represented as having thus been bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; 2 Peter 2:1).
 - b. "With his own blood," "With the sacrifice of his own life; for blood is often put for life, and, to shed, the blood is equivalent to taking the life (See Rom. 3:25). The doctrines here are...
 - 1) That the death of Christ was an atoning sacrifice; that he offered himself to purchase a people to his own service.
 - 2) That the church is, therefore, of peculiar value — a value to be estimated by the price paid for it. (Compare 1 Peter 1:18-25).
 - 3) That this fact should make the purity and salvation of the church an object of special solici-

tude with ministers of the Gospel (I add elders and members as well, nme.) They should be deeply affected in view of that blood which has been shed for the church; and they should guard and defend it as having been bought with the highest price in the universe. The chief consideration that will make ministers (and again I add elders, deacons, and members as well, but especially elders in light of the context; nme) faithful and self-denying is, that the church has been bought with a price. If the Lord Jesus so loved it; if he gave himself for it, they should be willing to deny themselves; to watch, and toil, and pray, that the great object of his death – the purity and the salvation of that church – may be obtained."

5. Recognizing the precious purpose and power of the blood of Christ. Goebel Music is due credit for the research in this section.
 - a. The blood shed on the cross is the blood of *propitiation*. "Propitiation" means "to appease, to satisfy" (Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:1-2; 4:9-10; Rom. 3:23-26).
 - b. The blood of the cross is the blood of *expiation*. "Expiate" means "to remove the guilt and punishment of sin by expiation" (John 1:29; 1 John 3:4-5; Matt. 1:21). Jesus, by his sacrifice, made it possible for us to obtain the "forgiveness," "remission...blotting out," of our sins (Matt. 26:27-28; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:38; 10:43; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:22).
 - c. The blood of the cross is the blood of *reconciliation*. "Reconcile" comes from the Greek word *katallasso*, which means "to change, exchange, as coins for others of equal value." The idea is that when Christ died on the cross, he brought man and God back together (Eph. 1:11-16; Rom. 5:6-11; Col. 1:12-13; 2 Cor. 5:18-21). In this work of reconciliation, Christ is working as a mediator. He intervenes between God and man. Christ seeks to bring God to man, and man to God and thus seeks to bring them back together (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24).
 - d. The blood of his cross is the blood of *redemption*. "Redeem" means "to release on receipt of ransom,

liberate by payment of ransom, a loosing away." It applies to the saved. The idea is that when Christ died on the cross, he paid to God what man owed, thereby buying us back" (1 Peter 1:17-19; Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 9:11-12; Rom. 3:23-24; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13-14; 1 Cor. 1:30-31).

6. Kindred passages which remind us of Acts 20:28 and the price of the church.
 - a. 1 Cor. 6:19-20, *"and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price; glorify God therefore in your body."*
 - b. Matt. 20:28, *"...to give his life a ransom for many."*
 - c. 1 Peter 1:17-19, *"...knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver and gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ."*
 - d. Eph. 2:16, *"...and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."*
 - e. Titus 2:13-14, *"...the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works."*
 - f. Eph. 1:7, *"In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace."*

CONCLUSION:

Goebel Music summed it up well when he said, "If people were better informed about the church, they would be more appreciative of it. False teaching about the church has depreciated the church in the eyes of the world and also of the brethren. We need to brush aside the rubbish and expose the glittering beauty of heaven's precious jewel." (From The Spiritual Sword Lectureship book on *"The Church, The Beautiful Bride Of Christ,"* Goebel Music's sermon on *"The Church — The Blood-Bought,"* pp. 207-217). His research mentioned earlier also came from this source.

"I love Thy Kingdom Lord,
The house of Thine abode;

The church our blest Redeemer saved
with His own precious Blood."
—Timothy Dwight

The Preparation And Establishment Of The Church

Walter W. Pigg

1. The love of God is a most amazing thing.
 - a. The extent of that love is well above our comprehension.
 - b. We often sing of God's love for man and man's love for God.
 - c. Yet, God's love is often unrequited.
2. The greatest demonstration of God's love has been in the spiritual realm.
 - a. Though God has provided great blessings in "the things which are seen," the things "which are not seen" are so much greater (2 Cor. 4:18).
 - b. While physical things are only "temporal," the spiritual things are "eternal."
3. God's love for the soul of man is evidenced by the preparation and establishment of His church.
 - a. It is only through the church that salvation is available to man (Eph. 5:23).
4. Reflecting upon God's hand as it was involved in the preparation and establishment of His church should greatly increase our respect and appreciation for it.
 - a. In the area of preparation for the church we shall consider Christ and His forerunner, John the Baptist.
 - b. Relative to the establishment of the church we shall note the record as recorded in Acts 1, 2, and some observations about the church since it has been established and exists today.

DISCUSSION:

I. GOD'S PLAN FOR THE CHURCH REVEALED.

- A. The first allusion to the church, though not specifically mentioned, is Gen. 3:15.

1. God was then letting it be known that the salvation of man was in His plan.
2. God's plan for the church would be continued through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
 - a. Through Abraham, all families of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3).
 - b. In Abraham's seed, all nations would be blessed (Gen. 22:18).
- B. The prophets spoke of the coming kingdom or church.
 1. The "Lord's house" (the church, 1 Tim. 3:15) would be "established" and the "word of the Lord" would go forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3).
 2. God would *"set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed"* (Dan. 2:44).
- C. God's plan for His church is older than the human race.
 1. The church is evidence of God's wisdom *"according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Eph. 3:10).
 - a. "Eternal" reaches beyond the human race.
 2. How tragic that some believe God's plan for the church didn't go even beyond the first century — that some even believe the church was just a temporary substitute for the "kingdom."
 3. How sad that many believe men can build churches today and have God's approval.
 - a. Such lack of knowledge contributes mightily to a lack of love and appreciation for the one and only true church for which Christ died.

II. JOHN THE BAPTIST MAKES PREPARATION FOR THE CHURCH.

- A. God's "eternal" plan for the church included John the Baptist.
 1. Isaiah speaks of him more than 700 years before it was established.
 - a. *"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God"* (Isa. 40:3).
 - b. Luke refers to Isaiah's prophecy and applies it to John (Luke 3:4).
 2. Malachi writes of John the Baptist: *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet..."* (Mal. 4:5-6).

- a. Christ identifies "Elias" as John. *"And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come"* (Matt. 11:14).
- B. John's work was to prepare a people for the coming of Christ and His kingdom.
 1. As the forerunner of Christ, John announced the coming of the kingdom.
 - a. *"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matt. 3:1-2).
 2. Matthew clearly identifies John as *"he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias."*
 - a. John's mission was to *"prepare...the way of the Lord"* (Matt. 3:3).
- C. John's work in preparing the people involved *"the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins"* (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3).
 1. Those baptized by John had their sins forgiven and were ready for the coming of the kingdom.
 2. Did those baptized by John have to be baptized again to become a part of the kingdom?
 3. If so, they were baptized twice for "the remission of sins."

III. CHRIST CAME TO MAKE PREPARATION FOR THE BUILDING OF HIS CHURCH.

- A. Jesus' ministry was a continuation of what John was preaching (Matt. 4:12-17).
 1. Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10).
 2. This redemption would be through Christ (1 Peter 1:18-20).
- B. Even before the world began, God had purposed the church in Christ (Eph. 3:10-11).
 1. Isaiah confirmed God's plan when he said, *"a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel"* (Isa. 7:14).
 - a. Matthew says Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled by the virgin birth of Jesus, who would *"save his people from their sins"* (Matt. 1:22-23).
 2. The birth of Christ was a gigantic step in the unfolding of God's scheme of redemption.

- C. Christ's earthly ministry involved preparation for His church or kingdom.
 - 1. From the time of John's imprisonment, *"Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matt. 4:12-17).
 - 2. The preaching of Jesus, like that of John, was to prepare people for the kingdom.
- D. Christ appointed the twelve apostles to carry forth His message (Matt. 10:1ff; Mark 3:14).
 - 1. Just before Jesus ascended, he commissioned them to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).
- E. Jesus declares that He will build His church (Matt. 16:18).
 - 1. *"Upon this rock I will build my church."*
 - a. That "rock" being the bedrock truth witnessed by Peter, *"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"* (Matt. 16:17).
 - 2. At this point, near the end of Christ's personal ministry, His church is still in the future.
 - 3. Christ has done His preparatory work for the coming of the church, and soon after His death it will be a reality, as revealed in Acts 1 and 2.
 - 4. Over the centuries God's eternal purpose for Christ's church has materialized.

IV. WHEN, WHERE AND HOW THE CHURCH BEGAN.

- A. These aspects of the establishment of the church are of crucial importance.
 - 1. If God's word reveals these things about the church, then we can identify the true church which Christ said He would build.
 - 2. Any church which does not harmonize with these facts cannot be the one built by Christ.
- B. When did the church begin?
 - 1. Hear Isaiah, *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains...and all nations shall flow into it"* (Isa. 2:2).
 - a. The "Lord's house" is the church (1 Tim. 3:15).
 - b. The Hebrew writer identifies "last days" as the time in which God speaks to us through His Son (Heb. 1:1-2).
 - c. The "last days" refer to the Christian dispensation.

2. When the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, Acts 2, Peter identifies this as taking place in the "last days."
 - a. Peter said, *"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days..."* (Acts 2:16-17).
 3. The kingdom was to come during the lifetime of the disciples to whom Christ was speaking (Mark 9:1).
 - a. *"...Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power"* (Mark 9:1).
 4. On the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, people were added to the church (Acts 2:47).
 - a. Before Acts 2 the church was in the future. After Acts 2 it was in existence.
- C. Where did the church begin?
1. Isaiah says, *"Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem"* (Isa. 2:3).
 - a. The prophet was talking about where the Lord's house [church] would be established (Isa. 2:2; 1 Tim. 3:15).
 2. Joel said, *"...for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance..."* (Joel 2:32).
 3. Micah 4:2, speaks of the "Mountain of the Lord," and says the "word of the Lord," shall "go forth from Jerusalem."
 4. Christ declared that *"repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"* (Luke 24:47).
 - a. "Remission of sins" was preached in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38).
- D. How did the church begin?
1. With "power" by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4).
 - a. Jesus promised the apostles they would *"receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you"* (Acts 1:8).
 - b. That "power" came when the Holy Spirit came (Acts 2:4).

V. OBSERVATION ABOUT THE CHURCH, NOW ESTABLISHED.

- A. We should be thankful to God that we can be a part of the church, of which Christ is the head and savior (Eph. 5:23).

1. The church represents the greatest thing God has done for us, as it relates to Christ and salvation.
 - a. Through it, we can have the salvation which Christ died to make possible.
 2. Not only should we be willing to stand up and defend the Lord's church with all our might, we should be willing to die for it if need be (Rev. 2:10).
- B. Sadly, many today are turning their backs on the Lord's body, the church.
1. They are saying that man-made churches provide the same benefits as those available in the blood-bought church for which Christ died.
 - a. That is, that man can be saved in those false churches.
 - b. In what way could one belittle the Lord's church more than by making it of no more worth than those built by men?
 - 1) Yet, liberal brethren of influence are doing this very thing.
 - 2) Consider Rubel Shelly, Max Lucado and others of their kind.
 - 3) LaGard Smith implies the same, saying that God may save those who have never been baptized.
 2. We should consider carefully what Paul wrote to the Philippians.
 - a. *"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ"* (Phil. 3:18).
 - b. When one criticizes or belittles the church of our Lord from the Divine side, that one has become AN ENEMY OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST.
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Solving Problems In The Church **Acts 15**

Richard Guill

1. No church has ever existed, nor shall ever exist, which does not have problems.

2. Acts 15 is a chapter which is a text on solving church problems. It begins with a problem and ends with a problem and shows the resolutions for each of them.
3. Our general theme is "The Uniqueness of the Church," and my particular lesson is "Solving Church Problems."
4. The church, as God designed it and as it appears in Acts 15, does indeed have a unique and workable method of solving church problems, but, unfortunately, many congregations do not follow divine instructions and don't "solve" their problems, they only "salve" them to produce temporary relief.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE DEVIL IS AFTER GOOD CHURCHES LIKE ANTIOCH.

- A. There were two Antiochs: one in Pisidia, and the one mentioned in our study, in Syria.
- B. At Antioch, the disciples were first called Christians (Acts 11:26).
 1. This was a "mission-minded" church, having sent Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-3).
 2. It was composed of both Jews and Gentiles who were at peace, working diligently, and growing.
- C. Those who do the most to defeat the Devil become his prime targets. Trouble WILL ARISE in the church, you cannot prevent that. Therefore, how to handle or solve those problems and troubles becomes the key thing.
- D. Every congregation, and especially every eldership, should be taught and trained in conflict resolution based upon biblical principles.

II. THE FIRST CONFLICT AT ANTIOCH (Acts 15:1-2).

- A. False doctrine will always find a way to follow the truth and infiltrate a congregation of the Lord's people.
- B. The trouble in Antioch was caused by "*certain men which came down from Judea*" (v.1). (They were not local people)
- C. False teachers will often come in from other places to disrupt the harmony of a congregation; sometimes openly, as here; but often they slip in and do their work "unawares" (Jude 3).
- D. Actually, these had "slipped in" and spread their false doctrine privately before they went public with its proclamation (Gal. 2:4). "*And that because of false brethren*

unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage."

- E. This is why it is so very important to examine every teacher and preacher to see if what they are teaching is the truth (1 John 4:1).

III. AN APPROVED ATTITUDE TOWARD ERROR.

- A. Paul, an inspired apostle, shows us how such matters ought to be dealt with. *Paul was "set for the defense of the gospel"* (Phil. 1:17).

- B. Notice that there was *"no small dissension and disputation with them"* (v.2).

1. Sometimes false doctrine and the one teaching it can be dealt with in private as it was with Apollos (Acts 18:24-28).
2. Sometimes it must be met publicly and openly as here. But why would anyone cause such public dissension and disturbance in a congregation?
3. Note the urgency, and the reason (Gal. 2:5). *"To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."*
4. This was a perversion of the gospel (Gal.1:7), because it ADDED requirements for salvation which God had not given, and those who followed such would be lost eternally – not saved.
 - a. If they were not already Christians, that perverted gospel would not save them.
 - b. If they were already Christians, and then submitted to circumcision and the keeping of the law because they believed it to be necessary in order to be saved, then they would have "fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4). *"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."*
5. Truth is always a premium. We ought to *"buy the truth and sell it not"* (Prov. 23:23), because it is the truth that sets us free from our sins (John 8:32).

IV. NOTICE HOW THEY SETTLED THIS PROBLEM (Acts 15:2-32).

- A. (v.2) *"They determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question."*
- B. The apostles had the authority of Christ and they knew the truth by inspiration. To them was given the power to "bind or loose" in scriptural matters (Matt. 18:18). *"Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."*
 - 1. Inspiration, God's Word, at that time was IN MEN, and not in the book; NOW, it is in the book, and not in men. Today, any matter of conflict must be settled by consulting the Book, the New Testament (Col. 3:17).
- C. The elders at Jerusalem were consulted and involved as well. Why?
 - 1. There is little doubt that some of them, if not all, knew the truth because they had gifts of the Spirit, like "wisdom and knowledge" (1 Cor. 12:8).
 - 2. However, I believe the chief reason was that those who had taught this perversion had come from Jerusalem, and had either told, or implied, that they had been sent by them (Acts 15:1). *"And certain men which came down from Judea" (v.24). "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment."* They wanted it made clear that they had not sent them with this.
 - 3. False teachers will lie when they think it is to their advantage. The testimony of the elders at Jerusalem would establish the false teachers were lying and validate the truth.

V. ANOTHER DISPUTE IN ANTIOCH (Acts 15:36-41).

- A. This time it is not a doctrinal matter, but a matter of judgment. And, it is not between the apostles and a false teacher, but between faithful brethren who were friends and co-workers.
- B. On their first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas had taken Mark along as a worker, but for some reason he turned back and didn't complete the trip. Now, Paul and

Barnabas are planning a second trip and Barnabas wants to take Mark along. Paul didn't want to take him because of his previous performance.

- C. The difference of opinion was such that the contention *"was sharp between them"* (v.39).
- D. An old principle, enunciated by Amos long ago, asked, *"Can two walk together except they be agreed"* (Amos 3:3)? Thus, Paul and Barnabas decided to part company. Barnabas took Mark with him and went to Cyprus. Paul chose Silas and went through Syria and Cilicia.
- E. Because it was a matter of judgment, not doctrine, they could disagree sharply and still remain friends. They would still be brethren in fellowship and both continue to do the Lord's work. There is not even a hint of letting this cause any dissension in the church or threatening to bring a split.
- F. This was true because neither sought to bind their judgment on the other to the point of making it a point of sin and fellowship.
- G. More church problems arise and splits result today over matters of judgment and opinion than they do over doctrinal perversion. When such happens, someone has sinned by pressing their judgment or opinion too far.

VI. SUMMARY AND APPLICATION.

- A. Trouble in the church is caused by the devil; no one can totally prevent such from arising, thus, when it arises it must be settled.
- B. But it must be done quickly; don't give place to the devil, no, not for an hour; the truth must continue to be taught and practiced if a congregation is to survive.
- C. Sin and error, like leaven in dough, if not expunged quickly, will soon affect the entire congregation (1 Cor. 5:6-7). *"Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened."*
- D. If it is necessary to publicly dispute with and reprove a false teacher, then DO SO! We have too many so-called preachers and elders who do not have the courage and love for the souls of men to boldly and openly stand against such error and those who teach it.

- E. ALL MATTERS OF DISPUTE within a congregation must be settled by a "thus saith the Lord" with Scriptures which apply either directly or by principle.
- F. If the dispute is over false doctrine or sinful practice, the truth must be vigorously sought out, and when openly confirmed, it must be accepted by all. Any who will not then abide by that truth must be dealt with as rebellious and disciplined accordingly.
- G. If the dispute is over a matter of judgment or opinion, each must be given due consideration and hearing, but the choice decided upon should be the one that will meet with the approval of the greatest majority of the congregation, unless there is a significant danger of wounding a weak brother's conscience (Rom. 14).
- H. After such disputes are settled, ALL MEMBERS must rejoice, accept the decision made, and NOT continue to disrupt the harmony by dwelling on the same issue or acting in an unchristian way toward those who opposed them.
- I. After the trouble has been settled...GET BACK TO WORK AGAIN! While the dispute was going on in Antioch, the work of evangelism was "on hold." But as soon as the dispute had been settled, the work continued (Acts 15:34-35). *"Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still. Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also."* When Paul and Barnabas proposed to take another evangelistic trip together, it was delayed by their personal dispute. But as soon as they had settled the matter between them, they each got busy in the work of the Lord.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Wouldn't it be wonderful to find a congregation that never had any problems? The reason it is so difficult is that such a congregation does not exist!
- 2. Wouldn't it be wonderful to find a congregation where they always dealt with problems in the biblical way without any deviation from it? Sadly, they too are hard, if not impossible, to find.
- 3. Brethren, if you are in a congregation which is caught up with such problems, but are not dealing with them in the biblical way, make sure YOU do not become a part of the problem, or

of another problem which may arise because you personally do not adhere to biblical teaching regarding such matters.

The Vine And The Branches

Mark Lindley

1. Teaching by allegories was an effective method used by our Lord.
2. This is perhaps one reason "the common people heard him gladly" (Mark 12:37).
 - a. They could relate to the message.
 - b. Jesus used figures with which his audiences were familiar.
 - c. Jesus referred to Himself as the Good Shepherd, the Bread of Life, and the Light of the World. These were terms familiar to his audiences.
3. On the eve of his betrayal, he met with His sorrowing disciples and gave the allegory of the Vine and the Branches.
4. In this beautiful imagery, Jesus illustrates the relationship between himself and his disciples.
5. Though these words were given primarily to exhort the disciples to faithfulness, there are many lessons to be learned from this passage concerning the uniqueness of the church.
6. The narrative of the Vine and the Branches shows the uniqueness of the church (John 15:1-11).
 - a. The True Vine represents Christ.
 - b. The Branches represent followers of Christ. Today, his followers are members of his undenominational body/church.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS UNIQUE BECAUSE THE FATHER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS ESTABLISHMENT (v.1).**
 - A. The Father is the "husbandman" in this figure.
 1. "Husbandman" is defined as:
 - a. "A tiller of the ground" (Vine's, Vol. 2, p.241).
 - b. A "vine dresser" or "tenant farmer" (Arndt and Gingrich, p.157).
 2. Scripture reveals the work of a husbandman.

- a. *"And Noah began [to be] an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard"* (Gen. 9:20).
- b. *"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain"* (James 5:7).
3. The husbandman plants the vineyard and waits for the fruit.
- B. Jesus is the True Vine (John 15:1).
 1. He was planted in the world by his Father (John 6:38).
 2. Jesus, in doing the will of his Father, promised to build his church (Matt. 16:18).
 3. This was according to the Father's divine plan (Eph. 3:9-11).
 4. God is, thus, responsible for the church of Christ, i.e., the church built by Christ.
- C. God is not responsible for denominationalism!
 1. God never purposed it (Eph. 3:9-11).
 2. The prophets never prophesied it (Isa. 2:2-3; Micah 4:1-4; Dan. 2:44).
 3. John the baptizer never prepared it (Matt. 3:1-2).
 4. Jesus never promised it (Matt. 16:18).
 5. It was not presented on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:47).
 6. It was not preached by the apostles (Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23).
 7. It was not perfected by the early church (Eph. 4:11-13).
- D. Denominationalism is the result of men departing from the faith!

II. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS UNIQUE BECAUSE ITS MEMBERS ARE IN CHRIST (vs.2,4,5,6,7).

- A. The necessity of being "in Christ" is stressed seven times in verses 2-7.
- B. Why is it necessary to be in Christ?
 1. The figure of the Vine and the Branches helps us understand why it is necessary to be in Christ.
 - a. What the vine is to the branches in the natural realm, Christ is to his disciples in the spiritual realm.
 - b. The vine supplies food to the branches.
 - c. Branches cut off from the vine will die (v.6).
 2. Christ is the source of spiritual life (John 1:4; 14:6).

- a. Only those in Christ enjoy true spiritual life.
 - b. True spiritual life is salvation from sin (James 1:15; 2 Tim. 2:10).
 - c. Salvation (spiritual life) is only in Christ!
- C. Merely being religious is not tantamount to being IN Christ.
 - 1. The Jews, who gathered for Pentecost, were religious (Acts 2:5).
 - 2. The Ethiopian eunuch was religious (Acts 8:27).
 - 3. Lydia was religious (Acts 16:14).
 - 4. None of these were in Christ before obeying the Gospel.
- D. There is but one way to get INTO Christ.
 - 1. One does not get INTO Christ:
 - a. By prayer
 - b. By believing
 - c. Or, by accepting Jesus as one's personal Savior.
 - d. Many are trusting in these false plans of salvation.
 - 2. One gets INTO Christ by being baptized INTO Him (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4).
 - 3. Unless one has heard the Gospel, believed the Gospel, repented of his sins, confessed his faith in Christ, and been baptized for the remission of sins, he is NOT IN Christ!
 - 4. This makes the church of Christ unique.

III. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS UNIQUE BECAUSE THE BRANCHES REPRESENT FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST, NOT DENOMINATIONS (vs.5,6).

- A. The branches sustain a vital relationship with the vine.
 - 1. The branches are dependent on the vine, and the vine is dependent on the branches.
 - 2. Thus, it is important to know whom the branches represent.
- B. Some argue that the branches represent denominations.
 - 1. This passage is used as a "proof text" for advocates of denominationalism.
 - 2. It is asserted that since all the branches are in the Vine, all denominations compose the body of Christ.
- C. There are at least four reasons why we can know the branches do not represent denominations.
 - 1. Jesus did not say, *"I am the vine, and all ye denominations are the branches."*
 - a. This is reading into the Bible.

- b. It is dangerous to take such liberties with God's Word (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19).
- 2. No denomination existed at the time Christ spoke the words recorded in John 15.
 - a. Denominations did not come into existence until centuries later.
 - b. Assuming the position that the branches represent denominations would make the Vine (Christ) branchless and fruitless for centuries!
- 3. A vine does not produce different kinds of fruit.
 - a. Watermelon vines do not produce pumpkins, and pumpkin vines do not produce watermelons.
 - b. A vine only produces one kind of fruit.
 - c. The Vine (Christ) did not produce the various denominational bodies of our day (Matt. 16:18).
- 4. Jesus used the personal pronoun "ye" in referring to the branches (v.5).
 - a. Jesus also said, *"If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch"* (v.6).
 - b. He did not say, "If a denomination abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch."
 - c. The branches represent followers of Christ, not denominations!
- D. Followers of Christ compose the church.
 - 1. When one follows the will of Christ and obeys the Gospel, the Lord adds him to the church (Acts 2:36-38, 47; 5:14).
 - 2. The church to which followers of Christ are added is the undenominational church of Christ.
 - 3. This makes the church of Christ unique. We (members of the church) are the branches connected to the Vine.

IV. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS UNIQUE BECAUSE ITS MEMBERS HAVE BEEN CLEANSED THROUGH THE WORD (v.3).

- A. Christ affirmed that the branches (i.e., his followers) are cleansed by the Word.
- B. Sinners cannot be cleansed apart from the Word (Eph. 5:25-26; 1 Peter 1:22-23; James 1:18; Rom. 1:16).
- C. Many attempt to be cleansed without the Word.
 - 1. They speak of "better felt than told" experiences.
 - 2. Some try to pray around the command to be baptized (Mark 16:16).

3. No one can be cleansed without following the words of Christ (John 6:63).
- D. When one obeys the Word, he is added to the undenominational, unique, church of Christ.

V. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS UNIQUE BECAUSE ITS MEMBERS HAVE THE RIGHT OF PRAYER (v.7).

- A. Those "IN" Christ who continue to follow the Word have the right of prayer (v.7).
- B. Not everyone is on praying terms with God (John 9:31; Prov. 28:9; 1 Sam. 28:15).
- C. Only children of God have the right to pray.
 1. God's children are those who have been born again (John 3:3-5).
 2. They may address God as Father (Matt. 6:9).
 3. They can expect an answer (1 Peter 3:12; Matt. 7:7).
- D. The children of God are in the family of God which is the church of God (cf. Eph. 3:10,15; 1 Tim. 3:15). This makes the church of Christ unique!

VI. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS UNIQUE BECAUSE IT BRINGS GLORY TO GOD (v.8).

- A. God is not glorified by denominationalism (1 Cor. 1:10-15; Phil. 3:16).
- B. God is glorified by the church. *"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen"* (Eph. 3:21).
 1. Members of Christ's church have the responsibility to bring glory to God.
 - a. This is done by living a faithful Christian life (Gal. 5:22-23; Col. 1:10; Titus 2:14).
 - b. Merely being a member of Christ's church is not sufficient.
 2. A congregation that is not following the Word does not bring glory to God (Rev. 3:14-19).

CONCLUSION:

1. The church of Christ is unique!
2. There are many religious bodies of the world that have not been planted by God.
3. Jesus is the "True" Vine.

4. All false religions will one day be rooted up. *"But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up"* (Matt. 15:13)
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Worship In Spirit John 4:23-24

Kent Bailey

1. In the study of the Scriptures, we note that worship is of paramount importance:
 - a. One's worship can be rejected. Gen. 4:1-7
 - b. One's worship can be vain. Matt. 15:7-9
 - c. Without proper obedience unto God (of which worship is an essential component), one will be lost in eternity. Matt. 7:21-23
2. Our text indicates that New Testament worship has three specific elements.
 - a. Worship must be directed toward the proper being.
 - b. Worship must be offered in the proper attitude.
 - c. Worship must be directed by God's truth.
3. It is the purpose and design of our study to give special consideration to the proper worship of God "in spirit."

DISCUSSION:

I. WORSHIP DEFINED.

- A. As we give careful consideration to our subject, we obviously must clearly define as to what we refer by using the term "worship."
- B. In the New Testament, there are four specific words that have been translated worship:
 1. *proskuneo* (προσκυνεω), "to do homage or make obeisance."
 2. *latreuo* (λατρευω), "to render religious service or homage, to worship."
 3. *sebomai* (σεβομαι), "to honor religiously, to worship."
 4. *eusebeo* (ευσεβειω), "to act piously or reverently toward God."
- C. The primary Greek term used in the New Testament relative to that of worship is the term *proskuneo* (προσκυνεω)

- E. Our response to Dobbs' syllogism:
 - 1. The major premise, minor premise, and conclusion are not related.
 - 2. The major and minor premises are not found in the conclusion.
 - 3. There is no middle term in the minor premise.
 - 4. The minor premise is not in the correct form.
 - 5. The syllogism is therefore invalid.
- F. While indeed all of our worship unto God is service, not all of our service unto God is worship:
 - 1. Deut. 4:19; 8:19; 17:3; 1 Kings 9:6
 - 2. Jer. 25:6; Matt. 4:10; Gen. 22:1-5
- G. To falsely affirm that all of life (except for sin) is worship is to ignore God's line of demarcation between the secular and the sacred.
- H. One must conclude that we must distinguish between that of worship unto God and the service one given to God.
 - 1. Rom. 12:1-2 does not teach a continuous action in our presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice unto God. The verb action of "present" is aorist tense implying punctiliar or point action
- I. Continuous action in 1 Thess. 5:17 would be impossible.
- J. To falsely affirm that all of our service to God is worship is to destroy the line of demarcation between the secular and the sacred.

III. WORSHIP MUST BE ACCORDING TO THE NEW TESTAMENT PATTERN.

- A. The church of the Lord is ordered after a divine pattern. It is by this pattern which the New Testament church can be identified.
- B. The term "pattern" *typos* (τυπος) is defined as a standard, form, figure and example. The Biblical use of the this term causes with it these particular connotations:
 - 1. The moral concept. Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7
 - 2. The technical concept. Acts 7:44; Heb. 8:5
 - 3. The doctrinal concept. Rom. 6:17-18; 2 Tim. 1:13
- C. Recognition of the pattern principle is of paramount importance. We note such in:
 - 1. The eternal purpose of God. Eph. 1:9-11; 3:10-11, 20-21
 - 2. The apostles' doctrine. Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 14:34-37

- 3. The apostles' traditions. 1 Cor. 11:23; 15:3; 11:2; 15:1-2; 2 Thess. 2:15
- D. The importance of the Gospel preacher's charge. 1 Tim. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:13
- E. The pattern is the faith. Acts 3:16; 6:7; 13:8; Gal. 1:23
- F. The pattern is the truth. John 8:31-32
- G. Thereby, we must worship God according to the New Testament pattern.

IV. WORSHIP IN PROPER SPIRIT IS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT PATTERN.

- A. Such is affirmed by Christ in the text of John 4:20-24:
 - 1. The Samaritans had abandoned the Old Testament pattern in the worship of God.
 - 2. Jesus demonstrated that following the instruction of the Old Testament was necessary for those amenable to such.
 - 3. Our Lord also indicated, in the Gospel age, God would require pattern obedience in following his divine plan.
- B. Such is inclusive of following the authorized avenues of worship. Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16
- C. Such is inclusive of our worship of God in rationality and sincerity.
- D. Worship in spirit is inclusive of proper understanding related to the proper acts in which we engage:
 - 1. 2 Tim. 2:1-15; 1 Cor. 11:23-30
 - 2. 1 Cor. 14:15-16; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16
- E. Worship in spirit is inclusive of recognizing that, prior to worship, we must follow the proper life-style:
 - 1. Psalm 1; Psalm 51; Psalm 66:18
 - 2. Eph. 3; Eph. 5
 - 3. Prov. 28:9; John 9-31
 - 4. 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 John 1:1-10
- F. While indeed a distinction must be made between service and worship; one must remember that worship in spirit necessitates that one have both a proper attitude and life-style before one's worship will be acceptable to God.

V. THE IMPORTANCE OF SCRIPTURAL LEADERSHIP AS IT RELATES TO WORSHIP.

- A. Preachers must preach the truth, all of the truth and nothing but the truth as it relates to both service and worship. 2 Tim. 4:1-5

- B. Elders must exercise scriptural oversight in local churches practicing discipline insuring purity of the local church that will qualify members for scriptural worship. 1 Cor. 5; Rev. 2:20-22; Heb. 13:17

CONCLUSION:

1. Worship is no trivial pursuit. It is of paramount importance.
 2. May we make adequate preparations in our lives that we see the importance of worshipping God in spirit.
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Types/Antitypes

Wayne Cox

1. Once again, sincere thanks to the East Corinth congregation for its annual lectureship!
 - a. The theme chosen is always timely and relevant.
 - b. The speakers selected are always true to the Book.
 - c. The fellowship enjoyed is always a delight.
2. Our assignment is to discuss Types/Antitypes.
3. Due to the exhaustive amount of material on this subject, and time and space constraints as well, our oral and written presentations will of necessity be limited. Some examples of types/antitypes are inclusive of areas outside the lectureship theme of the "Uniqueness of the Church;" these will be listed at the end of the lecture material.

DISCUSSION:

I. A DISCUSSION OF TYPES/ANTITYPES.

- A. One of the many ways God has chosen to communicate His Will is by Types and Antitypes.
- B. A definition of terms:
 1. "Type" — "to strike."
 - a. "The mark or impression of something; stamp; impressed sign; emblem. A figure or representation of something to come."
 - b. "A type is a mere shadow or faint outline-picture of something pertaining to the future."
 - c. Analogies:

- 1) Typewriter key and imprint.
- 2) Rubber stamp and impression.
- d. A type is thus a "planned correspondence between two biblical accounts designed by God to teach and illustrate truth."
2. "*Antitype*" — "against," "over against," "type."
 - a. Denotes the substance, or that which is prefigured by the type.
 - b. The imprint of the typewriter key is the type, while the key itself is the antitype.
 - c. God "literally took what would come to be in the human future, and stamped or typed it onto the human past. He gave us the negative long before the picture had ever been taken and developed."
- C. It is essential for Bible students to notice the types of the Old Testament and accurately match them with their counterparts in the New.
- D. To determine when there is an actual Type/Antitype relationship:
 1. Either the Bible says so (1 Cor. 10:1-3), or:
 2. The similarities between the two are so evident as to rule out coincidence.
- E. Points to remember:
 1. Never expect the type and antitype to be the same. Such would be identity.
 2. Generally, for one purpose, the type has been selected. Finding that purpose, the application will be easy.
 3. It must foretell something. When it represents a present truth or duty, it is a symbol, and not a type.
 4. The *antitype* is always superior to the *type*.

II. TWO EXAMPLES OF TYPES/ANTITYPES RELATING TO THE CHURCH.

- A. The **ARK** was a type of the church.
 1. Both singular in number.
 - a. One ark.
 - b. One church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23).
 2. Both built according to specifications given.
 - a. Ark — Gen. 6:13-22.
 - b. Church — Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20.
 - c. Had some who live today lived then, they might have said: "Let us build many arks of different

shapes and sizes and let everyone board the ark of his choice. "

- d. Or, "Let's not be so bigoted and narrow-minded as to think that only gopher wood will float."
3. Only one door in both.
 - a. Ark – Gen. 6:16
 - b. Church – John 10:9; 14:6, To enter through Christ is to enter by the way – the terms – He has set.
4. Only one window (light) in both.
 - a. Ark – Gen. 6:16
 - 1) Some might have argued with God: "One window will not be proper ventilation, so we'll add more."
 - 2) However, God gave the instructions and Noah carried them out.
 - b. Church – one light in it – the Word.
 - 1) Psa. 119:105, 130; 2 Tim. 3:16-17
 - 2) A window is not the light, but the medium through which the light comes.
 - 3) God's Word is the window through which the light comes to us today, that we may have the spiritual light to guide us in service to God on earth and lead us to heaven at last.
5. All the saved in both.
 - a. Ark – Gen. 7:23. All on the outside perished!
 - b. Church
 - 1) Just as the ark was the place of salvation from the flood, so the church is the place wherein is salvation from sin, and the hope of eternal salvation.
 - 2) Acts 2:47
 - a) The church is the body of Christ (Col. 1:18).
 - b) Reconciliation takes place in the body, the church (Eph. 2:16).
 - c) Therefore, one must be in the church, in Christ, to be saved.
6. All saved by water – water transported from the old to the new.
 - a. Ark
 - 1) 1 Peter 3:20
 - 2) The flood came and lifted the ark up while the earth was being purified of sinful people, and the saved in the ark were thereby transported into the purified state.

- b. Church
 - 1) All enter the body and are saved by baptism, and, in immersion, one is transported out of the realm of Satan into the kingdom of Christ.
 - 2) Col. 1:13; 2:12; 1 Peter 3:18-21; Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 12:13
- 7. In both, all needs supplied.
 - a. Ark. God supplied physical needs to sustain Noah and his family through that long journey.
 - b. In the church, all spiritual needs are provided (Eph. 1:3).
- 8. The humble and obedient in both.
 - a. Ark – Heb. 11:7.
 - b. Church – Matt. 18:3; 5:3.
- B. The **PRIESTS** were a type of Christians— those who comprise the church.
 - 1. Both called and separated.
 - a. The priests were separated from the other tribes and were devoted to the worship of God (Exodus 29).
 - b. Christians are called out of the world and separated to the spiritual service of God (2 Cor. 6:17,18; 7:1). Christians are not to be conformed to the world, but to seek heavenly ways (Rom. 12:2; Col. 3:1,2).
 - 2. Purity involved in both.
 - a. Priest – required to be sound in body and free from deformity (Lev. 21:16-24).
 - b. Christian – required to keep himself “unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).
 - 3. Blood involved in both.
 - a. Priest – an offering was made to God on the altar of burnt offerings (Exodus 29:15-21).
 - b. Christian – an offering was made on the cross – the sacrifice of Christ.
 - 1) As the blood was applied to the priest, so must the blood of Christ be applied to the heart in the process of becoming a Christian.
 - 2) Rom. 3:24,25; Heb. 10:22; 1 Peter 1:18-19
 - 4. Water involved in both.
 - a. Priest washed in laver (Exodus 40:7).
 - b. Christian washed in baptism (Acts 22:16).
 - 5. Holy garments required in both.
 - a. After washing, the priest was required to wear the holy linen garments (Exodus 29:4-9).

- b. After baptism, the Christian is to be "clothed" in righteous living (Titus 2:11-14).
- 6. Holy Place – the place of service for both.
 - a. The priest served in the Holy Place in the tabernacle (Heb. 9:6-9).
 - b. Christians serve God in the church (1 Peter 2:5; 1 Tim. 3:15).
- 7. Light involved in both.
 - a. Priests would light the candlestick (Exodus 40:4,5).
 - b. Christians light the world by teaching the Word (Psa. 119:105; Acts 8:4).
- 8. Incense involved in both.
 - a. The priest burned incense daily (Exodus 30:7,8).
 - b. Prayers of the saints are referred to as incense to God (Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4).
- 9. Bread eaten by both.
 - a. The priest ate the shewbread (bread of the Presence; Presence bread) each week on the Sabbath Day (Lev. 24:5-9).
 - b. The Christian partakes of the Lord's supper each week on the Lord's Day (Acts 20:7).

III. A LISTING OF VARIOUS TYPES/ANTITYPES.*

Brother Robinson suggested a compilation of several types/antitypes. Some are listed below.

A. Types of the church:

1. The tabernacle.
2. The Jewish nation.
3. The burning bush.
4. The cities of refuge.
5. Jerusalem.
6. The rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem was a type of the restoration of the church.

B. Types of Christ:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Adam | 9. The Manna |
| 2. Noah | 10. The Smitten Rock |
| 3. Melchizedek | 11. The High Priest |
| 4. Isaac | 12. The Brazen Serpent |
| 5. Joseph | 13. Joshua |
| 6. Moses | 14. David |
| 7. The Passover Lamb | 15. Solomon |
| 8. The Scapegoat | 16. Jonah |

CONCLUSION:

1. May we profit from and increase our appreciation for Scripture by studying the various types/antitypes included therein – especially those that relate to the Lord and His church.
2. Romans 15:4

***NOTES:**

1. Three excellent sources from which much of this material was gleaned and which can be pursued further by those interested are:
 - a. D. R. Dungan's excellent work, "Typology" in the book entitled *Hermeneutics* (Gospel Light Publishing Company, Delight, AR), pp. 359-369.
 - b. *Types and Shadows* by W. Gaddys Roy (Southern Christian University, Montgomery, AL), c. 1992.
 - c. *Types and Antitypes: The Third Annual "Labourers Together With God" Lectureship*, ed. Kenneth Burleson (Ensley church of Christ, Pensacola, FL), 1995.
 2. In addition, fine work has been done by David P. Brown, who has a chapter entitled "Recognizing and Interpreting Types" in *Rightly Dividing the Word: Volume II – Special Hermeneutics*, ed. Terry M. Hightower (Shenandoah church of Christ, San Antonio, TX), c. 1991
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The New Birth

Gilbert Gough

1. As some people contemplate their past life, past experiences, and especially past mistakes, they may say to themselves, "I wish I could start all over again."
2. In a Gallop Poll of the 1980's, some forty million Americans professed to having started over by being "born again."
3. Where did forty million Americans get such a concept of being "born again?"
4. It would be a great thing to start a new life – a new life in Christ.

5. The concept of a new birth came from Jesus when He was in a conversation with a man named Nicodemus (John 3).
6. Jesus told Him, "*Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again*" (John 3:7).

DISCUSSION:

I. WHO WAS NICODEMUS?

- A. He was "a man of the Pharisees," the largest sect of the Jews (John 1:1).
 1. Jesus oftentimes exposed the Pharisees for their hypocrisy (Matt. 5:20ff; 23).
 2. However, Jesus knew that not all were hypocrites. [e.g. Paul was a Pharisee (Phil. 3:5), and he was conscientious (Acts 23:1), zealous (Gal. 1:14) and practiced what he believed (Acts 22:3; 26:5)].
 3. Nicodemus was conscientious and religious, and we may conclude he was honest and sincere with Jesus.
- B. He was "a ruler of the Jews" which suggests he may have been one of the seventy, a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, the highest court of the Jews (John 1:1; cf. 7:50).
 1. The Sanhedrin was a religious council but a council which exerted political influence. [It was the Sanhedrin which condemned Jesus to die.]
 2. Jesus called him "a master of Israel" (1:10).
- C. He was a believer in God and that Jesus was "a teacher come from God" (v.2).
- D. He "came to Jesus by night" (v.2). Why?
 1. Why he came to Jesus at night is not revealed.
 2. He could have come at night so his interview with Jesus would not be given publicity among his peers.
 3. He could have come by night because he worked during the day and the evening was convenient.
 4. One explanation is as good as another, and insignificant as to the conversation between him and Jesus.
- E. He had an open mind to whatever Jesus had to say even though he would not immediately understand Jesus' words.

II. THE CONVERSATION (John 3:2-8).

- A. Nicodemus begins by stating to Jesus, "*Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him*" (3:2).

1. What Nicodemus said was **not** a confession that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.
 2. John the baptizer, the forerunner to Christ, was a teacher come from God, but he was not the Christ.
 3. Jesus could have been a teacher come from God, and not be the Christ, but that was the very point Nicodemus wanted to learn. Was Jesus the Christ — the Messiah.
 4. Nicodemus knew Jesus had the credentials of a God-sent teacher. The evidence of the miracles which He did proved that.
 5. Nicodemus knew that when the Messiah came, He would establish His kingdom (Isa. 2:3,4; Dan. 2:44), and he, as any other Jew, wanted to be in the kingdom of the Messiah.
 6. John 2:25 says Jesus "knew what was in man" and He would respond to Nicodemus' statement.
- B. Jesus' response was, *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again (anew, ASV), he cannot see the kingdom of God"* (John 3:3).
1. Whatever it means to be "born again," Nicodemus understood that he could not "see" (enter) "the kingdom of God" (which he longed for and Jesus was about to establish).
 2. Being born again is a figure of speech, a metaphorical statement by which Jesus was telling him not what to do at that time, but what he would have to do in order to enter the kingdom of the Messiah.
- C. Nicodemus is confused by Jesus' figure and says, "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born" (3:4)?
1. He knew that by physical birth a Hebrew as himself entered into the Mosaic covenant with God.
 2. He had proof in his flesh that he was born into the covenant with God by circumcision.
 3. What need was there for him to be "born again" which would be physically impossible anyway?
 4. His confusion caused him to conclude that Jesus was speaking of the physical birth.
- D. Jesus gave Nicodemus a little more insight and said, *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"* (3:5).

III. THE NEW BIRTH.

- A. Jesus made clear that to be born again meant to "be born of water and of the Spirit."
 - 1. The Greek text language has the preposition "of" appearing only once and the definite article does not appear before "Spirit." Thus, "born of water and Spirit."
 - 2. "Spirit" is a reference to the Holy Spirit, but how the Holy Spirit functions in the new birth is not disclosed in verse 5.
 - 3. In every birth there must be two elements: the begetting (implanting of seed which germinates and grows) and the coming forth (the emergence of new life).
- B. The "Spirit" is the begetting power through the Word of God.
 - 1. Whether it be the plant realm, the animal realm, the human realm or the spiritual realm, all life must be germinated by seed.
 - 2. The "sword of the Spirit" is the "word of God" (Eph. 6:17); the "word of God" is the "seed;" therefore, the "sword of the Spirit" is "seed."
 - 3. When the word of God is sown and it falls upon "good ground" (Luke 8:15, which is the "honest and good" heart), it will bring forth life.
 - 4. As Peter declares, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:23).
 - 5. Christians have been begotten "through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4:15), "with the word of truth" (James 1:18).
 - 6. There is power in the Spirit's word to lead men to Christ and salvation (Heb. 4:12; Rom. 1:16; John 6:45).
- C. The "water" is the element of the birth in baptism to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3,4).
 - 1. The water of the new birth is baptism: as a person is immersed in water (Acts 8:38) and that person emerges from the water (Acts 8:39), there is reason for rejoicing at that person's new birth.
 - 2. The begetting is by the word of God which produces faith in the heart, and the water is the element of the coming forth to "walk in newness of life" (Col. 2:12).
 - 3. One who is baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3,4; Gal. 3:26, 27) is "a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17).

4. When the time was close at hand for the kingdom of God to be established (Acts 2), Jesus dropped the figures of speech, the metaphorical phrase, and speaks in plain, literal language – "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel (the Spirit's seed) to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized (in water) shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15,16).
5. There is no difference in saying "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" and "except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

IV. THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

- A. After Jesus spoke of the new birth, it was necessary for Him to explain the nature of the kingdom of God of which those who were born again would become citizens.
- B. Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).
 1. Nicodemus wanted advance information on how to enter the kingdom of the Messiah, and he thought his Israelitish birth would do it.
 2. So, when Jesus said, "That which born of flesh is flesh" that had to do with Nicodemus' fleshly Israelism.
 3. He belonged to a fleshly kingdom, and his fleshly birth, being a descendant of Abraham, put him into that fleshly relationship.
- C. In contrast to his fleshly birth putting him in a fleshly kingdom, Jesus said, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."
 1. "Born of the Spirit" means the Spirit of God.
 2. "Is spirit" means the spirit of man, the inner man, which is the subject of the new birth.
 3. Paul wrote, "*For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son...*" (Rom. 1:9).
 4. It is the inner, invisible man that is subject to the new birth, the part of man we cannot see.
 5. That is why Jesus continued to say, "*Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit*" (John 3:7,8).

D. Jesus, in verses 7-8, has shifted from the new birth to the one who is born again.

1. He did not say that the new birth is like the wind; He did not say conversion is like the wind; He did not say the operation of the Spirit is like the wind.
2. Some are confused or dishonest and say, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: *so is the new birth, or conversion, or the operation of the Holy Spirit.*"
3. That is not what Jesus said. He said, "so is **every one** that is born," talking about the person.
4. As the wind is the invisible element of nature, and we do not know its source, the inner, invisible part of man is the subject of the new birth.
5. The kingdom is a spiritual kingdom made up of spiritual souls.

V. WHEN BORN AGAIN — WHEN ONE ENTERS INTO THE KINGDOM/CHURCH — THE ENTIRE MAKEUP OF MAN UNDERGOES A CHANGE.

A. *The mind of man changes.*

1. The change of mind occurs when one learns God's truth (John 6:44,45).
2. The faith in God's Word, which is necessary to please God, must be in one's heart (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6).
3. With the heart man "believeth unto righteousness" (Rom. 10:10). His mind set is on righteousness (Psa. 119:172).

B. *The affections of man change.*

1. Once the mind of man accepts the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the affection of man is to "love Him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).
2. God loved lost man even while they "were yet sinners" and gave His Son to die for man (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8), so in turn, man should love God with all their being (Matt. 22:37-39).
3. That affection of man for God is demonstrated and only can be demonstrated when God's commandments are obeyed (1 John 5:3; John 14:15).
4. Since Jesus "was wounded for our transgressions" and "bruised for our iniquities," how can we but love Him? (Isa. 53:5)

C. *The will of man changes.*

1. Now that the mind and affections of man are changed, the will of man is to do God's will instead of being in rebellion to God (John 7:17; 5:40; Matt. 23:37).
2. Repentance triggers the will of man to say "yes" to God's will and "no" to Satan's will.
3. Jesus said, *"A man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented himself, and went"* (Matt. 21:28,29).
4. The determination to change one's will is brought about by fear and love.
 - a. The goodness of God appeals to our love and the severity of God appeals to our fear (Rom. 11:22).
 - b. Fear drives us to serve God and love leads us to serve God.

D. The change of the mind, of the affections, and of the will certainly is a change in the spirit of man, but the physical part of man is also involved in the new birth.

1. When one **believes** in Christ, and is properly instructed concerning baptism, he is baptized into Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:26,27).
 2. Trusting Christ, we trust His word, and His word says "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).
 3. His word tells believers to **repent** and to be **baptized** unto the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
 4. From our heart of faith we give our bodies to Him; therefore, we are baptized into Christ and raised to the new life wherein we present to Him our body members as instruments of righteousness (Rom. 6:12,13; 12:1,2).
 5. Without the change from unbelief to belief, from hostility to love, and from rebellion to submission, baptism could not mean anything.
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The Work Of The Church

Tom Bright

Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:13-19

1. These verses contain the first mention of the word "church."
2. The word "church" is from a word which means *the called out*.
3. The church was miraculously brought into existence on the first Pentecost following the death and resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2:1-47).
 - a. This is seen when we notice that prior to Acts 2, the church (kingdom) was always spoken of as "future." After the events of Acts chapter two, it is spoken of as existing.
4. The church did not just happen — it is a Divine organization and is a result of Divine decree.
5. Since it is recognized that God does nothing without purpose, we know there was a plan, a purpose, a design for the New Testament church.
6. The Bible teaches the purpose of the church was twofold:
 - a. First, all of the saved are added to it (Acts 2:47).
 - b. Second, it is that organization through which God works to fulfill His ultimate desires.
 - 1) Paul affirms that Christ is the head the church, which is His body (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).
 - 2) Paul further asserts that Christians are "*...his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*" (Eph. 2:10).
 - 3) This shows beyond the slightest doubt that God has determined to fulfill His desire through the church.
7. Since it is true that God works through the church, then it is essential we understand what the work of the church is, based upon the word of God.
8. In today's world, man seems to think that anything we think of can be placed under the heading: "The Work of the Church."
9. This includes everything from entertaining our youth to stage plays, golf and fishing tournaments, credit unions, unwed mother's homes, adoption agencies, and who knows what else some might try to list as a "work of the church."
10. But the question first, last, and always is: What does the Bible teach about the God-given work of the church?
 - a. Did inspiration list any specifics?
 - b. Did the Holy Spirit place any limitations upon us?

- c. Is anything and everything a proper item to place under the umbrella of the "Work of the church?"
11. It is without hesitation that I affirm that inspiration has set forth certain specifics and limitations of the "Work of the church."
 12. The work of the church can be properly divided into three categories:
 - a. Evangelism
 - b. Edification
 - c. Benevolence
 13. Anything that a person desires the church to do must fall into at least one of these categories..
 - a. If a supposed action or thing cannot be placed under one of these, then the church must not be burdened with said action or thing.
 14. Let us notice each of these closely and see if there are any things we can glean from such a study.

DISCUSSION:

I. EVANGELISM.

- A. The world is lost in sin (Rom. 3:23).
 1. Sin is the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4).
 2. Sin separates man from God (Isa. 59:1-2).
 3. When one lives in sin, it means they have no hope and are without God (Eph. 2:12).
 - a. Paul spoke of such people as being "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1).
- B. A person is lost because of sin (Isa. 59:1-2).
 1. Through his own efforts, man is incapable of removing this guilt.
 - a. He can do nothing that would earn or merit the removal of the guilt of sin.
 - b. In other words, man can do nothing by which God would be obligated (to pay as a debt) to forgive man's sin.
 2. Thus, the only way the guilt of sin can be removed is for it to be forgiven.
 3. Furthermore, God is the only One who can forgive sin.
- C. Pardon is offered through Jesus Christ, "*...the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29).
- D. The gospel, God's "good news" about the salvation He offers through Jesus Christ, is His power "unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16).

E. Thus, separated by sin must hear the "good news."

THE GREAT COMMISSION

- A. This points us to The Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20).
- B. The Gospel must be preached to the lost.
 - 1. We are commanded to "Go."
 - 2. Inspiration does not specify the manner of "going," this is left to the judgment of those attempting to "go."
 - 3. "Where" we are to go is specified — into all the world!
- C. The early church was busily engaged in fulfilling the Great Commission.
 - 1. Notice that Paul stated the Gospel "...was preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Col. 1:23).
 - 2. This is especially noteworthy when we meditate on the fact that man did not have the modern technology available today!

SOME WENT — SOME SENT

- A. In the first century, it is evident there were some who were willing to "go," such as Paul, Barnabas, John Mark, etc.
- B. Likewise, there were some that could not go, but were willing to "send."
 - 1. The church at Antioch — Acts 13:1-3; 14:27-28
 - 2. The church at Philippi — Phil. 1:3-5; 2:25-30; 4:14-20
 - 3. The church at Thessalonica — 1 Thess. 1:2-8
 - 4. The churches of Macedonia — 2 Cor. 11:8-9
 - 5. The church at Jerusalem — Acts 8:1-5
- C. There must never be the feeling of superiority by either those that "go" or those that "send."
 - 1. David established a viable principle that should always be before us: *"For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike"* (1 Sam. 30:24).
- D. The important thing is that the Gospel be preached to a lost and dying world.

THE CHURCH TODAY FOCUSES ON MANY THINGS OTHER THAN EVANGELISM

- A. Working through his minions, Satan has convinced the church in many places there are other things more important than the God-given mission of the church.
- B. He has used what I call the "I, me, my, and mine" philosophy.
 - 1. We are living in a self-centered society.
 - 2. Thus, everything should be used (some think), to please, to entertain, to excite, to arouse me.
 - 3. The modern thinking is: "Give me more elaborate buildings," "Give us more programs that satisfy my wants," "Entertain me," "Make me feel good," "Raise my self-esteem," etc.

LIBERALISM WOULD DESTROY THE EVANGELISM OF THE CHURCH

- A. If the "Change Agents" have their way, the New Testament church will become nothing more than a "big, sick denomination."
- B. In their mind, there are only a few things that are essential.
 - 1. They advocate that most things the churches of Christ have long considered as "doctrinal issues" are nothing more than opinions and judgments and are of no consequence whatsoever to one's standing before God.
 - 2. If they would be honest, they would have to admit that God should have said, "Be religious as you think religious is."
- C. If they are correct, then why should the church be involved in evangelism today?
 - 1. In their view, there is no reason to try to convert anyone, because everyone is acceptable to God anyway!
- D. These "Change Agents" argue the mode and essentiality of baptism, the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship, the organization of the church, the Godhead, the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion and sanctification, Premillennialism, Calvinism, frequency of and who can legitimately partake of the Lord's supper, the Bible doctrines of Faith, Grace, and Works, marriage, divorce, and re-marriage etc. are "non-issues" and should never be considered important.

1. In other words, they are advocating the doctrine of "religious pluralism."
- E. This ungodly philosophy has done untold damage to the cause of Christ, because the acceptance of it has a direct bearing upon the urgency of "evangelism."
 1. Unto these individuals, there *is no urgency* at all!!
 2. If there is no urgency, there will be no evangelism!

II. EDIFICATION.

- F. In Romans 14:19 we read, "*Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*"
 1. The original word translated "follow after" is used forty-four times in the New Testament, and is translated as "persecute" twenty eight times and "suffer persecution" three times.
 2. Thus, we are to "persecute" (follow diligently, with purpose and aforethought) edification.
- G. The basic meaning of the word translated "edification" is *building up*, and even refers to the act of building up.
- H. In the New Testament, the word is used both literally and figuratively:
 1. Literal use:
 - a. The wise man *built* his house upon a rock (Matt. 7:24).
 - b. The foolish man *built* his on the sand (Matt. 7:26).
 - c. The rich fool was determined to tear down his barns and *build* greater (Luke 12:18).
 2. Figurative use:
 - a. After the brethren sent Paul to Tarsus, "*Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified*" (Acts 9:31).
 - b. Paul exhorted the Thessalonians, "*Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do*" (1 Thess. 4:11).
- I. When we use the word in the sense of "building up Christians," we mean the idea of *spiritual strength*.
 1. The same idea is found in Colossians 2:7: "*Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*"
 2. It is, in effect, being made stronger in the Lord.

NECESSARY ELEMENTS FOR PRODUCING EDIFICATION

- A. Tomatoes grow best in rich soil with the proper amount of water and sunlight.
 - 1. This the God of heaven has decreed.
- B. The climate for babies to grow are within the realm of the God-like home, in the love of father and mother.
 - 1. This the God of heaven has decreed.
- C. God has likewise ordained the proper "climate" for the edification of New Testament Christians.
- D. Before we notice the proper "climate" for edification of the saints, let us notice that which man affirms is "edifying."
 - 1. We are told that impressive and expensive buildings will edify.
 - 2. It is asserted that pulpits which send forth funny stories, jokes and sweet sounding nothings are "edifying."
 - 3. Some argue that situations where the leaders, in order not to offend anyone, carefully tiptoe around doctrinal matters is "edifying."
 - 4. Others seem to think that sufficient "edification" is found in a congregation that is nothing more than a *social club*, with all of its "pot luck" dinners and various forms of socialization.
- E. Nonetheless, God has decreed that Christians are edified by:
 - 1. An atmosphere of sound doctrine.
 - a. This means to speak, write, and encourage one another relative to righteous living and strong faith in the promises of God.
 - b. True edification cannot exist without sound doctrine (2 John 9).
 - c. False doctrine or "No doctrine" results in no edification for God's people. Paul wrote, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, ⁴Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: *so do*" (1 Tim. 1:3-4).
 - 2. An attitude of "selflessness:"

- a. In correcting the misuse of spiritual gifts in Corinth, Paul used a form of the word under consideration six times (1 Cor. 14).
- b. The problem was an abuse of speaking in tongues and the result was the congregation received no *edification*.
 - 1) We affirm that miracles have ceased, but the principle of *edification* is here established.

REASONS FOR EDIFICATION

- A. In Ephesians 4, Paul clearly states some aims of edification.
 1. Undoubtedly, this section has specific reference to the spiritual gifts which were limited to the first century. These miraculous gifts existed for the purpose of reaching specific goals. If these goals were to be reached by Christians in the first century who enjoyed the spiritual gifts, should we not take the *confirmed* word and strive to reach the same goals?
- B. First, we seek to edify so we might develop that "unity of the faith" (Eph. 4:13).
- C. Second, we seek to edify in order that we might develop a full "knowledge of the son of God" (Eph. 4:13).
- D. Third, we seek to edify so we might come nearer to being that "perfect man" (mature Christian; Eph. 4:13).
- E. Fourth, we seek to edify so we might help each other to be like Christ, "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).
- F. Fifth, we seek to edify in order to help others be mature in doctrine (Eph. 4:14 — "That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."
- G. Sixth, we desire to edify to help each other "speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15).

III. BENEVOLENCE.

- A. Of the three general areas of the work of the church, this is probably the one about which most people are the most touchy.
- B. This realm is often abused.

1. There are those who literally survive by going from congregation to congregation, and taking whatever they can.
 2. These people normally ask for just enough "food" or "gas" to get them a few hours down the road.
 3. They will then "hit another congregation," attempting to do the same thing.
- C. Because of this, the concept of "benevolence" sometimes leaves a bitter taste in the mouth of some.
- D. This should not be. We need to be reminded the abuse of a Biblical principle does not overturn the scriptural design of that particular thing.
1. For instance, man's abuse of the Lord's supper does not make it invalid.
 2. The same thing could be said for: "music" in the church and the organization of the church, etc.
 3. "Abuse" of a scriptural principle must be accepted for what it is: An abuse of a scriptural principle, not the cancellation of that precept.

CARE FOR THOSE IN NEED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

- A. In this section on "Care for the Needy," please understand I have reference to legitimate needs, not to those who abuse this Scriptural principle.
- B. God's concern for those in need is clearly seen in the Old Testament.
- C. Consider Deuteronomy 10:18, *"He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment."*
1. This sets forth a principle that is repeated time after time in the Old Testament.
- D. All of us are familiar with the fact that the priestly tribe (Levi) received no inheritance in the promised land.
1. But they were sustained through the tithe the rest of the nation gave.
- E. But how many people realize that God also legislated that the fatherless, the widow, and the stranger could partake of the tithe (Deut. 14:28-29; 16:11,14; 26:12-13).
1. Thus, can any deny that God has always had concern for those in need?
- F. The Israelites were not to afflict any widow or fatherless child (Exod. 22:22)

- G. They were not to pervert the judgment of the stranger or the fatherless, not take a widow's raiment as a pledge (Deut. 24:17).
- H. Many passages show God's concern for those who had a need. We have not the time or the space to look at each of these closely. We encourage the reader to read the following passages: Deut 10:18; 24:19-21; 26:12-13; 27:19; Psa. 68:5; 146:9; Prov. 15:25; Isa. 1:17; Jer. 7:6; 22:3; Ezek. 22:7; Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5.

CARE FOR THOSE IN NEED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

- A. In Galatians 6:10, Paul commanded, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
 - 1. Even though "care for those in need" is not specifically mentioned in this passage, it would certainly fall within the borders of that commanded, "do good unto all men."
 - 2. Just as Jesus "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38), so should we do good (as defined by Scripture).
- B. New Testament Christians are created in Christ Jesus "unto good works" (Eph. 2:10), and are to always abound in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).
 - 1. Surely, helping those who are in need is a part of this.
- C. James 1:27 is a clear call to this very concept: "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."
 - 1. The word "visit" means more than just go to someone's house and pass the time in idle chat.
 - 2. It denotes the idea of looking upon someone in order to help or benefit in some way.
 - 3. It suggests the concept of helping, of supplying the needed things.
- D. In 1 Timothy 5:3, Paul exhorted, "Honour widows that are widows indeed."
- E. In fact, this chapter has much to say relative to the responsibility of the church to widows.
 - 1. The children or grandchildren of a widow are to take care of her, thus showing piety at home (v.4).
 - 2. If any Christian man or woman have widows, they are to relieve them so the church be not charged (v.16),

thus allowing the church to relieve those who are "widows indeed."

3. A widow was not to be taken into the number under sixty years of age; further qualifications were, "Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work" (vs.9-10).

PROBLEMS THAT STEM FROM THIS.

- A. In this area of the care of the needy, there arose a faction in the 1950's that advocated that churches of Christ could not support orphan homes.
- B. This movement did a great amount of harm to the body of Christ.
- C. I believe congregations can scripturally support an orphan home.
 1. However, I hold this as a matter that falls within the realm of judgment, that it is a matter of opinion.
- D. However, this is not to say that I think a congregation ought to blindly send money to any orphan home.
 1. In my judgment, there are some today that are not worthy of support.
 2. I affirm this, not because I have changed my view, but because in many instances, those who have control of the children are not faithful to Christ.
 3. When we support such things as this, we place ourselves in violation of Ephesians 5:11, "*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*"
 - a. c.f. 2 John 9-11

THE EARLY CHRISTIANS WERE TAUGHT THIS PRINCIPLE.

- A. We are to do good to all men, especially those of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10).
- B. The Macedonian Christians were highly commended for their liberality (2 Cor. 8:2-3).
- C. In so doing, they exhibited their great desire (v.4), their consecration (v.5), their love and gratitude (vs.8-9), and their willing mind (v.12)

- D. There can be no doubt, benevolence was truly a part of the work of the early church.
 - 1. Rom. 12:13 – "Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality."
 - 2. Rom. 15:25-27 – "But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things."
- E. Inspiration shows how they did this in the first century:
 - 1. It was done individually – Dorcas (Acts 9:36-43).
 - 2. It was done congregationally (Acts 2:43-45; 11:29-30)
 - 3. It was done by congregations co-operating with each other (2 Cor. 8:18-21).

THE CAUSE OF CHRIST WILL PROSPER WHEN TRUE CARE FOR THE NEEDY IS PRACTICED.

- A. Even though the filling of hungry stomachs and supplying physical needs are things that last a short time, there are other benefits that can and do arise from a proper use of the principle of benevolence.
- B. Sometimes helping those in need opens the only door that will ever be opened, whereby the Gospel might have entrance into the lives of those so touched.
- C. Thus, not only does God's people supply a very real need at the moment, precious souls can be influenced for good through benevolence.
- D. I know of such an event.
 - 1. During the depression, there was a family in desperate need. The Lord's church responded with food. As a result of this offer of practical Christianity, the father and mother were ultimately taught the Gospel of Christ. Out of this, we now enjoy the fourth generation of an active family. At least one faithful elder and one faithful deacon have come as a result of this action.
- E. Probably this can be multiplied repeatedly. When we do as the father has commanded, good will come as a result.

CONCLUSION:

1. The "Work of the church" is certainly a misunderstood and mis-applied principle.
 2. However, abuses of scriptural New Testament concepts do not nullify or disallow the concept itself.
 3. We hope and pray that each of us will look closely at the "Work of the church."
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The Church Is Militant

Melvin Sapp

1. We live in a time of social toleration of every diverse philosophy.
2. Toleration is good and commendable in areas of opinions, judgments and expediencies.
3. Yet, the church of our Lord is a exclusive divine organization that is regulated by God and is the only vehicle that can prepare one for heaven.
 - a. It was established by Jesus (Matt. 16:18).
 - b. Jesus is its Head (Eph. 1:19-23).
 - c. Jesus is the only Savior (Acts 4:11-12).
 - d. Jesus adds all that he saves to the church (Acts 2:47).
4. All organizations that claim to offer salvation compete with the Lord and His church and will be defeated (Matt. 15:13-14).

DISCUSSION:**I. JESUS, AS LORD AND KING, WAS MILITANT.**

- A. Jesus withstood the devil and won (Matt. 4:1-11).
 1. He resisted every form of temptation without sinning (cf. Heb. 4:15).
 2. Jesus had authority over demons (Luke 4:33-37).
 3. He went into satan's house and bound him (Matt. 12:22-30).
- B. Christ, as the lion and lamb, had the power to open the Book (Rev. 5:1-14).
 1. Jesus has the power to do what no one else can (1-5).
 2. Jesus is a worthy leader because he redeemed us with His blood (9-12).

II. THE EARLY CHURCH WAS MILITANT.

- A. The apostles preached Jesus while under the threat of prosecution (Acts 4:1-20).
 - 1. The religious leaders put them in ward for preaching Jesus (Acts 4:1-4).
 - 2. Their bold conviction identified them as followers of Christ (Acts 4:13, 17-20).
- B. Individual Christians were persistent in evangelism despite persecution (Acts 8:1-4).
- C. The church is engaged in a spiritual war against satan and evil (Eph. 6:10-18).
 - 1. The Lord empowers the Christian to stand against evil.
 - 2. Our fight is not against people but wicked principles that influence them.
- D. We use spiritual weapons to combat the devil for the minds of men (2 Cor. 10:3-6).
 - 1. Love is a powerful weapon against hate, prejudice and evil conduct (Matt. 5:43-45).
 - 2. Though the church was aggressive, they were motivated by love (Eph. 4:15).

III. AREAS OF MILITANCY.

- A. Defense of the Scriptures.
 - 1. Mere men did not write the Bible (2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
 - 2. The Bible does not contradict itself nor does it contain errors (Prov. 30:5-6).
 - 3. The Word of God can't be altered (Matt. 24:35; Rev. 22:18-19).
 - 4. Paul was set to defend the gospel (Phil. 1:15-17; Jude 3).
- B. Discipline of immoral members preserves the purity of the congregation (1 Cor. 5:1-7).
- C. Unauthorized practices in worship.
 - 1. Circumcision was pressed on the Gentiles by Jewish Christians (Acts 15:1-11).
 - 2. Paul would not compromise the Gospel by adding circumcision (Gal. 2:1-5; 5:1-5).
 - 3. The use of music in worship other than congregational singing (Eph. 5:19).
 - a. Mechanical instruments are additions and are unauthorized (Col. 3:16-17).

- b. Rhythmic clapping is melody made with the hands, not in the heart (Eph. 5:19).
- c. Small groups that entertain the worshipers give praise unto men, instead of unto God (John 4:23-24; Heb. 13:15).
 - 1) Spiritual songs are to be used to fellowship and praise God and must meet His requirements to please Him.
 - 2) Many appropriate secular songs exist to entertain man, but not to worship God.
 - 3) The misuse of spiritual things as worldly things are an abomination (Lev. 10:8-11; Rom. 2:22, sacrilege).
- D. Women teaching over men and leading in the worship.
 - 1. Females are not to teach public classes where men are present (1 Tim. 2:11-15).
 - 2. Public preaching of the Word by women must not be done (1 Cor. 14:33-37).
 - 3. Women can teach privately and can teach other women and children (Titus 2:3-5).
- E. The dangers of false teaching must be fought against.
 - 1. Only by abiding in the truth can one be made free (John 8:31-32).
 - a. Error enslaves while truth liberates.
 - 2. No fellowship can be extended to those who won't abide in the truth (2 John 9-11).
 - a. The truth is the basis for fellowship with God.
 - b. To go beyond the Word of God is to partake in evil.
 - 3. False teachers are divisive and must be marked (Rom. 16:17-18).
 - a. Sound doctrine is the standard for accepting a teacher.
 - b. Too much time is spent on hardened false teachers (Titus 3:10-11).
 - 4. Those who pervert the gospel are cursed (Gal. 1:6-9).
 - a. A perverted gospel has no power to save (cf. Rom. 1:16).
 - b. Everyone should be preaching the same gospel.
 - c. One's response to the Gospel determines where he spends eternity (Mark 16:15-16).
 - d. Salvation before or without baptism is a perversion of the Gospel (Acts 2:38).

- e. Salvation by "grace only" negates free agency and demands universal salvation (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 2:11-12).

CONCLUSION:

1. In order for the church of our Lord to maintain its identity, it must remain militant.
 2. Liberalism is doing so much harm to the church today because of a lack of militancy.
 3. The church is God's salvation army and only she can carry the redeemed to heaven.
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Worship in Truth #1 Singing, Lord's Supper

Ronnie Whittemore

1. The subject of this lesson has been narrowly focused.
 - a. This lesson deals with the manner of worship as noted by the phrase "in truth" as opposed to "sincerity" as noted by the phrase "in spirit" in John 4:24.
 - b. This lesson deals with only two of the five avenues of worship: singing and Lord's supper.
2. It is the intention of this author to focus on the proper manner of worship from a positive perspective. Other writers will deal with abuses and wrong manners of worship in their lessons.
 - a. While we are concentrating on the manner of worship, we cannot ignore the importance of the heart in our worship to God.
 - b. God is the object of our worship and He desires the use of our hearts as we seek to worship Him in the proper manner.
 - c. Therefore, acceptable worship involves pure motives and a righteous heart that desires to please God by following His instructions according to His Word.
3. Our lesson will be divided into four parts and then an application.
 - a. The use of the heart in Christianity.
 - b. The importance of obeying God as He commands.
 - c. The significance of singing in worship.

- d. The significance of the Lord's supper in worship.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE USE OF THE HEART IN CHRISTIANITY.

- A. A fundamental lesson pertains to the value of the heart regarding salvation.
1. If the heart is right with God, then the life will be right with God. Therefore, every sinner begins his or her reconciliation to God and journey to salvation with the heart which includes acceptable worship.
 2. One interesting and informative study of the Bible involves tracing the use of the words "heart" and "heart" throughout the book of Acts as they relate to the church.
- B. The word "heart" occurs nineteen times in eighteen verses and the word "hearts" occurs five times in five verses in the book of Acts.
- C. Though space will not permit an examination of each occurrence of the words "heart" or "hearts" in Acts, let us consider the following.
1. The early church possessed penitent and submissive hearts (Acts 2:37).
 2. The first century church was united in heart (Acts 2:46).
 3. The first public sin to afflict the early church involved the corruption of the heart (Acts 5:3-4).
 4. An unrighteous heart led Simon astray (Acts 8:21-22).
 5. The church needs men and women who will profess with all their heart that Jesus is the Son of God (Acts 8:37).
 6. A loyal heart depends upon purpose and planning (Acts 11:23).
 7. God needs people with an obedient heart (Acts 13:22).
 8. The church needs hearts that are clean and pure (Acts 15:9).
 9. The Lord has the power to open hearts (Acts 16:14).
 10. Paul was a man with a tender heart (Acts 21:13).

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF OBEYING GOD AS HE COMMANDS.

- A. The Old Testament example of burnt offerings taught the importance of obedience.

1. Burnt offerings of cattle had specific requirements (Lev. 1:1-9).
2. Burnt offerings of sheep had specific requirements (Lev. 1:10-13).
3. Burnt offerings of fowl had specific requirements (Lev. 1:14-17).
- B. The punishment of Nadab and Abihu serves as a warning against disobedience (Lev. 10:1-2).
- C. The Old Testament example of sin offerings taught the importance of obedience.
 1. The priest sprinkled the blood seven times.
 2. If he sprinkled the blood six or eight times, then the worship would have been corrupted.
- D. Naaman dipped seven times in the Jordan River (2 Kings 5:1-14).

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SINGING IN WORSHIP.

- A. The **kind of music** specified by the Scriptures and authorized by God is **singing**.
 1. The New Testament authorizes **singing only**.
 - a. Jesus and His apostles "sang a hymn and went out" (Matt. 26:30).
 - b. Paul and Silas "prayed and sang" while in prison (Acts 16:25).
 - c. Christians are commanded to "sing unto His name" (Rom. 15:9).
 - d. Christians must sing with the spirit and understanding (1 Cor. 14:15).
 - e. Christians are exhorted to "sing and make melody in their heart" (Ephesians 5:19).
 - f. Christians are commanded to "sing with grace in their heart" (Col. 3:16).
 - g. The writer of Hebrews wrote of "singing praise unto his name" (Heb. 2:12).
 - h. James wrote, "*...Is any merry? let him sing psalms*" (James 5:13).
 2. The command to sing is specific.
 - a. Specific commandments are exclusive commandments.
 - 1) Gopher wood excludes other kinds of wood (Gen. 6:14).
 - 2) "Remember the sabbath day" excludes other days of the week (Exodus 20:8).

- 3) "Fruit of the vine" excludes water or Coke (Matt. 26:26-29).
- 4) "Singing" excludes playing (Eph. 5:19).
- b. If one goes beyond the word of God, then it is sin (2 John 9-11).
- B. The **purpose of singing** is explained in the Scriptures also.
 1. Singing is an expression of the heart (James 5:13).
 2. Singing includes praise and thanksgiving (Heb. 13:15; Rom. 15:9).
 3. Singing includes teaching and admonishing (Col. 3:16).
- C. The **manner of singing** is described in the Scriptures.
 1. Christians sing to God in worship, not to each other for entertainment (Acts 16:25).
 2. Christians sing "in spirit" or in sincerity (Josh. 24:14-15).
 3. Christians sing "with understanding" (1 Cor. 14:15).
 - a. One must know and understand the lyrics and sentiments of a song.
 - b. One must be careful not to sing lies.
 4. The Christian's singing must be understood by others (Eph. 5:19).
 5. The kind of songs are given: psalms, hymns and *spiritual* songs.

IV. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IN WORSHIP.

- A. The Lord's supper is a period of commemoration.
 1. There are many secular and historical memorials such as the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, etc.
 2. God has designated certain memorials, such as, the rainbow, the O.T. Passover, etc. (Gen. 9:13; Exodus 12:13).
 3. When Jesus met with His apostles, prior to His death, He instituted the Lord's supper as a memorial (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:20-25).
 4. The real beauty of the Lord's supper is its simplicity.
 - a. The unleavened bread represents Jesus' flesh.
 - b. The fruit of the vine represents His blood.
 - c. These emblems remind us of Him.
- B. The Lord's supper is an opportunity for proclamation.
 1. The message of Christ is preached through words (Acts 8:35; 1 Cor. 1:23).

2. We preach Christ through this memorial feast.
 - a. We "show the Lord's death" (1 Cor. 11:26).
 - b. These emblems proclaim to the world our faith in the death of Jesus (Luke 24:46-47; 1 Peter 3:18).
3. We proclaim to the world that our lives are possible because of Jesus' death (2 Timothy 1:10; Heb. 2:14-15).
- C. The Lord's supper is a sign of anticipation.
 1. We observe the Lord's supper "till he comes" (1 Cor. 11:26).
 - a. This memorial had a beginning when instituted by the Lord at the passover (Luke 22:1,7, 13-15).
 - b. It is observed upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).
 - c. It will end at the second coming of the Lord.
 2. However, until He comes, our memory and hope are intertwined at the partaking of this feast.
 - a. We remember His life's work.
 - b. We recall His betrayal, mock trials, and scourging.
 - c. We cannot forget His suffering and death upon a cruel cross.
 - d. Yet, our hope rests with His death, burial and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:9; 1 Peter 1:21).
 3. Yet, each time we eat, we silently wish this time to be the last (Rev. 22:20).
- D. The Lord's supper is an occasion for examination.
 1. As we partake of the supper, we "examine ourselves" (1 Cor. 11:28-29).
 - a. This examination is more than a gathering of personal data.
 - b. It is the disciplining of self into the proper disposition.
 - 1) We sometimes make the statement or include in our prayers that our "minds be centered upon the cross."
 - 2) Our disposition is important while partaking of the Lord's supper.
 - a) Sometimes we sing a hymn that relates to this event prior to our partaking.
 - b) Sometimes, we read a passage of Scripture in which Jesus instituted the Lord's supper.
 2. But this "self-examination" should involve more than "setting the tone" or being "sober-minded."

- a. We must be sure that our disposition is right to participate in this feast.
 - b. Our hearts and lives must be right before God; therefore, sin should not be held to our charge. Otherwise, partaking of the Lord's supper is in vain (1 Cor. 11:27-29).
3. The unleavened bread used by Christ in the Passover and the Lord's supper showed the absence of something.
 - a. Leaven was often the substance that represented sin or false teaching (Matt. 16:6, 11-12).
 - b. It was also representative of the "hypocrisy" of the Pharisees (Luke 12:1).
 - c. Therefore, by the use of "unleavened bread," our lives should be void of sin and hypocrisy (1 Cor. 5:8).
- E. The Lord's supper is a moment of communion.
 1. The cup and bread are described as a "communion of the blood and body of Christ" (1 Cor. 10:16).
 - a. In this occasion, we are "one bread and one body" (1 Cor. 10:17).
 - b. We cannot be partakers of the Lord's cup and satan's cup (1 Cor. 10:21).
 2. "Communion" is "fellowship, sharing, joint participation."
 - a. As in any activity concerning our relationship with Christ, we have "fellowship" or "communion" with Him, not satan (2 Cor. 6:15).
 - b. In partaking of this feast, it is **His** (The Lord's) table, not satan's and not ours.

CONCLUSION:

1. Christians worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).
 - a. Both singing and partaking of the Lord's supper are specifically defined in the Scriptures.
 - b. Therefore, both items of worship must be done according to God's instructions – without addition or subtraction.
2. At the outset of the lesson, attention was given to the many passages in Acts which point to the heart of Christianity.
 - a. Acceptable worship to God includes the heart.
 - b. Acceptable worship to God includes obedience.
 - c. These two items of worship emphasize that God wants our hearts wholly devoted to Him through obedience to His Word (Rom. 6:16-18).

The Church As Seen Through The Eyes Of The Prophets

Windell R. Fikes

1. Each of the following prophets spoke of one or several characteristics or identities of the coming kingdom or church.
2. The date of beginning, the place, and nature of the church were described in detail by the prophets who were God's spokesmen.
 - a. The church as seen through the prophet Isaiah
 - b. The church as seen through the prophet Jeremiah
 - c. The church as seen through the prophet Daniel
 - d. The church as seen through the prophet Joel
 - e. The church as seen through the prophet John the Immerser
 - f. The church as seen through Jesus Himself

DISCUSSION:

I. THE CHURCH AS SEEN THROUGH THE PROPHET ISAIAH (Isaiah 2:1-4).

- A. The Lord's house (the church according to 1 Tim. 3:15) was to be established in the last days (v.2).
- B. All nations would flow into it (v.2).
- C. The law would go out from Zion (v.3).
- D. The Word of Jehovah would go from Jerusalem (v.3).
- E. The nature of the church/kingdom.
 1. They would beat swords into plowshares.
 2. They would beat spears into pruning hooks.
 3. The nations that became part of the church would not lift the sword against other nations.
 4. Isaiah again describes the peaceful nature of the church/kingdom (Isaiah 11:6-10).
- F. A memorial name and an everlasting name would be given to the church after the nations (Gentiles, KJV) entered the kingdom (Isaiah 56:5; 62:2; Acts 11:26; Rom. 1:5).
- G. Note: Micah's Prophecy (Micah 4:1-4) is nearly identical to Isaiah's prophecy.

II. THE CHURCH AS SEEN THROUGH THE PROPHET JEREMIAH (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

- A. Jehovah will make a New Covenant with the church (Spiritual Israel) (v.31).

- B. The New Covenant would not be like the Old Covenant (Law of Moses) (v.32).
- C. The New Covenant.
 - 1. The law would be written in their hearts.
 - 2. Sins would be remembered no more (v.34).

III. THE CHURCH AS SEEN THROUGH THE PROPHET DANIEL (Daniel 2:1-45; Matt. 24:15).

- A. Daniel revealed the King's dream by the power of God (vs.25-35).
- B. Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream by the power of God (vs.36-45).
 - 1. Head of Gold represents the Babylonian Empire (606-536 BC).
 - 2. Breast and Arms of Silver represents the Medo-Persian Empire (536-332 BC).
 - 3. Belly and Thighs of Brass represents the Greek Empire (332-63 BC).
 - 4. Legs of Iron, Feet part Iron and part Clay represents the Roman Empire (BC 63-476 AD).
 - 5. A stone cut out without hands smote the image (v.34).
 - a. This stone represents the kingdom of God (the church).
 - b. God would set up his kingdom during the days of the Roman kings (v.44).

Note: Christ was crucified in AD 30 during the reign of the Roman kings (John 11:48; John 19).
 - c. God himself would rule his kingdom (v.44).
 - d. The Lord's kingdom (unlike man's kingdoms) would never be destroyed.
 - e. The Lord's kingdom would break into pieces and consume all other kingdoms.
 - f. The Lord's kingdom (the church) would stand forever.
 - g. The Lord's kingdom would never pass into the hands of other rulers.

IV. THE CHURCH AS SEEN THROUGH THE PROPHET JOEL (Joel 2:28-29).

- A. I [God] will pour out my spirit upon all flesh.
 - 1. Jews – Acts 2:1-47
 - 2. Gentiles – Acts 10:1-48

B. Miraculous prophecies and visions would accompany the power of the Holy Spirit.

1. Fulfillment (Acts 2:1-4; 10:46; 11:15; Mark 16:17-20).

2. Peter states "this is that" (Acts 2:16). What occurred on that day (Pentecost) was the beginning of the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Acts 2:16-20).

3. Phillip had four daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:9).

C. God would show wonders and signs (vs.30-31).

D. Jerusalem would be the place (v.32).

V. THE CHURCH AS SEEN THROUGH THE PROPHET JOHN THE IMMERSER.

A. John was a prophet (Matt. 11:7-10; Mark 11:32).

B. The kingdom was at hand in John's day (Matt. 3:1-3).

VI. THE CHURCH AS SEEN THROUGH JESUS HIMSELF.

A. Jesus was a prophet (Matt. 21:11; John 7:40,41).

B. Jesus spoke of the kingdom at hand (Matt. 4:17).

C. Jesus promised to build his church (Matt. 16:13-20).

D. The kingdom would come (be set up) during the lifetime of the apostles (Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27).

E. The church/kingdom was to be a spiritual body not a military kingdom (John 18:36-40).

CONCLUSION:

1. All the prophecies concerning the church were fulfilled when the kingdom began ten days after the ascension of Jesus.
 2. The kingdom came on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection.
 3. The church was complete in its design from the beginning until now.
 4. There will be no other kingdom on earth like it.
 5. It (the church) was the finality of God's plan through which man could and can be saved, as the prophets foretold.
-

The Spiritual Nature Of The Church

Jon Macon

1. Many Jews did not recognize the kingdom of God when it came because of a failure to understand its nature.
2. Many people today also misunderstand the nature of God's kingdom and still are looking for the wrong kind.
3. The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom. There is only one kingdom. It is the Lord's church.
4. As we cannot believe wrongly about Christ and put him on, we also cannot believe wrongly about the church and expect God to add us to it. How can we properly believe in the Christ (the King) without knowing what his kingdom is?
5. Salvation is only for those who are in the kingdom (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23; Heb. 12:22-23; Rev. 20:15; 21:27).
6. Therefore, a proper understanding of the nature of God's kingdom, the church, is of eternal significance.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE FORETELLING OF THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE CHURCH.

- A. The spiritual nature of God's kingdom was foretold, though not understood until the time of its fulfillment.
 1. 1 Peter 1:10-12 – The prophets themselves did not understand everything they were inspired to say or write.
 2. Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 2:7-13; Col. 1:25-27 – Though foretold, many things remained a mystery until the New Testament was revealed.
- B. Old Testament prophecies of the spiritual nature of the church.
 1. Psalm 22:25-29
 - a. Verses 1-21 contain the great prophecy of the crucifixion of Christ.
 - b. Verse 22 is quoted in Hebrews 2:12, concerning the church being Christ's brethren.
 - c. The same word "congregation" found in verse 22 is also in verse 25; here, this "great congregation" is again referring to the "church."
 - d. In verse 26, those in the church would be meek and seek the Lord.

- e. In verse 27, "all the ends of the world" would remember and turn to the Lord, and "all the kindreds of the nations" would worship God.
 - f. In verse 29, we see worship again as being a characteristic of the church.
 - g. Meekness, seeking the Lord, turning to the Lord, worshiping the Lord, and the inclusion of all nations are all reflective of the spiritual nature of the church.
2. Isaiah 2:1-4
- a. Verse 2 says all nations would flow into the Lord's house.
 - b. In verse 3, God would teach his ways to his "house" (i.e. the church, 1 Tim. 3:15), and the people would walk in God's paths.
 - c. In verse 4, the people would beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks and not learn war any more (see Matt. 5:38-48); this drastically differs from the nature of any earthly nation.
 - d. All of these things describe the spiritual nature of the church; it would not be like any earthly kingdom.
3. Isaiah 35:8
- a. *"A highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness."*
 - b. Holiness is yet another part of the spiritual nature of the church (Heb. 12:14).
4. Isaiah 61:1-3
- a. Verses 1 and 2 are quoted (and fulfilled) in Luke 4:17-21.
 - b. Verse 1 says glad tidings would be preached to the meek.
 - c. Verse 3 calls those in the church "trees of righteousness" planted by the Lord.
 - d. Meekness and righteousness are parts of the spiritual nature of the church.
5. Jeremiah 3:14-17
- a. In verse 15, "pastors" (elders) would feed the flock with knowledge and understanding in the New Testament.
 - b. Verse 16 makes it clear that this is a prophecy of the church, as he mentions the things of the Old

Testament would not come to mind or be done any more.

- c. In verse 17, all nations would be gathered to the name of the Lord, and no more would walk after the imaginations of an evil heart.
 - d. The work of elders, the inclusion of all nations and the manner in which they would walk are all aspects of the spiritual nature of the church.
6. Jeremiah 31:31-34
- a. In this famous prophecy of the New Covenant, the Lord says in verse 33 that he would put the law in the inward parts and write it in the hearts.
 - b. In verse 34, all would know the Lord and sins would be forgiven.
 - c. This prophecy is clear about the spiritual nature of the law and the church it would govern.
7. Daniel 2:36-45
- a. Verses 37-43 describe four earthly kingdoms: Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece and Rome.
 - b. In verses 44-45, Daniel prophesies of the kingdom of God and contrasts it with these physical kingdoms.
 - 1) Unlike physical kingdoms, the kingdom of God (the church) would never be destroyed.
 - 2) Unlike physical kingdoms, the kingdom of God would not be left to other people.
 - 3) God's kingdom, the church, would break and consume the earthly kingdoms (by conversion, Isa. 2:4).
 - 4) Unlike physical kingdoms, the kingdom of God would stand forever.
 - 5) The kingdom of God is the stone that is cut out without hands, meaning it is not of men.
 - c. Daniel 2 particularly emphasizes the point that God's kingdom would be spiritual, not physical in nature.
- C. New Testament prophecies of the spiritual nature of the church.
1. Luke 17:20-21
- a. The Pharisees demanded to know when God's kingdom would come.
 - b. Any earthly kingdom can be observed, but Jesus said God's kingdom would not come with observation.

- c. No one would be able to point to the kingdom of God and say, "Here it is!" or "There it is!"
 - d. Jesus declared the spiritual nature of the kingdom, saying "the kingdom of God is within you."
 - e. The emphasis of God's kingdom would be what is within its citizens, which shows its spiritual nature.
2. John 18:33-37
- a. The Jews were accusing Jesus to the Romans of trying to be a rival to them (John 19:12,15); this was hypocritical since it was they who wanted to be rid of the Romans and Jesus had refused this (John 6:14-15).
 - b. In the face of this accusation, Pilate naturally questioned Jesus about being "King of the Jews."
 - c. When asked about his Kingship, Jesus taught about his kingdom and its nature (which effectively demonstrates the necessity of understanding about the church in order to be added to it).
 - d. Jesus could not have spoken more plainly about the nature of the church than he did in verse 36.
 - e. The Lord's kingdom, his church, would not be of this world.
 - f. Jesus added that if his kingdom were physical, his servants would have fought physically for him.
 - g. The kingdom of God would be spiritual in nature and its warfare would be spiritual in nature.
 - h. John 18:38 – Pilate understood enough from Jesus' answer to conclude that Jesus was no threat to Rome.
3. Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4
- a. In Mark 9:1, Jesus prophesied that his kingdom would come with power during that generation.
 - b. If the nature of the kingdom were to be physical, then so would this power.
 - c. Matt. 26:50-54 – Even Jesus' own disciples for a long time were expecting an earthly kingdom and Jesus had to stop them from physically fighting for him.
 - d. Since the kingdom would be spiritual in nature, we would expect the power to be spiritual in nature.
 - e. Accordingly, Jesus told the apostles in Acts 1:8 that the power would come from the Holy Spirit.

- f. The spiritual power came in Acts 2:1-4 and on that same day the kingdom, the church, was established.
- g. The nature of the power and of the kingdom itself was spiritual.

II. SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE CHURCH.

A. The church is eternal in duration.

- 1. 2 Cor. 4:18 – Spiritual things, the things which are not seen, are eternal by definition.
- 2. Dan. 2:44; Matt. 16:18 – The church is the spiritual kingdom and is therefore eternal in duration.
- 3. Only a spiritual kingdom could last eternally.

B. The head of the church rules from a place that is spiritual in nature.

- 1. Acts 2:32-36 – God raised up Jesus and set him at his right hand and made him Lord and Christ.
- 2. Eph. 1:20-23 – Jesus rules as head of the church from God's own right hand "in the heavenly places."
- 3. Only a spiritual kingdom could be ruled from heaven itself.

C. The church is a spiritual nation.

- 1. Deut. 5:1-3 – The old covenant was made with physical Israel.
- 2. John 8:37-39; Rom. 4:11-13; 9:6-8 – The "seed of Abraham" refers to his physical descendants, but the "children of Abraham" are his spiritual descendants, by faith.
- 3. Rom. 2:28-29 – Today, Christians are Abraham's children, and are the spiritual Jews.
- 4. 1 Peter 2:5, 9-12 – The church is God's spiritual house and holy nation.
- 5. Gal. 6:14-16 – The "Israel of God" today is spiritual Israel, not a physical nation.

D. The law of the church is spiritual in nature.

- 1. Gal. 6:2 – The church is under the law of Christ, which is the New Testament.
- 2. Rom. 8:2 – This is "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."
- 3. John 6:63 – Jesus said that his words are spiritual in nature and they give eternal life.
- 4. Heb. 8:10 – This law is written in the minds and hearts of the citizens of spiritual Israel.

5. Matt. 24:35; 1 Peter 1:23-25 – Hearts and minds are eternal and the word of Christ is also eternal.
 6. Only a spiritual kingdom could be governed by such a spiritual, eternal law.
- E. The church is fighting a spiritual war with spiritual weapons.
1. 2 Tim. 2:3-4 – The citizens of the kingdom of God are the soldiers of Jesus Christ.
 2. 1 Tim. 1:18 – These soldiers are fighting an ongoing war.
 3. Our war is not a "war after the flesh" (2 Cor. 10:3), and "not against flesh and blood" (Eph. 6:12).
 4. We are soldiers in a spiritual war.
 - a. 2 Cor. 10:5 – We are fighting imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.
 - b. Eph. 6:12 – We are fighting against principalities, powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
 - c. Heb. 12:4 – We are striving against sin.
 5. 2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:10-17 – For this spiritual war, God has given his soldiers powerful spiritual weapons and armor.
 6. Only a spiritual kingdom could fight such a spiritual war with these spiritual weapons and armor.
- F. The purpose of the church is spiritual.
1. Eph. 3:21 – The church is to bring glory to God now and forever.
 2. 1 Peter 2:5 – One way the church glorifies God is by offering up spiritual sacrifices to him. Worshiping God in spirit would be included in this context.
 3. Col. 1:27 – Another way in which the church is to glorify God is to have Christ in us.
 4. Eph. 4:11-16 – The ultimate purpose for the church is to grow spiritually "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."
 - a. The word "perfect" (*teleios*) means "complete" (the verb form *teleioo* has the same meaning).
 - b. 1 Cor. 13:10; James 1:25 – This same word is used to describe God's word.
 - c. 1 John 2:5; 4:12,18 – This same word is also used to describe God's love.

- d. John 17:26 – Jesus has the love of God complete in him and we need to be like Christ in this way.
- e. James 1:4 – Spiritually, we need to be complete, entire, and lacking nothing.
- 5. Rom. 8:28-29 – This purpose is also described as being “conformed to the image” of Christ.
- 6. 2 Peter 1:4 – God’s word will enable the church to be partakers of the divine nature.
- 7. 2 Cor. 3:18 – The glory of the New Testament is that within it, God’s image is clearly revealed and we can be changed into the same image from glory to glory.
- 8. All of the works of the church (including evangelism, edification and benevolence) work towards this goal.
- 9. Eph 5:27 – Jesus wants to have a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any kind of spiritual blemish.
- 10. Luke 17:21 – This is how the kingdom of God is to be within us.
- 11. Only a spiritual kingdom could have such a glorious, spiritual purpose.
- G. The destination of the church is a spiritual place (a literal place that is spiritual in nature).
 - 1. Heb. 11:13-16; 13:14 – God’s faithful are strangers and pilgrims on this earth, looking for a spiritual, eternal dwelling place.
 - 2. Phil. 3:20 – Our citizenship is in heaven.
 - 3. 1 Peter 1:4 – We have an incorruptible inheritance reserved in heaven.
 - 4. 1 Cor. 15:24 – Jesus will deliver the kingdom up to the Father in heaven.
 - 5. Eph. 3:21; Rev. 22:1-5 – The church will serve and glorify God forever and ever in heaven.
 - 6. Only a spiritual kingdom could have an eternal destination in heaven.

III. OPPONENTS OF THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE CHURCH.

A. Premillennialism.

- 1. Some of our own brethren are on record as saying that this doctrine should not be a test of fellowship.
- 2. Like the Jews of old, premillennialists are looking for a physical kingdom.

3. The doctrine of premillennialism completely denies the spiritual nature of the Lord's kingdom.
 - a. Premillennialism denies the eternal nature of the church, teaching that it is a temporary, stopgap measure employed by God until the alleged coming of Christ's millennial reign on earth. (It should be pointed out again that rather than rejecting Jesus as an earthly king, the Jews tried to force that upon the Lord and he refused it (John 6:14-15). Jesus is the one who rejected himself becoming an earthly king, not the Jews.)
 - b. Premillennialism denies the doctrine of the church being spiritual Israel, emphasizing instead their imagined resurgence of physical Israel.
 - c. Premillennialism totally warps the spiritual law of the church, even turning Jesus into a false prophet.
 - d. Premillennialism is utterly blind to the spiritual weapons, warfare and purpose of the church.
 - e. Many premillennialists even deny the ultimate destination of the church in heaven, instead looking for a supposed renewed, glorified physical earth as an eternal dwelling place.
 4. This false doctrine is a blatant attack upon the spiritual body of Christ, his chaste bride for eternity.
 5. It is not possible to believe and teach premillennialism and also be a part of the only body of people that will be saved when Jesus returns: the church of Christ.
- B. Denominationalism.
1. Not just a few of our brethren are accommodating the concept of denominationalism.
 2. Denominationalism also completely denies the Lord's spiritual kingdom.
 - a. Denominations oppose the concept of only one church which is Christ's one and only kingdom.
 - b. Denominations view the church as strictly an earthly organization with no eternal significance.
 - c. Denominationalism is thus ignorant of and denies the very existence of the kingdom of God.
 3. As with premillennialism, denominationalism is a blatant attack upon the Lord's blood-bought church.
 4. Matt. 15:13 – The very existence of denominations is wrong and they will all be rooted up by God.
- C. Materialism.

1. 2 Cor. 4:18; 1 Tim. 6:8-11, We must make a decision between seeking material things or spiritual things.
2. Luke 16:13 – No one can serve both God and mammon.
3. 1 John 2:15-17 – We must not love the things of the world, including the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.
4. John 5:44; Matt. 6:1-8; Acts 12:20-23 – The pride of life includes the glory of men, which destroys faith.
5. Luke 8:14 – Jesus warned that the cares, riches and pleasures of this life would choke some Christians.
6. 2 Tim. 4:10 – Demas is an example of one who forsook the Lord because he loved this present world.
7. Rom. 8:6 – *"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."*
8. Materialism runs contrary to the spiritual nature of God's kingdom and we must not allow it to destroy us.

CONCLUSION:

1. The importance of the God's kingdom, his church, is evident from the following facts:
 - a. The church was planned by God from the beginning and will exist forever and ever to glorify God (Eph. 3:8-11,21).
 - b. The church is not of this world or of men, but is from heaven, established by Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18-19; John 18:36).
 - c. Jesus Christ the Son of God died for the church and bought it with his precious blood (Eph. 5:25; Acts 20:28).
 - d. The church is the bride of Jesus Christ (Rom. 7:1-4; 2 Cor. 11:2-3; Rev. 19:6-9).
 2. The importance of the church in God's eyes demonstrates why he has decreed that man's salvation depends upon being a faithful member of this church (Eph. 5:23; Rev. 3:4-5). Consequently, those who fail to understand the spiritual nature of the church are in peril.
 3. May we all be ever diligent in extolling and proclaiming this truth and opposing any and all contrary doctrines and practices, *"for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee"* (1 Tim. 4:16).
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The Church Is Unique In It's Discipline

Toney L. Smith

1. This is a great theme: The Church Is Unique...
 - a. It is important to know this and to be able to explain why it is unique.
 - b. Many important topics to be discussed in the lectureship.
2. Our lesson: "THE CHURCH IS UNIQUE IN IT'S DISCIPLINE."
 - a. I appreciate the elders desire to have this subject discussed.
 - 1) Many are treating this subject as if it did not exist.
 - 2) The church has been hurt because many have forgotten this command.
 - b. There are varied reactions at the mention of "church discipline."
 - 1) Horrified, apathetic, even some rebellious.
 - 2) And some are desirous of doing God's will.
 - c. Truly in many places it is a "forgotten command."
3. This may be the most neglected subject in the Bible.
 - a. There surely has been a departure from this Divine command in many congregations.
 - b. Without it, the church is not what God desires it to be.
 - c. Without discipline, there is chaos, error and damnation.
4. Discipline often goes undone – unheeded.
 - a. Why so much controversy?
 - 1) The world's impact on the church. Rom. 12:1-2
 - 2) Weak and cowardly preaching aimed at folks with "itching ears." 2 Tim. 4:1-4
 - 3) Few congregations with strong leaderships. Heb. 13:17
 - b. However, church discipline is **STILL A BIBLE SUBJECT!**
5. Discipline Defined: Training which corrects; molds, strengthens. It is chastisement that puts in order. Or it is the development of self-control and instruction that carries one in a certain direction.
 - a. It can be divided into two categories.
 - 1) Instructive. Eph. 6:4
 - 2) Corrective. 2 Thess. 3:6
6. Read 1 Cor. 5:1-13
 - a. There are many passages which could be cited.
 - b. In this passage we observe a command to the church at Corinth.

- 1) From these verses we can observe WHY THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS TO PRACTICE CHURCH DISCIPLINE.
- 2) We can clearly see what Paul, by inspiration, told the church was needed to keep its purity and to save a soul from hell.

The church of Christ practices church discipline because...

DISCUSSION:

I. IT IS COMMANDED BY DIVINE AUTHORITY.

- A. By this I mean that it is not designed in the mind of men!
- B. v.4 – *"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ..."*
 1. This term means by His authority, by His will. Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Peter 3:22
 2. Church discipline is by Divine edict.
- C. It is a command from that authority.
 1. Simple to understand.
 2. Note these inspired mandates. vs.4-7; Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15; Titus 3:10; 2 John 9-11
 3. Let's notice 2 Thess. 3:6
 - a. "...In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ..." (authority!)
 - b. Command signifies "to pass a military order along," one that comes from a superior command. (Lynski)
- D. Yes, church discipline is a COMMAND given by HIS AUTHORITY!
 1. God never gave "non-essential" commands.
 - a. Not an option, suggestion or mere thought.
 - b. Not a man-made thing.
 2. A command from the Supreme commander.

II. BECAUSE OF ITS PURPOSE.

- A. Discipline does have a purpose. (Some have said it serves no good purpose)
 1. To save a soul from sin. (1 Cor. 5:5)
 2. To keep the church pure. (1 Cor. 5:6-7)
 3. To keep sin from spreading through the congregation. (1 Cor. 5:6)
 4. To show the community that we practice what we preach.
 - a. Read Acts 5:1-11
 - b. Note in verse 11, *"...and upon as many as heard these things."*

B. Notice three things in 1 Cor 5:5-7: *"To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:"*

1. To save the SOUL THAT IS IN SIN. (v.5)
 - a. *"...For the destruction of the flesh..."*
 - 1) The flesh must not rule. Gal. 5:19-21
 - 2) It is to be cleansed. 1 Peter 2:11
 - b. McGarvey, stated concerning 1 Thess. 5:15. "The purpose of discipline is to save (1 Cor. 5:5). It is a medicine for curing, not poison for killing..."
 - c. It is never to be used to "get back" or "get even."
 - d. Note Matt. 18:15 — *"...gained thy brother."*
 - e. Gal 6:1 — *"Restore..."*
2. To KEEP THE CHURCH PURE. (v.7)
 - a. The church is to be pure. (Eph. 5:27 — *"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."*)
 - b. 1956 Annual Lesson Commentary, p.26 "If the church does not exercise more discipline in the future than in the past fifty years, the area of separation between the church and the world will be so narrow that it will be difficult to see..." (amazing indeed...)
3. Also, to KEEP SIN FROM SPREADING AND DESTROYING MORE SOULS. (v.6)
 - a. Ecc. 9:18, *"One sinner destroyeth much good."*
 - b. 1 Cor. 15:33, *"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."*
 - c. The sinner must never be allowed to carry out his rotten work! (Acts 5 Ananias, with Sapphira his wife)
 - d. This is a deadly PLAGUE IN THE CHURCH TODAY!
 - 1) Overlooking sin on every hand, until it becomes an almost impossible task.
 - 2) IF one is allowed, then another, then another, etc.

- e. Acts 5:11, *"And great fear came upon all the church..."*
 - 1) Fear can motivate us to do that which is right.
- 4. Now let us notice another lesson from Acts 5:11.
 - a. *"...And upon as many as heard these things."*
 - b. Those in the community understood that the disobedient would be punished.
 - c. Our neighbors should understand that the church practices what it preaches.
- C. The church of Christ must practice church discipline because of its cleansing, correcting and its demonstration of obedience.
- D. This is God's purification system!

III. AN IDENTIFYING MARK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.

- A. God has given the commandment.
- B. It is for a Biblical purpose.
- C. If we do not practice that which is commanded and which has a Scriptural purpose, can we say we are the New Testament church?
 - 1. Many had better begin to observe their actions, or lack thereof.
 - 2. Must we observe Scriptural commands for worship, baptism, for godly living?
 - a. God gave His plan for salvation. We all know that every factor involved must be observed to be pleasing to God.
 - b. Not one single thing can be omitted!
 - 3. Then how can we do less with this "FORGOTTEN COMMAND?"
 - a. This is the God given plan for church purification and soul restoration.
 - b. Why do we not practice this?
 - c. Is it lack of faith or obstinate disobedience?
- D. Truly, church discipline is a test of our relationship with God.
 - 1. Note: It tests our...
 - a. Loyalty to His word. Matt. 7:21, *"doeth the will..."*
 - b. Love for the Lord. John 14:15, *"if...keep"*
 - c. Love for the lost soul. Gal. 6:1
 - d. Love for the church. (Never let her be tattered and torn by allowing sin to remain. Eph. 5:22ff)

- e. Faith. (James 2:26, "*faith without works...*")
- 2. And remember that the carrying out of church discipline will not always be popular with men.
 - a. Some will say, "We will run some folks off."
 - b. One eldership said, "We will lose too much of our contribution!"
 - c. These ought to better understand Acts 5:29, "...We ought to obey God rather than men."
- E. Church discipline identifies the true disciple of Christ and it identifies the true CHURCH OF CHRIST.

IV. ALSO, NOTICE THE TREATMENT OF THOSE WHO WILL NOT REPENT AND ARE WITHDRAWN FROM.

- A. They are not treated as if they do not exist.
 - 1. Withdrawal does not mean "vengeance toward the offender" because vengeance belongs to God. Rom. 12:19
 - 2. It does not mean the church pronounces eternal damnation upon this individual. If they do not repent they will be lost, but the Lord will pronounce the eternal destiny of an individual. Matt. 7:21-23
 - 3. It does not mean that the person becomes an enemy, but rather an erring brother that needs restoration. 2 Thess. 3:15
 - 4. It is not retaliation, "I'll get even with you for what you have done, etc."
- B. These individuals must never find any encouragement in the sin that divided.
 - 1. 2 John 9-11
 - 2. Obedience to God's will is joyful, but obeying some of them will sadden our hearts. Especially when we must remove fellowship from an unfaithful member.
- C. We must also remember that when it is necessary to withdraw fellowship, it is to be publicly honored.
 - 1. A principle is not true and just unless it can be applied both ways.
 - a. If Paul could write and ask the church to receive Phebe, then he could do the opposite also. Rom. 16:1-2
 - b. This principle was applied to Demas (2 Tim. 4:10) and Diotrephes (3 John 9-10).
 - 2. All congregations in the area should be notified of the withdrawal.

- a. They are honor-bound to refuse the extending of fellowship to the unpenitent person.
- b. One cannot be scripturally out of fellowship with one congregation and scripturally in fellowship with another local congregation.
- c. A person out of fellowship with a faithful body of the Lord's people in one place is out of fellowship with the body of the Lord's people everywhere.
- d. One cannot be out of fellowship with the church and be in fellowship with God.
- e. Neither can he be out of fellowship with God and in fellowship with the church!

CONCLUSION:

1. We have discussed a very serious matter.
 - a. The church of Christ stands as the pure bride of Christ.
 - b. We have a grave responsibility in this life.
 - c. If there is no attempt to keep the church pure NOW, God has promised that He will purge it forever more by the judgment of His Son.
 - 1) Rev. 21:27, *"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."*
 - 2) Matt. 25:32, *"...he shall separate them one from another."*
 2. For the church to be the unique bride of Christ, it must begin in earnest to preserve its purity.
 3. We pray that the church of Christ will take any action necessary to preserve its purity, to restore lost souls, to cause all members to strive to live godly and to show the community that we practice what the Bible teaches
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Instrumental Music And Singing Groups

Virgil L. Hale

1. It is a shame that such a subject needs to be addressed today.
2. To look at the history of these practices, one must go outside the Bible.
 - a. The Bible is as silent as the tomb on the subject.
 - b. In this study we will look into when such began and problems it caused.

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORIZE FOR MUSIC?

- A. We know what God has authorized. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; 13:15; 1 Cor. 14:15
- B. "Singing" is specific – not generic.
- C. "Singing" does not include humming.
 1. There is no difference in humming and using an instrument.
 2. "Speaking to yourselves" – "teaching and admonishing" – cannot be accomplished by humming nor playing on an instrument.
 3. Making sounds like an instrument is not authorized either.
- D. There was a time when some in the church thought that the subject of instrumental music was a dead issue.
 1. In the last few years it has been very much alive, and I predict that it will get worse.

II. HISTORY OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP.

- A. The instrument was first introduced into the Catholic Church – either 670 A.D. or 755 A.D.
 1. At first it was opposed – then later accepted.
- B. Well known men of the Reformation Movement opposed it. Clarke, Calvin, Knox, Wesley and Luther opposed it's use.
- C. God has always forbidden additions to or subtractions from what He authorized.
- D. Nowhere is the instrument commanded, authorized, sanctioned, endorsed or employed in the New Testament.
- E. What about the Restoration Movement?
 1. As early as 1851 there was some trouble in Kentucky over the instrument.

2. The American Christian Review began in January of 1856.
 - a. Benjamin Franklin was its editor.
 - b. It played an important role in the struggle over the instrument.
3. In 1860, in response to an article by Benjamin Franklin, L. L. Pinkerton of Midway, Kentucky, said that he was the only preacher in Kentucky advocating the use of the instrument.
 - a. The Midway congregation was the only congregation that made a decided effort to introduce it.
 - b. What brought this about?
 - 1) Because of their deplorable singing, they brought a melodeon in on Sunday nights for song practice to get the pitch.
 - 2) They then decided to use it on Sunday morning.
 - c. Adam Hibler had one of his slaves named Rueben to pass the melodeon out the window to him, and he took it to his home. Another was brought in and it stayed.
4. The melodeon is encased in glass at the library of Midway college.
 - a. The handout says it, "...occupies a place of honor."
- F. The cause for such additions is simply a lack of respect for the authority of the Scriptures.
 1. All additions are but symptoms – about like fever.
 - a. Fever is not a disease but a symptom that something is wrong.
 - b. Get rid of the problem and you get rid of the fever.
 2. When people have respect for God's Word – all additions will cease.
 - a. I might add – and not before!
- G. Concerning the instrument, the old farmer said, "There ain't no Scripture fer it" and another said, "There ye air."
 1. They could not have said it better in a three hour sermon.

III. WHAT ABOUT SOLOS, DUETS, CHOIRS, CHORUSES AND QUARTETS?

- A. Again, "There ain't no Scripture fer it."
- B. In singing there must be reciprocal action.
 1. *"Teaching and admonishing one another"* (Eph. 5:19).

2. This passage is abused about like (James 5:16) — the "prayer partner" concept.
- C. All do not participate — thus there is discrimination.
 1. They will not let "off key" singers in the group.
- D. Quite often there are non-Christians participating in the groups.
- E. In reality — what is taking place when groups "perform?"
 1. Is it worship? If so everyone is to participate.
 2. Is it entertainment? If so, should use other songs.
 - a. Such is referred to as a "performance," a concert," etc.
 - 1) What about applauding? Would not such be appropriate for entertainment?
 - b. Can we ever be guilty of profaning holy things? Yes.
 - c. Is it not possible to sing God's name in vain as well as speak God's name in vain in other ways? Yes.
 3. Is it a teaching situation? What about girls or women being involved?
 - a. At a lectureship in North Carolina a number of years ago, a chorus (made up of men and women, some of the men preachers) performed.
 - 1) A woman directed the chorus.
 - 2) I and the brother with me got up and left when they marched in with their robes on.
 - b. In a bulletin from the congregation in Benton, Kentucky, dated June 7, 1981, the following appeared.
 - 1) "Hear Gospel Music at its best. No instruments — purely a cappella singing. Listen to God's Word taught in song. Be with us to enjoy a free concert by this fine Christian group."
 - a) The group consisted of two couples (husbands and wives).
 - b) If God's Word was being taught, were not the women publicly teaching? If not, why not?
 - F. Some preachers are now arguing that you cannot take the Scriptures and prove that solos, choirs and choruses are wrong.
 1. They say that we don't use them because of "tradition."
 2. That is the same argument used when it comes to women leading in prayer.
 3. Monroe Hawley, in his book REDIGGING THE WELLS, makes an argument based on 1 Cor. 14:26 that

there is no doubt but what they had solos in the first century.

a. I have known of others who make the same argument.

G. In Statesville, North Carolina, there are at least four congregations in the immediate area. When one was in a Gospel Meeting, the others would turn out on Wednesday night to support that effort.

1. They could not have 200 people present.

2. However, one of them had the "Melody Boys Quartet" to come in and give a performance.

a. I was told that more than 400 people were present?

b. My question is why? Were they not present to be entertained?

c. Why would that many not be present to worship the God of heaven?

H. I did not agree to work with a congregation a number of years ago because they said that on occasion they would have a group from one of "our" colleges to perform.

1. Also, one of the elders said that he could sing any song with his guitar.

I. I predicted years ago that eventually groups would be used in the worship service, and sadly to say, that prediction has come true in many places.

CONCLUSION:

1. There is no authority for instruments of music in the worship of God.

2. As for group singing, such activities must come under the heading of worship or entertainment.

a. If entertainment, other songs should be sung. The church is not in the entertainment business.

b. If worship, all should participate.

3. If it is a teaching situation, the girls, women, and non-Christians are eliminated.

4. If we can have such on Sunday night or Wednesday night — why not Sunday morning?

5. Just because the "Amen" has been said, does that make the songs sung before the "Amen" any different than the songs sung after the "Amen?"

6. Why would it be wrong "in the church building," but right elsewhere?

7. These are questions that need to be honestly answered. When they are, such practices will cease.
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The Bride Of Christ, The Church

Charles Blair

1. John saw the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven and described it as a "...*bride adorned for her husband*" (Rev. 21:2).
2. The Bible uses different ways to describe the church and its relationship to man.
3. The idea of uniqueness could not find a better description than that of a husband and wife.
4. A man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife; there is no other woman in all the world for him (Gen. 2:24).
5. The church is separated out from the world to be one of a kind, there is no other like her.
6. In our study we shall strive to present "her" as the world is to see her and as she really is in God's eyes. May God bless our study together.

DISCUSSION:

I. WE BEGIN WITH THE NOBLE IDEA OF THE CHURCH BEING SET APART FROM THE WORLD:

- A. The church is sanctified by the Lord (Eph. 5:26).
 1. By definition, the idea of being sanctified is to be set apart for a special reason.
 2. The meaning for Christians is that we are set aside for a spiritual purpose.
 3. The Christian is to purge himself of the things of this world and by so doing, makes himself sanctified and meet for the Master's use (2 Tim. 2:21).
 4. Those who are in love with the world cannot be used by the Lord for the spiritual purpose planned by Him (1 John 2:15).
- B. The church is the individual members of the body of Christ, not the building (1 Cor. 12:20).

1. When the Lord sanctifies an individual, it is for the purpose of that individual being set apart from the world (1 Peter 3:15).
2. When the individual is set apart and he makes up the church, then the church is set apart from the world because of the members.
3. By the same token, if the members return back to the world they will affect how the world sees the church.

II. THE CHURCH, THE BRIDE OF CRUST, IS TO BE CLEANSED:

- A. No one would rationally contend for baptizing a building.
- B. We understand then, the cleansing of the church is brought about by the cleansing of the individual which makes up the church. Acts 22:16
- C. After we have become Christians, our task is still one of remaining clean. Gal. 5:7; 1 John 1:7-10
- D. The issue is not how "much" dirt the soul has on it in coming to Christ but rather the power of the Lord to remove whatever the "filth" is on the soul. Acts 2:38

III. ONCE THE CLEANSING HAS TAKEN PLACE AND ONE IS SANCTIFIED, THE LORD THEN SHOWS US HOW THE CHURCH IS PRESENTED:

- A. The church, the bride of Christ, is a showcase to the world of the power of the Lord and the affects He has on the souls of men.
 1. Oftentimes, the voice of the world becomes loud. It has a message of hate, anger, discouragement, resentment and a thousand others like it.
 2. The church is to be the voice of the Lord to counter-act the voice of the world (1 Tim. 3:15).
 3. The message which the church has to offer is one of life changing attitudes which leads to changed lives (Rom. 12-2).
 4. Members who listen to the world and live out that wisdom in their daily existence cannot be an agent of the Lord to counter-act the world.
 - a. James 3:14,15
 - b. 1 Cor. 3:1-3
 - c. Christians should never have the reputation of always creating strife and division where ever they go.

- B. The church, as presented or seen by the world, should be glorious.
 - 1. The Lord is shown as being the brightness of the glory of God (Heb. 1:3).
 - 2. Husband and wife are to become one.
 - 3. We, as the church should reflect the glory of Christ to a world that is in darkness and sin.
 - a. Col. 1:13; 2 Peter 1:19
 - 4. When we quit reflecting the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ it is because we are no longer walking in the light (1 John 1:6,7).
- C. The church (it's members) should not have spot, wrinkle or any such thing.
 - 1. We make no claims to being perfect, but rather forgiven.
 - 2. However, if we forget that and allow our souls to be stained by sin, we will bring that stain upon the bride of Christ. 2 Peter 1:9
 - 3. Think, why was it so important for the local congregations to maintain moral conduct, purity of life and spiritual concerns?
 - a. 1 Tim. 4:12 — *"...of the believers"*
 - b. Why is the warning given so quickly in the Revelation to the seven churches of Asia in chapters 2 and 3?
 - c. As the song says, "lest our dimness and neglect, keep some soul from its God."
- D. The church must be holy and without blemish.
 - 1. Under the Old Testament, sacrifices were to be without blemish. Lev. 1:3,10; 3:1,6
 - 2. Jesus Christ is the lamb of God which takes away sin (John 1:29).
 - 3. When we walk in His steps we are, by our lives, to be without blemish.
 - 4. No secret corner of our heart should be kept back from the Lord.
 - 5. We are to be daily sacrifices to God without blemish (Heb. 8:10).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. In the midst of a crooked world with no hope, the bride of Christ, the church, offers a way to live and a way out of sin and darkness.

2. We are God's instruments to destroy the effects of iniquity in the souls of men (Matt. 24:12).
 3. May we never forget "who" we are and "how" we are to live because the world is watching us and we are glad to show to the world, the bride of Christ, the church.
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Metaphors Of The Church

David Paden

1. Metaphor: A figure of speech in which a term that ordinarily designates a dissimilar object or idea is used to suggest a comparison or likeness between them.
2. We use metaphors most every day of our lives and don't even realize it.
 - a. He's stubborn as a mule.
 - b. He's mean as a snake.
 - c. Your head is hard as iron.
 - d. She's pretty as a peach.
3. Church defined:
 - a. Most people think of the church as a building, the place where we meet.
 - b. Webster defines church as, "A building for the public and especially for Christian worship."
 - c. The Bible teaches that "Christians" are the church. Acts 8:1; 9:1; 11:22; Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 12:27
 - d. Christians are God's sanctuary, not buildings. Acts 17:24; 1 Cor. 6:19
4. With these thoughts in mind, there are many metaphors of the church. What are some of them?

DISCUSSION:

I. HOUSEHOLD.

- A. The church is a household (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:19-22; Heb. 3:6; 10:21; 1 Cor. 3:9; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Peter 2:5).
- B. Household: Those who live under the same roof and compose a family. (Webster).
 1. A household is a family (Acts 16:15; 1 Cor. 1:16).
 2. The church is a family.

- a. God is our Father (Rom. 1:7).
- b. Christ is our older brother (Rom. 8:17).
- c. Christians are brothers and sisters in Christ (Gal. 3:26-27).
3. The rule of the house/family is "The Faith."
 - a. Paul preached the "Faith" which he once destroyed (Gal. 1:23).
 - b. It was the church which Paul sought to destroy (Acts 8:1,3; 9:1).

II. VINEYARD.

A. Vineyard.

1. A vineyard is usually a common grape vine.
2. Vineyards are spoken of throughout the Bible.
3. The first recorded account of a vineyard is in Gen. 9:20.

B. Facts about a vineyard.

1. Vineyards were usually surrounded with a protective wall of stones or thorny hedge to keep out destructive animals (Psa. 80:8-13; Prov. 24:30-31; Isa. 5:5).
2. Vineyards had a tower for the watchman (Isa. 5:1-2; Matt. 21:33).
3. Vines required constant care to keep them productive.
 - a. They were pruned every spring.
 - b. The ground was ploughed to keep it free of weeds.
 - c. Pruned branches were gathered and burned (John 15:6).
4. The harvest season was always one of happiness (Isa. 16:10; Jer. 48:33).

C. The church is spoken of as a vineyard (Matt. 20:1-6).

1. Christians must surround their lives with a protective wall (Prov. 4:23).
2. Christians must watch for evil.
 - a. We are watchmen (Ezek. 33:7-9).
 - b. We must warn of evil (Acts 20:31; 1 Cor. 4:14; 1 Thess. 5:14).
 - c. We must avoid evil (1 Thes. 5:22; 1 Cor. 15:33).
3. Christians need constant care so as to be productive.
 - a. We are to bear fruit (John 15:2).
 - b. How do we bear fruit? Constant study and application of God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15).
 - c. Neglecting to be productive will result in spiritual death (John 15:5-6).
4. Production of fruit brings joy to our hearts.

III. BRIDE.

- A. The bride is a concept we all understand.
 - 1. Where there is a bride, marriage has taken place.
 - 2. There are many things in marriage one must consider.
 - a. Marriage is a lifetime commitment (Matt. 19:6; Rom. 7:2). (Fornication is the only act which "permits" or authorizes a divorce, according to Matthew 19:9.)
 - b. A man is to have only one bride (Rom. 7:1-4).
 - c. A bride is to love her husband (Titus 2:4).
 - d. She wears his name.
 - e. She must be faithful (Matt. 19:9; Rom. 7:1-4).
- B. God's people are referred to as His bride (Jer. 3:14; Rom. 7:4).
 - 1. Christianity is a lifetime commitment (Phil. 3:13-14; 2 Tim. 4:6-8).
 - 2. There is only one bride (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).
 - 3. The church is to love Christ (John 14:15).
 - 4. The church is to wear the name of its husband (Acts 4:12; 1 Cor. 3:11).
 - 5. She must be faithful (Rev. 2:10).

IV. FAMILY.

- A. Things to consider.
 - 1. Families work together.
 - 2. Families stick together. (There is unity)
 - 3. Families support one another.
 - 4. Families take care of one another.
 - 5. Families love one another.
- B. The church is a family (1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 3:14-15).
 - 1. The church is to work together (1 Cor. 15:58).
 - 2. There is to be unity in the church (Psa. 133:1; John 17:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:10).
 - 3. Christians support one another (Heb. 3:13).
 - 4. Christians take care of one another (Acts 2:45; Rom. 15:26).
 - 5. Christians are to love one another (1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:14).

V. BODY.

- A. Consider the human body.
 - 1. The human body is composed of different parts.
 - 2. Each part has a particular function.

3. Every part of our body is needed. Even the smallest members are needed (Judges 1:6-7).
- B. The church is compared to the human body (1 Cor. 12:12-27, "*ye are the body of Christ*"; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4,16; Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27).
 1. The church is made up of all Christians in the world (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:27).
 2. Each member has different abilities (Matt. 25:15; Rom. 12:4).
 3. Every member is needed (1 Cor. 12:14-27).

VI. ARMY.

- A. Consider an army.
 1. An army consists of soldiers who are ready and able to defend and protect their country at all times.
 2. They know who the enemy is and what he is capable of doing.
 3. They are armed.
 4. They are prepared to go into battle at all times.
- B. The Bible speaks of the church as an army.
 1. Christians are soldiers (2 Tim. 2:3).
 2. We are involved in a war (1 Tim. 1:18).
 3. We have an armor we wear and a weapon we bear (Eph. 6:13-18).
 4. We are to fight and be ready to defend the truth at all times (1 Tim. 6:12; 1 Peter 3:15).
 5. We must realize who the enemy is and what he is capable of doing.
 - a. Our enemy is satan (1 Peter 5:8).
 - b. He is able to disguise himself (2 Cor. 11:13-14).
 - c. He wants to destroy us (Luke 22:31).

VII. KINGDOM.

- A. Kingdom defined: A country ruled by a king. An area in which one thing is dominate. (Webster).
- B. Four things necessary to constitute a kingdom.
 1. A king
 2. A territory
 3. Subjects
 4. A law
- C. The church is spoken of as a kingdom (Matt. 16:18-19; Mark 9:1).
 1. The church is a spiritual kingdom (John 18:36).

2. Our king is Christ (Luke 1:33; 1 Cor. 15:25-26).
3. The territory is within the hearts of men (John 18:36).
4. The subjects are those who are willing to be obedient to Jesus (Heb. 5:8-9).
5. The law is the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; Gal. 2:20).

VIII. TEMPLE.

A. 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21; cf. 1 Cor. 6:18-20

IX. PRIESTHOOD.

A. 1 Peter 2:5,9; cf. Rev. 1:6; 5:10;

CONCLUSION:

1. As we conclude, let us remember that Christians are the church.
 2. Thus, when we talk about metaphors and the uniqueness of the church, we are talking about Christians.
 3. Christians are unique and most important.
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The Bible School Program Of The Church

Don W. Tate

1. The Bible School program of the church is made up of many complicated parts that need to be investigated so to better deal with the subject properly. One of the first things to accept in regard to this subject is where to start. A very wise man of old gave us this valuable information.
 - a. Prov. 1:7, *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction."*
 - b. No human being in his/her right mind would desire to be known as a fool, but that is what one is when he despises wisdom and instruction. Why would anyone of any age want to be a fool?
2. Everyone involved in the Bible School program must respect God's authority and power. Without a respect for the Lord, the Bible School program is doomed from the beginning. Only when

people fear the Lord will knowledge begin to surface in the classroom.

3. Through the years, many unholy people have tried to stop God's Word from being shared. God's providential care has preserved His Word for us today and it will continue to endure for ever (1 Peter 1:25).
4. God allows us to study His will. One of the places where we are allowed to do this studying is where the church meets together. This type of study is often called a Bible School, Bible Class, or Bible Study.
5. One must remember that the Bible is God's Word and it is through His Word that one is taught, reproved, corrected, and instructed in what pleases God as being right in His sight (2 Tim. 3:16).
 - a. No human being will be perfect, complete, or mature without this information from God (2 Tim. 3:17). This is why the Bible School program is so vital for everyone's well-being.
 - b. We know that it is a sin for Christians not to assemble together (Heb. 10:25). How can one properly assemble together in worship without first acquiring the information necessary to know how to assemble properly in God's sight?
 - c. It is in the Bible School that we learn the fine details concerning worship and living the Christian life.
 - d. For one to refuse to come to Bible School is to show that he despises wisdom and instruction.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE HOME HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO FULFILL ITS PART SO AS TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL BIBLE SCHOOL PROGRAM.

- A. When the homes of a congregation are not right with God, then expect many problems. The apostle Paul wanted the brethren at Ephesus to understand how important the home was.
 1. Eph. 6:1-4, "*Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. ²Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; ³That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. ⁴And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*"
 2. Surely no one would claim that a father who takes his children to Bible School is acting foolish, but that he is

bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

- B. Moses was to instruct the people of Israel on how to raise their children (Deut. 6:4-9). The method of teaching was found in that wherever the child went, he should be taught about the Lord.
- C. Eli had 2 sons that he failed to teach properly. His sons were so sinful that Eli was being held responsible for their actions for he failed to restrain them (1 Samuel 3:13).
 - 1. If Eli was alive today and his children were too, then his children would be a Bible School teacher's nightmare. They would be the type that would be disruptive in class.
 - 2. Most teachers have had some children like Eli's children in their class.
- D. The Bible School program was never designed to take away from a parent's responsibility. It was designed to enhance or complement what was already being taught in the home.
 - 1. When a home is led by a fool, then the children will more than likely act foolish. Keep in mind a fool is one who despises wisdom and instruction, especially concerning the Lord (Prov. 1:7).
- E. Children who have been taught to respect God, more than likely will respect their parents in showing them honor. The child who obeys the parent and God will be blessed. But, blessings cannot come to the home when parents refuse to carry out God's will.

II. THE STUDENT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO FULFILL HIS/HER ROLE SO AS TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL BIBLE SCHOOL PROGRAM.

- A. There are some people you cannot teach due to their refusal to learn. James allows us to know what type of attitude is necessary in order to learn God's will.
 - 1. James 1:21-25, "...²²*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.* ²³*For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:* ²⁴*For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.* ²⁵*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth*

therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

2. One must lay aside anything that will hinder his ability to learn.
 - a. He must be ready to receive the Word of God.
 - b. He must be humble so to listen properly.
 - c. He must be ready to correct what he finds is in error in his life.
 - d. He must be willing to put to practice what he learns.
- B. Students, of whatever age, should not be just like a sponge that soaks in what is shared, but should also be required to put into practice what they learn. A teacher could have a special time in the class to find out who is practicing the Word of God.
 1. Did the student visit the sick or shut-ins? James 1:27
 2. Did the student take food to the needy?
 3. Did the student do a kind deed for someone?
 4. Did the student send a card to one with a problem?
 5. This list could be added to with many different categories, but no student should continue for a long period of time in a class without accepting his responsibility.

III. THE TEACHER HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO FULFILL HIS/HER ROLE SO AS TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL BIBLE SCHOOL PROGRAM.

- A. It takes study to rightly divide the Word of God so that you do not have to feel ashamed (2 Tim. 2:15).
 1. You will never know it all and sometimes you will be wrong in what you say. It happens to all teachers. Your studying should never end.
 2. When a teacher doesn't study, then he has no right to expect students under him to study either.
- B. There is no doubt that a teacher will be held responsible for what he teaches (James 3:1).
 1. If the teacher hasn't studied properly, he will be held accountable before God.
 2. Most congregations are looking for good teachers. Sometimes congregations will take people who not only are not qualified, but who aren't taking any means of getting qualified.
- C. There is an art to teaching. Paul instructed Timothy on that art (2 Tim. 2:23-26).

1. It is imperative that you avoid certain questions that are not designed to edify a class but instead cause division. You, as a teacher, must realize you are serving the Lord. You must use wisdom in your class.
 2. You must not be the type who likes to argue, but one who can be gentle to the students in showing patience.
 3. In all humility, you need to know that some of your students will be in the process of going down the wrong road. It is your responsibility to guide them back to the correct way.
- D. While you are dedicated in desiring to do your best; you need to know there is a hungry lion at the door of the class desiring to consume your students (1 Peter 5:8).
1. Your students are not the devil, even though some teachers may think some of them are acting like him.
 2. When you enter the classroom, have on your complete armour of God so you can stand against any of the tricks of the devil (Eph. 6:11).
 3. If you are teaching the adult class, you better have the Sword of the Spirit ready (Eph. 6:17). Children will disrupt a class due to ignorance or lack of discipline at home, but some adults have already given their lives to the devil and his service. Keep the sword ready!

IV. THE ELDERS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO FULFILL THEIR ROLE SO AS TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL BIBLE SCHOOL PROGRAM.

- A. If a congregation has elders, they better take charge of the Bible School program. That does not mean they cannot have someone in charge of that work who will continually report back to them.
1. Elders have the responsibility to protect the church from false teachers (Titus 1:9-10). Many times the false teacher begins his deceptive work in the Bible School classroom.
 2. Elders must be teachers themselves and be willing to take care of the church (1 Tim. 3:2-5). An elder who does not teach is like a father who does not teach his child. This is why one of the qualifications of an elder is that he must be "apt to teach" and that he rule his own house, for if he can't do that, he can't take care of the church.

- B. The Bible School program will make or break a congregation. If the wrong material is taught, then it will take years to get what was taught out of them and that is especially true in regard to the youth (Prov. 22:6).
1. The leaders of a congregation (in the absence of elders) must hold the teachers responsible for what they teach. Just because you have bought sound Bible School material doesn't mean that it is being taught the way it was intended.
 2. All the teachers must be double-checked on a regular basis. If you feel that by entering a classroom it would disrupt the class, then walk softly to the door and listen in.
- C. Students should be progressing just as if they were in a regular school system. You should have some a way to determine whether each child is maturing in God's Word.
1. When children are not maturing spiritually, then it is time for some special training sessions designed for that purpose.
 2. Jesus, at the age of 12, was listening and asking questions (Luke 2:46). If students are not listening and asking questions by the age of 12, the teaching program is in trouble.
 3. Hosea recorded that God's people were destroyed for their lack of knowledge concerning God's Word (Hosea 4:6). We cannot afford for the next generation to be destroyed due to our neglect.
 4. It would be a wise decision for those in the leadership capacity to sit down with God's Word in hand, and make a list of what the children should know and what the adult should. Start with the list and set out to correct the lack of knowledge.

CONCLUSION:

1. The Bible School program of one congregation can greatly determine the church of tomorrow. What one learns in a Bible School is often shared with other congregations as one moves from area to area.
2. If we would spend as much time on our Bible School program as we do on what the preacher teaches, then false doctrine from the pulpit would end. All of the audience would have been taught properly and would be able to convict the gainsayer.

Worship In Truth #2 Preaching, Praying, Giving

Paul Powers

1. Unique: Distinct; one of a kind; having its own identity; set apart.
 - a. Illustrated in 1 Cor. 14:7,8
 - b. The church is unique in design, organization, etc.
 - c. We would expect it to be unique in worship also.
2. A passion for uniqueness – a passion for conformity.
 - a. Uniqueness seen in names, clothing, furniture, etc.
 - b. Conformity seen in religion.
 - c. Great emphasis placed on the appearance of similarities in religion.
 - 1) Advertising styles – “Plain folks” and slice of life.
 - 2) Emphasize that the people you see in the ads are just like you and their lives are just like yours.
3. There are indeed similarities in the history of congregational worship.
 - a. Psa. 42:4; 1 Chron. 29:20 – Multitudes worshipping God.
 - b. Similarities declare the providence of God in leading us to proper worship in the New Testament.
4. A comparison of activities in congregational worship.

<u>TEMPLE</u>	<u>SYNAGOGUE</u>	<u>CHURCH</u>
Sacrificial Acts 2 Chron. 7:5		
Ceremonial Acts 2 Chron. 7:6		
	Scripture Reading Acts 13:15 Luke 4:16,17	
Public Prayer Deut. 6; Lk. 19:46	Public Prayer Matt. 6:5	Public Prayer 1 Tim. 2:1
Praise/Singing 2 Chron. 5:13	Singing	Singing Eph. 5:19

	Sermon Acts 13:15,16,42	Sermon Acts 20:7
Memorial Feasts Lev. 23		Memorial Matt. 26:26-29
Giving Mark 12:41	Alms Collected	Giving 1 Cor. 16:1,2

5. There are many similarities, but there are also many points of distinction in the worship of the church.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF PREACHING:

- A. Preaching in the Temple and Synagogue.
 1. The synagogue was the seat of Jewish learning – much teaching there.
 2. But the sermon became more devotional and the ceremony became more important than the doctrine.
 - a. The garments (Matt. 23:5).
 - b. The chief seats (Matt. 23:6; Luke 11:43; 20:46).
 - c. The membership standing (John 9:22; 12:42).
- B. Present day preaching among religions is characterized by entertainment – little by way of spiritual edification.
- C. How preaching is to be distinctive: It is regulated by truth.
 1. Preaching must defend the faith (Jude 3).
 2. Preaching must be from the Word only (2 Tim. 4:2).
 3. God must be the center of our preaching (Acts 3:16,18).
 4. Preaching must be specific (Acts 24:25).
- D. The authorized content of preaching:
 1. 1 Peter 4:11 – The oracles of God.
 2. Mark 16:15 – The Gospel (Rom. 1:15; 2 Cor. 9:14,16).
(Do not preach another gospel, Gal. 1:8)
 3. 2 Tim. 4:2 – The word.
 4. Luke 9:6 – The kingdom.
 5. Rom. 10:8 – The word of faith.
 6. 2 Cor. 4:5 – Christ.
 7. Col. 1:28 – Preach warnings.
 8. Rev. 4:16 – The everlasting Gospel.
 9. Acts 19:3 – Preach Jesus.
(Do not preach another Jesus, 2 Cor. 11:4).
 10. Gal. 1:23 – The faith.
 11. Eph. 2:17 – Preach peace.

12. 1 Cor. 1:18 – Preach the cross.
13. Rom. 15:19 – Preach fully.
14. Gal. 1:11 – Preach not after men.

II. THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF PRAYER:

- A. Prayer in the Temple and Synagogue.
 1. Characterized by inappropriate motives.
 2. Prayer was made to be seen of men (Matt. 6:5).
 3. Prayer was comprised by a long show of words and vain repetitions (Matt. 23:14).
- B. Present day prayer among the various religions.
 1. Chain prayers and memorized recitals – Participation in prayer events.
 2. Sensationalism – raised hands.
- C. How prayer in worship is to be distinctive: It is regulated by truth.
 1. 1 Tim. 2:8 – For all men, led by males (*andras*).
 2. Matt. 6:6 – Directed to the Father.
 3. 1 Tim. 2:5 – Through Christ our Mediator.
 4. Luke 18:1 – Frequent (Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2).
 5. James 5:15,16 – From a righteous person.
 6. 1 Cor. 14:14 – With the spirit and understanding.
 7. Mark 11:25 – With a forgiving spirit.

III. THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF GIVING:

- A. Giving in the Temple and Synagogue.
 1. Characterized by inappropriate motives.
 2. To be seen of men (Matt. 6:2).
 3. The amount regulated (Matt. 23:23).
- B. Present day giving among the various religions.
 1. Many methods of raising funds for the organization (Bake sales, car washes, etc.).
 2. No regulation for the use of money.
- C. How giving is to be distinctive: It is regulated by truth.
 1. The manner of giving is regulated – not the amount.
 - a. 1 Cor. 16:2 – As prospered.
 - b. 2 Cor. 9:7 – As purposed in heart.
 2. The use of the money is regulated – according to the authorized works of the church.

CONCLUSION:

1. If the church loses its distinctiveness/uniqueness, it ceases to be the New Testament church.

2. We must do all that is within our power and ability to maintain the distinctiveness of the church, including worship.
 3. If we hold to the truth of the New Testament, we will continue to be distinct, but if we depart from the doctrine therein, we will simply conform to the other religions around us.
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The Influence Of The Church The Salt And Light Of The World

Bill Crossno

DISCUSSION:

I. DEFINITION OF INFLUENCE.

A. A person has influence by his/her:

- 1) Ability (Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 4:1-8).
- 2) Personality (1 Peter 4:11, 16-19; 5:6-8).
- 3) Position (Rom. 1:16; 2 Tim. 2:15-18; 3:12-15).
- 4) Wealth (John 14:1-4; Rom. 6:18; Matt. 25:21,23).¹
- 5) Someone Should Have Taught Him...

I went to a birthday party, but I remembered what you said. You told me not to drink at all, so I had a Sprite instead. I felt proud of myself the way you said I would. That I chose not to drink and drive, though some friends said I should. I know I made a healthy choice, your advice to me was right.

As the party finally ended, and the kids drove out of sight, I got into my car sure to get home in one piece. Never knowing what was coming, something I expected least. Now I'm lying on the pavement. I can hear the policemen say, "The kid who caused the wreck was drunk." His voice seems far away. My own blood is all around me. As I try hard not to cry, I can hear the paramedic say, "The girl is going to die." I'm sure the guy had no idea while he was flying high, it is because he chose to drink and drive that I would have to die. So why do people do it knowing that it ruins lives?

Now the pain is cutting me like 100 stabbing knives. Tell my sister not to be afraid. Tell Daddy to be brave. When I go to heaven put "Daddy's Girl" on my grave.

Someone should have taught him it is wrong to drink and drive. If his mom and dad had taught him that it was wrong, I would still be alive. My breath is getting shorter, I'm getting really scared. These are my final moments, and I am so unprepared. I wish you could hold me Mom, as I lie here and die. I wish I could say, "I love you, and Good-bye."²

B. The church (every member) needs all of these personalities in his/her services today.

1. The church, God's one foundation.
 - a. Eph. 3:15; Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:1-4
 - b. Do you proudly wear His name or foolishly play in the devil's back yard.
2. The home, God's likeness.
 - a. A home without God is like a church without God.
 - b. Gen. 2:7-24; Matt. 19:3-9; Eph. 5:21-31; 6:1-4.
 - c. How precious is God's family to Him? How precious is God to me?
3. Schools (Matt. 5:13-16; Phil. 2:5-11).
 - a. Will I continue to go to God's school and learn His ABC's and grow up to add His 1,2,3's?
 - b. Joseph, Daniel, Timothy and Titus walked the narrow way.
4. Society no longer blushes but plunges head on into the darkest hour of sin and destruction (Matt. 16:24-26; James 1:13-27).

C. Jesus did not lay aside doctrine.

1. Matt. 7:21-27; John 12:48; 2 John 9-11
2. We cannot turn to the right hand nor left.
 - a. Deut. 5:32; Joshua 1:7; Prov. 4:27
3. Ezekiel said, "on they went everyone straight forward."
4. John 17:20-21
5. Boiling the Frog

While I have never seen it demonstrated, I have heard (as I am sure you have) that you can put a frog in hot water and it will immediately hop out. I am also told that you can put a frog in cold water; turn the heat on low and increase the heat very slowly and you can boil the frog and he will make no attempt to jump. The temperature changes so gradually that the frog does

not realize the danger until it is too late. I believe the decent people of America are being "boiled" today by the news media, abortion advocates, gay rights movements, the crime elements, television, living together without marriage proponents, and a host of other "rights" movements. Things which the general public would not have tolerated just a few years ago are being done now on a daily basis and hardly an eyebrow is raised by anyone. A few years ago a man and a woman living together without being married was a disgrace to the family and community. The man was referred to as a "no good bum" and the woman was "trash." Today, they are business and community leaders, civic leaders, government officials, school teachers, lawyers, doctors, and other professional people. They are generally accepted everywhere, even by many religious organizations. Homosexuals or gays were known a few years ago by another name which we will not print here. But one which I believe better describes their plight. The word "gay" is certainly not descriptive of their condition. However, today they are accepted by almost all of society. States are being pressured to allow them to marry and even to adopt children. They fill the pulpits in some religions today. My, how a few years change things. It is amazing how the public accepts changes when they come about so gradually. See, we are being "boiled." Look at television and the movies — years ago curse words were rarely used (remember Clark Gable in "Gone With the Wind"?). Nudity was strictly frowned upon. Today, not only is nudity and foul language rampant in movies, it is also showing on television — television which our children watch daily. Notice also the sexual references, even on the comedy programs, complete with laughter to make it seem innocent. Some programs are now being listed as "viewer discretion" and/or "not suitable for small children." We have come a long way since "Mayberry RFD" and "The Brady Bunch," haven't we? But it has been gradual and the general public has accepted it. Today our schools spend a great portion of their time policing rather than educating. Just recently the school board in Memphis, Tennessee, voted to put metal detectors in all schools. Grade school children

are carrying knives, guns and other weapons to school. Makes you wonder about their training at home, doesn't it? Seems the Golden Rule, "Do Unto Others As Ye Would Have Them Do Unto You" has been changed to "Do Unto Others Before They Do Unto You." Drugs can be purchased almost anywhere, including our schools. We have councils, conferences and a host of other things to combat violence and drugs. Laws are enacted to prevent pro and anti-abortion foes from bloodshed. Billions of dollars are appropriated by Congress to try and bring moral decency back to this country. None of our political leaders seem to be able to come up with a solution. Well, you and I know the answer to all the problems we have been discussing and it is so very, very simple: TURN THIS NATION BACK TO GOD! Study and learn God's Word and apply it in all situations. Put husband and wife back at the head of the family in the roles God has ordained for them. Let the family be in worship each time there is the opportunity. Make Bible study a standard in every home. Quit looking the other way. Stop blaming the system and society for our woes. Each person must be accountable for his/her conduct. We are at the point now where Israel was when Isaiah said they were calling good evil and evil good (Isaiah 5:20). These changes have come about so gradually that our pre-school and grade school children will think of them as normal rather than abnormal. God's Word can provide the answers to our dilemma and it must be applied. We must stop ignoring the gradual, but great changes that America is now facing. We must stop being "boiled!"³

II. HOW THE CHURCH INFLUENCES OTHERS.

A. The church has a great and awesome responsibility.

1. It is to be a teacher at home and abroad.
2. Jesus taught, in Matthew 5:1-16...

¹"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: ²And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, ³Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. ⁵Blessed are the meek: for they

shall inherit the earth. ⁶Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. ⁷Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. ⁸Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. ⁹Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. ¹⁰Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. ¹²Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. ¹³Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. ¹⁴Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

B. Salt was common then as now.

1. It was used for a condiment (something to give flavor.)
2. Some food does not taste good without salt or a substitute. Job 6:6

C. Salt was also used as an Antiseptic.

1. Ezekiel 16:4
2. When a child, salt was used in the home where I grew up as an antiseptic.

D. Salt was used in religious sacrifices in Old Testament times. Ezek. 43:24

E. It is also a preservative. Rom. 12:18; Eph. 4:29; Heb. 12:14

III. SALT IS A POSITIVE FORCE.

A. Its presence or absence cannot be ignored.

1. Its presence is *usually* highly welcome.
 - a. Where Christ and Christians are welcome in God's kingdom – the church which Christ purchased with His own blood so that none would perish, 2 Peter 3:9.
2. Its presence is *sometimes* keenly resented.
 - a. Coffee, ice cream, etc.

- b. Where Christ and Christians are not welcome.
- B. Disciples of Christ cannot be ignored.
 - 1. John 8:31-32; Matt. 28:19-20
 - 2. Jesus was either hated intensely or loved dearly.
 - a. John 19:6; Mark 12:44
 - b. The presence of the disciples was either welcome or resented.
 - 1) Paul (2 Cor. 11:22-28).
 - 3. A king asked his daughters how much they loved him.
 - a. The youngest said, "like salt." Matt. 22:37-40
- C. The Lord and His word may not seem palatable to the world (John 12:48 John 3:35; 5:27).
 - 1. We who have tasted the good word and know that the Lord is gracious are to so live that others will better appreciate the word.
 - a. *¹⁴"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is heaven" (Matt. 5:14-16).*
 - b. Matt. 10:37-39; Luke 14:26; 19:10
- D. A little boy was asked to define salt.
 - 1. He said, "It makes you thirsty."
 - a. Matt. 5:6; 6:33; 1 Tim. 4:13,16; 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Peter 1:5-8
 - 2. Our lives should create thirst for the water of life.
 - a. John 4:13-14; 6:35
 - b. Jesus' life creates a desire for a better life.
 - 1) Acts 2:37-42,47; 5:14
- E. Christians preserve the world in at least two ways.
 - 1. Teaching (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; 2 Tim. 2:2).
 - 2. Influence (Heb. 11:24-25; Col. 3:16-17).
 - a. For salt to preserve it must make contact.
 - b. Rom. 1:16; Gal. 3:28
- F. There is a great need for salt and light in this wicked world today.
 - 1. *¹⁹"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, ²⁰Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, ²¹Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I*

tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).

- a. The Gospel salt is needed against lasciviousness, uncleanness, adultery and fornication.
- b. It is needed against morality in general.
2. In some cases, a young person's worst problem is his/her parents. We are concerned with Christian parents and children.
 - a. Christian adults
 - b. Rebellion
 - c. Gambling
 - d. TV and movies
 - e. Drugs, alcohol
 - f. Satanism
 - g. Marriage, divorce and remarriage, common law mates
 - h. Tobacco
 - i. Pornography
 - j. Immodesty
3. We make the world go around and around and around for whom? God? Or man? Matt. 7:13-14

IV. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THERE IS NOT ENOUGH SALT AND LIGHT?

A. Spoilage

1. This was so in the days of...
 - a. Adam (Gen. 2-3).
 - b. Judas Iscariot (Luke 22:3).
 - c. Noah (Gen. 6-7).
 - d. Today's Christians (so called) — Marriage, divorce and remarriage (Matt. 19:3-9).
 - e. Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19; Rom. 1:18-32).
 - f. 1 Cor. 6:9-11

B. Salt preserves at the expense of itself.

1. 2 Cor. 8:9; Eph. 5:25; Luke 22:42
2. Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:44-48

C. If we lose our influence, what then?

1. Deterioration. 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 4:10
2. Drift.
 - a. Prodigal son (Luke 15:11-24).
 - b. Elder brother (Luke 15:25-32).

D. How can we maintain our saltiness?

1. *"Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man"* (Col. 4:6). cf. 1 Peter 3:15
2. *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto god, which is your reasonable service. ²And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God"* (Rom. 12:1-2).
3. *¹"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: ²That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. ³The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; ⁴That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. ⁶Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. ⁷In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, ⁸Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. ⁹Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; ¹⁰Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. ¹¹For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, ¹²Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world: ¹³Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; ¹⁴Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works"* (Titus 2:1-14).

ENDNOTES

¹Thorndike and Barnhill Comprehensive Desk Dictionary, p. 140

²Someone Should Have Taught Him, author unknown

³Boiling the Frog By Doyle Stover, Deacon and Educational Director, Stage Road Church of Christ.

The Organization Of The Church

G. W. Childs

1. Some church organizations are not found in Scripture.
 - a. There is an Empire type organization that is in use.
 - 1) The pope's position is equal to that of the Emperor of Rome.
 - 2) Cardinals are equal to Roman senators.
 - 3) Archbishops, bishops, and priests had their counterparts in the Roman system.
 - b. Some churches have a monarchy—a one person headship.
 - 1) The preacher is often the head of the church.
 - 2) He may own the property.
 - 3) He sets his own salary.
 - 4) All the major decisions are made by the preacher or monarch.
 - 5) Free wheeling, Pentecostal type preachers operate by this system.
 - c. Other churches have an oligarchy system.
 - 1) This is a rule by a select few, usually elite, people.
 - 2) The Mormon Church with its 12 apostles is a good example of an oligarchy.
 - 3) Views of the majority are not considered in this kind of system.
 - d. A democratic organization is used by some churches.
 - 1) This is rule by the majority.
 - 2) Decisions are made usually by popular vote.
 - 3) The views of the minority are obviously ignored in this kind of system.
 - 4) Baptist churches usually have this type of organization.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **WHAT WAS THE EARLIEST ORGANIZATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH?**
 - A. The church is an absolute monarchy.

1. Jesus is the monarch—the only head (Eph. 1:22-23).
2. He owns the church (Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28).
3. He made all the rules (Matt. 28:18-20).
4. He is in total control.
5. The headquarters of this monarchy are in heaven where Jesus is (Rev. 3:21).
- B. There were 12 apostles who were hand picked by Jesus (Matt. 10:2-4).
 1. Their primary work was to preach the Gospel throughout the world (Mark 16:15-16).
 2. They confirmed their work with various types of miracles which cannot be duplicated today (Heb. 2:3-4).
- C. The New Testament church also had prophets.
 1. There were prophets in the New Testament as well as the Old Testament.
 2. Their primary work was that of preaching the Gospel.

II. WHAT WAS (AND IS) THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH?

- A. There were "ELDERS" (*presbuteros*) (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1-3).
 1. What is the Greek background meaning of the word "elder?"
 - a. Ancient Greek literature shows it was a word used to indicate greater age, especially of men.
 - b. It was a term of venerability growing out of wisdom associated with age.
 - c. The word was a favorite in ethical teaching regarding honor which was due age.
 - d. It was used as a political title for college presidents, ambassadors, assembly of magistrates, advisors, committee members of associations and guilds (secular and religious), and elected agents of a village council who had administrative and judicial duties (Lothar Coenen, *DNTT*, I, p. 189).
 - e. At times, it was also used of heads of a group of men in a guild.
 - f. In ancient Greek literature, the only time this word "elder," or "*presbuteros*," had any specific ages attached to it, the ages were 45, 35, and 30 (Gunter Bornkamm, *TDNT*, VI, p.653).
 2. The term "elder" was used extensively in the Old Testament. What did it mean there?

- a. The Hebrew word was "zagen," which is from "zaqan," meaning "beard." (J.P.L., *TWOT*, I, p. 249)
- b. The use of the term probably grew out of the ancient patriarchal heads of the tribes of Israel. In this case, age was the primary factor. However, it was also used as a term of comparison in age, even of young children—so the meaning of eldest.
- c. Elders (plural) was a technical term which occurs 100 plus times in the Old Testament (Brown, Driver, & Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 278).
 - 1) These were men who had authority to execute certain responsibilities.
 - 2) There were elders among the Israelites.
 - 3) However, the Egyptians, Babylonians, Moabites, Midianites, Gibeonites, and Hittites had their elders, too.
- d. Early in Israel's history there were "elders of Israel" (Exodus 3:16; 18:12). Martin Noth regards the "elders of Israel" as the real leaders of the people during the Exodus, but they were overshadowed by the powerful figure, Moses (*A History of the Pentateuchal Traditions*, p. 175-88).
 - 1) They witnessed Moses striking the rock (Exodus 17:5-7).
 - 2) Israel's elders became counselors, perhaps beginning with Moses selecting men to help him judge and counsel (Exodus 18:21-25).
 - 3) They dealt with cases while Moses was on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:14).
 - 4) Elders put their hands on the head of sin offerings when the whole congregation had sinned (Lev. 4:15).
 - 5) At the tent of meeting, they received the Spirit (Num. 11:16,24-25).
 - 6) The fate of Dathan and Abiram was observed by 25 elders (Num. 16:25).
 - 7) Ten elders made up a deciding body for a city (Ruth 4:2).
- e. Elders of Israel had a leading role among the people in Canaan.

- 1) Elders stood with the Judges before the ark of the covenant as the law was read (Josh. 8:33; cf. 23:2; 24:1).
- 2) The tribes, like Judah, had their elders (1 Sam. 30:26).
- 3) It was the elders of Israel who requested a king of Samuel (1 Sam. 8:4).
- f. The elders maintained a powerful influence after Israel became a kingdom.
 - 1) The choice of a king rested with them, so David made a covenant with them before they anointed him at Hebron (2 Sam. 5:3).
 - 2) Absalom won their favor (2 Sam. 17:4, 15).
 - 3) David returned to rule after Absalom's revolt only when the "elders of Judah" had given him permission (2 Sam. 19:11).
 - 4) Elders continued to be an advisory body to the kings in later history, and they retained independent authority (1 Kings 20:7; 21:8).
 - 5) Josiah called them for the reading of the newly discovered law (2 Kings 23:1).
 - 6) Elders remained influential during the exile and afterwards (Jer. 29:1; Ezek. 8:1; 14:1; Ezra 10:8, 14).
- g. Therefore, "elder" came to have a dual Old Testament meaning: 1) age, and 2) executives who had the responsibility to counsel the people, judge in small matters, advise kings, and lead their communities.
- h. However, the Old Testament does not specify the age required to qualify one to be a "*zagen*," or the details of appointment to this group.
3. What were the meaning and role of elders in the New Testament?
 - a. It is used of age, as in "The elder shall serve the younger" (Rom. 9:12), and "Rebuke not an elder" (1 Tim. 5:1)
 - b. There are numerous references in Matt. 26; 27, and Acts 4-6 to Jewish elders in conjunction with chief priests and scribes as part of the Sanhedrin. They were enemies of Christ, the apostles, and early Christians.

- c. In the middle part of Acts, chapters 11-16, elders and apostles work together.
- d. From the middle of Acts through 1 Peter 5:1, elders are those who are appointed to care for Christians in local churches.
 - 1) Elders were to be "ordained... in every church" (Acts 14:23) or local congregation. The scope of their work was local.
 - 2) They were to "*take heed*" to themselves and the flock (Acts 20:28).
 - 3) They were also to take the oversight of the flock or members "*among them*" (1 Peter 5:2).
 - 4) Elders are expected to "rule well" (1 Tim. 5:17).
 - 5) Hebrew Christians were reminded that elders "*watch for your souls*" (Heb. 13:17). That's perhaps the gravest responsibility elders have.
 - 6) Elders "*must give account*" of the souls under their care (Heb. 13:17). It's serious business!
4. Elders are also called "bishops" (*episcopos*) in the New Testament.
 - a. How is "*episcopos*" used in non-Biblical Greek?
 - 1) The word is best rendered "overseer" or "watch."
 - 2) "Episcopos" developed a twofold usage among ancient Greeks.
 - a) "In Greek *episcopos* is first used a. With a free understanding of the 'on looker' as 'watcher,' 'protector,' 'patron'" (Herman W. Beyer, *TDNT*, II, pp. 608-609). It came to mean "a gracious looking down upon the one protected and in care of him" (Beyer, p. 609).
 - b) Then, it came "to be used b. as a title to denote various offices. The official activities thus described vary, and are usually not too important." In this sense it had no religious significance, but was used of secular appointments with technical and financial responsibilities (Beyer, p. 609).
 - 3) Later, Greek gods were called "bishops" (*episcopoi*).
 - a) They were regarded as watchers over the good and evil which befell man.
 - b) They were thought to serve as protectors and even avengers of evil deeds.

- c) Each god had his own sphere of protection, oversight, and retribution.
- 4) People could serve as "bishops" in various circumstances in Greek society.
 - a) In this case, they were looked upon as watchers or scouts in different ways.
 - b) They might be watchers who guarded a corpse, women who oversaw young married couples, captains of ships, or masters of a house.
- 5) "Bishop" was also the designation of Office in ancient Greece.
 - a) In Athens during the 4th and 5th centuries B.C., "bishop" was the title for state officials. These were supervisors who gave attention to public order and avoidance of friction with Athens.
 - b) In other places, these men served like secret police.
 - c) More commonly, these "bishops" were local officials or officers who primarily acted as supervisors in their local areas. They supervised such matters as relief of the poor of a city.
- b. Were there "bishops" in Judaism?
 - 1) The Greek Septuagint Version of the Old Testament uses "bishop" in a single reference to refer to God (Job 20:29). The Roman numerals LXX refer to the Septuagint.
 - 2) Men are also referred to as "bishops" in the Greek Old Testament, but with no reference to a clearly defined office. It is used as "overseer" in several different ways.
 - a) Officers are called "bishops" in the LXX (Num. 31:14).
 - b) Eleazer was an "overseer" or "bishop" of the whole tabernacle, including oil for light and anointing, sweet incense, and daily meal offerings (Num. 4:16).
 - c) "Bishops" refers to overseers in the repair of the temple (2 Chron. 34:12).

- d) The great men of Benjamin are called overseers or "bishops," too, in the time of Nehemiah (Neh. 11:14).
- c. What is the meaning of "bishop" in the New Testament?
- 1) While the word came to have great significance in the history of Christianity, it is used only five times in the New Testament (W. F. Moulton, A. S. Geden, & H. K. Moulton, *Concordance to the Greek Testament*, p. 370-1).
 - 2) A "bishop" is "a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian, or superintendent" (J. H. Thayer, *Greek English Lexicon of the N. T.*, p. 243).
 - 3) Christ himself is called the "Bishop" of our souls (1 Peter 2:25). Here, the idea of "one who watches" is the meaning.
 - 4) Twice the word is used of those men who will do the work of, or function as, "bishops" (1 Tim. 3:1; Titus 1:7). The qualifications for elders or bishops are given in both of those contexts.
 - 5) Paul mentions "bishops" in his letter to the Philippians (Phil. 1:1).
 - 6) The other time "bishop" appears in the New Testament it is translated "overseers," which tells something about the work they are to do.
 - 7) "There was in apostolic times no distinction between elders (presbyters) and bishops such as we find from the second century onwards: the leaders of the Ephesian church are indiscriminately described as elders, bishops (*i.e.* superintendents) and shepherds (or pastors)" (F. F. Bruce, "The Book of Acts," *The New International Commentary On The New Testament*, p. 415).
 - 8) Acts 20:17, 28 provide examples of the above usages. Paul met with elders v.17, and in v.28 those elders are called "overseers" (bishops), and they are told to "feed" (pastor) the church.
 - 9) Bishops, then, have the responsibility to "watch" for the souls under their care, for they must give an account of those souls (Heb. 13:17). This is a

serious and weighty matter which is not to be taken lightly.

- 10) Bishop is never used of those roaming preachers, or apostles who were on the move, but it refers to those men who watched for souls in a local congregation.
5. The word "pastor" (shepherd) is also used of elders. It is never used specifically for preachers. Only when a preacher is serving in a dual role as preacher/elder is he a "pastor," according to biblical usage.
 - a. The noun "pastor" (*poimen*) appears some 16 times in the New Testament, but is translated "pastor" only once (Eph. 4:11). It is usually translated "shepherd."
 - b. The verb "*poimaino*" is used six times in the New Testament and is usually translated "feed" when used of elders (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2).
 - c. Pastor, or shepherd, has a rich background in the Old Testament, where it occurs 160 times. The verb form "*raah*" means "I, pasture, tend, graze" (William White, *TWOT*, II, p. 852.).
 - d. According to White, the word is used as far back as 2300 B.C., in the time of Sargon, as an honorific title in royal names and inscriptions.
 - e. "From very ancient antiquity, rulers were described as demonstrating their legitimacy to rule by their ability to 'pasture' their people" (White, p. 853).
 - f. In the Old Testament, it is God who feeds his people (Gen. 48:15; Psa. 23:1).
 - g. Jeremiah and Ezekiel rebuke the shepherds or pastors in Israel who are failing to guide and feed the people spiritually (Jer. 23:1; 25:34; Ezek. 34:2, 8).
 - h. The Old Testament picture of good shepherds who feed and care for their sheep is brought over into the New Testament (John 10:11,14,16; 21:16; Heb. 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25).
 - i. The word is also used to refer to shepherds of literal sheep in the New Testament (Luke 2:8).
 - j. Therefore, the words "elder," "bishop" and "pastor" are used interchangeably in the New Testament.
- B. There were also "DEACONS" in the New Testament church (Phil. 1:1).

1. What function did these people serve in the early church?
2. The word "deacon" comes from the Greek word "*diakonos*."
3. It is translated "deacon," "minister" and "servant" in our English Bibles.
 - a. Another word, "*doulos*," is also translated servant at times, but it means a slave.
 - b. "*Diakonos*" represents a servant "in his activity *for the work*" and not a servile or slave relationship to an owner. His service is rendered freely (R. C. Trench, *Synonyms Of the N.T.*, p. 32.)
4. The word "*diakonos*" is used in a variety of circumstances.
 - a. It refers to "waiters at meals" (John 2:5, 9).
 - b. "Servants of masters" are identified by this word (Matt. 22:13; John 12:26; Mark 9:35).
 - c. In a figurative sense, it refers to servants of Satan (2 Cor. 11:14-15).
 - d. The word is used of "ministers of Christ" (usually apostles) (2 Cor. 6:3; 11:23).
 - e. Timothy (1 Tim. 4:6), Epaphras (Col. 1:7) and Tychicus (Col. 4:7) are also ministers.
 - f. Secular authorities are also "ministers of God" (Rom. 13:1-4).
 - g. Paul (Col. 1:25), and Apollos (1 Cor. 3:5) are spiritual "ministers of God."
 - h. Finally, "*diakonos*" is used of a group of men who must meet specific qualifications in order to serve the church (1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12).
 - i. What kind of work did these selected deacons do?
 - 1) It seems the first ones chosen "served tables" (Acts 6:1-4).
 - 2) However, one of those selected, Philip, is seen preaching in Samaria (Acts 8:5ff).
 - 3) Therefore, deacons were not limited to physical or secular type work, but served in any capacity that was needed, in keeping with their abilities.
 - j. In the church today, all servants or ministers serve under the elders, bishops, or pastors.
- C. The **MEMBERS** of a local body or congregation are under the elders, too.
 1. They serve in any capacity requested by the eldership.

2. Naturally, they serve in areas in which they are scripturally qualified.

CONCLUSION:

1. In religion, it's important to worship the right God and Savior.
 2. It's also necessary to obey the right plan of salvation.
 3. Furthermore, it's important for the church to have the kind of scriptural organization set forth in the New Testament. We have no right to change it to fit our own notions or thinking.
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Respect For Bible Authority And The Church

Gary McDade

The church of Christ at East Corinth is to be commended for the timeliness of the theme of this year's lectureship: "The Uniqueness of the Church." While others are striving for cultural relevance, it is refreshing to know there are brethren who are upholding the Word of God as the transcendent source for all spiritual guidance and authority. In order for members of the human family to enjoy the proposed blessings of an eternal abode with God, men and women must discover, cultivate, develop, maintain, and cherish a sacred and solemn "respect for Bible authority and the church of Christ."

DISCUSSION:

- I. **MAY WE BEGIN OUR STUDY BY STRIVING TO EMPHASIZE THE SURPASSING IMPORTANCE OF THE WORD OF GOD.**
 - A. The worlds were framed by it. Heb. 11:3; 2 Peter 3:5
 - B. It will not return unto God void. Isa. 55:8-11
 - C. It gives understanding. Psalms 119:169
 - D. It guides. Psalm 73:24
 - E. It is alive and powerful. Heb. 4:12
 - F. Believers are born again by it. 1 Peter 1:23
 - G. It is able to save the soul. James 1:21
 - H. It is forever settled in heaven. Psalm 119:89

- I. It thoroughly furnishes unto every good work. 2 Tim. 3:17
- J. It is supported by the church which is the pillar and ground of the truth. 1 Tim. 3:15
- K. It is the standard in judgment. John 12:48; Rev. 20:12-15

II. A KEY WORD IN THIS STUDY IS "AUTHORITY."

- A. The word means: "The right, power, to sanction, commissioned, certified, to ratify, the okay, to be legal."
- B. The word does not mean "ability."
- C. A text for this study will be Matthew 21:23-27 which reads: *²³And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority? ²⁴And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? ²⁶But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. ²⁷And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."*

III. AUTHORITY IN RELIGION TODAY MUST:

- A. Originate with God. Psalms 68:11; John 7:16,17; 8:29; 12:49, 50
- B. Be ordained by God. 2 Tim. 4:2; Isaiah 55:11
- C. Be ordered by God. 1 Peter 4:11; Jonah 3:2

IV. ORIGATION OF DIVINE AUTHORITY HAVING BEEN ESTABLISHED, NEXT WE LOOK FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF THE TEXT.

- A. Divine authority was with the teaching and preaching of Jesus. Matt. 21:23; 28:18-20
- B. A demanded answer exposed the enemies of Jesus. Matt. 21:24-26; John 7:46
- C. A dethroned adversary was silenced. Matt. 21:27; 1 Peter 2:15; Titus 1:9-11

V. THE APPLICATION OF THE TEXT BRINGS TO LIGHT THE OBSERVATION THAT THERE ARE WRONG

AUTHORITIES ACCORDING TO TRADITIONS AND THERE IS THE RIGHT AUTHORITY ACCORDING TO TRUTH.

A. The corrupt ways. Prov. 16:25

1. Feeling or inner consciousness. Gen. 27,37; Phil. 3:3; Acts 23:1
2. Forefathers and families. Gal. 1:13,14; Luke 14:26; Matt. 10:34-39
3. Majority. 2 Peter 2:1,2; Matt. 7:13
4. Manuals of mankind. Rom. 10:1-4, Col. 2:22, Mk. 7:7-9
5. Visions and dreams. Jer. 23:28
6. Some soul searching questions need to be answered to expose corrupt standards of authority like: "What did you believe and obey to be saved?" "Why are you a member of that church?" "What are you doing in worship to God?"

B. The correct way is the Messiah's message. John 8:32; Col. 3:17; Gal. 3:21; 6:2; 2 John 9-11

VI. THE LACK OF RESPECT FOR THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS APPALLING AND EMERGES FROM SEVERAL SOURCES.

- A. Ignorance of the authority of the Bible. Hosea 4:6; Acts 17:30,31
- B. Affinity with the denominational concept of the church. 1 Sam. 8:6; 2 Cor. 6:16-18
- C. Identity with the absence of conviction prevalent in religion today. Jer. 6:16; Mark 8:38
- D. Rejection of the work of the pioneer preachers and powerful polemicists of the former generation who were "set for the defense of the gospel." 1 Cor. 11:1
- E. The virtual abandonment of sound doctrine within institutions of higher learning associated with the church of Christ as evidenced by the increased use of false teachers and heretics on their lectureships and special series. Rom. 16:17
- F. The establishment of denominational churches, i.e., the Community Church, by institutions of higher learning like the Harding Graduate School of Religion and the six Community Churches in Memphis under the support, guidance, and leadership of the new dean, Everett Huffard. 2 Tim. 4:10; Jer. 10:23; 1 Cor. 14:34,40

- G. The attitude of denial and non-involvement present within many informed elderships. 1 Tim. 3:5, 1 Peter 5:2; 2:17
- H. The lack of distinctive preaching. 2 Tim. 4:2
- I. Congregational selfishness for social programs in the place of Biblical evangelism. Matt. 28:18-20
- J. The discarding of Gospel meetings by local congregations due to the Devil's lie that they do no good. Isa. 55:8-11

VII. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS THE INSTRUMENT OF THE GLORIFICATION OF GOD FOR ALL TIME. Eph. 3:21

- A. The church belongs to Christ because He purchased it with His blood. Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25
- B. The church of Christ does not belong to any man or group of men who think they may emphasize certain aspects of it to the omission of others. Acts 20:26
- C. The name "church of Christ" is eminently Scriptural. Rom. 16:16
 - 1. Imagine, if a Presbyterian could find the name of his church in the Bible, oh how he would stress and emphasis that point.
 - 2. The church of Christ has a very strong point of Truth here that is seldom pressed by preachers of the Gospel today.
- D. The church of Christ is not a part of God's scheme of redemption; it is God's scheme of redemption. Eph. 3:9-11

CONCLUSION:

- 1. The authoritative Word of God insists that a lost humanity respect and obey its teaching in order to enjoy the salvation which is in Christ Jesus.
 - 2. Those who love and respect the church of Christ will hold it up before the world so that the manifold wisdom of God may be seen by all.
 - 3. Among accountable souls, only those who are members of the church of Christ will be saved (Rev. 19:6-9).
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The Pillar And Ground Of The Truth

1 Tim. 3:15

Terry Joe Kee

1. Timothy was perhaps a convert of Paul as Paul refers to him as his son. 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 2:2.
 - a. Timothy was a native of Lystra (Acts 16:1-3).
 - b. He was one who had been instructed by his mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14,15).
2. This young evangelist has remained with the church in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3).
3. Two main themes seem to permeate the book:
 - a. Paul is concerned with false teachers, especially among the Jews, who are wreaking havoc on the church, who are desiring to hold to a part of the law.
 - b. This epistle also seems to express the need to emphasize the nature and work of the church and Timothy's responsibility as an evangelist.
4. Paul's letter to Timothy emphasizes the following.
 - a. Chapter One warns the church against false teachers.
 - b. Chapter Two emphasizes the Christian's responsibility to civil leaders, to God, to one another and to worship.
 - c. Chapter Three emphasizes the need for the church to be scripturally organized.
 - d. Chapter Four again warns of false doctrines infiltrating the church and how we fight against them.
 - e. Chapter Five emphasizes the church's benevolent duty toward widows indeed.
 - f. Chapter Six warns against those things which could bring strife into the body of Christ.
5. In the midst of this warning and encouragement is our text, 1 Tim. 3:15.

DISCUSSION:

I. THREE THEORIES CONCERNING 1 TIM. 3:15.

- A. It is suggested by some that Paul's address to Timothy indicates how he is to behave himself in the church and that Timothy is "the pillar and ground of the truth."
 1. Arguments are made to try to link this passage with Galatians 2:9 where James, Peter and John are referred to as "pillars" in the church.

2. For this to be the case one would have to change the "which" to "who" and rewrite the verse to say, "who is the pillar and ground of the truth."
- B. The most common argument is to take this passage and emphasize the need for the church to uphold the Truth in the world.
 1. Albert Barnes says, "Thus it is with the church. It is entrusted with the business of maintaining the truth, of defending it from the assaults of error, and of transmitting it to future times. The truth is, in fact, upheld in the world by the church. The people of the world feel no interest in defending it, and it is to the church of Christ that it is owing that it is preserved and transmitted from age to age."
 2. This interpretation leads one to believe that the Truth is dependent upon the church. Barnes later says, "the stability of the truth on earth is dependent on the church."
 3. Truth does not originate with the church. This is the Roman Catholic argument that the church determines truth and it is the church that reveals and maintains truth.
 4. This simply cannot be, because the Truth is the Truth and is not dependent upon anyone. Nor is it dependent upon a council, a pope, or the church in whole or in part.
- C. This passage teaches that the church itself is the pillar and ground of the truth. The church is the full revelation of God's Truth as seen and revealed.
 1. This parallels Paul's passage to the Ephesians when he says "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10).
 - a. This passage is not saying that the church is to express the manifold wisdom of God, but that the church is the manifold wisdom of God.
 - b. By seeing and understanding the church, the kingdom of God, one sees and understands the manifold wisdom of God.
 2. Our text says that the church is the pillar and ground of the Truth.
 - a. The church, the kingdom of God, is the pillar (*stulos*, a column supporting the weight of a building) and

the ground (*hedraioma*, the support, the bulwark, the stay from the root word meaning to be steadfast, firm and set).

- b. From the beginning, the pillar and ground of the truth has been the kingdom of God, the church of the living God.
- c. Whenever men's eyes can be opened to see the church as this bulwark, then and only then, will their eyes be firmly established and ready to meet all the adversaries of the church and put them to flight.
- d. Whenever men fail to see the value and importance of the church, the pillar and ground of the truth, we have digression and apostasy.
- e. The very Truth of God is the church of Christ. What would the truth be without the church?
- f. Christians need to open their eyes to the importance of the church and her place in God's truth. It is the truth. No one can separate the church from the truth; it is the truth!

II. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH.

- A. Without the church, the kingdom, what would the Truth be?
- B. From the foundations of the world, God had begun to unveil the church.
 1. To the serpent he said, the king, the seed of woman, was coming to crush his head and destroy him (Gen. 3:15).
 2. This seed promise was made to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3).
 - a. It was repeated to Isaac, Jacob, Judah and remembered by the Jews for 1500 years as they longed for the coming king to establish His kingdom.
 - b. Judah is promised the "sceptre" would not depart until the Messiah would come (Gen. 49:10).
 - c. This seed, the king, is Christ (Gal. 3:16).
 3. The promises of the coming king were always understood to be the bringing in of the new kingdom.
 - a. Isaiah told of the coming kingdom (Isa. 2:1-4).
 - b. Micah told of the coming kingdom (Micah 4:1,2)
 - c. Daniel promised a coming kingdom in the days of the Roman rule (Dan. 2:44).

- d. Daniel promised this kingdom would be given when the king returned to the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:13,14).
- e. Time would not permit to discuss all the passages referring to the coming kingdom.
- C. This is the pillar and ground of the truth—the church of the living God—the kingdom of God.

III. THE CHURCH DEFENDS ITS FOUNDATION.

- A. A steadfast, firm, pillar and ground will not be moved.
- B. The church will, by her very nature, defend herself that she might be strong against all the forces of Satan as they muster themselves against her.
 - 1. Whenever we see the church for who she is, she will fight to the death against all her enemies, because she will not be moved.
 - 2. Fables and endless genealogies do not move her because she is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 1:4).
 - 3. The church of the living God is not shaken by the teachers of the law (1 Tim. 1:7-11) because of what is committed to us — "the glorious gospel of the blessed God."
 - 4. When the church is the pillar and ground of the truth she will not be shipwrecked, because she is holding faith (1 Tim. 1:19,20).
 - 5. The pillar and ground of the truth does not fear civil government, she prays for it (1 Tim. 2:1,2).
 - 6. Whenever we see the church as the pillar and ground of the truth we will have men rising up ready to serve in the kingdom as bishops and deacons—apt to teach, to defend the truth against all gainsayers, to hold fast the faithful word, and to hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience (1 Tim. 3:2,9; Titus 1:5-11).
 - 7. Let those depart from the faith who will, but the church of the living God will not be moved. She will stand as a bulwark, set and steadfast (1 Tim. 4:1-9).
 - 8. The church will labor and suffer reproach because we "trust in the living God" (1 Tim. 4:10).
 - 9. The church trusts in the "living God" and refuses to err from Him (1 Tim. 6:17-21).

CONCLUSION:

1. May the church learn to appreciate who she is.
 2. When brothers and sisters in Christ can see the glorious church of Christ as she has been treasured in the mind of God from the foundation of the world, then we will rise up as conquerors who cannot be overthrown by the evil one.
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The One Body, One Fold, Non-Denominational

Richard Carlson

1. The church built by our Lord was prophesied in Dan. 2:44, promised in Matt. 16:13-19, and established in Acts 2.
2. In our study, we will ask and answer from Scripture the following questions:
 - a. Is there more than one body, one fold?
 - b. Is the Lord's church, as many believe, just another denomination?
 - c. Is the Lord's church the one and only true church we can read about in the New Testament?
3. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus promised to build His church.
 - a. The word "my" denotes ownership, possession.
 - b. Church is singular, not plural.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **THE WORD OF GOD TEACHES THAT THE LORD'S CHURCH IS THE "ONE BODY."** Col. 3:15
 - A. The church is His body. Eph. 1:22-23; 5:30
 - B. "The body" — Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18
 - C. "Sheepfold," "this fold," "one fold" — John 10:1; 16
- II. **THE ONE BODY, ONE FOLD, IS UNLIKE ANY OTHER INSTITUTION IN THE WORLD.**
 - A. The Bride of Christ is the "*ecclesia*," the called out.
 1. God calls mankind to render obedience to His will. Rom. 11:29; Eph. 1:18; Phil. 3:14; 2 Thess. 1:11; Heb. 3:1

2. The "one fold" enjoys the unique distinction of having the one shepherd as its supreme Saviour.
- B. Distinctive marks of the one body, one fold.
 1. In Gospel obedience, the Lord "adds" to His body. Acts 2:47; 5:14; 11:24
 2. Spiritual blessings are found only within the one body, one fold. Eph. 1:3,7
 3. The one body, one fold was purchased with the precious blood of Christ. Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18-19
 4. In Eph. 4:4-6 we see God's platform for unity in the one body, one fold.
 5. Related passages are Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; 1 Cor. 8:6, Mal. 2:10

III. WORSHIP WITHIN THE ONE BODY, ONE FOLD.

- A. Must always be in spirit and in truth, never in vain. Matt. 15:8-14
- B. Members of the one body, one fold plead with lost souls to hear the Lord's Word, yet sadly many do not. Ezek. 33:30-31.
- C. Jesus Christ is the whole, complete, one body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-27), consisting of all who have been saved by His blood, and only those who have been redeemed by His blood.
- D. Members of the one body, one fold are called Christians. Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16
- E. Salvation is in no other name but Christ. Acts 4:12.
- F. The one body, one fold is God's family and is identified as the church of God in 1 Cor. 1:2,56; 1 Tim. 3:15.
- G. The Lord has one family, one house, one church. Matt. 12:25
- H. The one body, one fold is the Lord's church, no other can be, because Christ and His Gospel never change. Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Heb. 13:8; Rev. 22:18-19
- I. We must always submit to Christ's authority and never to the false creeds of men. Col. 2:20-22
- J. The one body, one fold is the product of the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11-15) grown in the hearts of men.
- K. As surely as the Gospel is preached, Christ's body (fold), will always be produced.

IV. THE ONE BODY, ONE FOLD IS NEITHER CATHOLIC, PROTESTANT OR JEW.

- A. The church has no "Parent" church.
- B. Christ's church is the only one He has.
- C. Only those called out of the world, into the service of God, constitute the church.
- D. A denomination is not the Lord's church, because they are of men, whereas the Lord's church is divine and blood bought.
- E. The one body, one fold, is the church and is not bound by any denominational creed.
- F. Denominations change their creeds by making some true that were once false, and vice versa.
- G. The church is not Catholic, Protestant, or Jew because it was not founded in "protest" of any institution and is not the product of "restoration" or "reformation."
- H. We hear people say "my church," "our church," "your church," but truthfully, you, I, or no one else has a church. Psa. 127:1; Matt. 7:24-29; 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20

V. A BRIEF LOOK AT THE ORIGIN OF DENOMINATION-ALISM.

- A. Roman Catholicism began as a result of certain departures from New Testament doctrine and practice. Acts 20:28-30; 2 Cor. 11:13-14; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Thess. 2:3-4
- B. Pope, creed, Holy water, etc. are all foreign to Christ's doctrine.

VI. SOME DENOMINATIONS AND THEIR BEGINNING.

- A. Lutheran, 1521.
- B. John Calvin founder of Presbyterian, 1535.
- C. Baptist, 1607.
- D. John Wesley founder of Methodist, 1729.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Let us be faithful to Christ. Rev. 2:10
 - 2. Let us anxiously await His coming. Matt. 25:31-46; John 5:25; 28-29; Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12-15; Acts 10:42; 17:31
 - 3. The one body, one fold, will be delivered up. Eph. 5:27
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The Church's People: Full of Faith and Works

Jeff Bates

1. David made the statement, *"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord"* (Psa. 122:1).
 - a. I'm thankful for the opportunities afforded us by the East Corinth church of Christ to study together from the Word of God with those of "like precious faith."
 - b. I am especially grateful for the opportunity to lead our minds in this study.
2. Man has attempted to change every Biblical principle, disregarding God's warning against such. Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Rev. 22:18,19
 - a. Many false doctrines are taught today concerning the role of faith and works in the Christian's life.
 - b. I'm not a Bible scholar, but God did not give inspired writings merely to scholars. He gave them to us all with the command that we are to read, study, and understand the Biblical principles found therein (Eph. 5:17).
 - c. Some of the "Bible scholars" of our day are leading many minds into the devil's doctrines, and people are allowing themselves to be led into these false teachings, because they are either intimidated by those who are supposedly more intelligent or are too lazy to study the Bible for themselves.
3. Let us study the Bible together with open minds and consider God's instructions concerning the importance of faith and works in our lives as Christians.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE CHURCH IS GOD'S PEOPLE, THOSE WHO FAITHFULLY SERVE HIM.

- A. The word "church" is taken from the Greek word *ekklesia*.
 1. From 'ek' meaning 'out of' and 'klesis' meaning 'a calling.' (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words)
 2. The church is an assembly of people, either locally or universally, who God has called through the Gospel out of worldliness and sin (2 Thess. 2:13,14).
- B. The church is made up of Christians, not wood and bricks.
 1. Under the law of God given through Moses, the room of the tabernacle or sanctuary, and later the temple,

which was referred to as the "the holiest of all" was representative of the presence of God. Heb. 9:1-7

2. Some today refer to a part of a church building as the sanctuary, but God "*dwelleth not in temples made with hands*" (Acts 7:48,49).
- C. The church is made up of those who have obeyed the Gospel of Christ in order to become Christians.
 1. God calls an individual to salvation through the Gospel (2 Thess. 2:13,14).
 2. The individual must obey God's plan as presented in the Gospel in order to be saved. This plan involves:
 - a. An obedient faith (Heb. 11:6).
 - b. Repentance from sin (Acts 17:30,31).
 - c. Confession of one's faith in Christ (Rom. 10:9,10; Acts 8:36,37).
 - d. Baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).
 3. When an individual is baptized as the final step in obedience to the will of God, that individual is in Christ (Gal. 3:26,27) – added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:47).
- D. The church is made up of those who, after becoming children of God, put forth every effort to obey God in all areas of life. Matt. 7:21
 1. They are spiritually minded as opposed to being worldly. 1 John 2:15-17
 2. Their Christianity is demonstrated through speech and actions. Matt. 7:15-20
 3. "The" church is distinguishable, not only from the world, but even from the religious world, because she adheres solely to the Bible for her teachings and practices (Titus 2:14).

II. THE CHURCH IS A PEOPLE OF GREAT FAITH.

- A. The word "faith" is from a Greek word meaning "primarily firm persuasion, a conviction based upon hearing. The main elements in 'faith' in its relation to the invisible God are:
 1. A firm conviction, producing a full acknowledgment of God's revelation or truth (2 Thess. 2:11,12).
 2. A personal surrender to God (John 1:12).
 3. A conduct inspired by such surrender (2 Co. 5:7).
 4. Prominence is given to one or other of these elements according to the context." (Vine)

- B. Faith begins with the mental assent that God exists, that the Jesus of the Bible is the Christ, the Savior of the world, and that the New Testament is God's will for man today.
 - 1. Without this mental assent, an individual cannot be saved, thus will not be added by God to the church. Mark 16:16; John 8:24; Heb. 11:6
 - 2. This faith is not merely a "blind leap in the dark" as some teach, but the Christian's mental assent is based upon undeniable evidence. Heb. 11:1; Rom. 1:18-20
 - 3. This faith is produced and strengthened only by reading and studying the Word of God. Rom. 10:17
 - a. If one is taught man's opinions and doctrines, how can that false teaching produce in the individual a true faith in the God of the Bible?
 - b. The reason that the faith of so many children of God is diminished to the point that they fall away is a lack of Bible study. 1 Peter 2:2
- C. The problem is that many in the religious world believe that at the point of this mental assent, an individual is saved and therefore added to the Lord's church.
 - 1. They believe the words "believe" and "faith" in passages such as Acts 16:31, 26:18, and Rom. 3:28 merely involve mental assent.
 - 2. This interpretation of the above passages directly contradicts James 2:14-24 and is therefore a misinterpretation.
 - 3. God never added the devils (demons) to the Lord's church, therefore the faith that saves must involve more than simply mental assent.
- D. This mental acknowledgment of God leads one to a decision: will I live the rest of my life for God or continue living for self?
 - 1. Those who truly believe in the truth of God's word, who have true Bible faith, will determine to please God.
 - 2. This determination will be evident in the way one lives.

III. THE CHURCH IS A PEOPLE WHOSE GREAT FAITH LEADS THEM TO GREAT WORKS.

- A. The word "work" simply denotes "an act or deed." (Vine)
- B. Some people will take passages such as Titus 3:4-7 and Eph. 2:8,9 and declare that God requires no works for one to be saved.

1. Jesus' purpose for coming to this earth was to do the works of his Father. John 9:4
2. If the above interpretation were true, then faith, which the Bible declares is a work, would not be necessary for salvation. 1 Thess. 1:3
3. God created mankind "unto good works." Eph. 2:10
4. The argument is made that our good works as Christians are the result of our being saved, but are not conditions whereby we are saved.
- C. The faith of those within the Lord's church definitely leads them to good works.
 1. Matt. 5:16; Titus 2:14
 2. A lack of true Bible faith is evident in those who fail to faithfully...
 - a. Assemble with the saints to study the Bible and worship God (Heb. 10:24-27).
 - b. Increase their knowledge of the will of God through Bible study (1 Peter 2:2).
 - c. Pray (1 Thess. 5:17).
 - d. Teach others the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19,20).
- D. Being added to the Lord's church and saved in eternity is conditioned upon good works.
 1. Col. 1:10; 1 Tim. 6:17-19
 2. Being full of good works, Christians cannot be boastful, because it is still the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ by which we are saved. Eph. 2:8-10
 3. There are works by which some sought in vain to be justified. Gal. 5:4

CONCLUSION:

1. There are many who claim to be the people of God, but aren't.
 - a. There are many who are Christians in name only.
 - b. The true test of whether or not one is a New Testament Christian is his/her speech and manner of life.
 - c. God, the great Judge of all, will not be deceived.
2. One cannot be a part of God's people, and not be a faithful part of his church. Matt. 6:33
3. Those who are God's people, a part of his church, are "full" of faith and works.
 - a. Too many who claim to be Christians seek the minimum requirements for pleasing God and being saved.

- b. Those who have true Biblical faith can never seem to be able to do enough in the Lord's work in his kingdom.
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The History Of The Church From Pentecost To Present

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Ardent appreciation is expressed to Garland Robinson, the elders and all the congregation here at East Corinth for the invitation to participate on this lectureship. This lectureship continues to be on the cutting edge of Truth. May it never vary from this solid stance.

Those disinterested in the history of the church are unlikely to exhibit ANY interest in its present or its future. They are somewhat like the public figure who, when interviewed some years back, said he was neither interested in human origins nor destinies. Even the present cannot have any real meaning to such restricted vision. We must not be of like mind.

BEFORE PENTECOST

Both Peter and his auditors on Pentecost in Acts 2 were interested in history. Peter quoted from both Joel and David in his stately speech. These two Old Testament prophets lived about 800 and 1,000 years respectively before the unique unfolding of Pentecostal activities. This was remote history. He also referred them to Christ and His ministry which was recent history. In a very real sense, Peter, the apostles and their auditors were making history of the most momentous type on that memorial day of days. Acts 2, very correctly, has been recognized for a long, long time as the hub chapter of the Bible. Chapters before it point to Acts 2; chapters thereafter point back to it. It is the pivotal point in the good, great and grand Scheme of Human Redemption.

We have frequently preached and written about the five great P's relative to the church of the Lord — purpose, promise, prophecy, preparation and perfection. The first four are Pente

costal pointers; they are powerful prerequisites to Pentecost in Acts 2.

As per Ephesians 3:10,11, the church was in the eternal planning and purposing of God. This does not mean God programmed man where he had to sin with no free moral agency involved at all. Jehovah predicted many things in the Old Testament such as what Judas would do and yet Judas acted as a free moral agent in the betrayal. A man on a mountain peak looks down on a winding road as two cars speed toward each other. He predicts they will collide in moments but his foreknowledge had nothing to do in MAKING such occur. Jehovah knew man and woman would sin and yet His foreknowledge did not militate their choice and conduct in Eden's Garden. They acted freely and responsibly.

In the Old Testament, God issued promises and proclaimed prophecies relative to Christ's coming and the future establishment of the church. Genesis 3:15 and 49:10 are promises that vouchsafed the first couple and Jacob's descendants respectively relative to the coming of Christ and His church. Jacob affirmed that unto Shiloh (the Messiah) would the gathering of the people be. Be it recalled that the church (*ekklesia*) is the called-out or those summoned-out of dense darkness and called into the luminous light of God's kingdom (1 Peter 2:9,10). Great prophecies about this sure-to-come kingdom are found in 2 Samuel 7; Isaiah 2; Daniel 2; Micah 4 and Zechariah 6. These predictive prophecies are precious indeed to every lover of Christ and His beautiful bride — the church. So very, Very, VERY much can be learned about the church of our Lord from these and other crystal clear prophecies relative to the church/kingdom of the Messiah.

John the Baptist and Jesus Christ both made diligent preparation for this kingdom soon-to-come, this church soon-to-be-built. Both of them proclaimed repentance in view that the kingdom soon would be established (Matt. 3:2; 4:17). These baptized believers would become charter members of it when it was established. In the rocky regions of colorful Caesarea Philippi, Jesus eloquently and elegantly made the precious promise that "*I will build my church*" (Matt. 16:18). Hadean gates of opposition would not prevail against the execution of such—the very purpose that brought Him from the Palace of the Universe to this low ground of sin, sickness and sorrow. Some of the Lord's contemporaries, as per Mark 9:1, would not taste of death till they saw the kingdom come with power. Premillennialism bats out, way out, here but truth knocks a grand slam home run.

The Godhead conditioned everything to be in a state of readiness when the day of Pentecost came in Acts 2. This was the culmination of the ages at work for man's redemption.

ON PENTECOST

This is the great birthday chapter of the Bible — the birthday of the Lord's church. On this memorial day, the church became a precious and perfected reality. The Spirit came on this day; the power descended on this day; the kingdom was preached and people became citizens of it on this day of days.

The twelve apostles were in a state of readiness. They were all together in one place (Acts 2:1). Earlier, they had been promised Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 1:5). This amazing phenomenon materialized just as Jesus had predicted and they had come to expect. This immersion in the Holy Spirit enabled them to speak with tongues never studied, never mastered. This unique and unusual occurrence prompted a great audience to assemble. This assembled audience was from many parts of the ancient world and spoke a number of different languages. Yet they heard them (the apostles) speak in their own respective tongues. We are not left in doubt by Luke as touching message content. They heard the apostolic proclaimers speaking the wonderful words and works of God (Acts 2:11). They sought an explanation and Peter began to give it in verse 14. Joel and David both spoke of what was now the very fruition unfolding before their amazed eyes, ears and hearts. Prophecies of the most stupendous kind were finding rich and fundamental fruition on that memorable day. With great force, Peter employed a "this is that" type of preaching approach (2:16). His message was well adapted to those familiar with the prophetic pronouncements of the Old Testament. Early in the sermon he promised salvation to those who would call upon the name of the Lord (2:21). Calling on the name of the Lord is NOT a prayer for Him to come in as Saviour, nearly the whole religious world to the contrary notwithstanding. Calling on the name of the Lord is a stately synonym for Gospel obedience. In this chapter we have the commands to hear, repent and be baptized (vs. 14,38). Implied are the equally valid stipulations of faith and confession. Acts 2:38 is a divine commentary on 2:21. So is Mark 16:16. So are the verses in Romans 10:13-17. They explain in delightful detail how one calls upon the name of the Lord, i.e., by Gospel obedience.

Peter, to whom the keys of the kingdom had been dispatched in Matthew 16:19, preached Christ to them. He preached the Christ that had been approved of God and yet, by them, had been cruelly crucified (vs. 22,23). He preached the burial and resurrection of this approved Messiah. David, in the book of Psalms, had much to say of the Messiah. Boldly and brilliantly, Peter wove the Davidic declarations into the very fabric of his Pentecostal presentation. Not only did he preach a resurrected Redeemer but also an ascended one now ruling in might and majesty at Jehovah's right hand. The rejected Redeemer in Pilate's court is now the reigning Redeemer. God has made Him Lord and Christ (v.36).

The deepest of conviction permeated their hearts. In anguish of spirit and desperation of heart they cried out touching what they should do. Peter did not tell them to believe. Faith had already been formed in their hearts. It just needed to blossom into full Gospel obedience to the clear conditions of conversion. Peter commanded repentance and baptism on their part (v.38). Motivation is supplied in verse 39 relative to God's promise to them, their children and those afar off (Gentiles). Additional testimony is given by Peter. Further exhortations are tendered them (v.40). Glad recipients of Peter's sermon were baptized, the number being about three thousand (v.41). Verse 47 states, *"Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."* In between verses 41 and 47 we read of their fidelity in worship, the apostolic miracles performed, the beautiful benevolence they selflessly practiced, the marvelous unity that bound them together and the undiluted joy they experienced as disciples of Jesus and children of God under the Gospel covenant.

The Lord's church in all its beauty and bountiful blessings was now a perfected reality on earth.

FROM ACTS 2 THROUGH REVELATION 22

Here we have inspired church history as set forth by Luke in his second treatise of Truth, the book of Acts, and the inspired penmen from Romans through Revelation. The book of Acts is inspired church history for about twenty-five years. The remnant of the New Testament is inspired church history for nearly forty years. The years cover from A. D. 33 to A. D. 96 in the aggregate.

In Acts 1:8, Jesus issued commands to the faithful eleven that they preach Him and His Gospel in Jerusalem, in Judaea, in

Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the world. Acts 2-9 relate the thrilling story of preaching in Jerusalem, Judaea and Samaria. From Acts 10, the chapter depicting the first Gentiles to be converted, to the end of Acts 28 we have the thrilling saga of preaching to the uttermost parts of the world. The church is planted throughout the ancient world. The Gospel is taken to Asia, Europe, Africa and the islands of the Mediterranean Sea. Paul wrote Romans before the book of Acts was penned. Acts 20:1-3 seems to be the writing period for regal Romans. Paul affirmed in Romans 10:18, *"But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."*

From Acts 2 through Revelation 22 we have the beautiful blueprint, the divine pattern of the church set forth. We have the message that was taught. They preached the Gospel which was/is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16,17). Paul determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). He delivered the Gospel as he had received it (1 Cor. 15:1-4). The preaching of *"the gospel of the grace of God"* was the one thing that moved and motivated him (Acts 20:24). Peter warned all Gospel carriers to speak as the oracles of God direct (1 Peter 4:11). Contend earnestly for the faith once and for all time delivered to the saints is the militant cry of the just Jude (v.3).

We have the plan of pardon plainly presented. It was God's grace through man's faith beautifully linked (Eph. 2:8). They NEVER argued that salvation is 100% in God's corner and 0% in man's corner as the Change Agent grace-only men of our day do persistently. They preached that men must **hear** (Rom. 10:17). They taught that men must **believe** (Acts 16:31). They preached that God now commands all men everywhere to **repent** (Acts 17:30). They preached that **confession** is a stipulation of salvation (Acts 8:36,37; Rom. 10:9,10). They preached that **baptism** is for remission of sins, in order that sins might be washed away and by which men would enter Christ and His church and thus be saved (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3,4; Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 12:13; 1 Peter 3:21).

They preached **Christian living**. This is the very heartbeat of Romans through Revelation. Galatians 5:22,23, Colossians 3:1ff, Titus 2:1ff and 2 Peter 1:5-11 are great specific passages on the Christian's pathway of piety.

They preached **the names God's people are to wear** individually: saints, priests, people of God, children of God, brethren, disciples and Christians (Rom. 1:7; 1 Peter 2:9,10; Gal.

3:26; 6:1; Acts 6:1ff; 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). They preached the names for God's people collectively – church, churches of Christ, church of God, church of the Lord, body of Christ, temple of God, household of God, bride of Christ, kingdom of Christ and of God (Eph. 1:22,23; Rom. 16:16; Acts 20:28; Col. 1:18; Eph. 2:21,22; Rom. 7:4; Eph. 5:5). Names in religion do have significance as the foregoing prove most conclusively.

They preached **true worship** – singing, prayers, teaching/preaching, communion and giving (Eph. 5:19; Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23ff; 16:1,2; 2 Cor. 8,9). They warned against vain worship, ignorant worship and will worship (Mark 7:7ff; Acts 17:23ff; Col. 2:23). They knew what Christ inculcated in John 4:23,24 and they geared their worship to it minus addition, subtraction, substitution or alteration.

They preached **the threefold mission of the church** – evangelism, edification and benevolence (Rom. 1:14-17; Jude 20,21; Gal. 2:10; 6:10; James 1:27). They knew, and knew well, that entertainment and recreation were not God-ordained works for the church of His Son. Why is it the case that so many of our brethren associate entertainment and recreation with the church and its mission? Jesus did not come to earth to entertain; He came to redeem humanity. Our mission is an eloquent extension of His (Luke 19:10).

They preached **the right pattern of church organization** of elders to oversee, deacons to serve and all as working members (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1:5ff; 3:1,8,14; 1 Cor. 15:58).

They preached **the right role for women** and that right role was not in the pulpit, in the eldership, serving as a deacon, Bible teacher of mixed classes of men and women or as a worship leader (1 Cor. 14:34,35; 1 Tim. 2:12). The work and role of women in the church are not the same as it is for men as a Texas woman once expressed in the church bulletin of her home congregation.

They preached **correct concepts of fellowship** as we see in Philippians 1 and 1 John 1. They knew what the Lord had taught in Matthew 12:46-50. Therein He based fellowship upon FAITH – not FLESHLY ties with Him. Those who do the will of the Father are His brethren, sisters and mothers. This should have told His unbelieving brothers something (cf. John 7:5).

They preached **the autonomy of each congregation**. This we see in the epistles and in Revelation 2,3. No ecclesiastical ties bound New Testament churches together as we find in Romanism and so much of Protestantism. I once explained this to a Methodist minister and he asked in utter amazement, "Will that

kind of thing work?" It had not dawned upon his mind that this is exactly how the church functioned in the New Testament. There was great wisdom in this. A neighboring congregation might falter and fail and yet it would not adversely affect a nearby one. Philadelphia and Laodicea in Revelation 3 were neighboring congregations and look how sharp the contrast was between the two. The former was faithful; the latter was faithless. The former was active; the latter was apostate with an ousted Lord from its congregational midst.

They preached to **prepare men for judgment and eternal destinies** – attaining heaven and avoiding hell (Heb. 9:27; 2 Thess. 1:6-9; Matt. 25:31-46).

The Great Commission was safe and secure in their hands.

FROM A. D. 96 TO A. D. 1999

Long before the New Testament Canon stood completed, there were numerous warnings of weight and wisdom relative to a coming apostasy. Paul spoke of the falling away and the development of the man of sin, the son of perdition, in 2 Thessalonians 2:1ff. Roman Catholicism proves the correctness of the Pauline prediction to this Macedonian congregation. He warned elders from Ephesus at Miletus that apostasy was in the winds for the future coming from both the outside and the inside (Acts 20:29,30). He knew men from among themselves would arise to draw away disciples after them. Ephesus later became a hotbed of religious error. John fought the Gnostics there all the sunset period of his illustrious life. Paul warned Timothy of digressions from truth in 1 Timothy 4 and 2 Timothy 3,4. The three chapters of 2 Peter 2,3 and Jude all warn of lethal dangers coming from false teachers and the damnable doctrines they would bring in among God's people. In Revelation 2,3 we see a church that left its first love – Ephesus. We see two congregations that compromised with false doctrines – Pergamos and Thyatira. We see a church that was dying by sure degrees with most members not caring. Only a faithful few remained in Sardis. We see a congregation already in lukewarm apostasy with an ousted Saviour standing at the door they had callously closed in His very face – Laodicea. The Lord found only two of the seven in a commendable condition – Smyrna and Philadelphia. The setting of Revelation is the battle that loomed between the Roman Empire of evil and the Messiah's Cause. Those minus conviction would yield and declare Caesar is Lord and God thus recanting the confession that Jesus is Lord

and God of their lives. This was behind the recurring exhortation throughout Revelation to overcome. This is the very keynote of this final book in the Heavenly Volume – the book of Revelation.

Apostasy did come in wholesale form and with militant rapidity after John the apostle died. The organization was changed as one man became the Bishop and his fellow elders became subservient to him. One step of departure led to another even more glaring and grievous digression. Soon the Bishop was over a plurality of churches or a diocese. By the early 600's of this common era there was a Pope in full ruinous form. There developed the clergy-laity system. We read in the New Testament about lying members but not about any LAY members. The clerics became legislative forces. They undid God's laws and made laws of their own for others to obey with death penalties for the disobedient. Autonomy was rejected and ecclesiastical ties emerged. Councils developed and with them came complete control over all their religious subjects. In less than six centuries after the church was begun there was Papal control of councils and churches. The Big Papa had arrived and all owed him strict allegiance. His control would dominate, both religious and political climates for several centuries especially during the Dark Ages – about one thousand years of time.

With the total corruption of the government of the church, there came an avalanche of other apostasies. There came **infant baptism**. The false doctrine of **original sin** demanded it. There came **sprinkling** in lieu of Biblical immersion. There came **holy water**. There came in **mechanical music** to beef up the singing and even to replace singing. There came in the **choral singers** in the great cathedrals of Europe. There came in all sorts of corruptions of the **Lord's supper**. Its names were changed; its elements became a virtual battleground as Catholic leaders insisted that the priestly blessing turned the bread into the actual flesh of God's Son and the fruit of the vine, wine to them, into the literal blood of Jesus Christ. If true, they have made cannibals out of their people and partakers of actual blood in glaring violation of the Jerusalem Council decision in Acts 15. There came the withholding of the cup from the laity with priestly consumption of large amounts of wine. It is little wonder why so many priests have drinking problems. Their apostate religion triggers such.

In the apostasy came **Purgatory** – a money making venture. I once knew a man in Tennessee who was quite wealthy and high up in Catholic circles. He paid enormous sums of money in efforts to get his wicked grandfather out of Purgatory. His grandfather

must have been quite a rounder. There came the **sale of indulgences** – another money making venture. Untold millions have flowed into Catholic coffers by these ingenious devices – devices straight from the old Devil himself.

In the apostasy came **Auricular confession** – a system that puts the Catholic laity under the total dominion of the priestly hierarchy. Some years back a priest in Tennessee said, in essence, "If a man comes to me confessing his sins, I forgive him if I think he is sincere. If I think he is insincere, I put my foot down and refuse him any forgiveness." The Pharisees of Christ's day were never so arrogant as this.

In the apostasy came **Papal claims toward dominion over religious and secular affairs**. Kings were made and deposed by Papal whims and wishes. Under Catholicism church and state were wedded with the Papacy and his cronies in the driver's seat all the way.

In the apostasy came **Papal infallibility**. A mere man, the Pope, claimed infallibility when he spoke "ex cathedra" or from the chair.

In the apostasy came **Bible-banning and Bible-burnings**. Kings and Queens did this on a regular basis and with Papal approval. Popes could have stopped such but they chose not to do so. Romanism has NEVER been a friend, supporter, defender and upholder of the Bible. When she was in complete control of religious and political power the Bible was "nailed to the pulpit." Catholic laymen were discouraged and forbidden to peruse and practice Biblical reading and Scriptural practices. The arrogant priestly hierarchy said Catholic laity was totally unable to interpret Scriptures. This was, according to their haughty claims, of priestly prerogatives only. They would point their people to a passage by Peter in 2 Peter 1:20. Evidently, they thought their people could understand and interpret that passage but could not understand and interpret any verses before it or any subsequent to it. How utterly amazing is such arrogance and bluster!

The apostasy and the Dark Ages were handmaidens to each other; they complemented each other. But a brighter and better day lay ahead.

Is it necessary that we find congregations in every generation during this long period? Not at all! Baptists have sought to rattle a chain of church succession back to New Testament times. Totally futile have been their attempts along this line for Baptist churches do not go back but a very few centuries and surely not to apostolic times. There may have been faithful remnants in all

these generations or there might not have been. However, the word of God is the seed of the kingdom as per Luke 8:11. All that was needed to produce Christians and churches of Christ was the planting or sowing of that seed into good and honest hearts. When received, believed and obeyed, Christians and churches of the Lord were the reaped results.

Reformation and restoration are important words in the final part of our study. The winds of Reformation began to blow in various places during the latter part of the Dark Ages. There were groups, scattered though they were, who longed to be more Biblical. They hungered to have the Bible in their own language. Courageous men like *John Wyckliffe*, *William Tyndale* and *Martin Luther* fought Catholic corruptions and gave people the Bible in the English and German languages. These three, and countless others, realized deeply that Catholicism had gone sour. They sought to reform this monstrous system of egregious error. Other names of reformation renown joined the efforts such as *Zwingli*, *Erasmus*, *Calvin* and *Knox*. *John* and *Charles Wesley* came later. These men were reformers. They paved the way for what was really needed – the restoration of New Testament Christianity.

There were efforts along this line in several different places. They would take definite shape in America. Men like *Abner Jones*, *Elias Smith*, *James O'Kelley*, *Barton W. Stone*, *Thomas* and *Alexander Campbell* and a host of other powerful personalities were filled with spiritual unrest as they surveyed the religious climate of their day. They knew Romanism was wrong; they knew that Protestantism was not the answer either. They sensed the need to go beyond Rome, London, Geneva, etc., and return all the way to Jerusalem. They knew that authority did not lie in the hands of Popes, priests, councils, synods, preachers, professors, rabbis or the popular creeds of their day. Campbell especially called the public's attention to the amazing ignorance of the Bible among the clerics (clergy) of his era. They knew the authority lay in what Christ and His inspired apostles and prophets taught. This is why they urged that people speak as the Bible speaks, be silent where it is silent, call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways. These famous declarations bore upon their beautiful bosom the very stately sentiments of Isaiah 8:20; 34:16; Jeremiah 22:29; Jonah 3:2; Luke 10: 26; Galatians 4:30 and 1 Peter 4:11.

The very heartbeat of the Restoration concept is basically this: If we preach now what they preached then, and if people hear,

believe and obey now what they heard, believed and obeyed then, people will become now what they did then. If not, WHY NOT?

This is what they did. This is what they urged all others to do. They restored *book, chapter and verse preaching*. They restored the name of *Christian* and that of *churches of Christ* (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16; Rom. 16:16). They restored the *organization of the church with elders to oversee, deacons to serve and all to be workers* (Phil. 1:1; 1 Cor. 3:9,10; 15:58; Titus 3:1,8,14). They restored *Christian worship—singing, praying, teaching/preaching, communion and giving* (Eph. 5:19; Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-34; 16:1,2; 2 Cor. 8,9). They restored the *autonomy of the church* with congregational independence free of entangling ecclesiastical control. They restored *Christian fellowship* (Matt. 12:46-50; Phil. 1:3ff; 1 John 1:3ff). They restored the *mission of the church* in evangelism, edification and benevolence (Mark 16:15; Jude 20,21; Gal. 6:10; James 1:27). They made it possible for people to be *Christians only* and nothing but Christians. They restored God's *first and second laws of pardon* (Rom. 10:17; Acts 16:31; 17:30; Rom. 10:9,10; Mark 16:16; Acts 8:22; James 5:16; 1 John 1:9). Here, the solid and sound still stand opposed to all innovations and supportive of all Biblical demands of us.

For the last one hundred and fifty years we have had to fight innovations, many including the *Missionary Society, mechanical music in worship, open membership, premillennialism, anti-ism, Pentecostalism, the Crossroads movement, version perversions, modernism, liberalism* and now the *Change Agent* agenda. It is sad, immeasurably so, that many no longer stand in the old paths but desire to plow new religious ground. They are out to restructure the Lord's church fitting it into the Protestant mainstream of digression and outright apostasy. Our militant cry must be, "They shall not pass!"

The Church And It's Non-Observance Of Religious Holidays

Terry Roberts

THESIS: To prove the church has no authority to participate in religious holidays. Col. 2:16; Gal. 4:9-16

1. I would like to express my gratitude to the God of heaven for this opportunity to speak on the subject "The Church and it's Non-observance of Religious Holidays."
 - a. My appreciation is expressed to the Elders and to Garland for the privilege to be a part of this lectureship.
 - b. Also to the congregation for all the hard work that takes place in having a lectureship.
2. Let's focus on the theme assigned to this Lectureship, "The Uniqueness of The Church," in the introduction before preceding to the main points of the lesson.
3. I affirm that "THE CHURCH IS UNIQUE." Webster defines unique as: "Being the only one." I proclaim to you in a loving way and with confidence that there is only one true church and that the Father receives glory through it (Eph. 3:21). It is the church Christ promised (Matt. 16:18) and died for (Eph. 5:25).
 - a. This needs to be pointed out for many of our brethren have forgotten it.
 - b. The church is the called out ones who contacted the precious blood made available by the Son of God when they answered the Gospel call (2 Thess. 2:14, 1 Peter 1:23) of **hearing, believing, repenting, confessing** and being **baptized**.
4. The church of the Lord, the precious bride of Christ, does not observe religious holidays.
 - a. But some may ask the question, "why not observe religious holidays?"
 - b. The Lord's church does not observe religious holidays because...

DISCUSSION:

- I. **THERE IS NO AUTHORITY FOR IT IN THE SCRIPTURES.**
 - A. Those who promote religious holidays and what goes along with them do not know or they do not care about who's in authority—by that I mean who's law we live under (Gal. 6:2).

1. Many have established their own righteousness just as the Jews in Paul's day (Rom. 10:1-3).
 2. Christians, followers of Christ, are under the authority of only one Master because we cannot serve two (Matt. 6:24).
- B. The church, the body of baptized believers, are directed by the head of the church/body, Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18; Col. 1:18). The head nor the law of the church/kingdom is subject to change by man.
1. The writings of those inspired men of the first century are authoritative (Matt. 16:19; 1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jude 3).
 2. We have the Word of God, which is our creed, rule, standard, and everything that is done must have the approval of God. If it does not, it's unapproved and unaccepted by the Father. Let us not take everything hook, line and sinker, we need proof (Col. 3:17; 1 Thess. 5:21; Acts 17:11; John 5:39).
- C. Where do we find the *precept* or the *example* in the New Testament of Christians observing religious holidays?
1. We learn of those who were trying to bind special days, holy days and what to eat or not eat upon Christians at Colosse and Paul informs them, *"let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days"* (Col. 2:16).
 2. It frightened the apostle Paul when he learned of brethren who were under the authority of Christ observing certain days and submitting themselves to the authority of men. He said, *"but now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain"* (Gal. 4:9-12).
- D. Those of us who came out of denominationalism observed man-made religious holidays—we didn't know any better. But, when someone laboured teaching us the Truth, observance of those days were put off.
1. It's sad to know some are going back to observing religious holidays.
 2. I'm afraid of some of my own brethren today who promote and take part in these religious holidays.

- E. The day Christians are to observe is the Lord's day, the first day of the week (Acts 2; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).
 - 1. And, if the overseer's decide a congregation needs further feeding of the Word of God they have the delegated authority to have the church meet at other times (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17).
- F. A choice has to be made about Who's authority we are submitting to.

II. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS THE LORD'S CHURCH DOES NOT OBSERVE?

- A. **EASTER.** Webster defines Easter as: A feast that commemorates Christ's resurrection and is observed with variations of date due to different calendars on the first Sunday after the paschal full moon.
 - 1. Easter originated with man, not with God. An 8th century scholar name St. Bede, believed it probably comes from "astre," the Anglo-Saxon name of a Teutonic goddess of Spring and fertility, to whom was dedicated a month which corresponds with April.
 - 2. Traditions that were associated with this pagan festival are still around today, such as the *Easter rabbit*, a symbol of fertility and the *coloring of eggs* which represent the sunlight of Spring. These festivals were also connected with Greek legends about the resurrection of Spring after Winter.
 - 3. The earliest evidence that Easter should be made a religious holiday was from the council of Nicaea in A.D. 325, which was called together by Constantine I. The ruling was made that Easter should be celebrated.
 - a. As members of the body of Christ, we do not follow the decisions made of a council or any other man. We follow the Word of God and there is no authority for us to observe Easter religiously in the New Testament.
 - 4. Some scholars point out that Easter is related to the Jewish festival of Passover from which comes the word Pasch, another name for Easter.
 - 5. The word Easter is found one time in the King James Version in Acts 12:4. It should have been translated Passover. The passover and the feast of unleavened bread are the same (Luke. 22:1).

- a. This shows us the influence of the customs of the day upon the KJV translators who were trying to help the people understand the passover was held in the Spring.
 - b. Exodus 13 helps us understand the passover was in the Spring because it was held in the month Abib, which means "to be tender, green, a young ear of grain." The month Abib corresponds with our March-April.
6. As we travel this highway of life on earth, we will have to face many four-way stops. Individual choices will have to be made about which way we will go.
- a. Who's way are we going to follow? There's my way, your way, the world's way and the LORD'S way. Let's go the right way, Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the father, but by me"* (John 14:6; Joshua 24:15).
- B. **CHRISTMAS** is the biggest of the religious holidays that the church is unique in not observing. Webster says: "A Christian feast on Dec. 25, or among some Eastern Orthodox Jan 7, commemorates the birth of Christ and is usually observed as a legal holiday."
1. Observing Christmas as a religious holiday did not originate in the apostolic age. Where is the book, chapter, and verse that Christians are to observe Dec. 25 as a religious holiday? 1 Thess. 5:21
 2. After the apostolic age, in the fourth century, an agreement was reached by apostate religious parties/sects to observe the birth of Christ on Dec. 25. There are indications some had observed the birth of Christ in the Spring, but they still had no divine authority for it.
 3. The Bible teaches much about the prophecy and birth of Christ but does not give us the date of His birth nor the authority to observe the birth of Christ on December 25th. Have you thought about why there are different dates given to his birth? Because it was established by men, not God. Matt. 15:9
 4. Brother Guy N. Woods speaking on the subject of Christmas say's "it is of significance that this word was not coined until the eleventh century, a thousand years after our Lord came to the earth."
 5. The origin of the days of our week are from pagan religious practices established by men: *Sunday*, the day

of the sun; *Monday*, sacred day of the moon; *Wednesday*, "Woden's Day" (chief idol of mythology); *Thursday*, the day of the war god, Thor; and *Saturday*, comes from Saturn, an ancient god of seed sowing. We don't make them or observe them as religious days now simply because people in the past once did.

6. There's probably not a person here that doesn't enjoy being off from work on the 4th of July—a time to enjoy being with the family. We don't make a religious day out of it. So why make Easter or Christmas a religious holiday?
7. One can see the influence of these man-made religious holidays by just noticing the attendance at services when these holiday's fall near or on the day the church assembles. People believe there's something religious about them, why? By following the traditions of men (Matt. 15:9).

III. WHY WOULD MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS ESTABLISHED BY MEN?

- A. One answer to this is that people are so caught up in the physical, they have neglected the spiritual. Also, there needs to be more teaching on how the Bible authorizes. It authorizes by: direct statement, approved example and implication.
 1. Some have lost faith in the power of God and want to supplement the Gospel by compromising (Rom. 1:16; Prov. 23:23).
 2. There are those who came out of error and now want to be a part of it again. They become like a child that other children have shunned and will do anything to be a part of the group again. They desire that old way of life as Israel did (Num. 11:1-6). The church is not to be like the world (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 6:14-18).
- B. Let's teach the Israel of God today to learn from the past and not make the same mistakes ancient Israel did in desiring to be like the nations around them (1 Sam. 8:5-6, "*now make us a king to judge us like all the nations*"). The people rejected God's divine guidance and wanted to be like the other nations. Rom. 15:4; Gal. 6:16
- C. One's religious participation in these holidays is teaching error by one's actions (Matt. 7:16).

- D. Adding to the Word of God condemns one's self (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; John 12:48; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 John 9-11, Rev. 22:18-19).
- E. Christians can use wisdom and enjoy the time off from work with your family and not honor any day made by man religiously.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Let us always remember who's authority we are under and try to the best of our ability never to violate that authority.
 - 2. Violation of that authority has taken place when one observes these holidays religiously.
 - 3. May we always express our love to God by keeping his Word (Matt. 7:21-23; Luke 6:46).
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Unity In The Church

Ed Floyd

- 1. It is God's will that we teach His truth. John 4:24
- 2. God will not tolerate our teaching contrary to His will. Gal. 1:6-9
- 3. Included in that teaching is unity. Psalm 133:1
- 4. We must make sure we are not guilty of causing division. Rom. 16:17
- 5. In fact, God says he hates the sin of division. Prov. 6:19
- 6. Many people want unity, but they do not want it God's way.
- 7. In the days of the apostles, the church was one. Acts 4:32
- 8. We have that same obligation today, to show the world what kind of unity God expects in His church.
- 9. God has already laid in his Word a foundation for Christian unity that is simple, perfect, and practical.

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT IS UNITY IN THE CHURCH?

- A. First, let us notice some things that are not Biblical unity.
 - 1. It is not unity in diversity.
 - 2. It is not agreement out of love.
 - 3. It is not unity for the sake of unity.

4. It is not union.
- B. What is true Biblical Unity?
 1. Meaning of word Unity: oneness, concord, harmony.
 2. Jeremiah prophesied concerning the unity God would require from his people. Jer. 32:39
 3. Jesus said it was being one, as He and the Father are one. John 10:30; 17:20-23
 4. Paul said it was speaking the same thing and having the same mind. 1 Cor. 1:10
 5. There is more involved in this unity than just calling on the name of the Lord. We must be willing to do His will. Matt. 7:21
 6. When we teach the doctrine of men, we cannot have unity. It is vain worship. Matt. 15:8-9

II. WHY ARE WE TO HAVE UNITY IN THE CHURCH?

- A. It is commanded.
 1. It was so important to Paul that he said, "*I beseech (beg) you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" 1 Cor. 1:10
 2. We must be united to be able to stand faithfully. Eph. 4:11-14
 3. We must not be divided, having a carnal mind. 1 Cor. 3:3-7
- B. It will help the church grow internally (stronger).
 1. We are to hold fast the profession of our faith. Heb 10:22-24
 2. Based upon God's Word, we are to bear each others burdens. Gal. 6:1-6
- C. It will help win souls to Christ.
 1. We must teach all nations, but we must teach them the truth from God's word. Matt 28:18-20
 2. Our lives are to shine forth in this sinful world in order that others might see Christ living in us. Matt 5:16
- D. It will help us go to heaven.
 1. Our walk is important. It must be in the light of God's word. 1 John 1:7
 2. Involved in going to heaven, is that we are to have the proper belief in God and Christ. John 14:13
- E. We cannot have unity with closed hands and hearts.
- F. We must have the right service and be willing to make the proper sacrifice to have this unity. Rom. 12:1-2

III. HOW CAN WE HAVE UNITY IN THE CHURCH?

- A. By holding to and defending God's word, His truth.
 - 1. God's word is the only way for us to be set free from sin. John 8:32
 - 2. We must be willing to defend God's word. Jude 3
- B. By having proper love for God and Christ.
 - 1. If we love Him, we will do what He says do, in the way He says do it. John 14:15
 - 2. We will not hold hands with those who teach contrary to His word. 2 John 9-11
- C. By having proper love for each other.
 - 1. We must love each other as Christ loves us. John 13:34
 - 2. For us to truly know God, we must have the proper love for each other. 1 John 4:7
 - 3. God has made it clear that we cannot love Him, until we love each other. 1 John 4:20
- D. By having proper love for His church.
 - 1. Jesus built His church. Matt. 16:18
 - 2. He purchased it with His own blood. Acts 20:28
 - 3. He is the head of the body, which is His church. Eph. 1:22-23
 - 4. We must do our part to keep it pure. Eph. 5:26-27
 - 5. We must be willing to rejoice even in affliction for the body of Christ, His church. Col. 1:23-24

IV. IN WHAT IS THE CHURCH TO HAVE UNITY?

- A. Paul has given us a platform for unity. Eph. 4:1-6
 - 1. Notice, we must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit. v.3
- B. Involved in these "seven ones," we find the unity God requires for the church.
 - 1. Unity in **Organization**—*One Body*.
 - a. The body is the church. Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23; Col. 1:24; 1 Cor. 12:20
 - b. Christ promised to build only one church. Matt. 16:18
 - 2. Unity in **God's word**—*One Spirit*.
 - a. The Holy Spirit revealed the truth. Eph. 3:3-6; John 16:13-14
 - b. All so-called revelation that differs from the Bible is false. Rev. 22:18-19
 - c. No one has the right to teach another doctrine, not even an angel from heaven can do this. Gal. 1:6-9

3. Unity in **Goal**—*One Hope*.
 - a. The hope of every Christian is eternal life— heaven.
 - b. Without Christ there is no hope. Eph. 2:12
 - c. In Him, we can have hope of eternal life. Titus 1:2
 - d. Jesus is our only hope. Eph. 2:13
4. Unity in **Authority**—*One Lord*.
 - a. Christ now has all authority in heaven and on the earth. Matt. 28:18
 - b. He alone is head of the church. Col 1:18
 - c. There can be unity only in submission to him. Heb. 5:8-9
 - d. All Spiritual blessings come through Christ. Eph. 1:3
5. Unity in **Doctrine**—*One faith*.
 - a. Guided by the Holy Spirit, the apostles all taught the same doctrine.
 - b. There is only one true gospel. Gal. 1:8-9; Jude 3
 - c. Unity can be attained only by uniting upon the one faith.
 - d. Both Jew and Gentile have to believe the same thing. Rom. 1:16
6. Unity in **Practice**—*One baptism*.
 - a. The Bible plainly tells us what baptism is, what it is for, and who is a proper candidate for it.
 - b. Scriptural baptism is a burial in water. Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12
 - c. It is for (unto) the remission of sins. Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16
 - d. There are seven baptisms listed in the New Testament. We must see which one is binding on men today.
7. Unity in **Worship**—*One God*.
 - a. The Father has revealed in his Word how men are to worship him, "*in spirit and in truth*." John 4:24; 17:17
 - b. We must do the will of God from the heart. Eph. 6:6
 - c. The New Testament reveals five aspects of worship.
 - 1) Singing. Eph. 5:19
 - 2) Partaking of the Lord's supper. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-24
 - 3) Teaching God's word. Acts 2:42
 - 4) Giving. 1 Cor. 16:2
 - 5) Praying. Acts 2:42

V. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR UNITY?

- A. God, Christ and the Holy Spirit have done their part. Heb. 1:1-2; John 12,48; 2 Tim 2:15
- B. Elders must do their part. Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:1-3
- C. Preachers must do their part. Eph. 4:15
- D. Members must do their part. Phil 1:1; 2:1-5
- E. We must be willing to remove those who hinder the work of the church. Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:14

CONCLUSION:

- 1. We need unity in the church and the world today.
 - 2. However, we need unity based on God's plan and not the plan of men.
 - 3. Only through this kind of unity can we be pleasing to God.
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150 Years Of Digression And The Present Apostasy

Kenneth Burleson

- 1. It is a shame that it is necessary to discuss this topic.
- 2. Since digression has taken place and continues even today, this subject must be discussed.
 - a. Many, today, refuse to talk about the matter.
 - b. Some elderships will not allow the discussion of matters that divide us from the pulpits where they serve.
 - c. Some preachers are afraid of their jobs, so they will keep quiet.
 - d. If one does not preach the whole counsel of God, he has become a false teacher.
- 3. Some brethren did not take a stand while they were in a position to do some good, but since they have retired they have begun to write sound articles and books.
 - a. Some of these brethren even helped in the digression.
 - b. Now that they are writing some good articles brethren have fallen over themselves to put them into print.
 - c. My question is, where is the repentance?

- d. Some will not take a stand as long as their financial well-being is involved.
- 4. We need men who will take a stand without fear or favor.
- 5. Schools have been involved in leading the church into apostasy. Brotherhood colleges, universities and some preacher training schools are to be blamed.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **THE EIGHTEEN HUNDREDS.** (The following material was gleaned from *"The Search For The Ancient Order"* by Earl West.)

- A. **The American Christian Missionary Society.**

- 1. The establishment of the American Christian Missionary Society in 1849 ended years of intense effort by Alexander Campbell to get the brotherhood to organize a general society through which the brotherhood could work in evangelizing the world.
- 2. The establishing of the Missionary Society was the first real test of unity in the brotherhood.
 - a. It divided the conservative and liberals.
- 3. Articles on church organization written by Campbell between 1841 and 1848 paved the way for the founding of the Missionary Society.
 - a. Campbell stressed the universal sense of the church while ignoring, at least for a time, the local character of the church.
 - b. Evangelizing is to be carried out by the local congregation.
 - 1) The work of evangelizing can not be done through an organization separate from the church.
 - 2) It is the responsibility of the church to preach the whole Gospel to the whole world. Eph. 3:10,11
- 4. The paper, *"Christian Intelligencer,"* published in Virginia, was on the Missionary Society side.
- 5. Campbell was not able to attend the organizational meeting due to illness. W. K. Pendleton attended the meeting in Campbell's place.
- 6. At first the Society was named "Christian Missionary Society." Walter Scott objected and suggested adding American. His motion carried and it was called American Christian Missionary Society.

7. Its constitution contained thirteen articles.
 8. One thing that caused the Society trouble was that membership was dependent upon the payment of money.
 9. David Lipscomb believed that Campbell changed his mind regarding the Missionary Society. He did not believe that Campbell believed in the Missionary Society in his earlier days.
 - a. Jacob Creath Jr. was the first to accuse Campbell of having changed his mind.
 - b. Campbell did not believe he had changed his mind. He was the first President of the Society. He was for the principle of the Missionary Society before 1847.
- B. The use of mechanical instruments of music in worship.
1. In the early part of 1851, articles began to appear in the paper, *"Ecclesiastical Reformer,"* in support of mechanical music in worship. J. B. Henshall was the associate editor.
 2. April 27, 1851, Aylette Raines wrote in his diary that, "Brother S(aunders)" wanted to introduce the melodeon into the church. Raines was preaching in Millersburg, Kentucky.
 3. The melodeon was introduced into the church at Midway, Kentucky. L. L. Pinkerton, said, that, "their singing had degenerated into screeching and brawling that would even scare the rats from worship."
 4. At first it was to be used to get the pitch of the songs in their singing practice on Saturday night. One of the ladies was accompanying the singing with her playing of the melodeon. They observed that it was good for the singing so they decided to use it on the Lord's Day in worship.
 5. Adam Hibler, one of the elders strongly opposed it.
 6. Late one night, he pushed Reuben, one of his slaves, through a window. Reuben passed it through the window to Hibler and he took it home with him.
 7. According to records, the church at Midway, Kentucky was the first to use the mechanical instrument in worship.
 8. After the episode in 1860, the subject of mechanical instruments of music died down for about four years.

9. In 1864 the question was renewed and this time it was raised in the "*Millennial Harbinger*."
10. W. K. Pendleton believed it to be in the same classification as using meeting houses in which to worship. He also placed it on the plain of expediency.
11. J. W. McGarvey opposed its use.
12. A. S. Hayden believed in its use.
13. The discussion was mainly by these two men through 1865.
14. Moses E. Lard was not long in getting into the discussion.
I visited the school in Midway, Kentucky several years ago while on vacation with my family and made some photos of the melodeon.

II. THE NINETEEN HUNDREDS.

- A. Why we left the church of Christ, Carl and Grayce Etter, 1945.
 1. We do not believe the church of Christ includes all true Christians.
 2. The teaching of the church of Christ is based upon superficial interpretation of the Bible and is fundamentally in error.
 3. The teaching of the church of Christ is inconsistent and contradicts the announced slogans of the so-called Restoration Movement.
 4. The church of Christ claims to have no creed except Christ, but it has over twenty unwritten creeds.
 5. The church of Christ claims to have all the truth, but, in fact, is groping in darkness.
 6. The church of Christ makes great capital of its ability to divide the word of God, but the system used is without scriptural sanction.
 7. The educational program of the church of Christ is unwilling to trust the youth of the church with the facts of life and religion.
 8. The leaders of the church of Christ have placed it in an embarrassing position by continual warfare upon science and the scientific attitude.
 9. The church of Christ is negative in much of its teaching, and offers no constructive program to take the place of that which it condemns.

10. The church of Christ has such great faith in the correctness of its position that it has developed a smugness that borders on a holier-than-thou attitude.
11. The church of Christ preaches unity and practices division more viciously than any church with which we are familiar.
12. The church of Christ refuses to cooperate with its religious neighbors in movements that are designed to make the world a better place in which to live.
13. Tries to carry water on both shoulders by appearing to be liberal to the world and strictly orthodox to its own brotherhood.
14. Claims to be allied with the religious fundamentalists, but its position is more accurately described by the term incidentalists.
15. Has its eyes on the past and is more concerned with "old paths" than it is in directing people to paths they can follow successfully in our modern age.
16. It does not encourage growth and has a set policy which opposes change.
17. It has no place in its fellowship for those who do not conform fully to the status quo.
18. It has a double standard for judging persons who are accused of violating what the church considers to be New Testament teaching. (Moral code, church's theological position.)
19. Showing signs of decadence and that it is running a marathon race with catastrophe.
* Note: The preceding was copied from a book "As touching those who were once enlightened" by G. C. Brewer. Brethren the issues we are facing in the church today go back several years.

III. THE PRESENT APOSTASY.

- A. Some are following the denominations in **celebrating religious holidays.**
 1. Celebration of *Christmas* as a part of the worship service. It is celebrated as the birth date of our Lord.
 2. Celebration of *Easter* with special Easter services.
 3. *Baby dedication* during the worship. Woodmont Hills in Nashville, Tennessee and Gateway in Pensacola, Florida to name two. They claim to be the non-traditional churches.

4. We must follow God's word. 2 John 9-11; 2 Tim. 1:13; Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Cor. 15:1-4
- B. Congregations are **changing the worship**. They have been led into such by false teachers.
 1. *Humming*.
 2. *Singing while partaking of the Lord's supper*.
 3. *Clapping in worship*.
 4. What does the Bible say? Sing, not humming. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16
 - a. The Bible no where authorizes singing or public praying while partaking of the Lord's supper.
 - b. There is no book, chapter and verse authorization for such.
 5. Jeff Walling said, "I don't go around the country preaching against instruments of music."
 6. There is no more authority for clapping than the use of mechanical instrumental music.
- C. **Changing God's pattern of salvation**.
 1. *Rubel Shelly* said, "We do not contribute one whit to our salvation" — "obeying laws doesn't put a person into the kingdom of God" — "I reject pattern theology" — "I'm not sure there is any sense in which the law of Moses is abrogated."
 2. *Max Lucado* said, "The Bible is a love letter as opposed to a blue print...."
 3. *Randy Mayeux* said, "I believe deeply that the New Testament teaches that salvation is a free gift of God, period. You are saved by grace alone." This leaves out the other necessities for salvation.
 4. What does the Bible say?
 - a. Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:12. These verses teach there is something to do.
 - b. We are under law. Col. 6:2; James 1:25; 1 Cor. 9:21
 - c. Grace is God's part; faith and works are man's part. Not meritorious works. Eph. 2:8-10
 - d. Matt. 5:17; Col. 2:14-16; Eph. 2:15
- D. The **Holy Spirit works separate and apart or in addition to the word of God**.
 1. This is a false doctrine. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit works only through the Word.

2. A comparison of the work of the Spirit and the Word.

<u>Holy Spirit</u>	<u>Their Work</u>	<u>The Word</u>
Neh. 9:30	Instructs	2 Tim. 3:16,17
John 6:63	Quickens	Psa. 119:50
John 16:8	Convicts	Titus 1:9
Eph. 5:18,19	Dwells	Col. 3:16
Rom. 8:24	Leads	Psa. 119:105
Rom. 8:2	Makes free	John 8:32

E. Name

1. Some have changed to "Community Church."
2. When Gateway, in Pensacola, Florida, advertise on T.V. they say Gateway Church. They should take their sign down that reads Gateway Church of Christ. It has ceased to be the church that Jesus built.
3. Woodmont Hills should also take their signs down. It has become a denomination.
4. Jesus said, *"I will build my church...."* Matt. 16:18. *"...churches of Christ salute you."* Rom. 16:16

F. Entertainment

1. Gymnasiums
2. Singing groups
3. Carnivals
4. Where is the Biblical authority for such?

G. Divorce and remarriage.

1. Rubel Shelly said, "remarriage is not what makes it adultery. It's divorce that's covenant breaking."
2. He does not properly apply Matthew 19:9.
3. The doctrine that baptism will wash away an adulterous relationship without dissolving that relationship is contrary to the Bible. Matt. 19:9 is very clear.

H. Missionary Society.

1. The church is to do the sending out of the missionaries. 1 Tim. 3:15
2. As I said earlier, it is the responsibility of the whole church to preach the whole Gospel to the whole world. Eph. 3:10,11

I. Premillennialism.

1. Several years ago this doctrine, for the most part, was defeated among brethren in Kentucky.

2. It seems the past few years that it has begun to raise its ugly head among brethren again in different areas.
- J. I want to close this lesson by pointing out some things that divide us that does not pertain to doctrinal differences.
 1. Strife – contention – the act of fighting or quarreling.
 - a. This goes on among sound brethren.
 - b. Prov. 26:20; 28:25
 2. Envy – A feeling of discontent and ill will because of another's advantage. A desire for some advantage.
 - a. Joseph was sold into slavery. Acts 7:9
 - b. It is a work of the flesh. Gal. 5:21
 - c. It is a mark of carnality. 1 Cor. 3:3
 - d. It crucified Christ. Matt. 27:18
 3. Schisms – 1 Cor. 12:25
The enemy from within will cause far more trouble than the enemy from without.

CONCLUSION:

1. Not only has there been digression for the past 150 years, it goes all the way back to Biblical times.
 2. We must work hard against the digression of our day.
 3. It causes me to tremble when I think of what the church may be like as my grand children grow up.
 4. If the present trend continues, it will be very sad.
 5. May God help us to stem the tide of digression
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The Destiny Of The Church

Ed Casteel

1. *"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."* 1 Cor. 15:24
2. It is without a doubt that the Lord has a plan for the church.
 - a. He had a plan for the church even before the foundation of the world (Eph. 3:10,11).
 - 1) That plan involved the coming of Christ into the world for the salvation of the souls of lost humanity (Luke 19:10).

- 2) All that are saved are added to his church by God (Acts 2:47).
- b. Furthermore, it is the plan of God that the church shall stand till the end of time.
 - 1) When Daniel was prophesying concerning the establishment of the church he observed that it would stand forever. *"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever"* (Dan. 2:44).
 - 2) Daniel 4:3, *"...his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation."*
 - 3) Daniel 6:26, *"I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end."*
3. With this thought in mind, that the church will stand forever, what is the destiny of the church? Paul answered this in the letter he wrote to the church at Corinth. *"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power"* (1 Cor. 15:24)
 - a. The context of this chapter is the discussion of the resurrection from the dead.
 - b. Therefore, the destiny of the church must have something to do, or in some way correspond with, the resurrection of the dead.
 - c. Let's therefore ask several questions that will help us. When properly answered, we will have a better understanding of the destiny of the church.

DISCUSSION:

I. WHEN IS THE END COMING?

- A. This question was originally asked by the apostles in Matthew 24:3.
 1. Jesus has spoken of a time when not one stone of the temple would be left upon another. *"Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down"* (Matt. 24:2). They did not fully comprehend such devastation.

2. Not understanding what he was talking about, they responded to him privately with a request. *"Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"* Matt. 24:3
 - a. These misguided disciples thought the only thing that could result in the temple being so destroyed would be the end of time.
 - b. Furthermore, these disciples thought that Jesus would give them some sign or signs by which they would know the end was near.
3. After discussing the fall of Jerusalem, and the signs that would accompany it, Jesus turns his attention to the real question, when is the end of the world?
 - a. *"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only"* (Matt. 24:36).
 - b. Because it is a secret time as far as man is concerned, the warning is sounded, *"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come"* (Matt. 24:42).
 - 1) No signs will be given.
 - 2) No advance warning will be heard.
 - 3) Rather, *"the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first"* (1 Thess. 4:16).
- B. In spite of the clear teaching of Jesus as to the "when" of his return, many have been and many still are being deceived with the false predictions and prophecies concerning the end of time.
 1. Some will look to the signs of Matthew 24:5ff and shout, "the end is near," "the signs are being seen." They fail to see and understand that Jesus said the signs he gave would be fulfilled in the lifetime of those who heard him speak. *"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled"* (Matt. 24:34).
 2. We know that William Miller taught that Jesus would return to this earth sometime between March 1, 1843 and March 21, 1844. But, he didn't come.
 3. Jehovah Witness' have taught that Jesus made an invisible return in 1914. But, he did not come then.

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John said, "*Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him...*" (Rev. 1:7).

4. People can make all the predictions they want, but that will not alter the time of the Lord's return. When men make their predictions they do so without a bit of evidence from divine Scripture.

II. HOW DOES THE END COME?

- A. The apostle Paul wrote, "*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first*" (1 Thess. 4:16).
- B. Matthew 24:37-29 makes it very clear that man has no foreknowledge of the exact time of the Lord's coming. He is continuing with his normal daily live.
- C. Peter shows how the end will come when he says, "*the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up*" (2 Peter 3:10).
- D. How does the end come?
 1. It comes with the return of Christ where the righteous meet him in the clouds.
 2. It comes with the destruction of the physical world. The elements shall melt with great heat, and the earth shall be burned up.
 - a. There will be no earth left for man to inhabit.
 - b. The earth is not going to be cleansed to make it better for the righteous who are not among the 144,000 whom the Jehovah's Witnesses' say will be the only ones who go to heaven. The earth is burned up, its purpose has been fulfilled.

III. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE END COMES?

- A. The resurrection of all the dead.
 1. John 5:28,29
 2. 1 Thess. 4:13ff only describes the resurrection of the faithful (the righteous). It was these individuals the church was concerned about.
- B. The judgment of all the earth.
 1. Matt. 25:31ff, "*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit*

upon the throne of his glory: ³²And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."

2. Some will be surprised to learn there, in spite of the clear teaching of the Bible, that there is a final judgment (Heb. 9:27).
3. Some will be surprised to learn that Christ will be the judge on that day (Acts 17:30,31; 2 Cor. 5:10).
4. Some will be surprised to learn the Bible is the final authority by which they are going to be judged (John 12:48).
5. Some will be surprised to learn just who are saved and who are lost (Matt. 25:31ff).
6. Some will be surprised to learn the judgment is final. There will be no appeal (Matt. 25:46).

IV. THE ULTIMATE DESTINY OF THE CHURCH.

- A. *"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power"* (1 Cor. 15:24).
- B. The context of 1 Corinthians 15 makes it quiet clear that Christ is the one to make the final delivery. He is the one that has been resurrected. *"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead"* (1 Cor. 15:20,21)
- C. That which is to be delivered up is the church.
 1. Christ promised to build the church (Matt. 16:18).
 2. Christ died for the church (Acts 20:28).
 3. Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22,23).
 4. Christ will take his church and present it to his Father at the end (1 Cor. 15:24).
- D. The ultimate destiny of the church is that Heavenly Home.
 1. John 14:1-6
 2. This beautiful place called heaven is far more glorious and beautiful than any man can imagine or even think.
 - a. Though Paul was not talking about heaven in 1 Cor. 2:9, the language must be true of this wonderful place as well. *"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."*

- b. Look at the glowing, glorious description of heaven in Revelation 21.

CONCLUSION:

1. The church has encountered a great deal of opposition and error over the last few years, not to mention all the difficulties of the centuries that have past.
 - a. In the 1950s the church was faced with the opposition to church support of orphan homes and cooperative mission works. The Truth won out, and the church remained.
 - b. In the 1960s the church was faced with Neo-Pentecostalism, but the Truth won and the church remained.
 - c. In the 1970s the church was faced with Crossroadism, but the Truth won out and the church remained.
 - d. In the 1980s the church was facing the plague of the Boston Multiplying Ministries. But the truth won out, and the church remained.
 - e. In the 1990s the church is faced with the work of the "change agents" who are out to destroy the church, but the Truth will win again and the church will remain.
2. Jesus proclaimed, *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away"* (Matt. 24:35). Daniel of old saw the establishment of the Lord's church, and wrote, *"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever"* (Dan. 2:44).
3. The kingdom of God will stand until Jesus comes and presents the kingdom to his Father. Then in that Heavenly Home, without error, division and turmoil, we shall have bliss forever more.

The following outlines appeared in the 1987
lectureship book which is out of print.

God's Mission For The Church Is To Glorify God

Roger Jackson

1. God must be glorified in all we do.
2. The obligation:
 - a. Exod. 20:1-6, The first commandment reflects the glorification of God. The Savior endorsed its position as first in prominence (Luke 10:27).
 - b. Dan. 2:27,28, Daniel was careful not to take honor unto himself that belonged to God.
 - c. Acts 3:12, The lame man Peter healed was steadfastly attached to the apostles. But they would not allow the honor to be bestowed on themselves.
 - d. 1 Peter 3:15, All of us must honor God by being able to explain the faith.
3. The failures:
 - a. Gen. 11:1-9, The people of Babel wanted a *name* for themselves and self glorification.
 - b. Num. 20:12, Not even God's second greatest prophet and His first High Priest were excused when they failed to honor God *by doing what He said*.
 - c. Acts 12:20-23, Herod Agrippa learned a hard lesson by failing to glorify God.
 - d. 1 Cor. 1:21, We fail to glorify God when we fail to preach the soul-saving Gospel of His Son – His power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16).

DISCUSSION:

I. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF VAIN WAYS MAN IS TRYING TO GLORIFY GOD.

A. In sin.

1. Prov. 14:34, The "sin is not so bad" foolishness comes from the "I'm as good as any church-member" philosophy.
2. Rom. 2:24, The conduct of God's people caused men to laugh at God. There is no greater problem in the Lord's church than sin swept under the carpet.
3. Rom. 3:5-8, Few men actually believe in situation ethics, but many more privately endorse it and imply it in false doctrines.

4. 1 Cor. 6:19-20, Inspiration leaves little doubt as to the sinfulness of the use of tobacco, drugs and alcohol in this penetrating passage.
- B. In human institutions.
 1. Civic organizations do much good, and many are wholesome as well as needed, but they cannot replace the Lord's church and the loyalty we owe it.
 2. A local high school had a "Christian Club." I advised the young people to leave it alone. The church is the only Christian organization God has.
 3. Masonry is a religion, just as much in competition with the church as any other denomination.
 4. The Salvation Army is another denomination. Let false teachers ring the bell.
- C. In a Protestant denomination.
 1. Ecc. 7:29, The inventions multiply every year.
 2. John 17:20-21, Jesus' prayer was answered in the first century. No sects are authorized.
 3. 2 Cor. 6:14-17, This has nothing to do with marriage. It commands Christians not to worship with sectarians and cults.
 4. Eph. 5:11, How much big "F" little "f" fellowship can we have with error?
- D. Outside the church.
 1. Matt. 19:16-22, Christ made it clear moral goodness is insufficient.
 2. Luke 12:15-21, I knew a man once who farmed too late to attend Wednesday night services on the basis that he could better serve God in the field!
 3. Acts 10:1-3, If a person can serve God outside the church as well as in, how shall we explain Cornelius' case?
 4. Eph. 5:25-27, God loves the church, and exalted His Son's bride.

II. GOD HAS SPECIFIED WHERE AND HOW HE MUST BE GLORIFIED.

- A. It is in the church as a faithful, active Christian.
 1. Acts 2:47, He puts all the saved there.
 2. 1 Cor. 9:24-26, Those moral souls outside, beat the air.
 3. 2 Tim. 2:15, Those approved of God know He must be glorified in the church.

4. 1 Peter 4:16, All men suffer; but those who suffer as Christians live forever, and glorify God.
-

Concerning Preaching

Charles Blair

1. Our preaching should be the kind that God wants.

DISCUSSION:

I. PREACHING SHOULD BE DOCTRINAL.

- A. Doctrinal preaching should be clear.
 1. People understood what Jesus taught.
 2. John 18:19-21; Matt. 7:28-29
- B. It deals with the issues of life. 1 Tim. 1:9-10
 1. Sins must be condemned, no matter who is involved.
- C. It helps the church to stay "on track." Eph. 4:14; 2 Tim. 3:16-17

II. PREACHING SHOULD BE IN LOVE.

- A. This is the proper attitude for preaching. Eph. 4:15
- B. We must be governed by our love for the souls of men. Rom. 1:14; 10:1
- C. To preach in love does not mean we compromise the Truth.
 1. Acts 20:27; Gal. 2:11-14
 2. Paul was not "unloving" when he preached.
 3. He loved the truth more than friendship.

III. PREACHING MUST PLEASE GOD AND NOT MAN.

- A. Our preaching must please God. 1 Thess. 2:4,13
- B. We cannot preach denominational doctrine and be pleasing to God. Matt. 15:3, 8-9
 1. We cannot afford to use the language of "Ashdod."
 2. You cannot mix truth and error. 2 Cor. 6:14-16
- C. Preaching will offend some, but our responsibility is to God. Matt. 15:12

IV. IN OUR PREACHING WE MUST SPEAK AS THE ORACLES OF GOD.

- A. When we preach, we represent the Way of God.
 - 1. 1 Peter 4:11
 - 2. We tell the world, this is God's will for you.
- B. We do not speak for "schools" or "institutions" of any kind in opposition to what God has said.
- C. We are not to be "hirelings" who will change or alter Truth because of financial pressure brought about by anyone.
John 10:13

V. PREACHING SHOULD REFLECT THE TRUTH IN OUR INDIVIDUAL LIVES.

- A. We will not quit:
 - 1. Because of discouragement. Jer. 20:7-9; 12:5
 - 2. Because of opposition of false teachers. 1 John 4:1

VI. ALL OUR PREACHING SHOULD POINT TO JESUS THE CHRIST.

- A. We have no business preaching any one or any thing else but Christ. 1 Cor. 2:2
- B. Jesus Christ is the only answer for salvation. John 14:6
 - 1. He does not "share the stage" with anyone.
- C. He is the only answer for the problems of the world.
 - 1. Congress cannot legislate sin out of the lives of people.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. We should preach the Word.
 - 2. All of man's problems are related to departure from God.
 - 3. We, as the servants of God, must call men back to God.
2 Tim. 4:2
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Concerning Restoring The Lost/Fallen

Jimmy W. Bates

- 1. Several terms describe this problem: unfaithful, backsliding, delinquent, out of duty, straying, erring, wayward, fallen, LOST (Jer. 8:4-7; Luke 15; Gal. 6:1-2; Heb. 6:4-6; James 5:19-20).

2. A problem that effects every congregation to some degree.
3. Much evidence of unfaithfulness in the church in the areas of doctrine, morality, attendance, involvement, work, etc.
4. The unfaithful Christian must realize the consequences of his/her unfaithfulness! The church must also realize its responsibility to the unfaithful and exercise that responsibility!

DISCUSSION:

I. THE CHRISTIAN CAN FALL AND BE LOST.

- A. Warned against falling (Heb. 3:12; 1 Cor. 9:27; 10:12).
 1. Told how to keep from falling (2 Peter 1:5-10; 1 Cor. 10:13).
 2. Told what to do when we fall (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9; James 5:16; Prov. 28:13).
 3. Since we are commanded to *repent of, confess, and pray* for forgiveness of sins, then it stands to reason that a Christian *can* and *will* be lost if he fails to do these things.
- B. Biblical examples of those who fell:
 1. Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:25; cf. Luke 22:3; John 13:27).
 2. Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9-24).
 3. The Galatians (Gal. 5:4).
 4. The church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:4-5; Eph. 2:8).

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FALLEN.

- A. The spiritual condition of the fallen:
 1. Spiritually sick (Isa. 1:5,6; Matt. 9:12).
 2. Out of fellowship with God and the faithful (1 John 1:3-7).
 3. In worse condition than before obeying (2 Peter 2:20-22).
 4. Enemies of Christ (Phil. 3:17-19; Matt. 12:30; Heb. 10:25-31).
 5. Spiritually dead — LOST (James 5:19-20).
- B. Why Christians fall:
 1. Not because they intended to fall.
 2. Luke 8:4-15 — Lack of convictions, cares, pleasures and riches of the world.
 3. Lack of spiritual nourishment of the word (1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 1:5-11; 3:18; Acts 20:28; 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 5:12-14).
 4. Wrong companions (1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor. 6:14-17).

5. False teaching (Acts 20:28-32; Gal. 3:1; 1:6-12; 1 John 4:1; 2 Tim. 4:1-5; Rom. 16:17-18).
6. Satan is behind every cause (1 Peter 5:8; Eph. 6:10-12; James 4:7).
- C. Who are the unfaithful or fallen?
 1. A difference in human imperfection and willful practice of sin (1 John 1:7-10; Heb. 10:25-26; Rom. 6:1-18).
 2. Those who willfully or neglectfully violate any of the teachings of Christ and continue in that violation have become unfaithful and need to be restored.

III. THE OBLIGATION OF THE CHURCH TO RESTORE THE FALLEN.

- A. Gal. 6:1; cf. James 5:19-20
 1. A COMMAND — "Restore such an one."
 2. Who is to do the RESTORING?
 - a. "Brethren" — Not just preachers and elders.
 - b. "Ye which are spiritual" — Not the hypocrite!
 3. The spirit in which the restoring is done: "spirit of meekness" — concern and compassion. "Considering thyself" (1 Cor. 10:12; Matt. 7:12).
- B. Go and find the one gone astray, Luke 15; *lost sheep*, vs. 4-7; *lost coin*, vs 8-10; *lost boy*, vs. 11-32.

CONCLUSION:

1. In restoring the Lost/Fallen: *attitude* is the key, *action* is the answer, *salvation* is the reward.
2. We MUST NOT ignore the FALLEN as if nothing were wrong! If we do, we're just as lost as they are!

Concerning Fellowship

Tom House

1. With the exception of the cross of Christ, there is no subject more endearing to the Christian than that of "fellowship."
2. Reasons for this conclusion are based on the fact that Christians, fellowship, and the cross are so closely connected.

DISCUSSION:**I. WHAT IS FELLOWSHIP?**

- A. Before defining terms, first note that the terms "fellowship" and "unity," on most occasions in our discussion, may be used interchangeably.
 - 1. It is vital to remember that "fellowship" and "unity" have divine purpose, design, and desire for and regarding man.
 - 2. Jesus prayed for it (John 17:21), and the Holy Spirit condemned opposition to it (1 Cor. 1:10-13).
 - 3. Additionally, it is important to note an age-old truth regarding this matter:
 - a. God does not approve all "unity" and "fellowship" (Rev. 2:14,15,20; Eph. 5:11; 1 Peter 4:3-4).
 - b. Nor does he condemn all division (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Thess. 2:5-16; 1 Cor. 5:7).
- B. Definition of terms.
 - 1. The word "fellowship" comes from the Greek term meaning: communion, partner, joint-participation, or joint-partaker.
 - 2. The dictionary defines it as: "The condition or fact of having common interests, ideals, experiences, etc," or "a body of individuals joined together through similar interest, beliefs, etc."

II. THE VALUE OF FELLOWSHIP.

- A. John sets forth its spiritual value in 1 John 1.
 - 1. He establishes in verse 7 the possibility of those of like interest and belief to co-participate in those interests, on which Paul comments in Eph. 4:11-16.
- B. No greater value may be placed on our fellowship than knowing that through the Gospel we may have the fellowship of the Godhead (1 John 1:3), the message of which gives us "full joy" (v. 4).

III. WHAT ARE THE LIMITS OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP?

- A. Religious fellowship among men is desired of God (John 17:21), but to properly obtain and maintain it is not without conditions.
- B. John sets the foundation upon which all Christian fellowship is based (1 John 1:7).
 - 1. One must "walk in the light, as he is in the light."

2. The "light" is God's standard of authority, the Gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 4:3-4; Psalm 119:105, 130).
- C. Those not "walking in the light" or those who do not practice or teach according to the truth, are not in fellowship with God, and consequently are not in fellowship with those who follow the Truth.
 1. This is true whether it is regarding matters of doctrine (2 John 9-11; Rom. 16:17),
 2. Or matters of morality (1 Cor. 5:7; Eph. 5:11; 1 Peter 4:3-4).

CONCLUSION:

1. The bottom line is, we may cry "we must have unity" or "let's be in full fellowship," (and many are; in every means conceivable), but unless we are in fellowship with God, which is based solely on the Truth, every effort we make to achieve unity among ourselves, is complete folly.
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The Mission Of The Church

David Jones

1. Jesus was sent on a mission: to shed his blood in order to purchase the church (John 4:34; Acts 20:28; Luke 19:10).
2. The church is charged with a mission today (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).
3. The church fulfills that mission as seen in the following analogies:

DISCUSSION:

I. CHURCH.

A. Meaning of the word *ekklesia*.

1. It is the "Called out."
2. The church consists of those called out of the world (Col. 1:13-14).
3. We are called by the Gospel (2 Thess. 2:13-14).

B. Mission of the "called-out" today:

1. We are to glorify God in our bodies (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

2. We are to be different from those in the world (Phil. 2:15-16).
3. We are to be without spot or wrinkle (Eph. 5:27).

II. FAMILY.

- A. At one time all men are the offspring of God (Acts 17:29).
- B. However, there comes a time when God makes a clear distinction between those who are spiritual sons and those who are not.
- C. Sonship doesn't depend on fleshly birth, but on being baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27).
- D. The family of God wears the correct name (Eph. 3:15).

III. VINEYARD.

- A. We read of the vineyard of God in Isaiah 5:1-7. This is a type of the church to come.
- B. John 15:1-3 Christians are in the vineyard today.

IV. ONE BODY.

- A. The church is likened to a physical body.
 1. Christ is the head (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).
 2. Members make up the spiritual body of Christ (Rom. 12:4-5).
 3. Just as the physical blood supplies life, so the blood of Christ supplies spiritual life (1 John 1:7, 9).
- B. How many bodies?
 1. Paul wrote there to but one body (Eph. 4:4).
 2. The way of entrance into this one body is by water baptism (1 Cor. 12:13).
 3. Salvation is found ONLY in this one body (Eph. 5:23).

V. SPIRITUAL BUILDING.

- A. Buildings built by men contain bricks, stones or pieces of wood linked together by mortar and nails.
- B. The church is spoken of as the building of God.
 1. The foundation is Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 3:11; Acts 4:11).
 2. The members are living stones (1 Peter 2:5)
 3. These stones are to be "fitly framed together" (Eph. 2:21).

VI. THE BRIDE OF CHRIST.

- A. John saw the church coming down from heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (Rev.21:1-2).

B. How many brides can one husband have?

1. The husband is to cleave to his one wife (Matt. 19:4-6).
2. From Rom. 7:1-4 and Eph. 5:23-32, we conclude the relationship between Christ and the church is the same as that between husband and wife.
3. There can be *only* one bride for Christ (2 Cor. 11:1-3).
4. The church is married to Christ and should bring forth fruit unto him (Rom. 7:4). If we try to bear fruit in more than one "church," we are guilty of spiritual adultery.

CONCLUSION:

1. The church is beautifully described in the Bible.
 2. For us to fulfill the mission God has for the church, we need to cultivate the characteristics of each of these analogies into our lives so we can be what God wants us to be!
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Concerning Modern Versions And Their Threat To The Church

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

1. Note carefully Gal. 1:6-9 and 2 Peter 3:16.
2. Other warnings: Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19.
3. Note also what we read in Mark 7:7,9,13; 2 Cor. 2:11; 2:17; 4:2.
4. Reliable translations demand three essentials: 1) accuracy; 2) clarity; 3) dignity.

DISCUSSION:**I. CONCERNING THE THREAT OF THEIR PERVERTED GUIDELINES.**

- A. Importance of knowing the background and aims of translators, paraphrasers, and publishers.
- B. What the Prefaces, Introductions, and Forewords of some of them have to say.

II. CONCERNING THE THREAT OF THEIR GROWING PERVERSIONS.

- A. TEV and NEB in Acts 20:7.
- B. The RSV of 1946, 1952 and the NIV of 1973 and 1978.
- C. A Jehoakim attitude now prevails such as with how they deal with Mark 16:9-20 and the Reader's Digest approach to Biblical translation or omission which is a more accurate term as far as they are concerned.

III. CONCERNING THE THREAT OF THEIR MODERNISTIC AND DENOMINATIONAL PERVERSIONS.

- A. The basic thing wrong with the RSV is its modernism.
- B. The basic thing wrong with the NIV is its denominationalism or its sectarianism.
- C. Creeds, once in books separate from the Bible or in Biblical footnotes, are now in the actual text of what is called Bibles.

IV. CONCERNING THREATS OF THEIR PERVERSIONS AND CONFUSION.

- A. They are filled with "modernism" and "faith only."
- B. The Deity of Christ is under attack.
- C. Premillennialism, mechanical music in worship, Pentecostalism, Denominational names.

V. CONCERNING THREATS OF THEIR NEW TERMINOLOGY.

- A. Titus 2:11; 2 Tim. 1:12 and Titus 1:9 are still binding on our manner of speech.

VI. CONCERNING THE CURRENT CHALLENGES WE FACE.

- A. The highly unpopular exposure of such. I know this from personal experience.
 - B. A defense of our reliable Bibles when so many are determined to have something new and different.
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The Effect Of The Home On God's Mission

Wendell R. Fikes

1. God desires that all men come to the knowledge of the TRUTH and be SAVED (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).
2. God's House, the church of Christ, is the pillar and the ground of the TRUTH (1 Tim. 3:15)!
3. The home *affects* and influences every segment of our society, the *church*, the schools, the government, and the nation.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE HOME WAS GOD'S FIRST DIVINE INSTITUTION ON THE EARTH.

- A. God made man and woman, male and female, the supreme part of His creation (Gen. 1:28-29; 2:18-25).
 1. God's marriage design was for the happiness of both man and woman (Gen. 2:18, 20; 1 Cor. 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4; Song of Solomon chapters 4 & 6; Prov. 18:22; 31:10-31; Eph. 5:22-23).
 2. Be fruitful and replenish the earth (Gen. 1:28; Psalm 128:3-6; 127:3-5; Gen. 4:1; 1 Tim. 5:14).
 3. Parents are responsible to teach their children about God (Deut. 6:6-7; Prov. 22:6; 13:24; 22:15; 2 Tim. 1:5; Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:21).

II. FOUR GRIEVOUS SINS THAT ARE DESTROYING HOMES.

- A. DIVORCE & RE-MARRIAGE without Bible cause.
 1. Divorce and re-marriage without a Scriptural reason.
 2. Fornication (Matt. 19:1-9; 5:32).
 3. Death (1 Cor. 7:39).
 4. Statistics reveal that more than 1.2 million divorces were granted in 1982, alone!
- B. ABORTION.
 1. Abortion, the Hitler murder-machine.
 2. Abortionists, hands that shed innocent blood (Prov. 6:16-17).
 3. Statistics: *abortion* is big-business in America—three-hundred million dollars a year)!!
 4. Since the Supreme Court ruled abortion OK in 1973, more than 5,000,000 babies have been scraped, sucked, and cut out of their mother's womb! (1987 number)

5. Animals have more protection from the Humane Societies in America.
- C. HOMOSEXUALITY.
 1. Homosexuality, that great wickedness.
 2. Def: "erotic activity with another of the same sex."
 3. What is wrong with homosexuality?
 4. Condemned by God as wickedness (Gen. 13:13; 19:1-11; Lev. 18:22-30; Rom. 1:26-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Jude 7).
 5. Homosexuality is perversion (Rom. 1:26-27).
 6. "Aids", its cure (1 Tim. 5:22)!
- D. DRUGS, every kind from alcohol to cocaine.
 1. Drugs — alcohol, booze, marijuana, cocaine.
 2. Booze and cocaine will destroy both body and soul (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 5:18; Prov. 23:29-32).
 3. Lost souls, broken-down bodies and millions of \$\$\$\$ wasted.

CONCLUSION:

1. If we allow men and women to be destroyed and their time and lives wasted in sin, who will go as did the Prophets of old when Isaiah said, "*Here am I send me*" (Isa. 6:8), and Samuel answered, "*Speak, for thy servant heareth*" (1 Sam. 3:10).
 2. Let every man pledge himself to righteousness and willingness to see that all men in every nation have opportunity to hear, believe and obey the GOSPEL. Then, and not until then, will we have fulfilled our purpose for God.
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Evangelism In The Book Of Acts

Arlis Richardson

1. The book of Acts is to the New Testament what the book of Joshua is to the Old Testament.
 - a. As Joshua outlines the methods used by Israel in settling the Promised Land, so does Acts outline the methods used by the early church in carrying out the Lord's commission (Matt. 28:18-20).
 - b. As Joshua centers around God's appointed leader, so does Acts center around Christ's appointed apostles and how they

used the keys of the kingdom to spread the Gospel around the world.

2. Those who would be a part of Christ's kingdom in good standing must realize the importance of evangelism (John 14:15; Matt. 28:19), but also that certain limitations exist.
3. Many seem to be zealous to carry out the Lord's commission, but have let zeal lead them into gimmicks and methods foreign to the Bible.

DISCUSSION:

I. WAITING UNTIL THE PROPER TIME WAS NECESSARY (Acts 1:4).

- A. There are times when it is better and necessary to wait (1 Sam. 13:7-14).
- B. God's plan for the world's salvation is too important to rush into without proper guidance and training.
 1. Christians are to be zealous but also patient (Titus 2:14; 2 Peter 1:6).
 2. Israel was characterized by zeal without knowledge (Rom. 10:2).
 3. A person can be zealously wrong (Phil. 3:6; Acts 22:3).
- C. The time for execution would be revealed (Acts 1:8; John 14:26; 16:13).

II. EVANGELISM BEGAN AND WAS CARRIED OUT ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN GIVEN FROM GOD.

- A. There was more than merely "*repent and be baptized for remission of sins*" taught.
 1. Peter taught other words (Acts 2:40).
 2. Only some accepted what was taught (v.41).
 3. Those baptized "continued" in the doctrine. One cannot continue in something he's not already in (v.42).
 4. The evangelism thrust began with Gospel preaching in Jerusalem as commanded. cf. Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8
 5. The apostles continued to seize every opportunity by getting attention, preaching the Gospel, pointing out specific sins, and delivering the same message to all (Acts 2:38; 3:19).
 6. Their converts were trained to carry out the Lord's commission as shown by Acts 8:1-4.
 - a. Members scattered and taught while leaders remained.

- b. Are the members where you worship being trained to do evangelistic work? If not, why not? 2 Tim. 2:2

III. EVANGELISM CONTINUED TO THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE WORLD ACCORDING TO PLAN.

- A. Churches began sending out evangelistic teams (Acts 13:1-4).
 1. There is wisdom in sending men in pairs as Jesus did (Mark 6:7).
 2. There was communication with the sending church (Acts 14:26, 27).
- B. Teaching was done publicly and from house to house (Acts 5:42; 20:20).
- C. Written communication was used — the New Testament epistles.
 1. Bulletins, letters, papers, are very effective, allowing the one being taught to truly study the communication.
 2. "The pen is more powerful than the sword."
- D. Churches cooperated in supporting evangelists, though there were times when a single church did so (Phil. 4:15; 2 Cor. 11:8).
 1. Sometimes cooperating churches supported an evangelist working primarily with another congregation.
 2. It is perfectly scriptural for an evangelist to support himself, but not always the most expedient, as shown by Paul (2 Cor. 11:8).
 3. If an evangelist is willing to do the work, certainly churches should provide adequate support! 1 Cor. 9:9; 1 Tim. 5:18
 4. A challenge was given to those being sent (2 Tim. 4:1-5).

CONCLUSION:

1. Although the book of Acts ends with Paul under guard in Rome, we must realize the Lord's commission did not end with the book of Acts nor the apostles.
2. The saviour told the apostles to "go," "baptize," and "teach" those converted to do the same.
3. If we are to be what God wants us to be, we will follow the pattern of those early Christians.
4. We will avail ourselves of every opportunity to "preach the word," realizing that is the only real plan revealed in the book

of Acts and that the word is designed to save men's souls (Luke 8:11; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:21).

The Work Of Deacons

Terry Joe Kee

1. The word *diakonos*, from which deacon is translated means: "One who by the virtue of the office assigned him, cares for the poor and has charge of and distributes the money collected for their use." (Thayer's)

DISCUSSION:

I. THE WORK OF DEACONS.

- A. *diakonia* means "ministration" (Acts 6:1).
- B. *diakoneo* means "to wait on, to minister to, to serve" (Acts 6:2).
- C. *diakonos*, the word "deacon," is used in Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8,10,12, thus setting forth the deacons as a distinct group of officers.
- D. If it is argued that Acts 6:1-2 refers to a special function, so does Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13. All Christians are servants, as was set forth in the "Preliminary Considerations" at the beginning of this outline, but deacons are a special class of servants.
- E. No title is given in Acts 6:1-2, but if the words used were anglicized instead of being translated, the English rendition would be the same.
- F. "Daily *diakonian*," (Acts 6) those chosen to *diakonein*, therefore, why hesitate to call them *diakono*i (deacons)? This is the same word as used in 1 Tim. 3:8-13, hence we could hardly question their being the same in Acts 6:1-2 (cf. Robert Milligan's *Scheme of Redemption* for further study).
- G. Keep in mind their qualifications and special office set forth by the Holy Spirit; hence, they ought to be allowed to function as such. A statement highly worthy of consideration:

- H. "The duties of the bishops and deacons were, no doubt, different; but the degrees of rank and importance of work is just the estimation of men. Some things God has said to us may appear to be more important than some other commands, but we do not have the right to pronounce them so. However much the function of the deacons differs from those of the elders, it is impossible for them to please God and not perform their functions. Hence, it is just as necessary that they serve faithfully as deacons as that the elders serve as elders." (G. C. Brewer: *The Model Church*, p. 99)
- I. The work of deacons was given in detail in the New Testament, but it is generally understood that they were to look after the physical needs.

II. THE DUTY OF DEACONS.

- A. Hold fast the faithful word (1 Tim. 3:9).
 - 1. Stand forthright for the truth (cf. Eph. 6:10-17; 1 Cor. 15:58).
 - 2. With a pure conscience. One should live a life consistent with God's Word.
- B. Look after the physical needs.
 - 1. Some specific suggestions:
 - a. "Serve tables" — care for the poor (Acts 6:1-5). The purpose: To free the elders for spiritual work of teaching, overseeing, etc.
 - b. See to the lighting (turn them on and off, see that burned out light bulbs are replaced, and necessary repairs are made).
 - c. See to the heating, air-conditioning, ventilation, etc.
 - d. Look after the cleaning and maintaining of the building and grounds.
 - e. Assist in planning new construction, getting plans, costs, etc., and reporting to the elders.
 - f. Usher crowds, see that everyone is properly seated, making sure that all visitors are registered.
 - g. See to the distribution of bulletins, literature, etc., during services.
 - h. See that the baptistery is always ready and clothing for candidates is in order.
 - i. Give assistance to those preparing for baptism, if needed.

- j. Make sure the emblems for the Lord's supper are properly prepared and in order. See that the congregation is properly served.
 - k. Look after financial interests in general.
 - l. Take up the collection.
 - m. Make distribution of the funds to the poor, pay the bills, etc.
 - n. Any sizeable expenditures, while they may be discussed and set forth as needed, should be discussed and passed upon by the elders, before any definite action is taken.
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Preachers: Their Qualifications And Work

Max R. Miller

- 1. 1 Tim. 4:16
- 2. Preaching essential to God's plan (1 Cor. 1:18, 21; Mark 16:15).
- 3. God so ordained that men would hear His word (2 Cor. 4:7).
- 4. As His word is pure and has a work to do, the preacher must be pure and do his work faithfully.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **QUALIFICATIONS OF PREACHERS (Timothy, Titus).**
 - A. Studious.
 - 1. Give heed to reading (1 Tim. 4:13).
 - 2. Study to show thyself approved (2 Tim. 2:15).
 - B. Industrious.
 - 1. A workman that needeth not to be ashamed (2 Tim. 2:15).
 - 2. Do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5).
 - C. Diligent.
 - 1. Be diligent in these things (1 Tim. 4:15).
 - 2. Be urgent in season, out of season (2 Tim. 4:2).
 - D. Conscientious.
 - 1. Holding faith and a good conscience (1 Tim. 1:19).
 - E. Prayerful.

1. *"I exhort...that supplications prayers..."* (1 Tim. 2:1).
- F. Not contemptible.
 1. Let no man despise thy youth (1 Tim. 4:12).
 2. Let no man despise thee (Titus 2:15).
- G. Careful.
 1. *"Take heed to thyself..."* (1 Tim. 4:16).
- H. Purity.
 1. *"Lay hands suddenly on no man... keep thyself pure"* (1 Tim. 5:22).
 2. *"Follow after righteousness... call on the Lord out of a pure heart"* (2 Tim. 2:22).
- I. Self-control.
 1. No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life (2 Tim. 2:4).
 2. Flee these things (all kinds of evil) (1 Tim. 6:11).
 3. Flee youthful lusts (2 Tim. 4:5).
- J. Follow after... (2 Tim. 2:22).
 1. Righteousness, godliness, faith (1 Tim. 4:17,6).
 2. Charity, patience, peace (1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22).
 3. Meekness (2 Tim. 2:25).
- K. Not contentious.
 1. And the servant of the Lord must not strive (2 Tim. 2:24).
 2. Avoid foolish questions... contentious... they are unprofitable (Titus 3:9).
 3. Withdraw from those dotting about questions and strifes of words (1 Tim. 6:3-5).
- L. Gentle.
 1. Be gentle toward all (2 Tim. 2:24).
 2. Gentle and artful teachers (II Tim. 2:24-25).
- M. Longsuffering and forbearing.
- N. Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel (2 Tim. 1:8).
 1. Endure hardness as a good soldier (2 Tim. 2:3).
 2. Exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine (2 Tim. 4:2).
- O. Impartial.
 1. Without preferring one before another and doing nothing by partiality (1 Tim. 5:21).
- P. Not ashamed.
 1. Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord (2 Tim. 1:8).
 2. A workman that needeth not be ashamed (2 Tim. 2:15).
- Q. Devoted.

1. Give thyself wholly to them (1 Tim. 4:15).
- R. Example.
 1. In word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity (1 Tim. 4:12) of good works, in doctrine uncorruptness, gravity (Titus 2:7-8).

II. THE WORK OF PREACHERS (2 Tim. 4:1-5).

- A. "*Preach the word*" (vs. 1-4) as divinely given, constantly, faithfully.
- B. "*Watch thou in all things.*"
 1. Watchman, for God's people (Ezek. 33:6).
 2. Thyself (1 Tim. 4:12,16; cf. 1 Cor. 9:27; 2 Tim. 4:10).
 3. Handling truth (cf. Heb. 4:12; 2 Cor. 10:4; Rom. 1:16-17).
- C. "*Endure afflictions.*"
 1. Examples: Paul (2 Tim. 3:10-12); Moses, Stephen, Antipas (Rev. 2:10); Christ (Rev. 1:5; Heb. 12:1-3).
 2. Why? Gospel furthered through sacrifice. Eternal reward (2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 2:10).
- D. "*Do the work of an evangelist.*"
 1. Things not included: pastoring, politics, etc.
 2. Preach the word, all else excluded (Titus 2:15).
 3. A competitive work, thus a fight (2 Tim. 4:7; 1 Tim. 6:12).
 - a. Against evil forces (Eph. 6:10-18).
 - b. Endurance. cf. Demas (2 Tim. 4:10).
- E. "*Fulfill thy ministry.*"
 1. Fill it full (study, no forty hour week) (Acts 1:8).
 2. Give it the Lord's measure (Luke 6:38).
 3. Never look back (Luke 9:62).

CONCLUSION:

1. Preaching the Gospel is God's highest calling.
 2. Sacrifice, dedication, truth, love—the cornerstones of the Gospel ministry, all laid on the foundation of the Rock, Jesus Christ.
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Worship

Gary Colley

1. Matt. 4:10; John 4:23-24
2. Worship deserves our close investigation.
3. Worship is a privilege and blessing of Christians referred to in some form in the New Testament 190 times.
4. Defined: "Profound respect mingled with fear and affection" (Webster) (1 Chron. 16:29-30).
5. Three requirements of acceptable worship:
 - a. Directed to God (Rev. 22:9).
 - b. Proper in spirit or attitude (John 4:24).
 - c. Must be in truth (John 16:13).

DISCUSSION:

- I. **THERE ARE SPECIFIC ACTS OF WORSHIP (Acts 2:42).**
 - A. Worship is not simply an act; neither is it solely an attitude.
 - B. The five acts prescribed in the New Testament are:
 1. Teaching (Mark 16:15-16; Gal. 1:8-9).
 2. Singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).
 3. Prayer (Acts 2:42; 1 Thess. 5:17).
 4. Communing (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:28).
 5. Giving (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:6-9).
- II. **THE ASSEMBLIES ARE TO BE RESPECTED BY REGULAR ATTENDANCE (Heb. 10:23-25; Matt. 6:33; James 4:17).**
 - A. What is my influence when I do not regularly attend all services: in the congregation, toward the outsiders, young Christians, children?
 - B. We fail to be like God when we do not respect the assemblies faithfully (Heb. 10:23; 1 Cor. 1:9).
 - C. Remember, the Lord keeps a perfect and complete record (2 Cor. 5:10-11; Rev. 20:12).
- III. **DO THE SCRIPTURES AUTHORIZE PARALLEL WORSHIP?**
 - A. We refer to two simultaneous assemblies in which the Lord's supper is taken in both by members of the church.
 1. Sometimes called "youth church," "children's Bible hour," "junior church" or "junior worship."

2. Certainly we believe in teaching children.
- B. The Old and New Testaments give assembling together of men, women, and children (Deut. 31:10-12; Matt. 14:21).
- C. The Bible does not provide for, nor authorize the breaking of the assembling of the flock together (1 Cor. 11:18-34; 14:23).
 1. Hence, those who do so are without divine authority, adding to inspiration, and, therefore, teaching and practicing another Gospel (2 John 9-11; Matt. 15:8-9).
 2. Every example in the New Testament shows one assembly for worship as is shown in every chapter in the book of Acts except for chapters 9 and 27.
- D. Jesus loved the children in His assemblies (Matt. 18:3-4) and many times He used them for lessons and used the five loaves and two fishes of a child to feed the 5,000 (Matt. 14:21).
- E. Many years ago, the digressives of the Christian Church started having their "young people's church." Shall we blindly follow them into error?

CONCLUSION:

1. Worship certainly deserves our attention and close investigation.
 2. Let us all resolve to walk in the Truth, rendering unto God the attitude and actions which He has prescribed. Let us attend regularly the services of the Lord's church.
 3. The greatest of all services will be enjoyed when we sing around the great white throne.
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Submission To Christ

Calvin Barber

1. Same mind (attitude) of submission that Christ expressed should be in every Christian.
2. Meaning of submission:
 - a. The act of lowering one's self, to place under.
 - b. The condition of being submissive or humble.

- c. The act of submitting to the authority or control of another, to surrender (Webster).
- 3. It is difficult for man to be submissive.
 - a. Man is self-centered and selfish.
 - b. Most of our time and talents are used in self-interest and pleasure.
 - c. Our humanistic society encourages selfishness.
- 4. Lesson Aim: to help us be more submissive to Christ.

DISCUSSION:

I. WHY SHOULD WE BE SUBMISSIVE TO CHRIST?

- A. The Lordship of Christ demands it (Phil. 2:9-11).
 - 1. "Christ is Lord" is to recognize him as the dominant ruler or monarch over every existing thing in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:19).
 - 2. God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).
 - a. He is Lord of creation (John 1:1-4; Col. 2:16-17).
 - b. He is Lord over the functions of this universe (Heb. 1:1-3).
 - c. He is Lord over the governments of men (1 Tim. 6:15).
 - d. He is Lord over the church, his spiritual kingdom (Col. 2:18; Eph. 5:21-24).
 - 3. When we become Christians, we are to submit willingly to his authority and dominion over us.
- B. Christ commands our submission (Matt. 16:24).
 - 1. This is likely the hardest command Jesus ever gave.
 - 2. The command is denial (literally empty one's self) and submit to Christ and his work.

II. HOW DO WE BECOME SUBMISSIVE TO CHRIST?

- A. By faith in God and Christ (Heb. 11:6; John 3:16).
 - 1. What is faith (Heb. 11:1)?
 - 2. Faith comes by a study of the evidences (Rom. 10:17).
 - 3. This kind of faith is intellectual or objective faith.
 - 4. This kind of faith is necessary but will not cause us to submit to Christ (John 12:42, 43; Acts 26:27-28).
 - 5. One could obtain a masters degree in the study of Christian evidences and never become a Christian.
- B. At some point our objective faith must become submissive faith (Matt. 16:24).
 - 1. We must get ourself out of the way and submit to Christ and his will.

2. This involves our trust or confidence in the object of our faith.
3. Illustration: It is one thing to believe that an airplane can fly (objective faith), but it is another thing to actually board an airplane to fly in it (submissive faith).

III. WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF SUBMISSIVE FAITH?

- A. We will move ourselves over and allow Christ to have first place in our lives.
 1. This means denying self of any obstacle that takes first place in our lives.
 2. A rejection of all forms of the philosophies of humanism.
 - B. Obedience to all the New Testament of Christ.
 1. Our initial obedience that we may enter his kingdom (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38, 47).
 2. Our regularity in his authorized acts of worship.
 3. Our willingness to serve in all areas of good works.
 4. Our attitude would be, "*Speak Lord, thy servant heareth.*"
 - C. It would eliminate all forms of false doctrine.
 1. Atheism and Humanism.
 2. Catholicism—pope and his authority.
 3. Denominationalism—man-made doctrines.
 4. Crossroadism.
 5. Unity-in-Diversity.
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God's Mission For The Church Today As Seen In The Life Of Christ

Wally Scaife

1. Someone has said, "Nothing walks with aimless feet." This is synonymous with the words of Solomon, that every thing has a "season" and a "purpose" under the sun (Ecc. 3:1).

2. It would stand to reason that the greatest institution known to man would indeed have a purpose for existence and a mission for fulfilling.
3. Brother Winkler summed up the matter well: "The purpose and mission of the church is not political (John 18:36); is not to give members social standing (the church is not a second-rate social club to gratify the ambition of social climbers); and is not to furnish entertainment. (This is the function of the home)"
4. What then is the purpose of the church, and what should be its mission?
 - a. The primary mission of the Lord's church is the same as the primary mission of our Lord while upon the earth—He came *"to seek and to save that which is lost"* (Luke 19:10).
 - b. God's mission for the church today is to be...

DISCUSSION:

I. EVANGELISTIC IN ITS PURPOSE:

- A. Our Lord came with a mission and left the church with that same mission. Matt. 28:18-20
- B. The Lord's church is not to support "A" "missionary society," but the Lord's church is to be "THE" "missionary society."
- C. The life of Christ revolved around his work as a missionary. A missionary is none other than one who is sent or entrusted with a work or a mission.
 1. Christ said, *"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work"* (John 4:34).
 2. "The church that is not a missionary which will soon become a mission church."

II. PRACTICAL IN ITS PERSUASION:

- A. Christ used practical means to carry out a practical mission.
- B. There are two motivating factors at our disposal in "seeking" souls.
 1. The power of force: that is we could physically force all to be submissive to God as do tyrants and the such (Dan. 3:1ff).
 2. Or, we can use the power of persuasion: that is we could draw men by persuading their freedom of volition (2 Cor. 5:11).
- C. The power of force is neither Biblical nor practical. God uses force as a practical means of carrying out his natural

laws. But, He has never used force to pressure man to obey his divine laws. (Notice all the Old Testament examples, for instance).

- D. The power of persuasion can be illustrated in the words of Solomon; *"He that winneth souls is wise."* "Winneth" would signify a persuasive turning, but not by force (Prov. 11:30).
 - 1. Persuasion used in the balance with wisdom, judgment and common sense would eliminate the impracticability of gimmicks and gadgets.
 - 2. God's power of persuasion is the Gospel (1 Cor. 1:18ff). It isn't practical or Biblical to try other means (cf. John 16:8-11; Acts 24:25).

III. POWERFUL IN ITS PROCLAMATION:

- A. Jesus proclaimed openly and freely his purpose in life.
- B. We remember the words of the pioneer preacher, "I would be ashamed to be afraid and afraid to be ashamed to preach the gospel." Such was true in every aspect in the life of Christ.
 - 1. Christ wasn't afraid to speak "openly to the world... teach in the synagogue...and in secret...said nothing" (John 18:20).
 - 2. "He taught them as one having authority;" and because of this, "The officers (of his day) answered, Never man spake like this man" (Matt. 7:29; John 7:46).
- C. Christ exemplified in life the teaching of Prov. 28:1. Truly, He was the bold "lion of Judah" that was emblematic of courage and strength.
- D. Notice how Paul imitated our Lord (1 Cor. 11:1), who also "spake boldly...disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom" (Acts 19:8).
 - 1. Paul did this even while being imprisoned in face of death (Phil. 1:20).
 - 2. How encouraging to his brethren who were "waxing confident by (his) bonds...(and were) much more bold to speak the word without fear" (Phil. 1:14).

IV. PERSONAL IN ITS PRESENTATION:

- A. Christ was very "pointed" in his deliveries. After his lessons his audience knew where they stood in relation to God. They knew they were lost. Matt. 3:7-8; 21:34

- B. Men have often received more from Christ than what they really desired or expected. He always gave what they personally needed.
 - 1. For example, notice how the palsied man desired healing; but Christ also forgave his sins (Matt. 9:1ff; Acts 3:1ff).
 - 2. Jews expected a physical king, Christ gave them salvation (1 Cor. 1:23).
 - 3. Man is content with temporary rest and relaxation but Christ has "pointed" out his sin and provided spiritual peace and eternal hope (Rom. 8:18).
 - C. God has always called for his watchmen to preach the needs of the lost.
 - 1. Notice the mission of Ezekiel (Ezek. 3:17ff).
 - 2. Notice the mission of Paul in Acts 23:24ff. "Paul preached to Felix what he needed to hear...he could have chosen to speak on the duty of citizens to the civil government. Had he followed this course, Felix might have praised him and said, 'Paul, that was a wonderful sermon, and I wish that all men could have seen the emphasis you gave.' However, Paul chose matters that the governor needed to hear." (F-HC 1970, p.98).
 - D. One can read how Jude desired to preach and enjoy the subject of our common salvation, but because of the present sin privately entering the ranks of the church, he was forced "*to write unto you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith...*" (Jude 3).
-

Concerning Benevolence

Frank D. Young

- 1. Nave's Topical Bible: "Alms, Beneficence; Charitableness; Love."
- 2. The New World Dictionary: "Doing or inclined to do good."

DISCUSSION:

I. THE COMPASSION OF JESUS.

- A. As illustrated by him. Matt. 9:37-38; 14:14; 15:32; John 19:26-27; Acts 10:38; John 19:26-27.

- B. As the Bible instructs Christians. Heb. 13:1-2; 1 Peter 2:17; 3:8; 4:8.
- C. Every man his brother's keeper. Gen. 4:9-12; Luke 10.
- D. Not a substitute for other duties. 1 Cor. 13:3.

II. AN OBLIGATION TO THE POOR.

- A. Mark 14:1-9; Deut. 15:11. (Contrast Judas)
- B. The spirit of Christianity. Matt. 5:43-48; Luke 10:25-37
 - 1. Faithful Christians can become in need. Reverses come to all. Rom. 12:10-15; Luke 14:13-14; 1 John 3:17-18; Acts 11:27-30
 - 2. All men can be in need. Acts 20:35; Eph. 4:28-29; Gal. 2:10
- C. An active love, John 3:17-20; Not faith alone, James 2:14-16; Gal. 5:6.
- D. A form of spreading Truth. Matt. 5:16; Acts 20:34-35; 2:44-46; Matt. 10:8; 10:42
 - 1. Brings glory to God. 2 Cor. 9:12-14
 - 2. Determines our blessings. 2 Cor. 9:6-8
 - 3. Makes us like Jesus. 2 Cor. 8:9
 - 4. New Testament church our example. Acts 2:44-46; 4:32-37; 11:27-30; 1 Cor. 16:1-3
 - 5. Enjoined upon us. 1 Cor. 16:15
 - 6. Pure religion. James 1:27; Rom. 12:20-21; Matt. 5:43-44

III. SAINTS ONLY.

- A. Rom. 12:13; verse 14, Saints only?
- B. Church practice these? Matt. 7:12; Luke 10:25-37; Rom. 12:20; Gal. 2:20; Matt. 5:7
- C. Just why is it wrong for the church to render aid to a non-Christian?
 - 1. We don't refuse him the right to give when he is present in the assembly.
 - 2. We don't even withhold the communion from him.
 - 3. How much of Christ's teaching can the church refuse to practice?
 - 4. Illustrate: John 4:24 spoken to an individual.
 - 5. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 John 9
 - 6. The church must obey Gal. 6:10b, but the church can't obey Gal. 6:10a. Context 6:6 church? Gal. 1:2.
 - a. See same word. John 12:32; 2:24; 1 Cor. 9:19,22; 1 Peter 2:17; 1 Thess. 5:14-15.

CONCLUSION:

1. Brother David Lipscomb: "Feeding the poor with the contributions of the church is just as spiritual as preaching the gospel" (Commentary I Timothy page 149).
 2. Brother Lipscomb again, "The church has no more important work than bearing children and training them for service to God" (Commentary I Timothy page 166).
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Responsibility Of The Elders To The Congregation

Roy J. Hearn

1. Great responsibility attached to the eldership in the individual qualifications that must be his, and in the *work* that the elder is obligated to do.
2. The Bible knows nothing of *nominal* Christians who are acceptable to God; neither do we read of *nominal* elders. Those who are Christians in name only are unfruitful branches, and their end is destruction (John 15:1-6). Neither are elders to be mere figureheads. The *office* of a bishop is a *great* work (1 Tim. 3:1).
3. The eldership is not to be desired for earthly honor, but for sincere service to God.
4. The eldership is a *work* and not merely an official position, yet it carries authority.
5. What are the duties of elders?

DISCUSSION:**I. SELF-DISCIPLINE (Acts 20:28).**

- A. Examine selves to see if lives conform to requirements of elders and Christians (2 Cor. 13:5).
- B. If elders do not watch carefully their own lives, they are not in a position to fulfill the requirement that demands they keep the church pure and free from false doctrine.
- C. The principle of 1 Tim. 4:16 would apply here also.

II. WATCH-CARE OVER THE CONGREGATION (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2-3).

- A. Comparison is to the oriental shepherd (John 10:1-14).
 - 1. Lead the sheep; a companion to the sheep.
 - 2. Knew them by name.
 - 3. Protected the sheep from wolves (cf. Matt. 7:15).
 - 4. Primary work not feeding, but guidance and protection.
- B. Work of elders analogous to literal shepherds (Acts 20:29-31).
 - 1. These verses give principle meaning of verse 28.
 - 2. Protect congregation from false teachers from abroad.
 - 3. Guard against influence of schismatics in congregation.
 - 4. Be ready to act on first appearance of danger.
 - 5. Those who don't show proper interest in the congregation indicate they are only "hirelings" (John 10:12).
 - 6. Must know the flock; who they are; how many; where they live; their spiritual condition and need.
- C. Elders to give account of souls (Heb. 13:7,17).
 - 1. Relate the Lord's parable (Luke 15:3-26).
 - 2. What of negligent members who wander away?
 - 3. Can they enlist aid of others in bringing them back?
- D. Some translations of 1 Peter 5:2.
 - 1. "Shepherd the flock of God" (N.T. Interlinear).
 - 2. "Be shepherds of the flock of God" (Williams).
 - 3. "Feed the flock of God" (King James Version).
 - 4. "Tend the flock of God" (American Standard Version).
- E. "To be a shepherd" comes from the Greek word *poimaino*:
 - 1. To *tend* as a shepherd (Young's Concordance).
 - 2. To *tend* a flock, keep sheep (Thayer's Greek Lexicon).
 - 3. To *rule*; govern (Thayers on Acts 20:29; 1 Peter 5:2).
 - 4. In what manner "rule or govern?" Not as a lord.
- F. Vigilance a qualification (1 Tim. 3:2).
- G. Slackness allows apostasy (2 Peter 1:5-11; 1 Peter 5:8-9)

III. TEACH THE WORD OF GOD.

- A. This implied in the qualification "*apt to teach*" (1 Tim. 3:2).
- B. But not all teaching must be done by the elders. Others to be teachers (Heb. 5:12).
- C. A prerequisite to teaching is possession of knowledge (2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Peter 3:18).
- D. Men who can't teach, or won't, fail in one of the most important qualifications. Note the purpose in Acts 20:28-31 and Titus 1:9.

IV. EXHORT AND CONVINC (CONVICT) THE GAIN-SAYERS (Titus 1:9).

- A. Ability to teach implied here.
- B. Gainsayers are objectors, those who speak against, contradict, those who tear down instead of build up.

V. TO TAKE THE OVERSIGHT OF THE CONGREGATION (I Peter 5:2).

- A. Rule over the congregation (1 Tim. 5:17, *poisteemi*).
 - 1. "Not of constraint, but willing," that is, willing to accept the fearful responsibility.
 - 2. Prohibition: "Neither as lording it over the charge allotted you" (R.V.). "Neither as being lords over God's heritage" (K.J.V.). See topic II. on "watch-care."
- B. No passage to indicate elders are arbitrary rulers.
 - 1. 1 Peter 5:2, American Standard Version, says "according to will of God."
 - 2. As subject to the Lord (cf. Eph. 6:1-9). (Apply principle)
 - 3. To rule properly is to see that the laws of the New Testament are carried out.
- C. *episkopeo*: "To look upon, inspect, oversee, look after."

VI. WATCH FOR THE GRIEVOUS WOLVES (Acts 20:29-31).

- A. Vigilance—one of qualifications (1 Tim. 3:2).
- B. "*Wolves*" refers to false teachers (Matt. 7:15).
 - 1. Classify a false teacher (2 John 9; 2 Peter 2:1-2).
 - 2. Beware of leaven (Matt. 16:6, 12).
- C. Why keep the church pure (Eph. 5:27)?
- D. Elders must know enough to recognize false doctrine. They may call someone, if necessary, who is posted in, or has made a special study of a particular form of error.
- E. Such vigilance is part of shepherding the flock.

VII. SUPPORT THE WEAK (Acts 20:35).

- A. God cares for the needy through human agency.
 - 1. See the law in Leviticus 19:10, 15. (cf. Matt. 19:21).
 - 2. Elders to take oversight in helping the poor (Acts 11:29-30).
- B. Has reference to physical needs (cf. Acts 20:34).
- C. Elders not to do this work alone (Matt. 25:34-46).

VIII. ADMONISH THE CHURCH (1 Thess. 5:12).

- A. Admonish: "To warn of a fault; to reprove gently, or kindly, but seriously; to exhort; to put (one) in mind of something forgotten, by way of a warning or exhortation" (Webster).
- B. Must be no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35; 1 Tim. 5:21).
- C. Uphold truth and right, regardless of whom, when, or where.
- D. See that all things Christ commanded are taught (Matt. 28:20).

IX. CONSIDER AND DECIDE ON CHURCH PROBLEMS (Acts 15:6).

- A. Settle difficulties; give direction wisely.
- B. No authority to make new laws. Decide matters in harmony with the Scriptures, employing good judgment.
- C. Can depend too much on the judgment of others. Can also too often ignore the wisdom and judgment of others.
- D. Is it wrong for elders to ask or accept advice from others? (Any sensible suggestion is worthy of consideration. The right of elders to act upon advice or suggestions, as they think best should always be respected.)
- E. Church not run by majority rule/vote of membership.

X. EXAMPLES TO THE FLOCK (1 Peter 5:3).

- A. As a pattern to be imitated (Heb. 13:7).
- B. Example must be worthy of imitation (Phil. 3:17; 1 Cor. 11:1).
- C. Here is a good reason for older men as elders; time to develop lives, bringing them into conformity to teachings of Christ (Rom. 12:2).
- D. Shepherds not aloof from the flock, but had close contact with them (i.e., the oriental shepherd illustration).
- E. Examples in what? Word, faith, charity, life, service, liberality, etc.
- F. Antithesis of "lording" (1 Peter 5:3).

XI. HELP IN ESTABLISHING NEW CONGREGATIONS.

- A. Preachers to be sent (Rom. 10:1-17).
- B. Preachers were sent (Acts 16:4-5).
- C. Gospel is to all (Mark 16:15-16).
- D. Must be interested in Gospel in foreign as well as local fields. Field is the world, not one city or state.

XII. SELECT TEACHERS AND PREACHERS.

- A. Timothy appointed (2 Tim. 1:6; 1 Tim. 4:14).
- B. This is in connection with numbers 2 through 6 in this part of the outline. Select and appoint faithful teachers.
- C. Are elders to do all the teaching, or can they hire a preacher?
 - 1. 1 Cor. 4:17, Timothy was sent to Corinth to "bring you into remembrance of my ways" (cf. Phil. 4:9; 1 Cor. 11:1; 2 Tim. 2:2; 2 Thess. 2:15).
 - 2. 1 Tim. 1:3, Timothy told to abide at Ephesus, which had elders (Acts 20:17).
 - 3. 1 Tim. 3:15, Teach men how to behave in the church.
 - 4. 1 Tim. 4:6, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance." (Timothy at Ephesus where they had elders)
 - 5. 1 Tim. 4:16, "Continue."
 - 6. 1 Tim. 6:3,17, Not directed to aliens, no need to thus instruct them. Teach church members Godliness.
 - 7. Col. 1:7, Church learned from Epaphras, a faithful minister of Christ for the church at Colosse.
 - 8. Eph. 4:11-12, Evangelists for perfecting the saints... edifying the body of Christ. Here also a distinction is made between elders and teachers. If elders are to do all the teaching, where do teachers fit in?
 - 9. Evangelists to preach the Gospel to the saints (Rom. 1:15; 16:25; 1 Cor. 1:2; 15:1-4; 2 Cor. 2:12-13).
 - 10. If elders are to do all the teaching, how can the older women find place to teach the younger women (Titus 2:3-5)?
 - 11. If elders are to do all the teaching, upon what grounds did Paul write to Titus as he did in Chapter 2?

XIII. TAKE THE LEAD IN EXERCISING DISCIPLINE.

- A. Some preliminary matters.
 - 1. Discipline defined: To educate, train, develop members, to correct evil, punish (Webster).
 - 2. Why is there such a lack of discipline? What would be the result if practiced Scripturally? Church would grow spiritually and numerically. More respect from everyone (cf. Acts 5:1-11).
 - 3. Needed in the home, school, state, church. Define anarchy: No law or supreme power; a state of confusion or disorder.

4. Purpose of discipline is to save the individual (1 Cor. 5:6).
5. God wants the church to be pure (Eph. 5:25-27; 2 Cor. 11:3).
- B. Examples of God's discipline.
 1. The flood; Sodom and Gomorrah; Uzzah (2 Sam. 6:1-7); Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-8).
 2. The wicked of the wilderness typical (Heb. 3:12-4:1).
- C. Kinds of offenses.
 1. Private (Matt. 18:15-18; Luke 17:1-4; Mark 11:25-26).
 2. Public (1 Cor. 10:32).
 3. Secret—between God and man (Psa. 19:12-14; 90:8). Secret faults, presumptuous sin.
- D. Who should be disciplined?
 1. The disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6; 1 Cor. 5:11-13). (What would be included in "walking disorderly?")
 2. Neglect (Heb. 10:25-29).
 3. Busybodies (2 Thess. 3:11-15).
 4. Those who cause division (Rom. 16:17).
 5. Open immorality (1 Cor. 5).
 6. 1 John 3:4; 5:16-17; James 4:17 (Define *sin*).
- E. The Lord's description and decree (Luke 12:41-46).
- F. Course to pursue.
 1. Personal offenders (Matt. 18:15-18).
 2. Public offenders.
 - a. Talk to them (Gal. 6:1).
 - b. Admonish them (1 Thess. 5:14 [R.V.]; warn [K.J.]).
 - c. Try to convert them (James 5:19-20).
 - d. Restore them, if possible (Gal. 6:1; 1 John 5:16).
 - e. After restoration efforts fail, withdraw (2 Cor. 3:6; 1 Cor. 5:9-12).
 3. Suggested procedure of withdrawal.
 - a. Make thorough investigation, obtaining unmistakable evidence (1 Cor. 5:1). "*Commonly*" reported.
 - b. Based upon evidence, make clear, written statement of charges.
 - c. Report the case to the congregation.
 - d. Congregation must accept facts, act unanimously.
 - 1) Evil doer to be taken away (1 Cor. 5:1, 13b).
 - 2) Church to act in both cases, public or private sins, if discipline necessary (Matt. 18:17).
 - 3) Punishment inflicted of many (2 Cor. 2:2-6).
- G. Scriptural requirements.

1. Lepers removed from the camp of Israel (Num. 5:1-4).
2. Them that sin rebuke (1 Tim. 5:20). How? (Titus 1:13).
3. Have no company with them (1 Cor. 5:6-13).
4. Admonish as a brother (2 Thess. 3:15).

CONCLUSION:

1. Jehovah disciplined evildoers, nations and individuals.
 2. He teaches and commands discipline in the church.
 3. Compare Acts 10:48 and 2 Thess. 3:6. What is the difference in the force of the two passages?
 4. "God has never, in any age, left the decisions of questions and difficulties that arise among his people to the vote of majorities." H. Leo Boles
 5. "Let it be observed here, that the duty of withdrawing from the disorderly is enjoined, not upon the overseers, but upon the church at large, and the overseers become connected with it, as leading actors, only by virtue of their official relation to the church." J. W. McGarvey
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Responsibility Of The Congregation To Its Elders

Garland Elkins

1. Members of the church are to...

DISCUSSION:

- I. **KNOW THE ELDERS** (1 Thess. 5:12).
- II. **ESTEEM THE ELDERS** (1 Thess. 5:13).
- III. **IMITATE GOOD ELDERS** (Heb. 13:7; 1 Peter 5:3).
- IV. **OBEY THE ELDERS** (Heb. 13:17).
 - A. Members of the church must recognize that elders have the responsibility to watch, and they should encourage them to perform this responsibility (Heb. 13:17).

- B. Elders are to take care of the church, and members should honor them for doing this (1 Tim. 3:5).
 - C. Elders have the responsibility to stop the mouths of false teachers, and the congregation should honor them for discharging this responsibility (Titus 1:9).
 - D. If the mouths of false teachers are not stopped, they will overthrow whole houses (Titus. 1:10).
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