

## Trends

10,000 people were asked, "What was responsible for you coming to the Lord and this church?" They replied:

- ☛ 2% had a special need
- ☛ 3% just walked in
- ☛ 6% like the minister
- ☛ 1% visited by chance
- ☛ 5% like the Bible classes
- ☛ 1/2% attended a gospel meeting
- ☛ 3% like the programs
- ☛ 79% a friend or relative invited me

-via Institute for American Church Growth

**Mark 5:19:** "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."

## Sentence Sermons

"Properly read, the bible is the most potent force for Atheism ever conceived." —Isaac Asimov

**Psalm 14:1:** "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good."

## News & Notes

Please pray for those mentioned in the announcements after services and others listed on the bulletin board in the foyer of the church building.

Pray that much fruit will come from the seed planted during our gospel meeting last week with Jesse Flowers. If you would like to contact Jesse his e-mail address is: [jafopie@hotmail.com](mailto:jafopie@hotmail.com).

Please pray for Susan Ferrell and her family as she continues to recover from a brain tumor. Her chemo treatment is completed and so far everything is clear! Please continue pray for her and her family.

Please pray for Alan Jones. He underwent deep brain stimulation to hopefully relieve severe facial pain. Alan held a gospel meeting for us in October 2014. He's been unable to preach for several months due to his affliction. Pray for him and his family.

Please keep sisters Virginia Brown and Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. Their faithfulness sets such a good example and gives encouragement to all! Ditto for Al (our Barnabas!).

Pray for Larry Halley; his heart valve replacement surgery was a success!

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many temptations in today's school environment.

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**Times of Service:** Bible Study, Sunday 9:30 AM and Wednesday 7:00 PM; Worship, Sunday 10:30 AM and 5:00 PM

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Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

# Words of Life

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**"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."**

John 6:68

**The "New Image" Church of Christ**

Donald Townsley



We live in a day when many churches of Christ are dissatisfied with their "image" before the world. They want the church of Christ to be a successful, powerful, sophisticated society coming to the front as a leading church in the United States. They want this "new image" church of Christ to continually have the applause of men and the popularity of the times. The sentiment among the leaders of the "new image" church of Christ is to have a "world-conforming" church ( Jn. 17:14 -18; 18:36; I Jn. 2:15-17; 4:5; Rom. 12:2). They want preachers who are recognized as scholars and men of sophistication and broad-mindedness. These leaders do not want this "new image" church of Christ to be isolated in any respect—they want it right in the middle of the mainstream of denominationalism. They also want the church to be socially involved—to help right the social injustices found in the state and world.

Many of these "new image" leaders are looking for a broad base for fellowship—one that will allow fellowship with the Christian church (which uses instrumental music in worship, besides all their other errors). It would also allow fellowship with premillennial churches of Christ. The end result of this broad-based fellowship is fellowship with all denominations! This is the ultimate end many of these leaders want because the liberal churches of Christ cannot have the position their leaders seek in the eyes of the denominational world until there is fellowship with denominationalism!

The leaders of the "new image" church of Christ have tasted their victory in the last ten years by carrying a large segment of the body of Christ across "the river of no return" from the principles of New Testament Christianity. They know now that this segment of people as a whole will not "abandon ship" no matter what innovations they bring in, so at last they are almost ready to take their place among modern denominationalism.

It is with sadness I have seen them "cross the Rubicon" (the point of no return), and at a distance I watch their further departures. As I stand filled with sorrow and hurt, I remember those days of fellowship and know that they can be no more. As I at a distance watch and listen, I hear perplexed and troubled souls moaning with great pain at the liberalism they see overwhelming the congregations of which they are a part. Their anxiety and uneasiness causes them on different occasions to vent their apprehensions—even to one like me. On such occasions the only advice I can

give is to “come out from among them” and stand with the many thousands of us who are firmly committed to oppose every innovation and trend you are involved in.

To those of us who stand against these trends and innovations, our service to God as He directs is a far greater thing than the popularity of men (Gal. 1:10). The hundreds of conservative congregations over the nation which have taken a stand for truth against these innovations are not concerned about projecting an image before the world. These churches revere and respect the New Testament image of the church. The churches of the New Testament were trying to please God, not the world (Jas. 4:4). They challenged the world with the gospel instead of trying to put forth an image to please the world!

### **Denominationalism Is Unnecessary**

Larry Ray Hafley

Religious denominationalism in general and Catholicism and Protestantism in particular are unnecessary institutions. *First*, if they were essential, they would be found in the Bible. Christ would have spoken of them and told us how to sustain and support them. That he did none of those things shows they are not required for the salvation of man. *Second*, there is not a single spiritual blessing in any human religion or denominational body that cannot be received outside it. There is no eternal benefit claimed by any denomination that cannot be obtained in Christ, whether or not one ever heard of any denomination.

If one lived and died as a faithful Christian, what did he lack if he never became a member of either a Protestant or a Catholic church? If one is saved by the blood of Christ by grace through faith and lives a life dedicated and devoted to the Lord, what insufficiency is in him if he never joins a Baptist church? If one is born of water and of the Spirit, and if he, as a new born baby, grows up in Christ through the word of God, of what is he deprived if he never becomes a Methodist or a Mormon? If one believes on the Lord with all his heart, confesses that Jesus is Lord, and serves God with a pure heart fervently, what does he miss if he never learns about the existence of a Presbyterian or a Pentecostal church?

In short, if it is possible to be saved and cleansed by the blood of Christ through the washing of water by the word, and if it is possible for one to be baptized by one Spirit into the body of Christ and to serve the Lord therein all the days of his life, and go to heaven when he dies, denominationalism is unnecessary.

One cannot be saved outside the body, or church, of Christ, for Christ “*is the Savior of the body*,” the church (Eph. 1:22, 23; 5:23). All spiritual blessings in heavenly places (in spiritual realms), are in Christ (Eph. 1:3). There are no spiritual blessings outside of Christ since “*all*” are said to be “*in*” him. For one to be “*in Christ*,” he must be in his body (for a germ to be in me, it must be in my body; it cannot be in me without being in my body). The body of Christ is the church—“*the church...is his body*,” “*the body, the church*” (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18). Thus, to have all spiritual blessings in Christ, one must be in his body, the church.

One may be saved by grace, be faithful unto death, and enter heaven at last whether or not he ever enters a denominational church, thus, denominationalism is not essential to one’s spiritual life or eternal salvation. The same, though, as we have seen above, cannot be said about the body of Christ. One must be in it to be in Christ where all spiritual blessings dwell (Eph. 1:22, 23; 2:16; 5:23, 30-32).

In light of the plain truth of the Scriptures, will any say that any denomination

is necessary? Will any declare that the body of Christ is unimportant, insignificant, and not in any way related to the salvation of the soul and every spiritual blessing? If not, why are some of our readers in those unnecessary, non-essential bodies and outside the body of Christ?

### **Attending Bible Classes: What Does It Say About The Christian?**

Barney Keith

There is one fact that is undeniable about the life of every Christian—he is saying something to those around him by every action of his life. Without any vocal sounds he speaks volumes by his conduct. In this way, many a Godly wife has won her husband to the Lord (1 Pet. 3:1,2). In this way, the shining light of a good life has caused onlookers to glorify God (Matt. 5:16). And even after a righteous person has departed from this life, “*he being dead yet speaketh*” (Heb. 11:4).

So it is with reference to our attitudes actions in the work and worship of the Lord in His church. When a person who loves to attend the Bible classes in the local congregation does so faithfully, that Christian is saying something loud and clear. Think about it for a moment. What is he saying?

(1) He is saying to any who observe him, “I love the word of God to the extent that I will take the time to attend classes where my knowledge of it can increase.”

(2) He is saying to others, “I realize my need of stronger faith as I strive to please the Lord. I know that it cannot be strengthened without the word of God (Rom.10:17). Being present for Bible study helps me build on the right foundation.”

(3) He is saying by his regular attendance, “I appreciate good and faithful Christians who spend hours studying so that they may teach me. I know that it takes much real dedication on their part to do this good work. I certainly want to be there to hold up their hands and to benefit from the study they have put into each lesson. If they devote so much effort in preparing lessons, I surely want to be present in the classes to listen to their instruction.”

(4) He is saying, “I find great value and help from spending time with brothers and sisters in Christ in searching God’s word together. I have all too little time as it is with my spiritual family in the local church. This extra hour or so means much to me in building stronger ties with them. I know that we all share a deep concern for our souls. And quite often I am helped by the comments of others in the class.”

(5) He is saying, by his consistent presence in the classes, “I appreciate what the elders of the congregation are doing for my benefit as they plan and arrange classes for the edification of the church. I am cooperating with them to accomplish their objective—MY increased knowledge of the truth.”

In nearly every place attendance at Bible study needs some improvement. That improvement will come from Christians who have opened their eyes to the grave importance of doing all they can to insure their soul’s salvation in the world to come. That improvement will be accomplished by good men and women who have their hearts set on things above more than on things of the earth (Col. 3:1,2). Let me appeal to ALL members to make a careful appraisal of your commitment to the Lord, His word and His kingdom. Let all of us make SURE that we all “*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...*” (Matt.6:33). Without doubt, when this is done carefully and prayerfully, the attendance question will be properly answered, and all other questions as well.

***“If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.” 1 Peter 4:11***