



### Trends

Most Americans identify as "Christian" (73%). However, a much smaller number regularly practice their faith. For example, only 31% of adults identifying as "Christian" attend at least one worship service a month. Barna researchers argue this represents a more accurate picture of Christian faith in America and reflects the reality of a secularizing nation. —via Barna Research

**2 Corinthians 13:5:** "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves.."

### Sentence Sermons

"Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important." —C. S. Lewis

**Matthew 16:26:** "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

**Editor's note:** The way some brethren act (e.g., inconsistent attendance) you would think they really do not comprehend (or care!!) the value of their own soul, or the souls of their loved ones, Do you?!



### 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.
- Please pray for my son and his wife as they seek to start a new congregation in northern Michigan. Please pray Ryan can raise enough support to do this important work.
- We had a great gospel meeting! Ryan did an excellent job of presenting the truth of the gospel in its simplicity and power. Thanks! If you missed it, the lessons will be posted on our web site soon (wsidcoc.org).
- Please continue to pray for Alan Jones as he struggles with severe facial pain with little to no relief. Pray his suffering may be minimized, please also pray for 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 Hatti and her "new life" in Texas!. We wish her only the very best and are missing her "something fierce"!
- Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people are now back to school. Pray for Zach as prepares to join the U.S. Army.
- There are many needy saints! Can you help?! Let me know.



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Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

# Words of Life

Westside church of Christ



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"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."  
John 6:68

**True But Not Applied**  
Johnie Edwards

While reading the September 6, 2017 *Westside Community News*, an article: *Some Thoughts About The Bible*, written by a Christian Church preacher, caught my attention: He said: "If God says that something is right or wrong, then that should settle the issue. We must never forget the specifics of God's message." These statement are the truth, right on; but Christian Church preachers do not make application of this grand ledged truth! Come and take a look:

**1) The Church:** The Bible never calls the New Testament Church, the Christian Church. The name Christian appears three times in the Bible (Ac. 11:26; Ac. 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16). It is the name predicted in the Old Testament (Isa. 56:5; 62:2; 65:15). This name is applied to "disciples" and individuals;

"And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch."  
Acts 11:26

never to the church! Take a look at 1 Peter 4:16. Peter says: "Yet if any man, suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." A "man and him" is not the church! Paul penned: "For the body is not one member, but many" (1 Cor. 12:14). The body is the "Church" (Col. 1:24). In the words of this Christian Church preacher: "If God says something is right or wrong, then that should settle the issue; we must never forget the specifics of God's message!"

**2) The Worship:** Among the channels of New Testament worship is "singing." Ten times, in the New Testament, the Bible authorizes singing as the kind of music God has specified (Mt. 26:30; Mk.14:26; Ac. 16:25; Ro. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Ep. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb.2:12; Heb. 13:15; Jas. 5:13). Read 'em; they all teach each one to sing! Many Christian Churches have full-fledged bands in their worship! Most have mechanical instrumental music. Remember the Christian Church preacher writing: "We must never forget the specifics of God's message!" God specified singing in worship!

**3) A Play House:** Many Christian Churches promote fun and frolic with kitchens, coffee shops, gyms, family life centers and more. Now read Romans 14:17!

*“for the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”*

**Romans 14:17**

### **Is Sincerity Enough for Salvation?**

Richard Thetford

Apparently, many sincere people are trusting in their sincerity for

*“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”*

**John 14:6**

salvation. But is sincerity enough? Jesus said, *“...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”* (John 14:6). Now what could this possibly mean if sincerity alone is sufficient?

If there is no other way to salvation than through Christ, as He clearly stated here, then sincerity alone will not do, will it?

One of the classical examples of a man who was unquestionably sincere, and yet lost, out of Christ, and even an arch enemy of the early church, is that of Saul of Tarsus. Saul had even participated in the murder of the first Christian martyr, Stephen (Acts 7:58). He *“...made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison”* (Acts 8:3). It is even reported further that *“Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem”* (Acts 9:1-2). So here is a man who is religious about persecuting the way of Christ, believing Jesus to be an imposter. Yet, though misguided, he said, *“...I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day”* (Acts 23:1). He had been sincere, but that sincerity wasn't enough, because you see, sin is not just a matter of violating your conscience; it is a matter of violating the will of God. John was speaking of this in 1 John, Chapter 3, verse 4, when he said, *“Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”*

*“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”*

**Acts 22:16**

In the course of time a Christian named Ananias informed Saul, *“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”* (Acts 22:16). Yet Saul's story ends happily because when he learned the error of his way, he was sincere

enough to turn from his sins to Christ and he went on to become the great Apostle Paul.

In Acts Chapter 2, we read that there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven (verse 5). Yet, as Peter preached to these sincere people, he accused them with these words: *“Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death”* (Acts 2:23). Although they were devout, they had participated in the crucifixion of the Lord. On learning of their sin, they were (as the Bible says) *“...cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’”* (Acts 2:37). They now realized that they were guilty before the Lord God. And as they were searching for a cleansing from this guilt, Peter said to them, *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 2:38).

The role of sincerity is to enable a person to be fair and honest with the truth! Sincerity alone does not determine truth, scientifically, and medically, legally, or religiously. We can see then, what Jesus was saying when He said, *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven”* (Matthew 7:21).

### **Ronald Reagan Writes About Jesus**

Larry Ray Hafley

President Ronald Reagan was a man with deep convictions. Like Lincoln, he was able to express his ideas and ideals logically and clearly.

Below is a snippet taken from “The Real Reagan,” an article which appeared in *Time Magazine*, 9/29/03, p. 56. It shows a side of Reagan of which many are wholly unaware. In it, he argues with a liberal preacher that it is inconsistent to say that we accept Jesus' teachings, but that we reject his teaching about himself wherein he says he is a divine being.

“In a 1978 letter, he argues with a California pastor about the divinity of Jesus: ‘[E]ither he was what he said he was or he was the world's greatest liar. It is impossible for me to believe a liar or charlatan could have had the effect on mankind that he has had for 2000 years. We could ask, would even the greatest of liars carry his lie through the crucifixion, when a simple confession would have saved him?...Did he allow us the choice you say that you and others have made, to believe in his teaching but reject his statements about his own identity?’”

*“But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’”*

**Matthew 16:15-16**