

Trends

Recent research shows that the unchurched are becoming less responsive to churches' efforts to connect with them. For example, conventional wisdom says the best way to get people to visit a church is to have friends invite them - and the conventional wisdom is right. The churchless were most open to "a friend of yours inviting you to attend a local church," with one-fifth expressing strong interest and nearly half willing to consider a church based on this factor. An invitation from a friend is the top-rated way churches can establish connections with the unchurched. However, twenty years ago, two-thirds of churchless Americans (65%) were open to being invited to church by a friend. Today, that percentage has slipped to less than half (47%) . . . in every outreach method surveyed, the unchurched are less open to it today than they were two decades ago . . . pastoral home visits (27%, down from 34%), a phone call from a church (24%, down from 34%) . . . this is especially true for advertising, including TV, radio or newspaper (18%, down from 20%), direct mailings (16%, down from 24%) and billboard ads (14%, down from 21%).

—via Barna.org

Matthew 13:15: "For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them."

News & Notes

- Please pray for Zachary Wallace. He is not faithfully attending services as he should (Heb. 10:24-25). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)
- Please keep sister Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. She's an encouragement to all!
- Pray for all our members who do not attend regularly. Try to encourage them!
- Pray for the African appeal for funds to buy Bibles, songbooks and support faithful preachers' travel expense. Donate if you're able! 1 Jn. 3:17
- Another 6.9 earthquake hit the southern Philippines. There have been over 3,000 tremblers since this terrible disaster first hit October 16th. Remember, we are "tools of God's providence" for those in need! Jas. 2:14-17; 1 Jn. 3:1-7
- Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.
- Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.
- There are many needy saints, including preachers! Can you help?!
- Anyone need prayers? Let us know so we can announce it and post it.

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Editor: Craig Thomas (812-320-9569); craigthomas82000@gmail.com

Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

Words of Life

Westside
church of Christ

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

John 6:68



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"...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish..."

Craig Thomas

We have been examining in detail what God requires of us to be saved: 1) **Hear Christ** (Heb. 1:1-2); 2) **Believe in Christ** (Jn. 20:31); 3) **Repent** (Acts 17:30); 4) **Confess Christ** (Rom. 10:10); 5) **Be Baptized** (Mark 16:16); and, 6) **Live Faithfully** (Col. 1:22-23). Today we will consider repentance...perhaps the most difficult command.

1) **What is repentance?** This is a critical question since Jesus said if we don't repent we shall perish (Lk. 13:3). Its importance can also be seen when Peter told the people in Acts 2:38, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Our salvation is dependent upon our repentance. Several words are used in the Bible to describe "repentance." One word simply means sorrow or regret. This is not the word used for "repent" in Acts 2:38. Many people are sorry about their sins, but not willing to repent in the sense required by God. For example, the Bible tells us Judas repented after betraying Christ (Matt. 27:3). Judas was "sorry" but did not repent in the sense God requires of sinners. Sorrow is definitely involved in true repentance, but it is not within itself true repentance. Paul tells us there are two types of "sorrow" (2 Cor. 7:10). One is the "sorrow of the world" that "worketh death." This is the type of sorrow typified by Judas. The second Paul calls "godly sorrow." "[G]odly sorrow" is different than "sorrow of the world" because "godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation."

2) **What then is true repentance?** The Bible defines it for us. In Matthew 12:41, Jesus referred to what happened when Jonah preached at Nineveh, He said, "...they repented at the preaching of Jonas." Now, what did they do? They were certainly sorry (Jonah 3:6-8). However, v. 10 points out they also "turned from their evil way." Thus, true repentance is shown by both attitude and action (Matt. 3:8). This is the repentance that God requires of us and is found in such passages as Acts 2:38, Luke 13:3, Acts 17:30, and Acts 11:18 and means "a change of heart or attitude toward one's sin that results in a reformation of life." The Bible points out at least three things which may cause one to repent. First, is "godly sorrow" (2 Cor. 7:10). Second, "the goodness of God" (Rom. 2:4). And, third, the judgment to come (Acts 17:30-31). Repentance is required to become a Christian (Acts 2:38) as well as when the Christian sins (Acts 8:13, 18-22).

Acts 17:30 says, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Have you repented? Remember, "...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish..."!

"...with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.."

Craig Thomas

We have been examining in detail what God requires of us to be saved: 1) **Hear Christ** (Heb. 1:1-2); 2) **Believe in Christ** (Jn. 20:31); 3) **Repent** (Acts 17:30); 4) **Confess Christ** (Rom. 10:10); 5) **Be Baptized** (Mark 16:16); and, 6) **Live Faithfully** (Col. 1:22-23). Today we will consider confession... perhaps the most forgotten command.

1) **Is "confession" necessary?** In Romans 10:10 the inspired apostle said, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." So as surely as belief is a requirement in order to be saved (Heb. 11:6), so also is "confession" (also see Rom. 10:9). Jesus Himself confirmed this truth when He said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 10:32-33)

2) **What is to be "confessed" and how?** Many are confused about what man is to confess "unto salvation." The Bible very clearly tells us what we must confess in Acts 8. Acts 8 records the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch by the evangelist Phillip.

"that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

—Roman 10:9-10

eunuch then responded with what we too must confess to be saved, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (v. 37). Note that his confession was verbal, before men, and specific as to its content (cf. Rom. 10:9; Matt. 16:16).

3) **Why is "confession" so important?** The fact that Jesus is the Son of God is the foundational truth upon which His church is built (Matt. 16:13-18). That Jesus is God's Son was fully demonstrated by His resurrection (Rom. 1:4). The fact that Jesus was resurrected qualifies Him alone to be "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36) and to be "the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5:23) which is His church (Col. 1:18).

When we make the "good confession" (1 Tim. 6:12) we proclaim our faith that God will "giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:57).

"And the eunuch said, 'See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?' 37 Then Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'"

—Act 8:36-37

Have you confessed that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God"? (Acts 8:37) If not He "will...also deny [you] before" His "Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 10:32-33) Sooner or later we all will make this confession (Phil. 2:11). Wouldn't you rather make that confession now than later?

"Church of God Grill"

Larry Hafley

"When I lived in Atlanta, several years ago, I noticed in the Yellow Pages, in the listing of restaurants, an entry for a place called 'Church of God Grill.' The peculiar name aroused my curiosity and I dialed the number. A man answered with a cheery, 'Hello! Church of God Grill!' I asked how his restaurant had been given such an unusual name, and he told me: 'Well, we had a little mission down here, and we started selling chicken dinners after church on Sunday to help pay the bills. Well, people liked the chicken, and we did such a good business, that eventually we cut back on the church service. After a while we just closed down the church altogether and kept on serving the chicken dinners. We kept the name we started with, and that's Church of God Grill.'

"This incident is not unlike many churches, denominations, and individuals who over time, have drifted away from their original purpose." (From *Making It Happen*, by Charles Paul Conn, p. 95 See: Phil 3:19 [Copied from unknown Internet source--LRH]).

With the buildings and activities of certain churches of Christ, should we expect similar results among our brethren? Might Mr. Conn one day notice an ad in the yellow pages for a "Church Of Christ Diet & Weight Loss Center"? How about a "Church Of Christ Health & Physical Fitness Center"? Might there someday be a "Church Of Christ YMCA" listed in the phone book? Other such works, with their emphasis on the social gospel, come to mind. Might one attempt to call a church of Christ and reach a "Church of Christ Pre-School And Day Care Center," or a "Church of Christ Boy Scout Troop," or a "Church of Christ Skit, & Puppeteer Drama Club," or a "Church of Christ Donut & Coffee Shop" (which is what probably made the "Church Of Christ Diet & Weight Loss Center" necessary in the first place!) Unfortunately, like the eternity that awaits, the possibilities are endless.

However, it is too sad to be funny. One unknown source (quoted by Greg Gwin) said: "Christ did not die to serve dinners but to save sinners."

How true that is (Lk. 5:32; 19:10)! The church is not the playground of the youth, but "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). The church, the culmination of the plan of salvation, makes known "the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10). "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Eph. 3:21). How, then, do men dare to turn it into a "grill," complete with condiments?

"What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you."

—1 Corinthians 11:22