

*In
search
of*

Truth and Right

Tim Henderson, Editor

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"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." Phil. 4:8 (NASB-U)

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Christ**

When God Thinks of the church of Christ

By: Gardner Hall

* **When God thinks of the church of Christ, He thinks of saved individuals (Acts 20:28).** When men think of the Church of Christ they think of parties, either a broad conglomeration of alliances such as the "one cup Church of Christ," "liberal Church of Christ," "conservative Church of Christ," etc. or one of those parties individually.

* **When God thinks of the church of Christ, He thinks of a number of individuals unknown to men (2 Tim. 2:19).** When men think of the Church of Christ, they think of a loose association of local churches whose numbers can be approximated, for example 1,260,838 in the United States according to Mac Lynn's 1994 directory. Perhaps they will focus more on the numbers given for a more narrow association of churches ("non institutional," "one cup," "no class", etc.).

* **When God thinks of the church of Christ, He sees an indivisible body composed of individuals with different levels of spiritual growth (1 Cor. 1:13; 2 Peter 3:18, Rev. 2,3).** When men think of the Church of Christ, they think of a group of local churches that has divided through the years over issues such as instrumental music, premillennialism and institutionalism. They say that the "next thing that will divide the church" (the conservative alliance, or collection of churches) will be the marriage, divorce and remarriage issue.

* **When God thinks of the church of Christ, He thinks of those growing in Him with obedient hearts in spite of imperfections (John 17:6).** When men think of the Church of Christ, they think of those who conform to unwritten creeds composed of doctrines that "leaders" have declared to be essential.

* **When God thinks of leaders in the church of Christ, He thinks of spiritually poverty stricken servants, who are**

Today's Sermon:

*What Christ went
through that I might
have Forgiveness*

*"He was despised and forsaken of
men, A man of sorrows and ac-
quainted with grief; ..."
Isaiah 53:3*

TIMES OF SERVICES

SUNDAY

Bible Classes*	10:00 AM
AM Worship	10:45 AM
PM Worship	6:30 PM

WEDNESDAY

Bible Classes*	7:00 PM
(* Bible Classes for All Ages)	

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"last" in the minds of men and yet whose quiet examples transform others (Matt. 5:3,16;19:30; 20:25-28). *When men think of leaders in the Church of Christ, they think of editors of papers, leaders in colleges or well known preachers who hold many gospel meetings.*

*** When God thinks of the Savior of the Church, He thinks only of His Son, Jesus Christ.** *When men think of the Church of Christ, they think of an alliance of local churches that David Lipscomb "saved" from the Missionary Society, Foy E. Wallace "saved" from premillennialism and other leading editors have "saved" from other dangers.*

*** When God thinks of where to find the church of Christ, He thinks of the hearts of men (1 Samuel 16:7).** *When men think of where to find the Church of Christ, they think of church directories.*

*** When God thinks of the church of Christ, He thinks of those who have responded to the spiritual attraction for those who are of good ground - the gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:16; 1 Cor. 2:2).** *When men think of the church of Christ, they think of an alliance or movement that itself is the primary attraction to those who are of good ground.*

*** When God thinks of the church of Christ, He thinks of a glorious body of saved individuals who are allowing themselves to be transformed into the image of His Son, in spite of the wrangling and political maneuvering of men (Eph. 5:25,26; 2 Cor. 3:18).** *When men think of the Church of Christ, they either think of a religious movement that has fragmented itself into dozens of warring factions, each claiming to "have" the truth on dozens of difficult issues, or they think of one of the factions.*

What do you think of when you think of the church of Christ?

Helping the needy in our Community

By: Matt Allen

My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm, John 18:36. I am convinced that the verse you have just read is one of the most important and fundamental passages in the entire Bible. Since Jesus' kingdom is spiritual, His mission on earth had a spiritual purpose. Peter spoke of the church as a *spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*, 1 Peter 2:5. In shedding His blood, Jesus paid the price for the establishment of the church which is a spiritual institution. The primary purpose of God's church is to save souls, Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16.

Over the last two thousand years, some have sought to shift the primary mission of the church from the spiritual to the physical, especially in the realm of benevolent help for the needy. This has happened so much, that there are numbers of people who now, often at the first hint of financial discomfort, turn to churches to help them with rent payments, groceries, gas, and other items. Many walk in and expect to walk out with cash on hand. Some churches keep a food pantry well stocked and stand ready to distribute food at a moment's notice. The needy in communities get used to this and thus expect the same thing when they ask us for assistance. Some are very shocked when we tell them there is no cash on hand and that we do not keep a food pantry. A few individuals leave angrily expressing, "I thought you guys were supposed to be Christians and help the needy!" While we sympathize with persons who are experiencing financial difficulty, it is important to realize that the New Testament pattern suggests local churches are limited in whom they give benevolent help to.

Did you know that the only examples in the New Testament where the church assisted those who were in financial need were faithful Christians? James has written, *If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled, and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that,* James 2:15-16. Romans 15:26 is a great example of where funds were gathered for the needy saints in Jerusalem. Christians have a responsibility to be there for one

another, especially in times of great need. Since we see no example in the New Testament where churches contributed to the needy of their communities from the church treasury, out of respect to God's authority we abstain from this practice.

What are God's expectations for a person meeting their own financial needs? One expectation revolves around work. One of the quickest and most effective cures for money problems is to go to work. Families must learn to take responsibility and provide for themselves. The apostle Paul established this principle when he wrote, *But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever*, 1 Timothy 5:8. Another passage that establishes this principle is found in 2 Thessalonians 3:10. We read, *if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either*. Al Sandlin has written, "When able-bodied people **could** work but **won't** work, it is clearly taught that they **are to go without** their needs being met. Thus to aid those who simply choose not to work when they could is to violate God's decree regarding the work ethic" (The Mentor, Jan. 6, 2002).

God also gave expectations to individual Christians to help persons in time of need. Unlike the local church, whose actions on benevolence are limited, the individual has the right to give assistance to anyone he/she sees fit. For example, *we are to do good to all men, and especially the household of the faith*, Galatians 6:10. In Matthew 25:35-40, Jesus connects a person's outcome on the Judgment day with the basis of their moral treatment of the needy, Matthew 25:35-40. When needy individuals from the community approach us for financial assistance, then individuals within the church have an opportunity to help out if they have the ability. While this method is different from the way many churches conduct benevolence in today's religious world, we feel that it is a practice that respects the authority of the New Testament and encourages individual Christians to take part in their spiritual responsibilities. Many Christians look forward to the opportunity to help others. Paul wrote, *We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people*, 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15.

News N Notes

Sick:

- Dorothy Sams, Linda Marshall's mother
- Susan and Scott Swanson, Dorothy Lancaster's daughter, and their baby.
- Blake Headen, Alberta's husband
- Kenny Johnston, Kathy Johnston's brother-in-law
- Amanda Dowdy
- Vicki Renshaw is still recovering from a broken foot, the doctors said it would be about 7 more weeks
- Terry Smith's brother George.
- Faith Kress, Linda Marshall's niece
- Ed Roberts father
- Ila Marshall, Harold Marshall's mother.
- Continue to remember—Marie Roberts; Terry Smith; Cindy North; Grace Lancaster

Nursing Home:

- Hazel Carroll; Pauline Sellers

Shut-ins:

- Rhea Henthorn; Ethel Mahan; Josephine Clow; Mabel Fleming; Pauline Midcap