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of...

Truth & Right

GENESIS

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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Wellsburg
church of Christ
Which meets at:
112 Sunset Ave.
Wellsburg, WV 26070
304-737-1422

We appreciate so much your presence here with us today. We would like to extend an invitation to join us at any of our other times of worship.

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)

Today's Sermon:

God
Is Our Strength

*Audio CD's are available
free of charge in the foyer.*

*Please visit our website:
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*If you have any questions regarding
what we teach and practice, please
feel free to ask*

Catechismal Christianity

Jonathan Perz
via—The Auburn Beacon

Having faith and understanding your faith are two entirely different matters in modern Christianity. Many profess to have faith, and even show signs of that faith in various aspects of their lives, but have little or no understanding of the faith they cling to so tenaciously. What is the explanation for this phenomenon?

Is it possible that the faith of many is not based in God's word, but in catechisms? A catechism is defined as an *oral instruction; a manual for catechizing; specifically a summary of religious doctrine often in the form of questions and answers; a set of formal questions as put as a test; something resembling a catechism especially in being a rote response or formulaic statement* (Merriam Webster's Dictionary).

Catechisms exist in every denomination. They are sometimes called statements of faith, creeds, tenets of faith, and even testimonies. Some have written catechisms, which are occasionally modified and updated, as need requires. Others rely upon oral catechisms, handed down from generation to generation, teacher to student, preacher to convert. Cate-

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The struggle of learning goes beyond the textbook ... beyond the catechism. While principles and expectations are clearly set forth in Scripture, the lessons God teaches can only be learned by practice and experience. Consider patience (**James 1:2-4**). The caterpillar, if deprived of the struggle of breaking free of its cocoon will soon die, for its wings will not have the strength to fly.

Catechisms Stifle Healthy, Beneficial Study and Discussion

A spiritual stifling and overbearing environment will inevitably cultivate stagnation and error. When one is apathetic and indifferent to all but their pet catechisms, they will stagnate in other key areas required for growth as a Christian (cf. **2 Peter 1:5-11; 3:18**). Catechisms are often insulated from honest investigation, making them perfect harbors for error and false doctrine. Since they are never questioned and examined, they are never seen for what they truly are—erroneous creeds that lead astray.

Furthermore, those who hold dear to catechisms either do not appreciate the benefits of healthy debate or improperly engage in the defense of their catechisms by resorting to unscrupulous tactics and hiding behind debating chicanery. No position or conviction should ever be withheld from honest evaluation. Such criticisms are not only good, they are commanded (cf. **Acts 15; 1 John 4:1; Romans 12:9**).

Catechisms Produce an Unhealthy Reliance Upon Traditions

Not all traditions are bad, but neither are all good (cf. **2 Thessalonians 2:15** and **1 Corinthians 11:2** with **Matthew 15:6**). Many of the things practiced by Christians are founded in tradition, not in faith. Each and every denomination has those dearly held traditions that are given preeminence, even when their continued exaltation is detrimental to genuine faith. Many abhor lawful practices on princi-

ple, simply because they would undermine some long held tradition, regardless if the lawful practice would prove more fruitful and expedient than the long held tradition. The status quo becomes the catechism and anyone who would question the catechism is a change-agent, heretic, and troublemaker. It is not a question of what is authorized, it is a question of what we have always done.

Conclusion

Catechismal Christianity is not conducive to growth, it instead festers decay (**2 Peter 3:18**). It is not indicative of work, but typical of laziness (**Philippians 2:12**). It does not represent diligence, but it characteristic of indigence (**2 Timothy 2:15—NKJV**). Strict adherence to catechisms is tantamount to wearing a pair of glasses prescribed by Satan himself, they will blind you to the truth, they will never help you to be a disciple of Christ indeed and will never lead you to salvation. Let us determine to know the truth and truly be His disciples (**John 8:31-32**).

“So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, 'If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'”

John 8:31-32