



*For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth... in every place.
(1 Thessalonians 1:8)*

Vol. 38, No. 29

July 21, 2010

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Worship 9:30 AM
Bible Study 10:30 AM
Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Study 1:30 PM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Bible Call

(618) 667-9603

www.collinsvillecoc.org

LIKE A LOST PUPPY

A lost puppy doesn't seem to have a home. He will drift from one house to another to get fed. However, there doesn't really seem to be any one to care for him. That's because he doesn't really belong to anyone at those houses. It is only when he finds his way to his owner that he has a home where he is fed and cared for. There he has someone who is concerned for him and will watch after him.

Some members of the Lord's church are like a lost puppy. They drift from one congregation to another and never really find a church home. Others may not drift from one congregation to another, but they will move into an area and begin attending a local congregation without placing membership.

The argument has been made that there is no need to place membership with a congregation. After all, aren't we all members at large in the kingdom of our Lord, in the church of our Lord? Is there really any scriptural reason for one to have to place membership with a local congregation?

There is both reason and Biblical precedent for placing membership with a congregation.

First, consider the reason for placing membership with a local congregation.

Like the lost puppy, a member at large has no one responsible for his care. It is true that members of a congregation may be concerned for and look after the welfare of Christians who attend but are not members. They should. After all, all Christians are brothers and sisters in Christ. There is a responsibility because of the common bond of love (1 John 3:17-18). This would be true spiritually and physically.

Yet, no one is really responsible for them. Elders are to watch in behalf of souls. Yet, they do so regarding those over whom they have rule (Hebrews 13:17). They are to tend the flock of God and exercise oversight. Yet, they do so for the flock among them (1 Peter 5:2). Elders are to take care of the church (1 Timothy 3:5). Yet, they have responsibility and authority only over the church they serve — those in the local congregation.

Second, the concept of placing membership and being identified with a local congregation is a scriptural concept. Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, which included all the saints at Philippi (Philippians 1:1). They had an identity as a congregation. When one is baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27), that one is saved and added to the church by God (Acts 2:38, 47). That one is baptized into the one body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). Every Christian, therefore, becomes a member of the church universal. However, as seen at Philippi, New Testament Christians were also members of a local congregation.

Neither were those local congregations merely loosely defined affiliations. Specific names of those identified with the church at Antioch are given (Acts 13:1). These are identified as those that were "in the church that was there."

There is also the precedent of one joining himself to a local congregation when coming to another city. Paul, when he came to Jerusalem, tried to "join the disciples" (Acts 9:26), but they did not believe him to be a disciple and were afraid. In the case of Phoebe, there is even the precedent of a letter of recommendation for a congregation to receive a sister in Christ (Romans 16:1-2).

If one is not a member of a local congregation, there is reason and precedent for placing membership.

TLM

Reprint from Volume 27 #44

November 15, 1999

“AND DEAR GOD, PLEASE HELP ME GROW”

LYNN PARKER

Those words, often uttered in prayer, make up a proper request. We all should desire to be stronger spiritually (2 Peter 3:18). We should indeed long for growth (1 Peter 2:1 ff). Let us examine this prayer request, as well as our attitude and efforts toward spiritual growth.

What would you think of a man who prayed, “God, please help me not to lose my job,” and then that same man slept in and was late to work every day? I have heard both men and women who say they want to be stronger spiritually. I have heard some say they want to know the Bible better. I have heard some folks piously sing, “*More, More About Jesus.*” And then I have seen the very same souls skip Bible classes on Sunday and Wednesday. Any wonder why there is no growth????

When one's attendance at worship assemblies is “hit and miss,” then that person will exhibit spiritual stagnation. When a tree in the orchard does not grow, we give it extra attention. When a Christian does not grow, we try to give some extra attention as concerned brethren. After all, we have an obligation to build up each other. “So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby **we may edify one another**” (Romans 14:19).

Your brethren cannot help you grow if you do not engage in really challenging, serious Bible study. Some brothers and sisters have been in the church for 10 years or more and never yet made 10 pages of study notes. Folks, casual reading of the Bible is not Bible study.

We cannot edify you if you are not in the assembly of the saints on a regular basis. If students at public school attended like some of my brethren attend the worship assembly, they would be charged with truancy!

We cannot help you grow if you persist in saying, “This is not a convenient time” or employing similar excuses. Everyone is busy. Everyone has more to do than week (sic) to get it done. Still, if heaven is really important to you, you will make time to sit down and study. We have the teachers. We have a strong desire to see you grow. We can come to your house and spend an hour a week in diligent study with you. We are ready. Still, we cannot help you grow if you never make an effort or lift a finger. We will make the time—will you?

You cannot grow to be like Christ if you still wallow in sinful company and activities. One brother went to “Hooters” restaurant for years (not a place known for wholesome company but rather known for its party-like atmosphere and scantily-clad waitresses). After his “conversion”(?), he continued the same practice. Need I

say that he continues to this day to be lukewarm and useless in the kingdom? One family in the church (the father was a deacon in the congregation) regularly rented “R” rated, trashy movies for “family entertainment.” It should not surprise anyone that families are not growing to be more like the Savior when they dine on immorality. If you are serious about growth, clean up your life, throw out the debris, and keep company with spiritually strong folks who will help you go to heaven.

It is impossible for you to grow if you will not do the things that make for growth. Enough with wasted months and years. No more excuses. Are you ready to grow? Do you hunger for spiritual nourishment? It is here for you. We love you. We will help. God has provided the plan to make growth a reality. All that is lacking is you. Do not ask God to help you grow if you will not do your part. Are you willing? Let us grow!

Beacon

October 2, 2006

Bellview church of Christ
Pensacola, FL

Mabery's Minutes



I asked the five distribution team leaders and two targeted team leaders to give me a report of progress.

Keep in mind that it took nearly five months to get everything up and running. I had hoped to have materials ready for distribution by early March. Instead, it was late May. To date, the wider distribution teams have reported about thirteen hundred packets of materials distributed through June. There may be more that have not yet been reported. In addition, more than five hundred seventy-five packets have been distributed into the targeted area where the *House to House* is being mailed. I do not have an accurate count of doors knocked in that area, but it must be between seventy-five and one hundred. Considering our late start and the hot weather, I think we are doing well. Pray for this effort.

The Correspondent

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