

The Messenger

COLDWATER CHURCH OF CHRIST

Mar. 13, 2011



QUESTIONS FROM THE BACK OF MY BUSINESS CARD PART 6:

WHY ARE THERE SO MANY CHURCHES?

Editor's Note: In order to answer this question, we will refer to a manuscript written by brother B.J. Clarke for the 2006 Truth in Love Lectureship hosted by the East Hill Church of Christ. The manuscript title is "How Many Churches Are There?" Space does not allow for the publishing of the entire manuscript; therefore, we will only refer to the section answering the above question.

WHY ARE THERE SO MANY DIFFERENT CHURCHES TODAY?

If only one church came into existence on the Day of Pentecost, then why are there so many different churches today? It is certainly not because of anything God has done. A little girl was walking to church services with her Daddy when she heard the church bells ringing across the way where her mother attended church services. The little girl took "time about." One Sunday she would go with mother to church and the next Sunday she would go with Daddy to church. As she heard the bells ringing, she missed her mother very much. She looked up at her Daddy and asked, "Daddy, does God do all things for the best?" Her father replied, "Well, certainly, God does all things for the best." With childlike innocence, she looked into her Daddy's eyes and said, "daddy, if God does all things for the best then why didn't He just make on church so you and me and Momma could all go together?"

The thing that makes this story so poignant is that God did make only one church in the beginning. But man was not satisfied to leave it the way that God designed it to be. As time went by, men began to add to and subtract from the doctrine of Christ, replacing it with the doctrines and commandments of men (Matt. 15:8-9; Rev. 22:18-19).

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you... (1 John 1:5).

VISITORS, WELCOME!

Sunday:

9:30 a.m. Bible Class

10:30 a.m. WORSHIP

5:00 p.m. WORSHIP

Wednesday:

7:00 p.m. Bible Class

We have Bible classes for all ages & Pew Packers on 1st & 3rd Sundays at 4:15 p.m.

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Ron Johnson Andy Ratliff

PREACHER

Clifton Angel

As the doctrines and commandments of men proliferated so did the number of different religious groups, all of them denominating themselves differently from one another. This has been going on for so many centuries now that many people take it for granted that this is just the way it is. But from the beginning of the church it was not so!

Picture a mountain stream from whence at the fount nothing but pure water flows forth. Now, picture the pure water from this stream flowing down the mountainside into the river. For the sake of argument, suppose that a number of chemical plants/manufacturing plants are built alongside of the river. Now, imagine yourself standing downstream of the river. You are thirsty and you dip your glass into the river, hoping to find something to quench your thirst. However, when you pull the glass up out of the water you are mortified to see th polluted and contaminated condition of the water. You are so disgusted by the condition of the water that you refuse to drink it. But you are still thirsty! Is there anyplace you can go to secure a pure, fresh, clean glass of water? The answer is “yes,” but you must bypass the sources of pollution and go back beyond them to the location where the water is pure and uncontaminated! Go to the fount where the water begins its flow and you will avoid the pollutions!

Likewise, when the church first began, the doctrine that flowed forth was pure, clean, fresh and uncontaminated. However, as the church went down the stream of time, men began to build different denominations, which in turn began to pollute the pure doctrine of Christ by pumping the doctrines and commandments of men into the religious waters. This has continued to this present time, so much so that someone who is thirsty for a relationship with God in our day may dip their theological cup into the religious waters of our day and be so disgusted by the polluted appearance of the waters that they throw their hands up in despair and announce “*I’m not drinking any of this stuff.*” Yes, they are still thirsty for God! Is there any place you can go and discover pure, clean, fresh, and uncontaminated New Testament Christianity? Indeed there is such a place. But we must bypass and go back beyond all of the manmade religious doctrines to the pure fount of New Testament teaching.

To put it another way, the seed of the kingdom is the Word of God (Luke 8:11). When this seed was planted into the hearts of first century men and women it did not produce the system of denominationalism. It produced only one church--the one that belongs to Christ. The nature of the seed (the Word of God) has not changed since it was preached in the first century. Consequently, the Word of God, when followed today, will not produce the system of denominationalism. It will produce the same thing it produced when it was preached in the first century! Many years ago, archaeologists discovered an ancient wheat seed in a Pharaoh’s tomb. They estimated that the seed was approximately 2000 years old. When they planted the wheat seed they got the same crop they would have gotten if they had planted the wheat seed 2000...

years earlier --wheat! Likewise, when we plant the pure seed of the kingdom in the hearts of men and women today, it will make them want to become a part of the one true church that Jesus built!

(Clarke, B.J. "How Many Churches Are There?" *The Glorious Church: Sixteenth Annual Truth in Love Lectureship*, Ed. Paul Sain. Pulaski, TN: Sain Publications, 2006).

EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION IN THE BOOK OF ACTS					
CONVERSION ACCOUNT	BELIEVE	REPENT	CONFESS	BE BAPTIZED	AFTER BAPTISM
3000 saved (Acts 2)		Repented (v37, 38)		Baptized (v38-41)	Remission of sins (v38)
Samaritans (Acts 8)	Believed (v12)			Baptized (v12)	
Simon (Acts 8)	Believed (v13)			Baptized (v13)	
Ethiopian (Acts 8)	Believed (v37)		Confessed (v37)	Baptized (v38)	Rejoiced (v39)
Saul (Acts 9, 22)				Baptized (9:18)	Sins washed away (22:16)
Cornelius (Acts 10, 11)	Believed (10:43)	Repented (11:18)		Baptized (10:48)	Accepted by God (10:35)
Lydia (Acts 16)				Baptized (v15)	Was judged to be faithful (v15)
Jailer (Acts 16)	Believed (v31, 34)			Baptized (v33)	Rejoiced (v34)
Corinthians (Acts 18)	Believed (v8)			Baptized (v8)	
Ephesians (Acts 19)	Believed (v4)	Repented (v4)		Baptized (v5)	
One must hear the Word of God (Romans 10:17)	One must believe in Christ (John 8:24)	One must repent of sins (Acts 17:30)	One must confess Christ (Matthew 10:32)	One must be baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27)	In order to be saved (Hebrews 5:9)
<p>The Great Commission</p> <p><i>"...make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them..."</i> (Matthew 28:19 ASV)</p> <p><i>"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..."</i> (Mark 16:16)</p>					

Chart by Jason Hilburn, www.thebibledomain.com.

NEWS & NOTES

Please Pray

Renee Davis--had surgery Thursday. All went well, and she is at home recovering.

Cash Jackson had the flu and **Georgia Bayless** had strep throat, but both are doing better.

Wiley & Betty Tuggle.

Caleb Baker--kidney stone.

Tim II, Rachel, & Titus Wilkes with full time mission work.

Tim & Lynn Wilkes are in Hawaii conducting Fishers of Men Classes.

Family & Friends

Gloria Angel--Clifton's grandmother, her health is not well, but doctors have not been able to diagnose.

Sandy Robertson--Jason's friend's mother--diagnosed with cervical cancer, but they believe they were able rid the cancer by the removal of a mass because caught early.

Faye McCorry--Inez's sister passed away.

Alegra Strong; Aaliyah Whitehead; Rebecca Chadwick Amy Meredith; Brandon Finley

Clay Collums--Terry's brother, has had to go back for more radiation treatment.

Bob Spurlin; David Bragg.

Doyce "Doc" Hunt--Jared Browns grandfather.

Brianna Edwards; Joe Culbreath; James Angel; Steve Angel; Dave Leonard, Sr.

Let us not forget to pray for the works being done through Fishers of Men, Far East Missions, and the Open Door Ministry.

THANKS TO ALL THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE BIBLE BOWL AND ALL THAT HELPED IN PROVIDING NECESSITIES.

March Anniversary

Herbert & Helen Bowman 3/29

March Birthdays

Ginger Bayless	3/9	Payton Jackson	3/29
Brianna Davis	3/14	Beau Davis	3/30
Betty Duke	3/18	Joe Davis	3/30
Ella Brown	3/21	Beverly Hays	3/31
Johnny Bayless	3/24		

Get Involved!

Coldwater Work Day: Sat, March 26

Forest Hill Annual Youth Day: March 26

Theme: Shine Jesus Shine, 9AM.

45th MSOP Lectureship: March 27-31

"The Behavior of Faith"

Sunday Night for the Savior

April 3 after evening services

Bible Bowl--Matthew 19-21

April 9, 5:00PM

Privileged to Serve

Sunday, March 13

Morning

Prayer Before Class

Wiley Tuggle

Announcements

Jim Jackson

Song Leader

Andy Ratliff

Lord's Supper:

Preside

Jared Brown

Assist

Johnny Bayless

Opening Prayer

Payton Jackson

Sermon

Shane Staten

Closing Prayer

Jerry Davis

Sermon

Chance Steen

Closing Prayer

Adam Sowell

Evening

Song Leader

Andy Ratliff

Opening Prayer

Caleb Baker

Sermon

Clifton Angel

Lord's Supper

Jared Brown

Closing Prayer

Payton Jackson

Jeremy Moore

Wednesday, March 16

Song Leader

Andy Ratliff

Prayer

Jeffrey Ferrell

Invitation

Clifton Angel

Prayer

Jim Jackson