

THE LEXIA EDIFIER

ROMANS 14:19 ...Let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.

JUNE 30, 2013

ARE THERE CHRISTIANS IN DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES?

Jim Stauffer

Since we recognize the volatility of this subject, let us approach it from a scriptural viewpoint only. The Scriptures are the revealed word of God. **(1 Cor. 2:12,13; Eph. 3:2-5)** Therefore, if we can understand this revelation (and Paul says we can) we can understand God's position on the matter.

Jesus said He would build **His** church. **(Mat. 16:18)** We are told those who repented and were baptized in **Acts 2** were added to that church, verse **47**. We are also told redemption, the forgiveness of sins translates us into the kingdom of Christ. **(Col. 1:13,14)** Just a few verses later we learn this kingdom is the body of Christ, the church. **(Col. 1:18)**

Paul tells us we are sons of God through faith in Christ and that all who have been baptized into Christ did put on Christ. **(Gal 3:26,27)**

If all this is true, why are there denominations in the first place? Everyone who obeys the gospel plan would be added to the Lord's church. There would be no other.

But there are religious people who have chosen to by pass the things we have

mentioned as necessary to entrance into His body, the church. Therefore, they have not been added to the church, His body.

Now, is it possible for someone to obey the gospel as taught in Scripture and by mistake become associated with and worship with people who have not? Of course it is. However, if they, *give diligence to present themselves approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth* **(2 Tim. 2:15)**, they will soon learn better and seek out and find their brethren who have also followed the gospel path to become sons of God through faith.

They will do as Peter instructs, **2 Pet. 3:18** *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.* They will follow the instruction of John, **1 John 4:1** *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

By walking circumspectly, they will find their way, led by the truth of God's word.

“Thankful for Your Brethren”

Some of the most amazing words in the New Testament are those of Jesus about His apostles in John 17. For example, *“And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and I in them” (verse 26).*

Why are such words so amazing? They indicate a profound thankfulness for weak, vacillating men who had given Jesus all kinds of problems with their immature faith.

How Could Jesus Be Thankful for Such Men?

Key #1. He was able to see the good within each of the apostles in spite of their glaring weaknesses. For this reason, horrendous apostolic blunders such as Peter's impulsive words on the mount of transfiguration, his sinking beneath the waves, Thomas's skepticism and the childish feuding for preeminence were not met with angry disgust, but with gentle, yet stern, rebuke. Jesus was not blinded to the good in the apostles by their defects and was therefore able to be sincerely grateful for those qualities that shallow, impatient eyes would have overlooked.

Key #2. He gave everything He had to help them. It is an amazing fact that we are most thankful for those for whom we sacrifice the most.

My wife, Beverly, and I had to give up our sleep, sanitary concern (dirty diapers), free time and innumerable other small blessings to take care of little Leah when she was born. At that time she seemed to give only slobbering, early morning yelling sessions and dirty diapers in return.

Yet, it seems the more time we spend, bleary-eyed at 3 A.M. in the rocking chair, and the more we exert ourselves in other ways for Leah and older sister Rebecca, the more deeply grateful we are for them.

As parent's sacrifices for their children deepen their gratitude for them, so the incomprehensible sacrifices that Jesus made for His apostles, His emptying of Himself (**Philippians 2**) and thousands of hours of prayer and teaching must have made it possible for Him to express such deep thanksgiving for them in spite of their sometimes serious faults.

How Can We Be More Thankful for Our Brethren?

Too often brethren are at worst a source of intense aggravation, or at best people with whom we can very politely discuss “niceties” two or three times a week. How can we cultivate that fervent love and closeness that produces such strong feelings of thanksgiving as those demonstrated by Jesus toward His apostles?

Key #1. We must follow the example of Jesus and learn to see more than the weaknesses of brethren, but the good as well. Sometimes the odd turn that a brother has, the weird idea, or the time he offended me five years ago become so big in my mind that I can see no good in him, much less be grateful for him.

This inability to cope with any deficiencies in other brethren has perhaps been the greatest obstacle to peace and growth in the kingdom. While sects that emphasize closeness among members have grown by leaps and bounds in spite of hard-to-swallow doctrines, growth among true brethren has often been stunted by a lack of love brought on by a lot of growling, snapping and yapping at each other that reminds one of a stirred-up dog kennel. In such all-too-common flareups, brethren seem about as thankful for each others as the Iranians are for the Iraqis. And they wonder why they don't grow!

When some take every weakness in a brother as if it were a sign that he has fallen from grace, is it any wonder that such brethren seem to be sitting in their foxholes suspiciously peering out at each other while emitting low, threatening growls?

Satan has won many battles because we have simply overlooked Jesus' example of patience with His apostles in spite of their shortcomings. Don't misunderstand me. Jesus did not ignore weaknesses nor participate in error as some extremists would have us do. But neither did He treat all faults as if they were signs of hopeless depravity.

Weaknesses in sincere Christians must be corrected, but with due time, gentleness and patience. (**2 Timothy 2.24-25**).

Key #2. We must give ourselves to our brethren. Do you feel a need to be more thankful for your brethren? Follow the example

of Jesus and give yourselves to serving them. Have them in your home for dinner or dessert. Go on a picnic with them or out for ice cream after services. Attend a meeting with them or go to a ballgame. Pray with them, study with them, cry with them and give your money to them when they need it.

Unhappily, we often do not open ourselves up to our brethren because of a growing emphasis in our increasingly urban society on privacy and formality. Some brethren have gotten so polite with each other that they would seldom think of visiting one another without formal invitations, fine china and complicated entrees with foreign names. All this formality tends to limit the all important contact outside of worship services. After all, who wants to drag out the crystal glasses once or twice a week? With less giving and exchange there is less thankfulness for each other; and with less thankfulness, churches become cold and dead.

Christians must burst through the shell of shyness that the urban formality has produced so that they can give freely of themselves to each other with confidence and openness. When brethren share our homes, our activities and our hearts, then we can learn to be truly thankful for them.

Conclusion

The world is too evil to face without this close brotherly relationship that God has given us. Look at those fighting evil alongside of you. You need them and they need you! Remember the keys to Jesus' thankfulness for His apostles and be thankful for your brethren, even if they have some weaknesses. Fight Satan with them, fight for them and go to heaven with them.

Gardner Hall

Stuff About Things

This little article is entitled, "How to Give, And Not Even Notice It, -- Much -- Hardly." It's easy, almost.

It came to me when I noticed how much more shoes cost at \$ 25. than a rifle scope did at \$ 33. That set me to thinking -- and there's no telling what will come next.

If I could just love the Lord, and the work He wants done, as I loved that rifle scope -- or somewhere close to that much, not to be a fanatic -- I could give \$ 20, or maybe even \$ 25.

for His cause, and wouldn't hardly even notice it -- much.

Or take house payments as an example. Each month I dutifully write out a check -- making certain "that much" is in there to cover it -- and put it in the mail. I don't even count that money as mine -- it has to go, no matter what else I need or want -- so if I am saving for a new rifle the house money doesn't enter the picture. Now suppose, just suppose, I planned my support of the Lord's work that way? When I determine what my income will be, I set aside a certain amount for the Lord's work -- as something that has to go, no matter what else I have to do. I would then plan the rest of my expenditures accordingly: buying or renting in a bracket I could afford with what was left. Soon my life would fit into this mold, and I would squeeze the new riflescope out of this budget. (Maybe I could cut down some on the wife's shoes.

This thing has amazing possibilities. Suppose all wage earners in a local church would adopt my plan. Ol' Bill loves his fishing tackle almost as much as I love my rifles. And Joe takes his fancy boat payment out of his income before he gives Pam any grocery money. Even Aunt Kit cuts her snuff money out of the social security check before she does anything else. Wonder what we could do if all of us loved the Lord and His work more than anything else in the world?

Do you suppose this is what the Lord had in mind when he said, **(Matt. 6:33,34)** "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take no thought (be not anxious) for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Robert Turner

Some quotes worth pondering - taken from the BEACON Electronic Edition, Colledgevue church of Christ

"Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start now and make a brand new ending."

"It doesn't take strength to hold a grudge; it takes strength to let go of one."

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, **20** being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; **21** in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1 Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psalms 1: 1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scoffers; **2** But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. **3** And he shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. **4** The wicked are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. **5** Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. **6** For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the wicked shall perish.

News and Notes: Let us remember the instruction of our Lord by visiting in whatever way we can, **Mary Czirr, Terry Czirr, Candiss Cason, Grant Clothier, Byron Taylor and Jan Patrick.**

Matt. 25:40 *And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.*

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We recommend to you the following websites:

***facebook.comlenexachurchofchrist/
thelenexaedifier.com
lenexachurchofchrist.org***

Our Meeting times are:

Sunday Bible Classes: 9:30 AM
Worship Services 10:20 AM&5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Classes 7:00 PM

The Church at Lenexa is a congregation of brethren who have been "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." **(Romans 3:24)**

As a result of this justification we have been "delivered out of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of sins." **(Colossians 1:13,14)**

We therefore respect the inspired word of God that will completely furnish us unto every good work by speaking only as the oracles of God. **(2 Timothy 3:16,17; 1 Peter 4:11)**

What must one do to be saved?

Hear the gospel -

Romans 10:17

Believe in Christ -

Heb. 11:6

Repent of sin - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord -

Romans 10:9,10

Be baptized for the remission of sins - Acts 2:38