

Truth

Magazine

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CURRENT ISMS

“See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ” (Col. 2:8, NASB).



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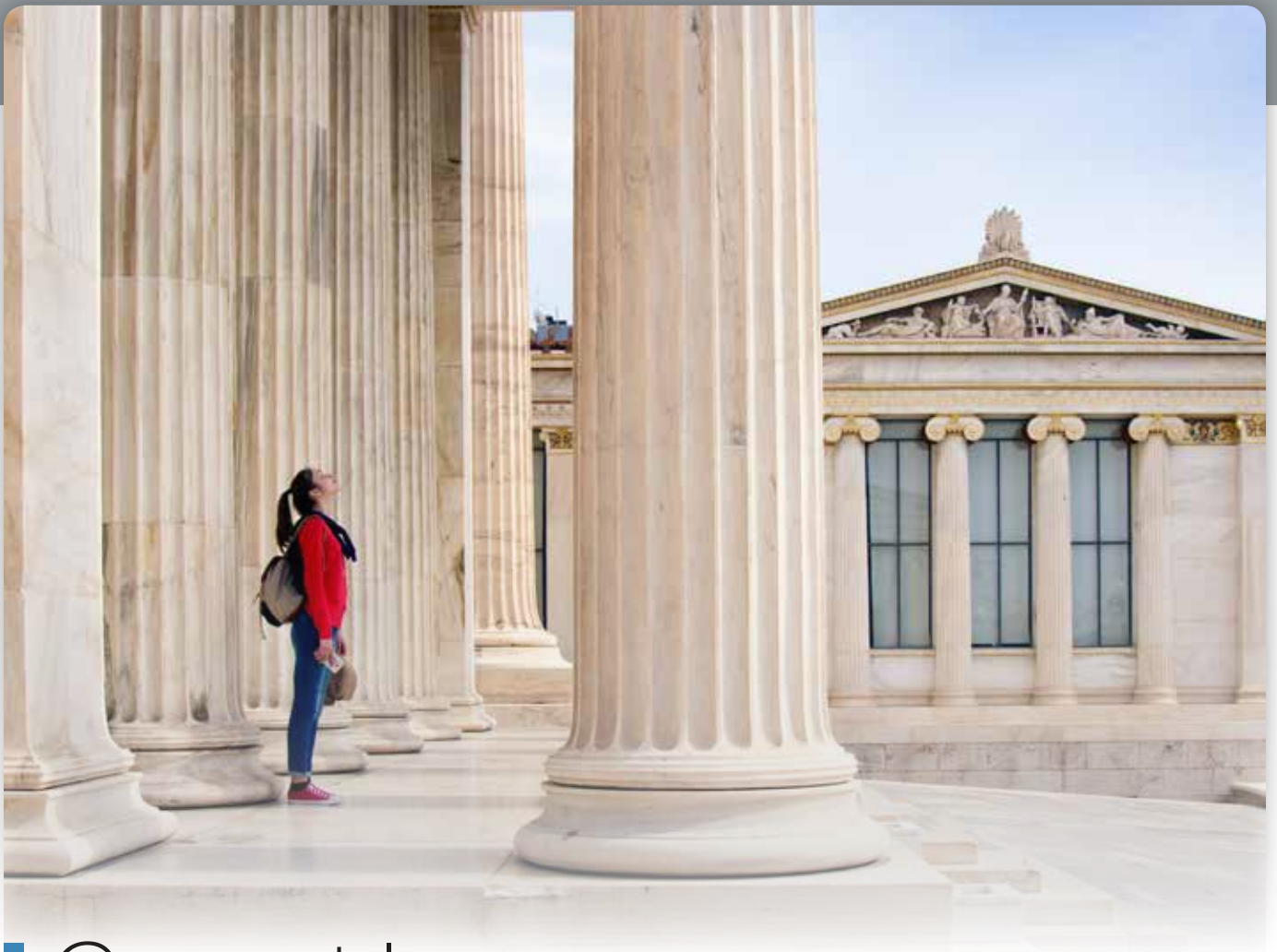
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Conflicting Worldviews

by Mark Mayberry

This issue of Truth Magazine focuses on “Current Isms” that confront the culture, and by extension, Christians. How should believers respond to the various schools of thought, or philosophical systems, that dominate the modern era?

Introduction

What is a worldview? The *American Heritage Dictionary* says it is “the overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world” or “a collection of beliefs about life and the universe held by an individual or a group.” There are two (or three) distinct possibilities: we can either hold to a God-centered worldview, a man-centered worldview, or perhaps a nature-centered worldview. The first affirms that God is the center of all things. The second affirms that man is the center of all things. The third affirms that nature is the center of all things.

God is the Measure of All Things

All Authority Belongs to God

The first words of the Bible affirm, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1). This concise declaration of divine supremacy can be stated even more concisely: In the beginning... GOD! The Lord God of Sacred Scripture existed before time: “Even from eternity I am He” (Isa. 43:13). YHWH, the most sacred name of God, affirms His divine self-existence (Exod. 3:13-14; cf. John 8:56-59). He was and is and is to come (Rev. 1:8; 4:8). Before the foundation of the world, our heavenly Father formulated a plan to save humanity (John 17:24; Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:20-21). He is lofty and exalted (Isa. 6:1-3). He is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent (Gen. 17:1-2; Psa. 139:7-12).

After crossing the Red Sea, Moses said, “Who is like You among the gods, O Lord? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders?” (Exod. 15:11). Psalm 95, an unattributed psalm that praises the Lord and offers a warning against unbelief, affirms “The Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods...” (vv. 1-6). At the dedication of the temple, King Solomon said “O Lord, the God of Israel, there is no god like You in heaven or on earth...” (2 Chron. 6:14-15).

After offering Himself as a sacrifice for sins, Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, ascended to heaven, and is now seated at the Father’s right hand (Mark 16:19). Having been granted all authority (Matt. 28:18-20), He is the head of the body, the church. He is above all rule and authority and power and dominion (Eph. 1:18-23). As the active agent of creation, God’s Son upholds all things by the word of His power (Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 1:1-4).

Hierarchy: God, Man, Nature

From a biblical worldview, the Lord God holds a position of supreme authority: He is our Father, we are His children; He is the potter, we are the clay; He is the molder, we are the molded (Isa. 64:8; Rom. 9:19-21). Therefore, we must follow His word and obey His will: “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36). While man is subservient to God, he is granted dominion over nature

with the expectation that he will act as a good steward (Gen. 1:26-28; 9:1-4).

Man is the Measure of All Things

What is humanism? The answer depends upon the context. The *Collins English Dictionary* offers the following variations. From a philosophical standpoint, humanism is “the denial of any power or moral value superior to that of humanity; the rejection of religion in favor of a belief in the advancement of humanity by its own efforts.” From a literary and cultural standpoint, it is associated with the Renaissance, a humanistic revival of classical art, architecture, literature, and learning that originated in Italy in the 14th century and later spread throughout Europe. Finally, it reflects a concern for human rights, i.e., an interest in the welfare of people, i.e., humanity.

Herein, we focus—not upon the study of the humanities, or the principles that guided the Renaissance, but rather on modern systems of thought that exalt human reason and wisdom, while depreciating faith in God and rejecting the authority of divine revelation.

Humanism grants man the freedom of defining (or redefining) truth for himself. Yet, it also robs man of stability. Whatever is accepted today may be rejected tomorrow. Everything is in a state of flux. Nothing is fixed. Everything is relative.

In some ways, the first and most concise expression of the underlying

philosophy of humanism came from the ancient Greek philosopher, Protagoras (ca. 480-421 BC), who famously said, “Man is the measure of all things.” This statement is usually interpreted to mean that the individual human being, rather than God (or a god) or unchanging moral law, is the ultimate source of value. Many, including Plato, took it to mean that there is no absolute truth, but that which individuals deem to be the truth (Wikipedia).

All Authority Belongs to Man

From the standpoint of secular humanism, man holds a position of supreme authority: God is a human construct, a fabrication of man’s superstitious mind. In other words, “You thought that I was just like you” (Psa. 50:16-23, esp. v. 21). Such an approach is imprudent: The fool has said, “There is no God” (Ps. 10:3-4; 14:1-3; 53:1-3). Woe to mortal man who thus quarrels with his Maker (Isa. 29:15-16; 45:9-10).

Hierarchy: Man, God, Nature

The worship of false gods was pandemic during ancient times, especially in the pagan cultures of Mesopotamia, Canaan, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. People worshiped representative idols, i.e., graven images; yet, the children of Israel were explicitly forbidden from pursuing such a path (Exod. 20:1-6; Deut. 4:15-20).

The inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Canaan often worshiped the heavenly bodies (sun, moon, and stars), natural phenomena (rain and storms, thunder and lightning), and the natural cycles of fertility on earth (crops and vineyards, flocks and herds, human sexuality and childbirth).

The Greeks/Romans glorified and deified various human characteristics. They considered the gods to be like man, only more so.

In other words, the gods of the Greeks and Romans were just like us, only more so. Think of them as

characters from the Marvel Cinematic Universe (Iron Man, Thor, the Scarlet Witch and the Black Widow, etc.). They were a bunch of super-powered misfits. “You thought that I was just like you” (Psa. 50:16-23, esp. v. 21).

The Lord God of Sacred Scripture says, “See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides Me; it is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, and there is no one who can deliver from My hand” (Deut. 32:39). Once again, we are faced with two choices: “Now consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you in pieces, and there will be none to deliver. He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; and to him who orders his way aright, I shall show the salvation of God” (Psa. 50:22-23).

In *Seven Men Who Rule the World from the Grave*, the late David Breese presents a summary of seven men from the past whose philosophies continue to shape the ideas and movements of the present day.

- Charles Darwin popularized the belief that evolution was behind the origin of the species.
- Karl Marx was a German philosopher and economist who promoted the concept of communism over capitalism.
- Julius Wellhausen was a German biblical scholar who denied the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and proposed the documentary hypothesis.
- John Dewey was an American philosopher who promoted progressive education and liberalism.
- Sigmund Freud, an Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis, promoted the view that the sexual instinct is the driving force behind all human action.
- John Maynard Keynes was a British economist who advocated economic policies that promoted deficit spending and governmental activism.

- Søren Kierkegaard was a Danish philosopher and theologian who was the first proponent of existentialism.

With time, some of these great thinkers have been superseded by others; yet, they or their successors have shaped the modern world. Collectively, they represent a humanistic, man-centered approach rather than a biblically-centered worldview.

The following “ISMS” are interconnected expressions of rebellious men who deny the reality of God and the authority of His inspired word: Atheism denies the very existence of God. Darwinianism and uniformitarianism are denials of divine creation. Determinism is a denial of man’s accountability and responsibility. Hedonism is a denial of divine morality. Humanism is a denial of divine authority over humanity. Radical environmentalism denies man’s dominion over nature. Even the political “isms” that have dominated the modern world potentially deny individual worth (communism/fascism/socialism/totalitarianism) or place an overemphasis on materialism (unfettered capitalism).

In Psalm 2, David asks and answers, “Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing?” The answer is troubling: “The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, ‘Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!’” (vv. 1-3). In other words, sinful humanity remains in a perpetual state of rebellion against God: Asaph addresses “the uproar of those who rise against You which ascends continually” (Psa. 74:23). Yet, God is in control—He has installed Jesus Christ, the King, upon His throne. Humanity has but two choices: Honor God, or face His wrath. “Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath

The “Memoirs of the Apostles”

by Kyle Pope

Drawing upon his knowledge of church history, Kyle examines evidence from the writings of Justin Martyr and others that support the biblical assertion that the Four Gospels were written by eyewitnesses of Jesus’ life and ministry.

Critics of faith have long tried to argue that the biblical books that preserve the inspired account of Jesus’ life, known as the “Gospels,” were not written by eyewitnesses to Jesus’ life, but centuries after Jesus by authors who wrote under the pseudonyms of *Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John*. Even though this has been disproven by manuscript evidence of the Gospels dating to the second-century, popular media still perpetuates this false claim. A compelling piece of evidence pertaining to this issue recently came to my attention that I would like to share.

Justin Martyr

One of the earliest authors who wrote in defense of faith in Christ was a second-century Christian named Justin. He was put to death for his faith under the Roman emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.16-18), thus earning the epithet by which he is generally identified—*Justin Martyr*. Before his death around AD 165, he wrote many works explaining his faith. The two longest that have survived are a defense of the faith written to the emperor, known as the *First Apology*, and a defense of the faith written to a Jewish man named Trypho. In both, Justin repeatedly refers to what he calls the “memoirs of the apostles.”

The first examples of this come in his letter to the emperor. As he describes how Christians worshiped on the Lord’s Day, he explained

that Christians, “gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits” (*First Apology* 67). By using the term “memoirs” Justin is not claiming this was just the creative imagination of the apostles, nor is he ignoring the divine inspiration of these texts. “Memoirs” translates the Greek word *apomnēmonēutis* meaning “recounting, summarizing, commemoration” (LSJ). He is referring to the accounts that the early church had already come to view as authoritative and held on a par with Old Testament Scripture.

What is Justin calling the “memoirs of the apostles”? Just before he first used this description, in discussing the Lord’s Supper, he explained, “For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels” taught “do this in remembrance of Me” (ibid. 66). We note here that he identified these “memoirs of the apostles” as texts which Christians were already calling “Gospels”—the term we still apply to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

We know that there were many other works that were Gnostic or apocryphal in nature that are also called “Gospels.” Could Justin have included them in his description? To answer this, we must look further at his use of this term in his work known as *Dialogue with Trypho*. In this work, Justin used this term at

least eleven times. By considering his usage, we can determine the scope of what Justin includes in the term “memoirs of the apostles.”

For example, Justin will discuss either the Jews plotting to take Jesus or the dividing of His garments and claim these “memoirs” as the source for his understanding of these events (*Dialogue* 104). These incidents are recorded in all four Gospels in our Bibles today. Justin used the term in discussing the temptation of Jesus (ibid. 103)—something recorded in all three of the synoptic Gospels (Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13).

Additionally, Justin also used the term “memoirs of the apostles” when citing events in the life of Christ recorded in only two of our Gospels. These include Jesus singing praise to God (*Dialogue* 106), recorded in Matthew and Mark (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26); the virgin conception of Mary (*Dialogue* 105), recorded in Matthew and Luke (Matt. 1:23; Luke 1:27); and the Jews’ request for a sign and Jesus’ reference to the sign of Jonah (*Dialogue* 107)—something recorded only in Luke and Matthew (Luke 11:29; cf. Matt. 16:4).

Justin also used “memoirs of the apostles” in reference to teachings of Jesus recorded in only one of the Gospels. These include the appearance of the star at Jesus’ birth and the visit of the Wise Men from the east (*Dialogue* 106); Jesus’ teaching that

Christian righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees (ibid. 105); and the shout raised while Jesus was on the cross, “He was the Son of God: let Him come down; let God save Him” (ibid. 100)—things recorded only in Matthew (Matt. 2:1-2; 5:20; 27:43). Finally, he cites Jesus’ words from the cross, “Into Your hands I commit My Spirit” (*Dialogue* 105), recorded only in Luke (Luke 23:46).

Mark and Luke

Two final examples demand our special attention. Justin discussed Jesus’ nickname given to James and John, Boanerges—an Aramaic term meaning “sons of thunder.” In referring to this, Justin spoke of Peter, claiming to learn about this from “his memoirs” (*Dialogue* 106). What is Justin calling Peter’s “memoirs”? There is an apocryphal work known as the *Gospel of Peter*, but it does not contain an account naming James and John, Boanerges. The answer likely rests in what early church writers claimed about Peter’s relationship to the Gospel of Mark. For example, Irenaeus (ca. 140-ca. 202) wrote, “Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter” (*Against Heresies* 3.1.1). Tertullian (ca. 155-ca. 240) claimed, “That which Mark published may be affirmed to be Peter’s, whose interpreter Mark was” (*Against Marcion* 4.5). Clement of Alexandria (AD 150-218) as quoted in Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History* (6.14.5-7) and Origen (AD 184-253) in his *Commentary on Matthew* (1.1) affirm the same view. Justin’s reference to Peter’s “memoirs” claims it as the source of the record of Jesus’ nickname “Boanerges”—something recorded only in Mark 3:17. Justin is likely calling the Gospel of Mark Peter’s “memoirs.”

There is a similar understanding related to the Gospel of Luke. After referring to Peter’s relationship to

the Gospel of Mark, Tertullian (ca. 155-ca. 240) continued, “For even Luke’s form of the Gospel men usually ascribe to Paul” (*Against Marcion* 4.5). This is interesting as it relates to Justin’s use of “memoirs” when he cites something from Luke alone. He refers to the account that in the garden Jesus had sweat falling down like drops of blood (*Dialogue* 103), something found only in Luke 22:44. He attributes the source for this to, “the memoirs which I say were drawn up by His apostles and those who followed them” (ibid. 103). Although Luke was not an apostle, his close association with Paul led Justin and other early church writers to view his Gospel as if it was Paul’s (or sanctioned by him).

Conclusion

What conclusions can we draw about Justin’s use of what he calls the “memoirs of the apostles”? First, it is clear that Justin used the term to refer to the four Gospels contained in our New Testament to this day. He applied the term to things found in all four Gospels, but never to things found in Gnostic or apocryphal sources (such as the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Gospel of Judas*, etc.). Second, the false claim that our Gospels were written long after the first-century by writers who were not eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus is clearly absurd. By the middle of the second-century, early Christians already viewed these inspired works as authoritative records of what Jesus said and did among His apostles. We can trust that what we have in our Bibles today are, in fact, the inspired accounts of our Lord’s life as preserved in the “memoirs of the apostles.” ■



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Lessons from the Trash Can

by Deborah Towles

Dealing with trash is usually a family affair and can provide opportunities to teach spiritual lessons regarding what is worth keeping and what should be thrown away.

Trash is an unpleasant but unavoidable part of life. We consume; we discard. We gather; we cast away (Eccles. 3:6). If not carefully managed, trash overwhelms our homes, communities and our nation. Our trash tells a story—revealing habits, vices, spending patterns, food preferences, family composition, medical conditions and more. What we save or discard is an indication of our values. Dealing with trash is usually a family affair and can provide opportunities to teach spiritual lessons regarding what is worth keeping and what should be thrown away.


Many things belong in the trash: the worn out, the broken, the unserviceable, the spoiled, the soiled, the grimy, the germ, and the hazardous. The longer the trash sits, the more rancid and contaminated it becomes. Occasionally, we may find that a possession we considered valuable is actually worthless. It can be cast away without regret. What we once deemed of great worth may be discarded when we no longer consider it necessary or important, though its intrinsic value is undiminished. Yet, it is shameful and wasteful to discard something of true usefulness and value.

Have you ever considered that we need a spiritual trash can to use when discarding the refuse from our hearts? Until we cast away our worthless, vile attitudes and values, a toxic environment will overwhelm us. The things we choose to throw away tell a lot about us. Do we cast away a deceitful and devious mouth (Prov. 4:24), filthiness and all that remains of wickedness (Jas. 1:21), malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy and slander (1 Pet. 2:1), the deeds of darkness (Rom. 13:12), our old manner of life including falsehood, bitterness, wrath, anger, and clamor (Eph. 4:22, 25, 31), any idols we still hold dear (Josh. 24:14) and the weights and sins that so easily beset us (Heb. 12:1)? If so, our full trash can is a testimony to God's ability to clean the pride and selfishness from our hearts and make us holy. Why would we ever want to reach back into our discarded filth to retrieve any vile thing?

What is revealed about our values by looking through our personal, spiritual trash can? Do we cling to invaluable spiritual treasures and discard the love of that which is

worthless (Matt. 6:19-21; 1 John 2:15)? Do we treasure God's word and never cast it from ourselves (Ps. 119:11; 18:22)? Are we like Paul, who considered knowing Christ the greatest treasure and counted all else as rubbish (Phil. 3:8)?

On the other hand, is our trash littered with good intentions, true commitment to God, love for His word, and the wounded, broken hearts of others, our Savior and our God? Are we like profane Esau, who cast away as worthless his great inheritance to satisfy his immediate fleshly desires (Heb. 12:16)? People of Ezekiel's day could not distinguish between the holy and the unclean (Ezek. 22:26). Because of their great wickedness, God cast them away as dross is cast into the furnace to be consumed (Ezek. 22:18-22; Ps. 119:119)! Let this not be said of us! Instead, may we be like Paul and the apostles who, though the world considered them as the offscouring of the earth belonging to the rubbish heap (1 Cor. 4:13), were of great value to God (2 Tim. 4:7-8)!

In most families, children have a role in dealing with trash. Our children will see whether we continually strive to rid our hearts of toxic sinful attitudes. As we practice, teach and require sound habits of thinking and behavior of our children, and ourselves, they learn to distinguish the valuable from the worthless. Perhaps the next time a child chooses kindness, patience or honesty, you may want to write the word "selfishness," "impatience," or "deceitfulness" on a piece of paper and then have your child throw it in the trash. Recording worthy attitudes and actions on a child's personal "heart chart" can encourage good choices. Using the trash can as a positive object lesson can help them distinguish what is worth treasuring in their hearts—and what should be discarded into the rubbish heap. May God bless us as we fill our trash cans with all that truly belongs there! 



Deborah Towles

Deborah is the wife of Gale Towles who preaches for the State Line Church of Christ in Charlotte, NC. Gale and Deborah have been married 42 years. They have four children and nineteen grandchildren. She can be reached at dtowles419@gmail.com.

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Sermon on the Mount: Judgment Without Mercy

by David Flatt

In contrast with the cruelty of the callout culture, David focuses on the proper approach Christians should take toward those who are living in sin.

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye (Matt. 7:1-5).

To this point in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has been direct and forthright in rebuking the self-righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Most of what Jesus said in chapters 5 and 6 related to their hypocrisy. Some listening to Jesus may very well have been quite pleased to hear someone rebuke the religious leaders of the day. In this context, Jesus seems to bring a sense of balance to His previous rebukes. Teachers and preachers would be wise to note this important dynamic.

Sometimes when delivering and listening to sermons which rightfully rebuke self-righteousness, we can easily forget how *we are to present and listen to* such teaching. We are to present and listen to teaching with a view to ourselves. When we get to thinking, "I really let 'em have it today!" or "She really needs to hear

that!" we have gone wrong. If any were thinking like this in Jesus' audience, He quickly refocuses attention to where it should have been all along: on themselves (Jas. 1:21-25).

On a personal note, most of the explanations of this text I have heard over the years go something like this: "Jesus said judge not lest ye be judged, but that does not mean we cannot judge others." Does this sound familiar? Why is this so often the approach taken to explain this text? Instead of mainly focusing on what this text does *not* say, why not focus on what this text *does* say? Do we think Jesus needs to be corrected in what He said, or some kind of asterisk needs to be placed next to this teaching? *Certainly not.*

Judge Not, Lest You Be Judged

Why are we so easily able to see the faults of others more clearly than our own? While I do not have an exact answer to this question, I do know it is true. Deflecting negative attention away from ourselves and toward others helps us acquire and maintain power. Such deflection is also how we deceive ourselves into thinking we are morally superior to others.

As was stated in the introductory article to this series, many have mistaken the purpose of God's kingdom in the world. Many have been misguided, malicious, and even murderous in their attempts to advance the kingdom. In this

sermon, Jesus declares we are not to pass self-righteous, hypocritical judgment against others.

The purpose of kingdom work is not to pass judgment against the world. God passed judgment against the prince of this world, and also those who collude with him, through the cross of the Messiah and by the Spirit (John 16:7-11). As a representation of this judgment, the cross is a sign pointing to the final judgment (Acts 17:30-31). Therefore, passing judgment against the world is not our place. Nevertheless, disciples have often tried to usurp God's judgment seat.

On one occasion, James and John were deeply offended by the Samaritan's rejection of Jesus. In their self-righteous, vengeful anger, they asked Jesus if they should call down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans (Luke 9:54). He sharply rebuked them, saying, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:55-56).

Like James and John, we may not realize whose spirit we reflect by similar self-righteous indignation. It seems to be far too easy for us to call for entire nations and civilizations to be "wiped off the map," or boldly assert how someone who made a bad decision "got what they deserved." When someone finally comes to their

senses and reaches out for help, we may reject the request because “you made your bed...now lie in it.” Or, after someone offers an apology, we will question his sincerity.

Our kingdom work is about salvation—not condemnation. Those living in sin already have a Judge. They do not need another. Our attitude toward people in sin is never to be shaped by what we think they deserve, but by what they most desperately need. Those in sin need someone to help them and save them. As royal priests in God’s kingdom, we are to be ministers of God’s mercy.

Our ministry is to be shaped by our struggles with sin and personal challenges to repent. Yes, those dying in sin need help. Administering help is sensitive work. As far as Jesus was concerned, there is no better training we can receive in helping others than by first dealing with our sin. The humility required to engage those in sin properly must stem from a keen awareness of our past and present struggles with sin. Those who think they have out-grown sin have only been deceived by their egos. Rather than helping, they will only harm everyone within their reach.

Certainly, the encounter with James and John proves this point. By rejecting Jesus, the Samaritans stood condemned. In such a condition, they did not need to be obliterated. This would not serve their salvation well. What they needed was mercy. They needed self-giving, redemptive love to persuade them to receive Jesus.

In that context, Jesus was not willing to condemn the Samaritans. He made sure the disciples knew to take the gospel to them (Acts 1:8). Phillip preached the gospel to the Samaritans. Surprisingly, some of them obeyed Jesus (Acts 8:5-12). In time, John would go with Peter to Samaria. They would give the Spirit to

Samaritans who had been baptized in the name of the Lord, Jesus the Messiah (Acts 8:14-16). Both John going to the Samaritans and their obedience demonstrates the transformative power of living by the principle of “judge not lest ye be judged.”

Helping Those in Sin

This teaching of Jesus provides direction on how we are to understand ourselves in the world and His kingdom. We are not morally superior to anyone. Like Jesus catching the Pharisees in hypocrisy in John chapter eight, we are not without sin. When we forget this, we will impede the progress of the kingdom, hurt other people, and bring condemnation upon ourselves.

Additionally, this teaching gives us a strong sense of how we are to confront sin in our lives and the lives of others. Both logs and motes matter. Both harm vision. Extracting both is sensitive work. If we are not careful, we can cause blindness.

The apostle Paul came to understand the sensitive nature of confronting sin. Paul had a constant awareness of his sin. Whether dealing with his past or present struggles, he knew first-hand of the humility required to confront sin. At the same time, this humility did not silence him in the face of sin. Humility gave voice to how he patiently reprovved, rebuked, and exhorted. He was not interested in being viewed as the smartest in the room, winning an argument, or having a good one-liner. He did not take pleasure in a confrontation, or view a crisis as an opportunity to elevate his reputation. Rather, he lovingly poured out his heart’s desire to save those ensnared by the devil. Why? He was once ensnared himself. He knew what was required to break the powerful hold of pride.

Note Paul’s instructions to the saints of Galatia: “Brothers, if anyone

is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:1-2). His instructions are not directed to the person caught in a transgression, but rather to those seeking to recover someone caught in a transgression. As far as Paul was concerned, the approach a restorer made toward someone in sin would make a major difference in the outcome of the confrontation.

Restorers are to approach others in sin with a spirit of gentleness. Kicking someone when they are down is not a gentle action. Bringing further humiliation and embarrassment on someone is not a gentle action. Such actions will only bring greater damage to the situation. Our first step toward engaging someone in sin must be to do no harm. If we lack gentleness and humility, we will make restoration more difficult for people than it already is. Paul warns restorers against using this kind of occasion as an exercise in egotism. Instead of being unreasonable and overbearing, by love, we are to help bear the burdens that are crushing someone in sin.

Additionally, consider what Paul told Timothy regarding how we are to engage others in sin: “The Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will” (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

Identifying sin is often a simple process. The destructive nature of sin can bring painful consequences to the lives and relationships of people fairly quickly. Many live with a ►

constant sense of emptiness. What is not so simple is persuading someone living in sin of their need to repent.

Persuasion requires more than finger-pointing. Persuasion is not the ability of a novice, but a skill carefully-honed over time. Restoration through gentle persuasion is accomplished through an awareness of the perilous condition of people in sin. They are being held captive by the devil, the deceiver. The only hope they have in this situation comes by acknowledging the truth they have been deceived from recognizing. They need a servant of the Lord to come and reason with them.

Conclusion

The tight grip of pride can cause people to be defensive and resistant to a helping hand. Similarly, guilt can prevent people from seeking restoration with God and those whom they have hurt. Guilt can deceive people into thinking they do not deserve restoration. It can rob people of every shred of self-worth. Regardless of the situation, kind persuasion,

gentleness, and understanding toward people held captive by the devil are the only means to lead them to repentance. If Jesus teaches us anything, He teaches us that only redemptive love can rescue people in sin. Therefore, we must be ministers of God's redemptive love.

Being the judge of the world appeals to our pride. We must resist this temptation. Nothing good will come from it. Often, when we have been wronged we demand "justice," but when we wrong someone else, we want mercy. Often, the "justice" we demand is not justice at all but merciless vengeance. That is what James and John wanted. They did not care about the eternity of the Samaritans. There was no love in their selfish request.

If God treated us in such a merciless fashion, we would all be in trouble. Not one of us deserves His mercy. Of course, this is the very nature of mercy: giving pardon to the undeserving. This is what Paul explained when he wrote, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved

us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:4-6).

Later in this discourse, Jesus will command His audience to treat others in the same fashion they would want to be treated. We would be wise to ask ourselves an important question: how would we want to be treated if we were in sin? Would we want someone to kick us or publicly humiliate us? Would we want someone to use our bad choices as a means to advance their public image within the church? Or, would we want someone to act with love and understanding and try to help us? At this point, the answer should be quite obvious. 🙏



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Wayward Children: Priceless Guidance for Broken Hearts

by Ron Halbrook

In the second part of his series, Ron explains how God's word answers the question asked by heavy-hearted parents of wayward children, "What can we do to please God and to rescue our children as we pass through this fiery trial?"

God's word gives priceless guidance for broken hearts, including the broken hearts of parents with wayward children. Their hearts throb with anguish and pain as they struggle with the question, "What can we do to please God and to rescue our children as we pass through this fiery trial?"

Pray, Pray, and Pray

Constant, fervent prayer is needed by all Christians, most especially when passing through fiery trials. Not only will the parents of wayward children pray for their restoration, but they must also pray to be delivered from the dangers this trial brings to their own faith. Surrounded by enemies, David prayed, "Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea; hear me and answer me. My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught... But I call to God, and the Lord saves me. Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice" (Ps. 55:1-2, 16-17, NIV). Like Daniel who faced one trial after another, and like Christ who knew his trials were stepping stones leading to the cross, we must "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17).

Parents of wayward children must pray that their longings to restore their children will be strengthened, balanced, and refined by the wisdom which only God can give. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given

him" (Jas. 1:5). God teaches us not to pray for the erring to be saved *in* their sins, but that they will *repent* of their sins. "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it" (1 John 5:16). The prayer of Jesus for his tormentors to be forgiven was answered for many when they repented (Luke 23:34; Acts 2:36-41).

Time is fleeting, and life is fragile and uncertain, and so we pray for God's kind patience and providence in extending the lives of wayward children to grant them time to repent. We pray for every influence to be brought to bear in their lives which might humble them and lead them to repent.

Put God First

Jesus warned that exaggerated fear for the material needs of life can divert our attention from life's first priority (Matt. 6:24-34). Nothing must be allowed to interfere with our focus on a right relationship with God. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). We must not let excessive anxiety over our children's bad choices and conduct obscure our faith in God.

By no means dare we compromise the truth in a frantic effort to mollify and accommodate wayward children.

We must determine to obey God no matter what our children may do. Jesus said in Matthew 10:37, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." Sympathizing with our children's sinful conduct, enabling them to continue in it, or joining with them in sin will harden their hearts. As Paul said, "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). Our children must know we love them, but we love God more!

Put Our Trust in God

How could any good result from the tragedy of wayward children? Let us learn to trust that God will bring spiritual good out of our trials as He promises. "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (Jas. 1:2-4, NIV). Facing the most severe and painful trials by trusting in God strengthens our faith, hope, and love.

When we wonder how we will survive dark days, the promise of God in 1 Corinthians 10:13 calms our fears. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able;

but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” Satan cannot overpower our freewill nor can he overturn our faith against our will. Legion are the number of parents who have lost their children because they chose a life of sin, and yet have survived by choosing the path of righteousness.

Almighty God stands above the storms of human life and exercises His infinite love and providential power to guide us through any trial or temptation, no matter how severe. “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:6-7). He knows. He cares. He is strong to help those who trust in Him!

Present the Truth Always in Word and Deed

Wayward children desperately need to see the faith of godly parents who uphold the truth in a kind, firm, and consistent manner under all circumstances. If the faith of a godly wife can influence an unbelieving husband who refuses to open the Bible, most certainly the influence of godly parents wields great spiritual power (1 Pet. 3:1).

If wayward children openly question or challenge their parents’ convictions, let us remember 1 Peter 3:15-16, which says, “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander” (NIV). Let them see the answer in words and in “good behavior.”

Parents must answer carefully and cautiously when wayward children complain against brethren and the

church in general. To sympathize with them is to help Satan make them comfortable in sin. Treat petty complaints as petty: “I don’t like the time or length of the service, sermon topics, Bible class teacher, elders, or song leader. Someone did not shake my hand, etc.” Remind them they do not quit their jobs or other activities over such pettiness. If true problems are identified, address them with Scripture, not emotion or overreaction. Point out that we can be part of the problem or the solution—we can seek to help, not merely complain.

Remove Stumbling Blocks and Correct Sin

There are cases where parents have committed sins, even sins against the child, which are a stumbling block to the wayward child. Such parents should openly confess their sins, seek reconciliation, and change their conduct. Jesus said our worship is not accepted until we do so (Matt. 5:23-24). Failure to do so will bring the wrath of Jesus on us on the Judgment Day: “But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea” (Matt. 18:6, NIV). Confessing and correcting our sins against other people opens a door for healing to begin.

Press on in Serving God

Let us focus on growing spiritually and on the future reward of heaven, not on our past mistakes or the sins of our children. “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13-14). We must not be embittered, demoralized, or paralyzed by the sinful attitudes and actions of our wayward children. Every lost soul

is wayward from God. If we cannot help our own children, we must remember that every soul is equally precious to God, and we *can* help someone. **TL**



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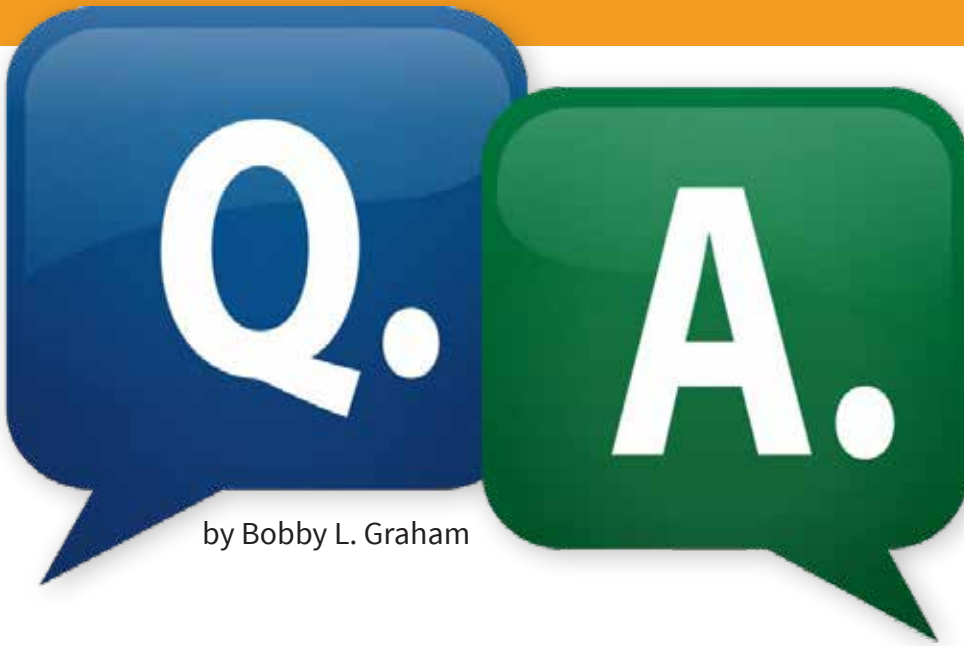


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Bobby participates in fill-in preaching, Belize trips, teaching at Athens Bible School, and in gospel meetings. He and his wife, Karen, have three children: Richard, Mary Katherine Winland (Darren), and Laura Paschall (Jeremy). He can be reached at bobbylgraham@pclnet.net.

QUESTION:

How Can We Become Better Servants?

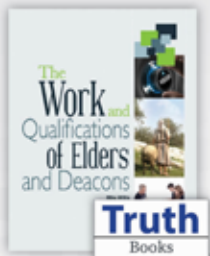
Answer:

This question was asked of me by a group of deacons before I spoke to the entire congregation about the matter. What a noble aspiration for men already serving as special servants to desire to improve their capacity for service! Surely these matters are sufficiently important that they deserve a wider audience among people interested in being the Lord's servants.

Some preliminary considerations deserve our attention. Deacons are special servants, made such by their appointment to a position of seeing to special needs in a local church under the oversight of elders (1 Tim. 3:1-13; cf. Acts 6:1-6). They also are servants of the Lord first, before they are asked to serve in a special role of service to the congregation. It is their general service to

their Lord and Master which attracts attention to them as being the kind of men depicted in God's description of deacons in 1 Timothy 3, and which they continue to display as deacons. "For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 3:13).

Because they were general servants (*doulos*) of the Lord before they became special servants (*diakonos*) in relation to a task/responsibility, we turn our attention to some teaching of Paul's in writing to the Thessalonians, specifically the first ten verses of chapter one. There in verse 9, he makes clear that they had turned/been converted from idols to serve God, as they changed their allegiance from vanity/nothing to the Creator of all.



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For the benefit of posterity, the Holy Spirit deposits a treasure of information by defining the elements of their service to the Lord: (1) better acquaintance with the Lord being served, (2) better understanding of themselves as servants, and (3) better knowledge of the service they were rendering.

We have complete information concerning the Lord whom we serve in the passage. God had elected (chosen) them to salvation through their faith and obedience to the Spirit's instructions (v. 4; cf. 2 Thess. 2:13; John 17:17). Their initial obedience to the Gospel of Christ carried through to their lives as servants, because they became examples to others (vv. 5-8). Obviously, their service was an active service as they became joyful imitators of the Lord Jesus in much affliction (v. 6). They lived and served in hopeful anticipation of the risen Lord's return to deliver them from the coming wrath (v. 10). What motivation we receive to serve the Lord better when we consider where we came from, who brought us to our place as servants, and our hope for His return!

This same passage also provides a better view of who we are, as opposed to who we were, and of what our service to God entails. Former idolaters have now become servants of the living and true God and His Son, the returning Lord (vv. 9-10). Additional information tells us that we are beneficiaries of God's grace and peace (v. 1). If we serve as the Thessalonians did, then others will thank God for us and pray for us (vv. 2-3). Why? Because we are also examples of workers in the gospel (vv. 7-8). Patient waiting for the Lord also will be a hallmark of our service, because our faith is in the Lord, not in men (v. 10). Our work done in faith, our labor performed out of love, and our steadfastness/endurance because of hope will become a way of life, not just a Sunday-Wednesday profession (v. 3).

Surely deacons can benefit from a larger "dose" of this medicine. All servants of the Lord, whether deacons or not, can profit from this information about these first-century servants. Even those not already enrolled as servants can understand the blessing of such service to the Lord, as opposed to the nothingness of alien service to other gods. **T**



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The Healing of the Demoniac

by Leon Mauldin

We look at the geography of Jesus' miracle of casting out the legion of demons on the "other side" of the Sea of Galilee, of which Kursi is the traditional location.

It is axiomatic that the purpose of the miraculous was to confirm the word (Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4). The purpose of Jesus' miracles was to answer the question, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" (Mark 4:41). Both the variety and the nature of Jesus' miracles gave infallible proof that He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God (John 20:30-31).

Jesus came that He might destroy the works of the Devil (1 John 3:8; Heb. 2:14). Those occasions when Jesus cast demons out of their victims gave both a visible and powerful demonstration that the promised Seed who would crush the head of the Serpent had come (Gen. 3:15). Though the defeat of Satan would ultimately occur when Jesus died on the cross

and was resurrected, His casting out demons gave proof that the devil's downfall was quickly approaching. Satan is strong, but Jesus is stronger (1 John 4:4)! Indeed, Jesus would bind the strong man, and plunder his house (Mark 3:27; cf. Isa. 53:12).

The most dramatic demonstration in this category of casting out demons was the case of the "legion" of demons recorded in Mark 5:1-20 with parallels in Matthew 8 and Luke 8. A legion was 6,000 Roman soldiers. While the number of demons in Mark 5 is not specified, it is instructive that they entered about 2,000 swine (v.13).

The setting of the miracle is in the Decapolis, on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee ("the other side" [Mark 5:1; Luke 8:22]). There are variant

readings in the manuscripts, including the country of the "Gerasenes," (Mark and Luke, NASB), and "Gadarenes" (Matt. 8:28). It sounds rather ominous when a scholar like Bock says, "The geographic setting of the exorcism involves a major textual problem..." (Bock, 771). "Greek manuscripts are divided on the precise location involved, citing three names: Gadarenes (Matt. 8:28), Gergesenes (from Origen), and Gerasenes... Reliable evidence favors the name Gerasenes which probably referred to the small town Gersa (modern Khersa) located on the lake's eastern shore" (Grassmick, 122).

The recently published *Archaeology Study Bible* has this information:



A tomb in Jerusalem.



The Sea of Galilee shows the Decapolis side; at the right, note the traditional "steep place" (Mark 5:13).



Some ruins of Kursi (thought by many to be the equivalent of Gerasenes/Gersa).

The geographic setting of Kursi fits the details of the story of the demoniac healed by Jesus. A boat pier adjacent to the first-century village has been found on the shoreline. Gergesa, the likely location of the healing of the demoniac in this chapter, was a Decapolis village dependent upon Hippos. Although some Jews lived in the Decapolis, the population and overall worldview of the region was predominantly Gentile (Wright, 1439-1440).

On the other hand, in the excellent work, *Lexham Geographic Commentary on the Gospels*, Dr. Todd Bolen (BiblePlaces.com) makes a compelling case for the environs of Gadara as the best fit for the textual and archaeological evidence. For more information, see his chapter, “Where Did the Possessed-Pigs Drown?” (cited below).

This man had his dwelling among the tombs (Mark 5:3). Our photos show a tomb in Jerusalem. Our photo of the Sea of Galilee shows the Decapolis side. At right note the traditional “steep place” (Mark 5:13). Also, we show some ruins of Kursi (thought by many to be the equivalent of Gerasenes/Gersa).

After Jesus’ merciful healing of the former demoniac, how wonderful to see him “sitting at the feet of Jesus” (Luke 8:35), “clothed and in his right mind” (Mark 5:15), and subsequently proclaiming “in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him” (Mark 5:15). **TL**

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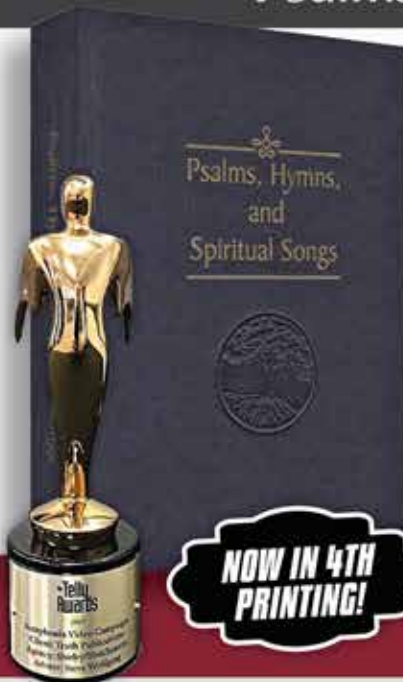


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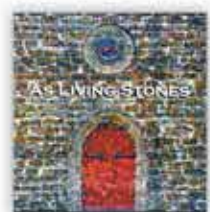
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FEATURES

Missing Stanzas:
recovered from archives,
relate meaning to Jacob's dream

328 • Nearer, My God, to Thee

1. Near - er, my God, to Thee, Near - er to Thee!
2. Though like the wan - der - er, The sun gone down,
3. There let the way ap - pear, Steps un - to heav'n;
4. Then with my wak - ing thoughts Bright with Thy praise,

Phrased Notation:
width of hymn set by length of phrases,
not by page margin

Even though it be a cross That rais - eth me,
Dark - ness be o - ver me, My rest a stone;
All that Thou send - est me In mer - cy giv'n;
Out of my ston - y griefs Beth - el I'll raise;

D.S. - Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee!
D.S. al fine

Still all my song shall be, Near - er, my God, to Thee.
Yet in my dreams I'd be Near - er, my God, to Thee.
An - gels to beck - on me Near - er, my God, to Thee.
So by my woes to be Near - er, my God, to Thee.

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Optional Arrangement:
in this case, a suggestion
to incorporate readings from Genesis 28

0^*,-\$-8-
11+7,CB118K

Take the Name of Jesus with You • 329

1. Take the name of Je - sus with you, Child of sor - row and of woe.
2. Take the name of Je - sus ev - er, As a shield from eve - ry snare.
3. O the pre - cious name of Je - sus! How it thrills our souls with joy.

It will joy and com - fort give you; Take it then, wher - e'er you go.
If temp - ta - tions round you gath - er, Breathe that ho - ly name in prayer.
When His lov - ing arms re - ceive us, And His songs our tongues em - ploy!

Familiar Versions:
in this case, the version
published by Austin Taylor

CHORUS
Pre - cious name, O how sweet! Hope of earth and joy of heav'n.
Pre - cious name, O how sweet!

Pre - cious name, O how sweet! Hope of earth and joy of heav'n.
Pre - cious name, O how sweet, how sweet!

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2. O LORD, O LORD,
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such a worm as I
love be - yond de - gree!
man the crea - ture's sin,
melt my eyes to tears,
all that I can do

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Sweet - ur - al - so

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Atheism

by Danny Linden

Atheism is not the enlightened philosophy it is often framed as, but a dangerous denial of the Creator and Lord.

There have always been those who reject even a shallow faith in God, and instead, cling to the tenuous assertion that there is no God. Atheists' numbers swell as western society grows more secular and materialistic. What are some of the flaws of atheism and the ramifications of believing it?

Denial of a Creator

The Bible begins not with a mathematical proof or a philosophical treatise on the existence of God, but with the assumption that an omnipotent Creator must exist. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). Atheists and Christians agree that laws of nature govern our universe. Various scientific fields are designed to study different slices of the universe: geology is the study of the earth and the rocks that compose it; biology is the study of living organisms; physics is the study of matter, energy, force, and motion; and there are, of course, many other such branches of science. Scientific research and experimentation are possible because the universe follows consistent laws—reflecting structure and form, not arbitrary anarchy. Laws regulate even the phenomena that we do not understand. We just have not discovered all that there is to know about the universe.

The Bible asserts that the form of the universe is a testament to the existence of God (Rom. 1:19-20; Job 12:7-25). Intricate design is indicative of a deliberate designer, not random

chance. God values order and structure; this is reflected in His creation. By contrast, atheists direct their awe of the universe toward coincidence and the passage of eons of time. God made us with enough intelligence and sense to realize that the order of the universe requires someone to set it in order. We observe that phenomenon on a smaller scale every day. A fundamental law of physics states that the natural state of things is to progress toward greater disorder. Things grow old, fall apart and decay. By skillfully expending energy, man fights against that natural process and creates order—raw materials like stone, steel, and silicon can be formed and manipulated with tools to create something ordered, finished, and useful. Even those raw materials had to come from somewhere. From where does the inherent order of the universe come? Why are the laws of nature consistent? It takes a God who exists outside of physical reality to create such a thing—time and chance are not enough by themselves to accomplish this.

Rebellious Roots

Rarely do you find an atheist who has little opinion on the idea of deity. The claim is often made that atheism is merely the lack of belief in a god, but in practice, it becomes a militant campaign against everything that deity represents. This strikes me as strange. Why is this distinction so common? I submit that its roots are found in man's rebellion against the responsibility he has toward God.

Inherent in the idea of an omnipotent God is the belief that we must submit to that God. Unfortunately, submission is unattractive to many. Paul followed this line of reasoning in addressing the Athenians:

And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we are indeed his offspring." Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead (Acts 17:26-31, ESV).

Since God created everything and everyone in this world, He has the authority and the willingness to set a standard of conduct for humanity and to judge our obedience or our rebellion. The Athenians were certainly not atheists, so Paul's argument was intended to lift them out of paganism and to confront them with the reality of the one true God, but

the conclusion remains the same for us all. One day, we will stand before God to be judged. Those who are unwilling to accept this either have to redefine God's standards to make them more palatable or explain away God Himself. However, neither changes the reality of God's existence.

Rejecting God or False Followers?

Many arguments that atheists make against God are not really against God at all, but against those who claim to follow Him. Sadly, wicked people have used God's name to condone all kinds of atrocities. God is not responsible for evil committed by "religious" people when He did not command that evil! Scripture is clear in its condemnation of false disciples. Invoking God's name casually or inaccurately is a serious offense:

And if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an

instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you (Rom. 2:19–24, ESV).

The presence of sinners, hypocrites, and religious factions does not disprove the existence of God. On the contrary, it should be no surprise that the obedience of man does not live up to the perfection of God. I fully expect to see innumerable variations of religion and hypocrisy in the world, and I share in atheists' disgust of this truth. God knows that these problems exist and condemns those who profane His name by their words or

their actions (cf. Exod. 20:7; Lev. 18:21; 19:12; 22:2; Deut. 5:11; Matt. 26:69–75). I have heard "proofs" of God not existing that only contain descriptions of Muslim terrorism, Christian holy wars, and pagan genocides. Those events certainly happened, but they fail to prove the non-existence of God.

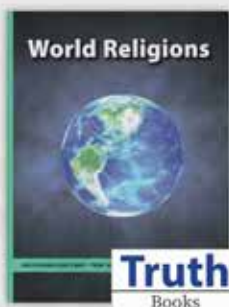
Conclusion

Atheists may be determined to ignore or resist God, but their efforts are foolish and vain. One day, every knee will bow to the Lord of heaven and earth, but only the faithful will do so in joy. May we all accept the reality of God's reign while His offer of grace is extended to us. **II**



Danny Linden

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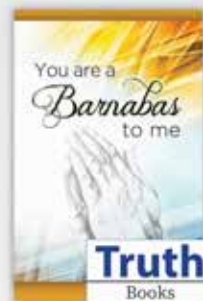
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Hedonism

by Phillip Shumake

Hedonism is a denial of divine morality. Phillip helps us avoid its temptation by pointing out four failures of this deceptive philosophy.

The pursuit of pleasure is one of the oldest themes in literature. We find it in Genesis 3:6, as Satan entices Adam and Eve to eat the delightful but forbidden fruit, and we find it again in the Babylonian work, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. In this ancient story from 2100 BC, the character Siduri advises, “Fill your belly. Day and night make merry. Let days be full of joy. Dance and make music day and night... These things alone are the concern of men.”

In and out of the Bible, we find humanity tempted toward hedonism. Hedonism is the pursuit of pleasure, especially sensual self-indulgence. As a philosophy, hedonism presents the satisfaction of desire as the highest good and proper aim of human life. This philosophy was formalized during the 4th century BC by Aristippus of Cyrene, and it continues to be one of Satan’s schemes to draw us away from God. Consider three recent cases of hedonism being openly and directly encouraged:

In 2014, Anthony Bourdain, the host of the hit show *Kitchen Confidential*, promoted hedonism as a guiding principle in his life of drug abuse, wealth, travel, and fame (Woods, *Men’s Journal*).

In 2016, the children’s movie *Trolls* included some positive messages of courage, sacrifice, and friendship, but was also applauded for promoting a hedonistic life of music, dancing, and neon glitter. (*Hair & Hedonism, Trolls the Movie*, by A. Zanin)

The 2017 *CNN* story, “Hedonism Is Good for Your Health,” advanced the term “rational hedonism” as a philosophy of avoiding outright debauchery, but still living a hedonistic life to ease the struggles of stress, depression, an unhealthy diet, and poor sleep. (Kozlowski, *CNN*).

Today hedonism is being presented as a useful, positive, and healthy approach to life with no concern for Biblical morality. Individuals are encouraged to engage in whatever pursuits maximize their personal pleasure. This is directly opposed to Peter’s instructions to, “...live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries” (1 Pet. 4:2-3).

The life of a disciple of Jesus Christ can never have pleasure as its highest aim. The Bible shows us a humble servant with “nowhere to lay His head,” not a rich man surrounded by pleasures or luxury (Matt. 8:20). Jesus specifically warns us in Luke 8:14 that the pleasures of this world will choke out the seed of the gospel. By His example, Jesus directs us to place doing the will of His Father above every other concern or desire. When His devotion to the Father led to isolation, rejection, and pain, He never compromised. We must choose citizenship in His kingdom above the things of the

world. Like Moses, we must decide to “endure ill-treatment with the people of God” rather than “enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward” (Heb. 11:25-26).

To avoid Satan’s deception and engage the lost in conversations that will lead them out of this deceptive philosophy, Christians need to recognize four failures of hedonism:

Don’t Fall for the Emptiness of Classic Hedonism

In Ecclesiastes 2, Solomon boldly declares the emptiness of pursuing worldly pleasure. He details his life of comfort, ease, riches, and pleasure and concludes that it is all empty and vain apart from the Lord (Eccles. 2:11). God’s commandments regarding moral behavior help us to enjoy the pleasures He created within healthy boundaries that place *Him*, not pleasure, at the center of our lives.

Don’t Fall for the Rebellion of Rational Hedonism

Even in moderation, hedonism replaces God’s authority to direct our lives, with man’s authority to participate in any activity we deem pleasurable. While modern hedonists may seek pleasure in things like education, self-control, and great food, the core problem is still the same. Hedonists deny God’s commandments to avoid the lusts of the flesh, and they seek first their pleasure and their

delights instead of God's kingdom. The greatest reward of moderate or rational hedonism is a life of temporary pleasure that still ends with one being eternally lost and separated from God.

Don't Fall for the Distractions of Virtual Hedonism

Saints who would never turn to chemical drugs for a daily dose of pleasure can become consumed by their electronic devices. We must remember the foolishness of the prodigal son so that we do not seek our joy in empty pursuits. Whether trapped by digital images that fuel lust, greed, discontentment, political extremes, or materialism, the result is the same: a virtual hedonism that leads to spiritual slavery. Our joy isn't based on a never-ending stream of beautiful pictures or a high count of positive emoji's. We cannot allow digital content to become an idol.

Don't Fall for the Incomplete View of Christian Hedonism


In 1986, John Piper introduced the phrase, Christian hedonism, to describe a life focused on glorifying and enjoying God. While this is certainly admirable, Christian hedonism is an incomplete approach to living for God. As Christians, we do not follow God simply because we find Him more enjoyable than other options, or simply to give Him pleasure. We follow God because He is our Holy, Divine Father, and King. We are thankful to live in a manner that pleases Him, but we also know that God is concerned with factors beyond His own pleasure! He is concerned with the redemption of our souls even when it caused Him extreme pain on the cross! Christians live with a purpose far greater than even a modified form of hedonism can encompass.

There Is a Better Way

Hedonism is not now, and has never been, the escape or solution that

Satan promises. It does not take away feelings of anxiety, regret, or loneliness: it amplifies them. It does not protect us from enemies or critics: it gives them ammunition. This is especially true in the local church. James warns that Christians who become obsessed with their own pleasures only bring empty prayers, local division, and heated conflict to the church (Jas. 4:1-3). We cannot afford to embrace this philosophy individually or collectively.

Hedonism only offers a life built on the sand, when what we truly need is a life built on the Rock of Jesus Christ. In Christ, our greatest hunger is fulfilled: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matt. 5:6). In Christ, our purpose is not pleasing self, but loving others. "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves" (Phil. 2:3). In Christ, our success is not a life of indulgence, but of fruitfulness and gratitude. "...so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10).

As we meet people searching for joy in hedonism, let us offer them the light of the gospel to guide them into life in the Son. May the Lord help us all to see that man's true aim is to "fear God and keep His commandments" (Eccles. 12:13). 

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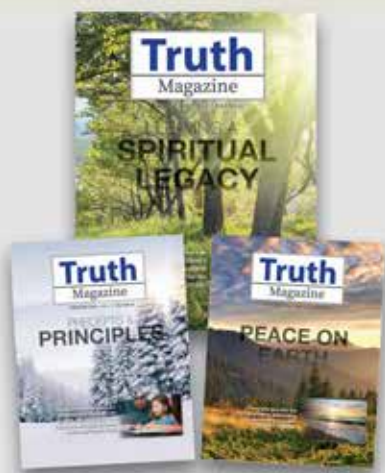
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Determinism

by Michael Wallace

Determinism is a denial of man's responsibility. Michael emphasizes the scriptural teaching that stresses individual accountability.

The term, "determinism," does not frequently come up in our conversations. Admittedly, my first response to the request to write of determinism was to do an internet search to confirm that I knew what it was. I was close.

The *Encyclopædia Britannica* defines determinism as the "theory that all events, including moral choices, are completely determined by previously existing causes. Determinism is usually understood to preclude free will because it entails that humans cannot act otherwise than they do."

Determinism holds that we are merely products of the past. So many factors at play, from physics to brain chemistry, that it is impossible to understand why things happen, let alone control these events. All events were set in motion, and we are merely experiencing what we cannot help but be.

One might wonder how this concept differs from the unscriptural philosophy of predestination. The two differ in that predestination requires an omniscient and omnipotent being to decide how things should be and then set the events in motion. Determinism replaces an Omnipotent God with inorganic matter and the grand forces of nature.

Current Concepts

Though it may not be a common conversation topic, the ideas behind determinism permeate today's society. Many are convinced that people can be grouped into sets of "privileged" and "non-privileged"

based on race and socioeconomics. In this broad definition, the privileged cannot suffer, and the unprivileged cannot help but suffer.

Modern sociologists often classify people based on the year of birth and then group us in large "generations" where we can be assigned characteristics based on the events of our youth. Thus, you get generalizations of a group of 83.5 million Americans (www.census.gov) that we call "millennials" and say of them that they are spoiled and entitled, but very tech-savvy. A cottage industry has even developed in corporate America to teach those of older generations how to cope with the newer generation that cannot help but "be themselves."

Perhaps the most striking example that comes to my mind was personal interaction with a Christian who was in prison, struggling with substance addiction and other destructive behaviors. When I asked what he thought about being in jail, he responded, "It was just my time." This brother had come to accept that his circumstances in life (absent parents, poor role models, poverty, exposure to drugs, etc.) had unavoidably led to this moment. In his mind, he was a victim, not of institutional oppression or a grand conspiracy, but just of the circumstances of his life. The danger of determinism, or its more commonly observed philosophical offspring, is that it slowly convinces us that we have no control over events in our life. This cannot be true.

Scriptural Teaching

This writer does suggest that there is no correlation to our environments and our current and future actions. Scripture confirms that we can be powerfully influenced by our environments both positively and negatively. Paul said the Jews had many privileges, chiefly, "that unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2). Elsewhere, the inspired apostle warns us to be careful of who we allow to influence our environment: "Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33). Even the destiny of our eternal soul is imperiled *when* we overemphasize physical possessions. As Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." (Matt. 19:24).

The Scriptures are also abundantly clear that we are expected to rise above our environments to make righteous decisions and live godly lives. Jesus admonished, "Judge not according to the appearance but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). Paul added, "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:12).

We gain insight from the Old Testament on God's view of any philosophies of men that encourage us to deny the responsibilities of our actions. Jeremiah and Ezekiel both deal with a common expression of their day: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Jer. 31:30; Ezek. 18:2).

This expression was representative of a philosophy that blamed previous generations and events for current troubles. In both Jeremiah and Ezekiel, God derides this way of thinking and looks forward to a time when men would no longer use such expressions but accept responsibility for their actions. God then affirms that “the soul who sins shall die” (Ezek. 18:4), but “If a man is righteous and does what is just and right... walks in my statutes, and keeps my rules by acting faithfully—he is righteous; he shall surely live” (Ezek. 18:5-9)

To illustrate the principle that we can rise above our environment to live righteously in this present age, consider the duty that Paul delegated to Titus, namely, to set in order the things that were lacking in Crete and appoint elders. This task is both necessary and yet further complicated because of the social influences of Crete. Paul affirms that a broad generalization of the people of Crete was true: “One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons. This witness is true” (Titus 1:12-13).

Yet, even in an environment where it was accurate to call Cretans liars and evil beasts, Titus is told to find men that were blameless, stewards of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre, a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate (Titus 1:7-8).

If we are merely a product of our environment, how did Paul expect Titus to find men of such character? The key is in verse nine: *holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught*. Paul knew the power of the word of God. He knew the gospel could change men and save men (Rom. 1:16) because it had done so for him (1 Tim. 1:11-14)!

God will not tolerate man blaming his actions on his circumstances. Consider 1 Corinthians 7:21, which says, “Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about

it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.)” It is difficult to think of greater socio-economic differences than the one between slave and master. Though Paul confirms that free is better, he offers no room for one to shirk his responsibility to God.

Christians recognize we are influenced by our environment, both negatively and positively. That is why we guard what exposure we give the sinner. As Paul said, “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?” (1 Cor. 6:14). This is one of the many reasons why it is important to find times and ways to assemble with the brethren. Accordingly, we should not neglect to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encourage one another, and all the more as we see the day drawing near (Heb. 10:25). We also realize that there are sometimes larger forces that we cannot change. We cannot change our parents or the generation in which we were born (full disclosure; I am very “privileged” with both). Yet, in all situations, in all events, the one action we can control is our own. This is what God demands of us (Phil. 2:14-16), and also promises that He will give us a certain privilege when difficult temptations come: “With the temptation, he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it” (1 Cor. 10:13). 📖

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Environmentalism

by Joe R. Price

Radical environmentalism is a denial of man's dominion. Joe weighs the balanced biblical approach we should take toward God's creation.

The gospel of Jesus Christ warns against our treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Christ being plundered by men and their deceptive philosophies (Col. 2:3, 8, 20-22). The philosophy of radical environmentalism distorts the biblical view of God, of the world, and man's delegated place of honor and rule over it.

The Bible announces, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). The created world proclaims God's glorious power: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Psa. 19:1, cf. vv. 2-4; Rom. 1:20). David acknowledged and praised God for His works and for placing mankind over His creation:

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen— Even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas. O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth! (Psa. 8:3-9)

Concerning our environment, God has given man the dual roles of dominion and stewardship. On the

sixth day of creation, God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth' ... Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth'" (Gen. 1:26, 28). All things have not been created equal. God gave human beings dominion over the world to subdue it for his provisions and livelihood.

The privilege of dominion comes with the responsibility of stewardship; the world does belong to its Creator, not its creatures (Psa. 50:10-12; Acts 14:15-17). Just as we are to be good stewards of our spiritual blessings, we should be good stewards of the material things entrusted to our care (Luke 16:8-12). God has given humanity rule over the world's resources so that we may survive and thrive. With stewardship comes accountability to Him to be faithful stewards of His goods (1 Cor. 4:2). Societies flourish when the earth's natural resources are used with care and conservation. Societies flounder when this dominion and stewardship are abused through selfishness, greed, indulgence, waste, and violence.

We generally think of environmentalism as the "advocacy

for, or work toward, protecting the natural environment from destruction or pollution" (AHD). We have briefly outlined the biblical agreement with this basic definition. We ought to protect our environment for its safe use and enjoyment because we have dominion over it and because we are stewards of its resources.

Radical Environmentalism

Nevertheless, radical environmentalism goes far beyond a statement of good stewardship of the earth's resources. Rooted in pagan theology and a rejection of God, modern environmentalism has formulated an alternate and opposing view of man and nature. It is an ethic based on the assumed rights of nature. As Jo Kwong explains, "Rather than supporting man's limitless rule of creation in which nature has no reason for existence save to serve man, we need to substitute the idea of the equality of all creatures" (Kwong). She continued, "In articles including 'Should Trees Have Standing—Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects?' and 'Do Rocks have Rights?' writers raised legal questions about the rights of nature. Philosophers argued that the 'shallow ecology' of mainstream conservation groups is too anthropocentric or homocentric, that is, centered on man, and is aimed only at improving the environment for the benefit of humans. 'Deep ecology,' on the other hand, leads to a view of 'biospheric

egalitarianism... the right [of all things] to live and blossom.” Summarizing modern environmentalism’s view of man and this world, she wrote, “The ‘rights of nature’ proponents, then, contend that all things are created equal; they should be venerated as ends in themselves, as intrinsically valuable apart from man; and they have equal rights to their own kinds of ‘self realization (sic),’ without human interference or exploitation. Failure to recognize such truths will lead to our downfall” (ibid.).

Devoid of a Creator who grants us privilege and responsibility over the earth, modern environmentalism envisions humans as equal to the rocks and the trees, the sky and the seas. To them, all living things have equal rights. The planet is doomed, they say, unless and until these equal rights are not only acknowledged but drive our decisions and actions toward the environment.

Unquestionably, radical environmentalism depreciates humanity and deifies nature. While the humanistic rejection of God has played a significant role in developing this philosophy of the equality of all living things, paganism’s part in the rise of radical environmentalism should not be neglected. “Pagan scholar Chas Clifton notes that the environmental awakening of 1970, the year of the first Earth Day, ‘was a year when Wicca (in the broad sense) became “nature religion,” as opposed to the “mystery religion” or “metaphorical fertility religion” labels that it had brought from England.’ Since then, modern Pagans of many stripes, particularly Wiccans and Druids, have placed a special emphasis on being religions that care for, and have concern about, our natural environment” (Pitzl-Waters). In effect, these pagan environmentalists tell us we should fall down and worship the earth instead of Him who

created the earth and everything in it (cf. Jer. 10:1-16; Acts 4:24).

Biblically Balanced Truth

Exploiting the land, the sea, and the sky and their inhabitants with greedy abandon, as if it were our God-given “right” to do so, is an extreme and unbiblical view of man’s dominion and stewardship of the earth. It is also extreme and false to view all living things as equal, with Mother Earth as the giver and sustainer of all life. Humans alone are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27). This distinction necessarily demands we use and tend to the earth responsibly, knowing we are accountable to Him who made us and it. Therefore, we must develop and maintain some fundamental traits to successfully subdue the earth as responsible stewards of God’s world.

Be Humble & Thankful

Pride leads to actions without a thought of God’s sovereignty. He is in charge of His world, not us. We are both recipients and stewards of God’s great earth. Thankful hearts are immunized against disregarding the earth’s gifts and disrespecting the Giver of such gifts. Humility and gratitude respect the earth God has given us.

Be Content, Not Covetous

Do not be deceived by the world’s greediness. To be satisfied with God’s daily bread will produce careful use of what God gives us. We must learn contentment, whether we have a little or a lot (Phil. 4:11-13). Contentment replaces waste with the respectful and careful use of the earth’s resources as we trust the Lord to be our helper rather than covetously disregarding His provisions (Heb. 13:5-6).

Refuse Selfishness & Care for Others

We are only on this planet a short while, and then all we have will be left to the care of others (Eccles. 2:18-19; 5:15). Respect for God and caring for

others was characteristic of Christ, who said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:34-35). The Lord’s earth gives us what we need to meet our necessities and to be able to help others. Environmental stewardship prompts us to work honestly and respectfully so that we can serve one another. Greedy consumption is selfish and thoughtless of the needs of others.

This is our Father’s world. God created nature; Nature is not our god. With respect for God and gratitude for the provisions of the earth’s environment, let us use it and maintain it responsibly. Humble dominion over God’s creation combines with reverent faith to praise His excellent name in all the earth (Psa. 8:9). 🙏

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Sectarianism

by David Halbrook

Sectarianism is a denial of the divine pattern for the church. Satan employed this tool in his rebellion against God, and it has continued to be used throughout history.

I once had little interest in history, but now, at age 42, the value of history is increasingly obvious. Every problem dealt with in this series on “isms” has thrived in the hearts and lives of people in the past, and if there is a record of it, we can benefit from what happened then. This is true with the problem of sectarianism.

Defining Sectarianism

The Greek word *hairesis* refers to “a choice,” and is also reflected in the English word, “heresy.” It was used of people choosing to leave a group, thus causing division. As the gospel spread, some people thought Christians were a new sect of the Jews (Acts 24:14). Discussing the works of the flesh, Paul used this term in describing those who cause division (Gal. 5:20, NKJV). In English, a “sect” may refer to any group that leaves another group due to differing beliefs.

In some ways, modern man-made religious groups that claim to follow Christ but reject His fundamental teachings on forgiveness and salvation could be called sects (though in reality, they were never in Christ). They repeat errors of the past and bring on themselves the same judgment and condemnation. Jesus prepared His people for this, saying “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword” (Matt. 10:34, NKJV).

Biblical Sectarianism

We begin to learn about sectarianism when we learn about

the sacrifice of Cain, the rebellion of Korah, and the teachings of Balaam (Jude 5-12). Cain didn’t compel Abel to worship like him but wanted Abel’s and God’s approval of his choice (Gen. 4:1-15; 1 John 3:10-12). Korah didn’t deny Moses and Aaron a place among the priesthood but sought a more inclusive approach to leadership (Num. 16:1-40). Balaam didn’t teach Israel to deny the existence of God—he just persuaded them to try a different way (Num. 25:1-5; 31:15-16). Jude mentioned these examples as he strengthened the saints to contend earnestly for the faith, note ungodly men, and reject such men. In this, Jude prepares us for the task of opposing sectarianism.

Modern Sectarianism

Imitates Cain

Assuming that Cain and Abel were bringing a sacrifice for sin (the primary type of sacrifice the Scriptures tell us of, especially before the law of Moses), Cain was guilty of bringing a bloodless sacrifice to God and was angry when his choice was rejected. We have no reason to believe that he criticized Abel for bringing a lamb, but Abel obviously expected his offering to be equally acceptable. This is also the spirit of modern sectarianism—it expects acceptance even when it’s faith contradicts the faith of those whose approval it seeks, failing to distinguish right and wrong.

As Christians, if we love our neighbor, then we are searching for opportunities to move conversations with them beyond mundane things

to spiritual things. Are you? What is your attitude and approach when topics of disagreement arise with them? Read John 3-4 and learn from Jesus’ approach to Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. Then, imitating Him, pay attention to the responses you see from others when disagreements arise. Modern sectarianism typically fails to show the kind of interest and openness of Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman.

In time past, even Protestant denominations would publicly debate basic matters of difference between themselves (Calvinism, infant baptism, sprinkling-pouring-immersion), but today sectarian groups often openly affirm that such differences are unimportant. For example, in the context of divorce, eternal salvation security, second baptism of the Holy Spirit, and worship, a “pastor” said:

“These debates may be important in my congregation, but they are not important to work together and preach the gospel to the city,” says Bongarrá. “We accept the differences as a richness. It would be very boring if all the churches were the same. Imagine if God made just one flower; that would be boring” (Weber).

It easy to imagine Cain saying something like this—“It would be very boring if all the sacrifices were the same...” This thinking minimizes the importance of uniformity in faith, believing almost all things offered to God on those subjects will be accepted. Herein, sin lies at the door and is uncontrollable without

the willingness to reexamine what they bring to God and what God has spoken. The willful acceptance of all this variety is sectarianism.

Imitates Korah

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were secretly upset with the limitations God placed upon Israel's leadership and priesthood, but their anger was visibly directed at Moses and Aaron. He accused them of taking "too much upon yourselves" because they limited what the Levites could do. On his side, Korah had two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, also called "men of renown." Had God not intervened, this would have resulted in a new Jewish sect (which came later in the leadership of King Jeroboam [1 Kings 12:28-33]).

The heart that is frustrated and angry with God's limitations will often do as Korah, unleashing that anger on God's people. They will claim the Lord is with them and that others are exalting themselves, while the exact opposite is true. Somehow, they find others who also are discontent, and they gather that group besides them in their efforts for sinful change. This group, bound together by the lie that the Lord is on their side, has joined the sect of Korah. In the distant past, this group revealed itself in a new plan for leadership that was widely accepted at least by AD 110. Please read Ignatius' letter to the Magnesians (see citation below) which distinguishes the pastor from the presbyters/elders and paved the way for the sinful organization of the Roman Catholic Church. In the present, this group reveals itself in the ongoing effort to diminish the different roles God has given to men and women among the church, promoting female pastors, evangelists, and deacons. Had many of these people been Israelites, they would have been among Korah's group, and if Korah were alive today, he would be among them. The result of sinful changes, whether in the distant past or present, is the ancient disease of sectarianism.

Imitates Balaam

If we look at the portion of Balaam's life recorded in Scripture, the true things he said outnumber the false things. He declared the glory of God in the presence of God's enemy Barak, a heathen king, but his overall influence was more aligned with Barak than Moses for he persuaded Israel to ignore what God said about sexual immorality.

Any idea that causes sinful division between God's people will eventually produce visible differences in their deeds, and those differences will increase over time. Paul warned, "Evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13, NKJV). By its nature, error cannot remain stagnant. False teachings in the first-century which denied the deity of Jesus were accompanied by various forms of sexual immorality (Jude 4). Ongoing digression like this continues. For example, The Church of England began when the civil king wanted a new spouse and was denied permission by Catholic leaders, leading him to declare his own spiritual authority. From this group comes this December 2018 announcement: "Church of England to offer baptism-style services to transgender people to celebrate their new identity for the first time." Read 2 Timothy 3:13 again and think about the connection between their origin and this recent news. Be aware that the American version of the Church of England is the Episcopal Church—expect them to imitate this in time. The seeds of sectarianism produce fruit according to its kind! If these people had been alive in Balaam's day, what would they have done at Baal Peor? If Balaam were alive today, what would he say about baptism-style services for transgender people?

Meanwhile, let us view these events as opportunities to talk to others about the gospel. Surely there are people whose eyes will be awakened by this or similar occasions of rebellion. For example, the day I began writing

this article I saw this headline: "A Presbyterian pastor was pushed out of his northern California parish this week after he erected a sign outside the church that stated, 'homosexuality is a sin' and transgender activist Caitlyn Jenner 'is still a man'" (Aviles). Is it possible your neighbors or coworkers see things like this among the religious group with which you worship? Is it possible you could send the light that brings men out of the darkness of Balaam-like sectarianism? Let's not merely identify the problems around us but bring the solution to those who have not heard!

Conclusion

The source of sectarianism is not new, nor is the solution. Satan started the original sect by his very first rebellion against God, and many followed him. God provides us with the solution to sectarianism through one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. In Him, there are no sects. In Him, there is peace. 🙏

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Political Isms

by Kurt G. Jones

Some political systems allow the faith of Christ to thrive, while others seek to silence the message of truth. Yet, as Kurt reminds us, the gospel can spread under any system, and the Lord's kingdom is eternal.

The political landscape in America, and the western world today is littered with ideologies to solve the various real or perceived problems within society. There are those who clamor to solve gender inequality, poverty, and provide "social justice." There is a call on some political fronts to have a completely free market with no tariffs or trade agreements with other nations. Some seek to close the pay gap by proposing government restrictions to the market by seeking to enact greater taxes upon corporations, and those that are the wealthiest. Each of these and other theories that are postulated to solve political and social problems encompasses one or more "Isms" that could affect those who seek to worship the Lord "in spirit and truth."

These political and economic ideas are nothing new and have existed in some form since God ordained governments of men (Rom. 13:1-7). Ideals such as communism, socialism, capitalism, and fascism, are all approaches to governing the daily lives and economic activities of people. In these political systems have both merits and failings. The Bible gives instruction to Christians, and understanding some of these political theories may broaden the Christian's ability to be faithful to the Lord regardless of the political or economic system that may govern him.

First, it must be noted that a person may come to faith in the gospel under any political or economic regime. James notes, "if any of you

lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (Jas. 1:5). Thus, while it may be easier under some political systems to become and remain a Christian. Those who seek to do the will of the Lord, and put their trust in him may do so under oppressive governments and free governments alike

As we notice these political ideas, we will consider the theory of capitalism. *Dictionary.com* defines capitalism as "an economic system in which investment in and ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange of wealth is made and maintained chiefly by private individuals or corporations, especially as contrasted to cooperatively or state-owned means of wealth." In most countries where the ability to preach the gospel is largely unfettered, there are varying levels of capitalism with limited government involvement in trade and the market. Historically, freedom of trade is tied to a greater political philosophy of personal liberty. Capitalist societies seem to be more inclined to personal and religious freedom. In these nations, generally, there is little or no restriction for children of God practicing the faith and spreading the gospel.

However, capitalism's chief complaint is that the basic motivation and economic driver is greed. The Apostle Paul noted "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the

faith in their greediness and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:10). Capitalism is also driven by the desire for "more" and for what someone else possesses. The Bible says much in the way of condemning covetousness even to the extent of calling it "idolatry." In writing to the Colossians, the inspired apostle wrote, "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5). Thus, it is incumbent upon the faithful Christian to continually examine himself, and not to be driven by covetous and greed.

Socialism is defined by *Dictionary.com* as, "a theory or system of social organization that advocates the vesting of the ownership and control of the means of production and distribution, of capital, land, etc., in the community as a whole." In the theory of socialism, the needs of the individual are met, by force of the collective. Socialism seeks to do away with the "greed" that drives capitalism, by compelling by threat or force, the collective to provide for the individual. Denominational scholar John Piper explained it like this, "Socialism borrows the compassionate aims of Christianity in meeting people's needs while rejecting the Christian expectation that this compassion not be coerced or forced" (*Desiring God*).

The appeal of socialism in "free" societies is that if the government were to take larger control of the means of production (through taxation, tariffs,

embargos, etc.), more could be spent to alleviate the needs of those who are “less fortunate.” This is often referred to as “social justice” in current political discourse. Children of God bear the responsibility to provide for the needs of those who are poor (Eph. 4:28; Jas. 1:27; etc.). Thus, the question is not, does a child of God bear a responsibility to provide for the needs of the poor, but rather, is it the job of the government, by threat of physical or political force to compel its citizens (including Christians) to provide for such needs? Biblically, Christians are given the free will and responsibility to obey the precepts of the gospel.

Also, as a general view of socialism in recent years, it is clear that as societies begin to embrace larger degrees of socialism they also begin to restrict personal freedoms such as the freedom of religion and speech. In many nations where there is a broadening of social programs and entitlements in order to bring about social justice, there are restrictions being placed upon religious speech such as teaching the biblical view of sexuality, and divorce and remarriage. While this may merely be a correlation, and not necessarily the cause of the greater secularization of society, it is certainly worth our consideration.

Communism, like socialism, seeks to take the means of production out of the hands of the individual and give it entirely into the hands of the collective. *Dictionary.com* gives three definitions of the idea. The first is the definition of theory itself “a theory or system of social organization based on the holding of all property in common, actual ownership being ascribed to the community as a whole or to the state.” In this idea, society is classless. There is no hierarchy but rather the collective has equal part to all property. In theory, this idea seems brilliant, yet only works this way if everyone is equally moral and has the same goals.

When discussing communism and its relation to the Bible, it is not uncommon for someone to reference Acts 2, noting that the church “had all things in common...” (v. 44) and thus this is offered as proof that the first church, and by extension the Lord, had endorsed communism. Yet the truth of this is the same for that of socialism. These Christians freely gave of what they had for the common good of their brethren. They were not compelled by threat or force to give. In Acts 5, we read of Ananias and Sapphira who sold a possession and lied about the proceeds. In the context the Holy Spirit said, “While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold was it not in your own control...” (v. 4). This passage, in its context, shows that each person had their own free will into providing for this common treasury.

However, communism, as seen in the last several years, is seen more clearly in the second definition provided: “A system of social organization in which all economic and social activity is controlled by a totalitarian state dominated by a single and self-perpetuating political party.” This is seen in Communist China, Cuba, and the now defunct Soviet Union. It appears in these examples that the ideals of an equal collective turned into a power grab by the party with the most strength, who then in turn maintains that power through force. Traditionally, these governments have been openly hostile to the Bible, and the concept of Christianity, often punishing, imprisoning, or even killing those who profess faith in Christ.

Fascism, on its very face, would be hostile to the faith of the Bible. It is defined as, “a governmental system led by a dictator having complete power, forcibly suppressing opposition and criticism, regimenting all industry, commerce, etc., and emphasizing an aggressive nationalism and often racism” (*Dictionary.com*). The most common examples of fascism

would be in the first half of the 20th century with the rise of Adolf Hitler in Nazi Germany. This regime was characterized by a complete rejection of any semblance of Christianity, and the depths of brutality that are largely unparalleled in modern society.

As earlier noted, while some of these forms of government offer more flexibility and liberty for the faith of Christ, one who truly seeks to serve the Lord can come to faith under any form of governmental system. Daniel remained faithful to the Lord in captivity to a government that did not respect the law of God. There were Christians in Caesar’s household (Phil. 4:22). Some Christians, like Onesimus, were slaves. These governments are simply mechanisms to govern people, some with far better intents than others, yet they each are temporary.

However, biblical Christianity is distinct from any of these systems. It is a wholly spiritual kingdom wherein citizens willing submit themselves to Christ as savior and King, become his subjects and obey his will. In submitting to his will and become a Christian, “[The Lord] has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.” This kingdom is eternal and will never pass away. 📖

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may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!” (Psa. 2:12).

Nature is the Measure of All Things

All Authority Belongs to Nature

Having accepted the tenets of radical environmentalism, many today have made a god of nature, either literally or symbolically. The same error occurred in antiquity. The Babylonians worshiped gods of heaven, air, and earth. In like manner, the Egyptians worshiped a variety of gods that combined the characteristics of man and beasts. The Lord God demonstrated His supremacy over the gods of Egypt by delivering the Israelites from Egyptian captivity: “Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the Lord” (Exod. 12:12; Num. 33:3-4). Today, many neo-pagans worship Gaia, the primordial Greek goddess who is the personification of the earth. According to Wikipedia, “Beliefs regarding Gaia vary, ranging from the belief that Gaia is the Earth to the belief that she is the spiritual embodiment of the earth, or the Goddess of the Earth.”

Hierarchy: Nature, Man, God

According to this worldview, the needs of nature outweigh those of men, and the will of God is discounted entirely. What saith the Scripture? God created the natural realm (Isa. 45:18), and the whole creation praises Him (Psa. 148:7-12). God provides for the animals, giving them their food in due season (Psa. 104:14, 24-28; 147:7-9). God cares about their well-being. Gently rebuking Jonah for his callous disregard for life, He said, “Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?” (Jonah 4:9-11, esp. v. 11). Even though

animal sacrifices were required of Israel, not because they satisfied God’s need, as if He were hungry; rather, they helped man understand the consequences of sin, and the importance of willing service (Psa. 50:7-15). God’s concern for animals is communicated through many deeper, spiritual messages. King David was restored to grace through Nathan’s touching story of a little ewe lamb (2 Sam. 12:1-6). Jesus’ parable of the lost sheep is predicated upon a shepherd’s compassionate care (Luke 15:3-7).

Since man is made in God’s image, he is of greater value than the lower creation (Matt. 6:25-26; 10:28-31; 12:9-14; 1 Cor. 9:9-10). Furthermore, God has placed him in a position of dominance over all the earth (Psa. 8:4-9). With rule comes responsibility. The Lord God ordered Adam to cultivate and keep the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15). Stewardship calls for sensible and sacrificial service (Matt. 24:45-46; Luke 12:42-43).

The worship of nature is an expression of pagan idolatry. Throughout the pages of the Bible, the worship of graven images is strictly prohibited (Exod. 20:2-6). The first chapter of Romans condemns both ancient and modern paganism, which dethrones the Lord God, exalts the creature over the Creator (Rom. 1:18-23), but ultimately debases everything (Rom. 1:26-32).

Conclusion

What is your worldview? Do you consider God, man or nature to be the measure of all things? Modern man imagines himself enlightened and free from the shackles of religion. In reality, he stumbles in darkness and is enslaved by sin. Our materialistic and secular age is much like ancient Athens—educated in human philosophies, but ignorant of the One True God, pretentious as

Greek philosophers, but moral and spiritual paupers. We need the same saving message that the apostle Paul spoke from the Areopagus (Acts 17:22-31). May God help us hear and heed heaven’s message. **T**

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FLORENCE

College View church of Christ
851 N. Pine St. (Next to University Campus)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:15 A.M.,
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Kenny Moorer (256) 766-0403

MOBILE

West Mobile church of Christ
129 Hillcrest Road
Worship 9-9:30 A.M., Bible Study 9:30-10:30 A.M.
Worship 10:30-11:30 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(251) 342-4144 or 342-2041
Ken Sils - Minister (765) 307-8048

MONTGOMERY

Ashburton Drive church of Christ
(formerly Southeast)
70 Ashburton Drive
Sunday Bible Study 9 A.M.,
Sunday Worship 10 A.M. & 5 P.M.
Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 P.M.
Contacts: Kirk Moore (334) 546-3788
John Humphries (334) 306-4172

MONTGOMERY

Eastbrook church of Christ
650 Coliseum Blvd.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Wednesday 6 P.M.
Contacts: Brian Moore: (334) 279-1077
Charles Martin: (334) 283-2983

PARRISH

McArthur Heights
church of Christ, 5082 Hwy. 269
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 6:30 P.M.
(205) 686-5978 or 686-5620

SCOTTSBORO

Eastside church of Christ
John T. Reid Pkwy., (Hwy. 72, 2 mi. E. of Hwy. 35)
Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 9:30 A.M.
Worship 10:30 P.M., Wednesday Summer 7 P.M.
Wednesday Winter 6 P.M.
Evangelist: Aaron Andrews
(256) 574-1603 or 575-2664

ARKANSAS

CONWAY

Hwy. 65 church of Christ
271 Highway 65N
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Bruce Reeves, Bldg: (501) 336-0052

CONWAY

Eastside church of Christ
1540 E. Oak Street 72302
Sunday Bible Classes 9:30 A.M.
Sunday Worship 10:30 A.M.
Sunday Worship 6 P.M.,
Wednesday Bible Classes 7 P.M.
www.conwaychurchofchrist.org

CONWAY

Prince Street church of Christ
2655 Prince St., (Hwy. 60)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(501) 339-6917

FORT SMITH

South 46th St. church of Christ
2323 South 46th Street
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: John Hagenbuch
Bldg: (479) 782-0588

HARRISON

Capps Rd. Church of Christ
407 Bella Vista Dr.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:15 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Norman E. Sewell
www.cappsroad.org
870-741-9104 or 870-741-5151

JONESBORO

StoneRidge church of Christ
514 Airport Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Dick Blackford (870) 933-9134
rlb612@aol.com

LITTLE ROCK

church of Christ
7115 West 65th Street
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Don McClain, Res. (501) 847-6677
Study (501) 568-1062

MARVELL

Marvell church of Christ
Highway 49 • Marvell, AR 72366
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 6 P.M.
(870) 714-1452 or (870) 338-1833

PINE BLUFF

Highway 79 South church of Christ
4341 S Camden Road
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Clarence W. Sell (870) 879-2097

POCAHONTAS

Westside church of Christ
3644 Hwy 90 West • P.O. Box 43
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:45 A.M.
Afternoon 1 P.M., Wednesday 6:30 P.M.

TEXARKANA

church of Christ
2301 Franklin Drive
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:15 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Bryan Garlock

ARIZONA

GLENDALE

church of Christ
6801 N. 60th Avenue
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:40 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Chance Ruffino

TUCSON

church of Christ
145 N. Country Club Road
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Hugh Delong
(520) 326-3634 or 722-3179

CALIFORNIA

BELLFLOWER

Rose Ave. church of Christ
17903 Ibbetson Ave.
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:50 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(562) 866-5615, <http://www.roseavenue.org>

FOLSOM

church of Christ
900 E. Natomas St. • P.O. Box 492
Sunday Bible Study 9:30 A.M.,
Sunday Worship 10:30 A.M.,
Sunday Bible Study 5 P.M.,
Wednesday Bible Study 7 P.M.
Evangelist: David Posey
(530) 676-9514 or (916) 608-4866
www.folsomchurch.com

LONG BEACH

church of Christ
3433 Studebaker Road
Bible Study 9:50 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
JP Flores (562) 420-2363
Mark Reeves (562) 377-1674
www.JustChristians.org

OCEANSIDE-VISTA

church of Christ
2020 Sunset Dr.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(760) 940-8003

COLORADO

FORT COLLINS

Poudre Valley church of Christ
126 West Harvard St., Suite 6
Bible Study 9:30 A.M.
Worship 10:30 A.M. and 1:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Richie Thetford
www.poudrevalleychurchofchrist.org

GRAND JUNCTION

Western Slope church of Christ
2923 North Ave., Unit 3
Grand Junction, CO 81504
Bible Study 9:30 A.M. Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M.
www.churchofchristwesternslope.org

MONTROSE

San Juan church of Christ
1414 Hawk Parkway, Unit C
Worship 11 A.M., Bible Study 2 P.M.
Evening 1:30 P.M., (970) 249-8116
sanjuanchurchofchrist.org

DELAWARE

MILTON

Lighthouse church of Christ
14574 Coastal Hwy. Rt. 1
Worship 9:30 A.M., Sunday School 10:45 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M., (302) 644-7379

FLORIDA

DESTIN

South Walton church of Christ
64 Casting Lake Road
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(850) 622-3817
www.southwaltonchurchofchrist.com

FORT LAUDERDALE

Northside church of Christ
912 NW 19th St.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(954) 763-1404

FORT MYERS

Southside church of Christ
13641 Learning Court
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: David P. Schmidt
(239) 433-2838 or 482-2158

FROSTPROOF

Frostproof church of Christ
40 W. "A" St., Frostproof, FL 33483
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M., (863) 635-2607 or 635-4278

GENEVA

church of Christ
Ave. C and 2nd St.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
(407) 349-9998

KEY LARGO

Key Largo church of Christ
100695 N. Overseas Hwy.
33037 m.m. 100.7 on US 1
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: William LeDent (305) 451-1194

MARY ESTHER

church of Christ
6 Lane Drive
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Joey Rankin (850) 244-9222

MIAMI

church of Christ
Eglise du Christ de Miami
8343 NE 3rd Court
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
Minister: Junot Joseph (305) 244-8295

MIAMI

Flagler Grove church of Christ
(Nearest to Airport), 500 N.W. 53rd Ave.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: John Buttrick (305) 634-5924

MIAMI

church of Christ
12780 Quail Roost Dr.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Clark Pace
(305) 233-9590 or (954) 430-1437

OCALA

Anthony church of Christ
9778 N.E. Jacksonville Rd., Anthony, FL 32617
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Wednesday 6:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Greg Cruz (352) 629-5505
www.anthonycoc.com

ORLANDO

Azalea Park church of Christ
6800 Lake Underhill Rd.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(407) 277-7931

ORLANDO

church of Christ at S. Bumpy
3940 S. Bumpy Ave.
Sunday Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.
Worship w/ communion 10:55 A.M. (No Evening Service), Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Ken Chapman and Greg Kline
Office: (407) 851-8031

ORLANDO

Pine Hills Church of Christ
890 Hastings Street
Sun. Bible Study 10 A.M., Sun. Worship: 11 A.M.
Sun. Evening Worship: 6 P.M.
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30 P.M.
(407) 293-2851 or (407) 290-8650

PALMETTO

Palmetto church of Christ
1575 14th Avenue W.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
www.palmettochurchofchrist.com
(941) 722-1307

PANAMA CITY BEACH

Beach church of Christ
8910 Front Beach Rd.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(850) 234-2521

SEFFNER

church of Christ
621 E. Wheeler Rd.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:50 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Bobby Witherington (813) 684-1297
www.seffnercoc.org

GEORGIA

CENTERVILLE

Centerville church of Christ
250 Collins Ave. (Near Robins AFB)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: J. Wiley Adams (478) 922-1158

COLUMBUS

River City Church of Christ
3900 River Road, Columbus GA 31904
Bible Class 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelists Jeff McCrary & Bo Couchman
(205) 451-9028, rivercitychurchofchrist.com
backtothebible@rivercitychurchofchrist.com

CONYERS

Rockdale church of Christ
East Metro Atlanta, 705 Smyrna Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Building (770) 929-3973

PINE MTN. VALLEY

church of Christ
Route 116 (near Callaway Gardens)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Tommy W. Thomas
(706) 628-5117 or 628-5229
www.pmvchurch.com

SAVANNAH

Coastal church of Christ
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
(912) 344-1687
coastalchurchofchrist@outlook.com

VALDOSTA

church Of Christ
4313 North Valdosta Rd.
(Located 1 mile E. of Exit 22 off I-75)
Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.
Communion 11 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(229) 244-8630, www.northvaldostacoc.com

IDAHO

BLACKFOOT

church of Christ
370 N. Shilling • P.O. Box 158-83221
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(208) 785-6168 or 681-1552

IOWA

DES MOINES

church of Christ
1310 N.E. 54th Ave.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:40 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M., (515) 262-6799

GRINNELL

church of Christ
1402 Third Ave.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
(641) 521-6485, (641) 236-3883
www.grinnellcoc.com

ILLINOIS

CHICAGO

church of Christ
1514 West 74th Street
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: James E. Scott
Bldg. (773) 224-9279, (708) 339-6126

DOWNERS GROVE

church of Christ
1236 63rd St., (1 and 1/2 mile E. of I355)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:55 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(630) 968-0760 • www.dgccc.org

GLEN ELLYN

Glen Ellyn Church of Christ
796 Prairie Ave.
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
Sunday Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Sunday Evening 5 P.M.
Evangelist: Keith E. Brown
(630) 858-2290, (630) 377-3990

MATTOON

Southside church of Christ
1100 S. 17th Street
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(217) 234-3702

SOUTH HOLLAND

Southeast church of Christ
16224 S Vincennes Ave.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 4 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Donald Hawkins, (708) 339-1008
www.southeastchurchofchrist.com

INDIANA

CLARKSVILLE

Clarksville church of Christ
407 W. Lewis & Clark Parkway, 47129
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Brian Anderson (812) 944-2305
or (812) 948-9917
www.clarksvillechurchofchrist.org

GREENWOOD

Greenwood church of Christ
371 W. Main Street
Sun. Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 4:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelists: Neil Tremblett
(317) 888-8288
www.churchofchristatgreenwood.org

HOBART

church of Christ
300 N. Liberty Street
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jerry Cleek (219) 942-2663

INDIANAPOLIS

Castleton church of Christ
7701 East 86th Street, 46256
Sun. Worship 11 A.M., Sun. Bible Study 10 A.M.
Wed. Worship 11:15 A.M., Wed. Bible Study 7 P.M.
(317) 710-1204

JAMESTOWN

church of Christ
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:25 A.M.
Evening 4 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: David McPherson
(765) 676-6404 or (270) 994-4397
www.jamestowncoc.com

OOBITIC

church of Christ
400 Lafayette Ave. • P.O. Box 34
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M. Wednesday 7 P.M.
(812) 279-4332

PEKIN

church of Christ
(First St. & Karnes Ct.)
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jeremy Goen
(812) 967-3437 or 967-3520
www.pekinchurchofchrist.com

PLAINFIELD

church of Christ West
2028 Stafford Rd., Ste. C., (Marsh Shopping Cntr.)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Johnie Edwards
(317) 964-9404 or (317) 839-1769
www.churchofchristwest.org

SAINT LEON, IN

Church of Christ
7140 Hyland Rd., Guildford, IN 47022
174 exit 164 1 mile south on SR 1
Bible study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6:00 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
812-637-1252 or 513-367-7871

SALEM

Westside church of Christ
2000 West State Rd. 56
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(812) 883-2033, www.westsidechurchofchrist.net

TRAFALGAR

Spearsville Rd. church of Christ, 6244 S. 500W.
(1.2 mi. S. of Hwy. 135)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Charles Wright
(317) 878-5969 or (317) 300-8790
www.trafalgarchurch.com

KANSAS

TOPEKA

17th Street church of Christ
5600 SW 17th St.
Bible Study 9:15 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
(785) 235-8687 or 273-7977
www.17thstreetchurchofchrist.org

KENTUCKY

AUSTIN

Peter's Creek church of Christ
856 Thomerson Park Rd.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M.
Evangelist: David Cox (270) 579-8074 or
(270) 646-0498, www.peterscreekcoc.com

BEAVER DAM

church of Christ
1235 Williams St.
Worship 10 A.M., Bible Study After Worship
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jerid Gunter
(270) 274-4451

BRANDENBURG

Brandenburg church of Christ
612 Broadway
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 6:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Charles J. White (270) 422-3878

CAMPBELLSVILLE

Sunny Hill Dr. church of Christ
A.M. Worship 9:30 A.M., A.M. Bible Study 10:30 A.M.
A.M. Worship 11:30 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Steve Lee (270) 789-1651
stevelee4510@windstream.net
www.sunnyhillcoc.com

CANEYVILLE

Caneyville church of Christ
103 N. Main St. • P.O. Box 233
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jarrod Jacobs (270) 589-4167 or
(270) 274-3065

DANVILLE

church of Christ
385 E. Lexington Ave.
Worship 10 A.M., Bible Study 11:15 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Scott Vifquain (859) 236-4204

FRANKLIN

31-W North church of Christ
1733 Bowling Green Road
Bible Study 9 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Steve Monts, (270) 586-3978
www.31wchurchofchrist.com

HODGENVILLE

Hodgenville church of Christ
613 S Lincoln Blvd.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Don Brady (270) 358-6053
Dbrady1295@aol.com

LEITCHFIELD

Mill St. church of Christ
733 Mill Street, Highway 62 E.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:55 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Michael Hardin
(270) 259-4968 or (270) 300-3239
www.millstreetchurchofchrist.org

LOUISVILLE

Valley Station church of Christ
1803 Dixie Garden Drive
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Dudley Ross Spears (502) 937-2822

LOUISIANA

GONZALES

Southside church of Christ
405 Orice Roth Road, 70737, (Baton Rouge area)
Bible Class 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: R.J. Evans (225) 622-4587
rjevans@eatel.net

MANY

Lakeside church of Christ
12095 Texas Hwy. (Hwy. 6 W.)
12 miles west of Many
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(318) 256-9396

STONEWALL

N. DeSoto church of Christ
2071 Highway 171 (South of Shreveport)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(318) 925-2733

MARYLAND

SEVERN

Southwest church of Christ
805 Meadow Rd.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Brandon Trout
(410) 969-1420 or (410) 551-6549
www.swcofchrist.com

MAINE

PORTLAND

church of Christ • 856 Brighton Ave.
Leave Maine Turnpike at Exit 48
(Breakwater School)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Second service immediately following morning
worship. Mid-week Bible Study. Please call for
times & places. (207) 839-3075 or 839-8409

MICHIGAN

CEDAR SPRINGS

W. Michigan church of Christ
Sr. Citizen Center, 44 Park Street
(Grand Rapids Area)
Worship 11 A.M., Bible Study 12:30 P.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Joseph Gladwell, (616) 975-2778
westmichcof10@yahoo.com

MINNESOTA

DULUTH

church of Christ
4401 Glenwood St.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Bible Study 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Taylor Ladd (218) 728-3233

ST. CHARLES

church of Christ
939 Whitewater Avenue
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Bible Study 2:15 P.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M., call for location
FREE Bible correspondence studies
Evangelist: Robert Lehnertz (507) 534-2905

MISSISSIPPI

BOONEVILLE

Oakleigh Dr. church of Christ
101 Oakleigh Dr.
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 4 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Building: (662) 728-1942

CLINTON

McRaven Rd. church of Christ
301 McRaven Rd. (I20, exit 36)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Leonard White
(601) 925-9757 or 924-2645

MERIDIAN

Grandview church of Christ
2820 Grandview Ave.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Wednesday 6:30 P.M.
Ron Cooper: (601) 934-3675
roncooper@bellsouth.net
Ricky Ethridge: (601) 737-5778
ricky-marsha@bellsouth.net

MERIDIAN

7th Street church of Christ
2914 7th Street
Sunday Mornings:
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.

SOUTHAVEN

church of Christ
2110 E State Line Rd. (Exit I-55), (Memphis area)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: James A. Brown
(662) 342-1132 - church Building

MISSOURI

BLUE SPRINGS

Southside church of Christ
4000 SW Christiansen
Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.
Worship 11 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Brett Hogland (816) 228-9262

BRANSON

Eagle Rock Road church of Christ
432 Eagle Rock Road
Sun. Worship 9:30 A.M., Bible Study 10:30 A.M.
Sun. Evening Worship 2 P.M., Wednesday 6 P.M.
Minister: Philip North (417) 239-1036
Email: primrosenor@suddenink.net
www.eaglerockroadchurchofchrist.org

CAPE GIRARDEAU

North Cape church of Christ
121 S. Broadview St. Suite 2,
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703
Sunday Bible Study 9:15 A.M. & 10 A.M.,
Worship 11 A.M., No Evening Service
Wednesday 6 P.M./CST, 7 P.M./DST
Evangelist: Jerry Lee Westbrook (573) 334-9673

DONIPHAN

Southside church of Christ
Hwy. 142 E. ½ mile (P.O. Box 220)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(573) 996-3251 or 996-3513

FAIR GROVE

church of Christ
217 N. Orchard Blvd.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.
Worship 11 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Walter Myers (417) 830-8972 or
(417) 736-2663

KENNETT

church of Christ
703 Harrison St.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(573) 888-6778 or (870) 650-1648
Preacher: Nolan Glover
www.westsidchurchofchrist.us

LILBOURN

church of Christ
211 Benton Street
First Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.,
Second Worship 10:45 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Ben Lawrence, (501) 470-5390

RAYTOWN

Sterling Ave. church of Christ
5825 Sterling Ave. (Near Sports Complex)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Justin Berss
(816) 356-3096 or (270) 320-6157
www.sterlingavechurchofchrist.org

ST. JAMES

church of Christ
685 Sidney St.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:15 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Lynn Huggins (573) 265-8628

ST. JOSEPH

County Line church of Christ
2727 County Line Rd.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
(816) 279-4737
www.countylinechurchofchrist.com

NEBRASKA

BEATRICE

church of Christ • 7th and Bell
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., 233-4102 or 228-3827
www.churchofchrist7bell.com

NEW JERSEY

VAUXHALL

church of Christ
Milbourn Mall Suite 6., 2933 Vauxhall Rd.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Contact: Harry Persaud
phone: (908) 964-6356 • cell: (908) 964-8570

NEW MEXICO

ALBUQUERQUE

Heights church of Christ
7801 Zuni Road, S.E.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evanagelist: Darrel Yontz (505) 266-7577
www.heightschurchofchrist.com

NEVADA

RENO

Central church of Christ
2450 Wrondel Way, Stuite A
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(775) 786-2888

NORTH CAROLINA

CHARLOTTE

Charlotte church of Christ
5327 S. Tryon Street
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Sun. Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(704) 525-5655
www.charlottechurchofchrist.org

OHIO

BEAVERCREEK

Knollwood church of Christ
1031 Welford Drive
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.
and 3 P.M., Wednesday Bible Study 1 P.M.
For Adults and 7 P.M.all ages.
Evangelist: Heath Rogers
(937) 426-1422
www.knollwoodchurch.org

CINCINNATI

Blue Ash church of Christ
4667 Cooper Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Russell Dunaway, Jr. (513) 891-3174
www.blueashchurchofchrist.com

CLEVELAND

Lorain Ave. church of Christ
13501 Lorain Ave.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(330) 723-0111 or (330) 590-0227
or (216) 322-9392
www.lorainave-churchofchrist.com

COLUMBUS

Laurel Canyon church of Christ
409 McNaughton Road
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(614) 868-1375, www.lccoc.net

DAYTON

West Carrollton
28 W. Main Street, 45449
Early Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 9:30 A.M.
Worship 10:25 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Michael Grushon (937) 866-5162
or 848-3779, www.wc-cc.org

FRANKLIN

Franklin church of Christ
6417 Franklin-Lebanon Rd. 45005
Sun. Bible Study 10 A.M.
Sun Worship 10:45 A.M.
Tues. Bible Study 6:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Josh Lee (937) 789-8055
or (937) 746-1249, www.franklin-church.org

FREMONT

church of Christ
3361 W. State Street, 1 mi. W. of Fremont
on U.S. Rt. 20
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(419) 849-3340 or 849-2980
www.fremontchurchofchrist.com

HAMILTON

Westview church of Christ
1040 Azel Ave.
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:45 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Eugene Ford (513) 856-9288

HILLIARD

church of Christ
4840 Cemetery Rd.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(614) 876-4089

MANSFIELD

Southside church of Christ
687 Mansfield-Lucas Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 5 P.M.
James Bond: (419) 526-2868
Leon Bond: (419) 525-3684
church: (419) 522-8982

NEW LEBANON

New Lebanon church of Christ
1973 W Main Street
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.,
Evening 5 P.M., Wed. Bible Study 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Bruce Hastings (937) 687-7150
or (937) 478-0367

MARIETTA-RENO

Marietta-Reno church of Christ
80 Sandhill Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Daniel Ruegg: (740) 222-9160 or
Steve Foutty: (740) 473-9028

NORTHWOOD

Frey Road church of Christ
4110 Frey Rd. (Toledo Area)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Donald Jarabek
(419) 893-3566, (567) 694-5062

UHRICHSVILLE

church of Christ
638 Parrish Street
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., Mid-week 6:30 P.M.

OKLAHOMA

MCALESTER

North A St. church of Christ
2120 No. A Street
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Rob Lungstrum, Cell: (918) 931-1362
Office: (918) 423-3445

OKLAHOMA CITY

Seminole Pointe church of Christ
16300 N. May Avenue
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: John M. Duvall (405) 340-3189
or (405) 513-6691, www.seminolepointechurch.org

OREGON

SWEET HOME

Church of Christ
3702 E. Long Street, Sweet Home, OR
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 7 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Building: (541) 367-1599

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA

church of Christ
7222 Germantown Ave., 19119
Bible Study 10:15 A.M., Worship 11:15 A.M.
Tuesday night 7 P.M.
Evangelist: James H. Baker, Jr. (215) 248-2026
www.mtairychurchofchrist.org

SOUTH CAROLINA

COLUMBIA

Lower Richland church of Christ
3000 Trotter Rd. (Hopkins, SC)
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(803) 730-0452, <http://lowerrichlandchurch.org>

SUMTER

Woodland church of Christ
3370 Broad St. Extension
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: A.A. Granke, Jr. (803) 499-6023

WEST COLUMBIA

Airport church of Christ
4013 Edmund Hwy. (Hwy. 302)
**OUR WEB SITE DISPLAYS OUR
CURRENT ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE.**
Evangelist: Terry W. Benton, Bldg. (803) 834-6978
<http://airport-church-of-christ.com>

TENNESSEE

COLUMBIA

Mooresville Pike church of Christ
417 Mooresville Pike
(.8 mi. N. of Hwy. 50/Jas. Campbell)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 3:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(931) 388-5828 or (931) 381-7898
www.moorevillepikecoc.com

COSBY

Cosby church of Christ
4894 Hooper Hwy., 37722
(15 mi. E. of Gatlinburg on Hwy. 321)
Bible Study 10A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday Bible Study 6:00 P.M.
Evangelist: Olie Williamson
(423) 487-5540 or (423) 748-0844

JACKSON

Sunset View church of Christ
3618 Hwy 70 East
(Exit 87 off I-40, 7mi. @ Spring Creek)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Steve Wilkerson (731) 967-0590
or 968-9851

JOHNSON CITY

Brookmead church of Christ
2428 Lakeview Drive
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Kevin Kay (423) 282-6251 or 426-1836

JONESBOROUGH

11-E church of Christ
240 Headtown Road
Bible Study 10:30 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Evangelist: David Wheeler
(423) 557-9119 or (423) 948-6464
www.christianadmonisher.jigsy.com

KINGSTON SPRINGS

Kingston Springs church of Christ
350 North Main Street
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Steve Walker, www.kscoc.com

MT. PLEASANT

Locust St. Church of Christ
108 Locust Street • Mt. Pleasant, TN 38474
931-379-3704 or 931-964-3924
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Daniel H. King, Sr.
www.lscoc.com

KINGSFORT

Kingsport church of Christ
4938 Fort Henry Dr. • P.O. Box 554
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5:00 P.M., Wednesday 7:00 P.M.
Evangelist: Tom Kinzel, Bldg.# (423) 239-3979
or (423) 579-2002 • www.kptcoc.org

MARYVILLE

Smokey Mt. church of Christ
2206 Montvale Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Harold Tabor (865) 977-4230
Lon Spurgeon (865) 388-8749
<http://tinyurl.com/smchurch>

MEMPHIS

Rocky Pt. Road church of Christ
516 E. Rocky Point Rd., Cordova
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
rockypointchurch@gmail.com
www.rockypointchurch.org

MURFREESBORO

Cason Lane church of Christ
1110 Cason Lane
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(615) 896-0090 (Building)
www.casonlanechurch.org

MURFREESBORO

Northfield Blvd. church of Christ
2091 Pitts Ln. at Northfield Blvd.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: David Bunting (615) 893-1200

NASHVILLE

Hillview church of Christ
7471 Charlotte Pike
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(615) 952-5458 or (615) 356-7318
Evangelist: Lee Wildman

NASHVILLE

Perry Heights church of Christ
423 Donelson Pike
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:55 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Johnny Felker (615) 883-3118
<http://perryheights.faiithweb.com>

PIGEON FORGE

King Branch Road church of Christ
560 King Branch Road
Worship 10 A.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Facilities available for Sunday evening services
upon request.
Evangelist: Roger Williams (865) 430-5980
www.KingBranchRoadchurchOfChrist.org

SHELBYVILLE

El Bethel church of Christ
1801 Hwy. 41-A North
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Donnie V. Rader (931) 607-9099
dvrader@live.com

SHELBYVILLE

Shelbyville Mills church of Christ
1222 W. Jackson St.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jeff Curtis (931) 607-9118
djcurtis1963@hotmail.com

TEXAS

ALLEN

West Allen church of Christ
1414 W. Exchange Blvd. (2 miles west of Hwy. 75)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Jerry King (214) 504-0443
Building phone (972) 727-5355

ALVARADO

I-35 church of Christ
E. Service Rd. off I-35, N. of Alvarado
Bible Study 10:00 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6:00 P.M., Wednesday 7:00 P.M.
(817) 295-7277 or 790-7253

ALVIN

Adoue St. church of Christ
605 E. Adoue St
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Mark Mayberry (346) 216-1707
www.ascoc.org & www.markmayberry.net

AUSTIN

Schultz Lane church of Christ
Faber Rd. & Schultz Ln., Pflugerville, TX 78660
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 2 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Ron Lehde

BAYTOWN

church of Christ at Pruett & Lobit
701 North Pruett Street
Bible Study 9:45 A.M., Worship 10:40 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jesse Flowers (281) 515-8939
Building: (281) 422-5926, Weldon: (713) 818-1321

BEAUMONT

Dowlen Rd. church of Christ
3060 Dowlen Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelists: Max Dawson & Benjamin Lee
(409) 866-1996

CONROE

Woodland Hills church of Christ
410 Woodland Hills Dr., 77303
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
phone: (936) 756-9322
www.conroechurch.com

CLEVELAND

church of Christ
310 E. Houston Street
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Robert Davis (281) 592-5676
www.clevelandchurchofchrist.org

CORPUS CHRISTI

Hwy. 9 church of Christ
Worship 10 A.M., Bible Study 11 A.M.
Worship 12 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Call for location: Keith Kalies (361) 776-2304
or Patrick Frazier (361) 235-1990

DICKINSON

church of Christ
2919 FM 517 Road E.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:50 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 9:45 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M., (281) 534-4870
www.dickinsonchurchofchrist.org

DALLAS

Methodist Street church of Christ
211 Methodist St. • Red Oak TX, 75154
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: D. LeRoy Klice
(972) 576-3119 or 363-7672
www.methodiststreetchurchofchrist.com

DUNCANVILLE

Whispering Hills church of Christ
2126 S. Main (South Dallas)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(214) 874-5701, info@whchurchofchrist.net

EDNA

church of Christ
301 Robison Street
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(361) 782-5506 or 782-2844
Elders: J. Mercer & S. Mercer

EL PASO

Eastringe church of Christ
3277 Pendleton Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(915) 855-1524

FORT WORTH

West Side church of Christ
6110 White Settlement Rd. 76114
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(817) 738-7269

GRANBURY

church of Christ
4313 Old Granbury Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
817-913-4209 or 817-279-3351

HOUSTON

Fry Rd. church of Christ
2510 Fry Road (77084)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Bob Pulliam: (281) 832-4633, www.fryroad.org

HOUSTON

Spring Woods church of Christ
9955 Neuens Rd. at Witte Road
Worship 9 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.
Worship 11 A.M., Evening 6 P.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: (713) 419-1750
www.springwoodschurchofchrist.com

IRVING

Westside church of Christ
2320 Imperial Dr. (closest to DFW Airport)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Mark Roberts (972) 986-9131
www.JustChristians.com

LANCASTER

Pleasant Run church of Christ
831 W. Pleasant Run Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(972) 227-1708 or 227-2598

LUBBOCK

Indiana Avenue church of Christ
6111 Indiana Avenue
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(806) 795-3377
www.lubbockchurch.com

LUFKIN

Timberland Dr. church of Christ
912 S. Timberland Drive
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 9:50 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelists: Harold Hancock & Reagan McClenny
(936) 634-7110 or 632-7070

MANSFIELD

Northside church of Christ
1820 Mansfield-Webb Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 5:30 P.M.
www.northsidecoc.us
Evangelist: Tom Roberts (817) 466-3160

NACOGDOCHES

Stallings Dr. church of Christ
3831 N.E. Stallings Drive
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelists: Randy Harshbarger & Jay Taylor

PLANO

Spring Creek church of Christ
2100 W. Spring Creek Pkwy., (North Dallas Suburb)
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(972) 517-5582, www.planochurch.org

SAN ANTONIO

Grissom Rd. church of Christ
5470 Lost Lane at Grissom Rd.
San Antonio, TX 78238-2700
Bible Classes 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday (Ladies Class) 10 A.M.,
Wednesday (Bible Class) 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Terry Starling
www.grissomroadcoc.org

SAN ANTONIO

Pecan Valley church of Christ
268 Utopia Avenue, (I-37 S.E. Exit Pecan Valley)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Clyde W. Carter (210) 337-6143

SHERMAN

Westwood Village church of Christ
314 N. Tolbert
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Ronald Stringer

TEMPLE

Leon Valley church of Christ
4404 Twin City Blvd.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Jason Garcia
yourfriendjgar@gmail.com
www.biblemoments.org

WACO

Sun Valley church of Christ
340 E. Warren St. (In Hewitt, a suburb of Waco)
Bible Class 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Marc Smith
(254) 666-1020 or 420-1484

THE WOODLANDS

Woodlands church of Christ
1500 Wellman Road • P.O. Box 7664 (77380)
Bible Class 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:20 A.M.
Evening 5 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(281) 367-2099
www.woodlandschurchofchrist.org

VIRGINIA

CHESAPEAKE

Tidewater church of Christ
217 Taxus Street
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Steve Schlosser (757) 436-6900

CHESTER

Chester church of Christ
12100 Winfree St., (Central to Richmond,
Hopewell, Petersburg, & Colonial Heights)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
church Building: (804) 796-2374, (804) 385-2725
or (804) 271-0877

NEWPORT NEWS

Harpersville Rd. church of Christ
315 Harpersville Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Wednesday 7:00 P.M.

RICHMOND (METRO)

Courthouse church of Christ
Courthouse Rd. at Double Creek Ct.
(2.2 miles S of Rt. 288)
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Gene Tope (804) 790-1629
www.courthousechurchofchrist.com

RICHMOND

Forest Hill church of Christ
1208 W. 41st Street
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6:00 P.M., Wednesday 7:00 P.M.
Evangelist: Jack Bise, Jr. (804) 233-5959

RIDGEWAY

church of Christ
2970 Old Leaksville Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(276) 956-6049
www.churchofchristatridgeway.com

ROANOKE

Blue Ridge church of Christ
929 Indiana Avenue N.E. (5 min. from Roanoke
Convention Center)
1st Lesson 9:15 A.M., Bible Study 10 A.M.
Worship 11 A.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(540) 344-2755

VIRGINIA BEACH

Southside church of Christ
5652 Haden Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Robert Mallard (757) 464-4574

WASHINGTON

BELLINGHAM

Mt. Baker church of Christ
1860 Mt. Baker Hwy.
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Joe Price (360) 752-2692 or 380-2960
www.bibleanswer.com/mtbaker

SEQUIM

Sequim church of Christ
American Legion Hall
7 W. Prairie St. at Sequim Ave.
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Wednesday night Bible study 7 P.M.
Evangelist: Jerry MacDonald
(360) 808-1021 or biblepage@att.net
www.churchofchristinsequim.com

TACOMA

Manitou Park church of Christ
(meets at Gray Middle School)
6229 S Tyler Street
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Wednesday 7 P.M.
(253) 242-3098
tacomachurch@gmail.com
www.tacomachurch.com

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON

Oakwood Road church of Christ
873 Oakwood Road
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:50 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
oakwoodrdcoc@suddenlinkmail.com
www.orcoc.org • (304) 342-5637

CLARKSBURG

Westside church of Christ
Davisson Run Road
Sunday Morning 9:30 A.M.
(304) 622-5433
www.westsidechurchofchristwv.net

FAIRMONT

Eastside church of Christ
1929 Morgantown Avenue
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(304) 363-8696 or (304)844-2437

GLADESVILLE

Gladesville church of Christ
2906 Gladesville Rd., Independence, WV 26374
Sunday Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 10:45 A.M.
Sunday 7 P.M., Wednesday 7 P.M.
(304) 864-3078

MOUNDSVILLE

Moundsville church of Christ
210 Cedar Street
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening 6:30 P.M., Mid-week 7:30 P.M.
Evangelist: Tony Huntsman (304) 845-4940

PARKERSBURG

Marrtown church of Christ
825 Marrtown Road
Bible Study 9:30 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 7:30 P.M.
(304) 422-7458 or 893-5227

WYOMING

RANCHESTER

Ranchester church of Christ
Hwy. 14 West, Ranch Mart Mall
Bible Study 9 A.M., Worship 10 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday 6:30 P.M.
Contact: Bob Reich (307) 655-2563

CANADA

CALGARY, AB

Northside church of Christ
803 20A Avenue NE
Bible Study 10 A.M., Worship 11 A.M.
Evening 6 P.M., Wednesday Bible Study 7 P.M.
+1 (403) 452-5116
www.churchofchristcalgary.com

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Redesigning ceibooks.com into truthbooks.com!

Website redesign project

To better serve you, we're in the process of creating a new design for our CEI Bookstore/Truth Publications website.

Our goal is to bring an easy-to-use, mobile-friendly, intuitive framework, with excellent content.

The redesign will take a few months to complete, but we are very excited about revealing the new site in early 2019!

