



# Living By Faith

*“The just shall live by faith.” Romans 1:17*

January 2, 2011

## 4th & Stewart Church of Christ

### Contact Us:

3201 4th Street  
Brownwood, TX 76801  
325-646-7102  
www.4thstreetcoc.org  
office@4thstreetcoc.org

### Meeting Times:

#### Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:45 AM  
Worship..... 10:40 AM  
Care, Inc. Service..... 2:30 PM  
Worship..... 6:00 PM

#### Tuesday:

Redstone Class ..... 9:30 AM

#### Wednesday:

Ladies Bible Class..... 10:00 AM  
Bible Study..... 7:00 PM

### Elders:

Gene Bannister ..... Billy Chism

### Deacons:

Mike Bannister ..... Jim Moore

Don Smith..... James Thomas

### Preacher:

Ryan Smithey .....

### Works We Support:

Belize Mission & Kindergarten  
Cherokee Home for Children  
Food Pantry  
Gospel Broadcast Network  
Gospel Chariot Missions  
House to House, Heart to Heart  
Lake Cisco Camp  
Mission Printing  
Rohan Jones, Africa  
The Truth in Love  
World Bible School

Let us know if you want to study the Bible to know more about Christ and His Church.

## Where Will This Congregation Be Ten Years From Now?

By Roger D. Campbell

When I ask this question, obviously I am not talking about where the church is going to meet for services. It may or may not be in the same physical location or building. What we have in mind in this study is spiritual status. If this world is still standing, what will a sound, faithful church be like a decade from now?

Every congregation goes through changes. Take a photo of all the people in attendance at service this coming Sunday and I can guarantee you that ten years from now when someone pulls out that old photograph, there will most assuredly be some who are no longer around, some who are newcomers; and, oh how the children have grown. We are not suggesting that all changes are bad, nor are we proposing that every change is a good one. But, you can mark it down: in any given ten-year period of time, any local church will go through some noticeable changes. There is no way to avoid it.

If the church you attend is still around a decade from now (and we all certainly pray it will be), will it be strong spiritually, or weak and wavering? Will it be a vibrant, active group of Christians, or will it be a somber bunch of folks that mope into services and quietly leave with no spirit and no vigor to do anything for the Master until the next public service rolls around? Will the church be growing, or will it be withering on the vine? None of us is a prophet of God. None has a crystal ball that can reveal the future to us. However, there are some matters that will surely play a big part in determining what the local church of which you are a member will be like ten years down the road. Let us take a brief look.

**Leadership** — At some point in any worthwhile discussion of a congregation's future, its leadership has to be addressed. Which direction is the current leadership taking the local church? What plan does the present leadership have for developing/preparing leaders for the future? Like money, leaders do not grow on trees! Who is preparing himself right now to be a shepherd where you're a member? Will there be any brothers prepared to step up as deacons between now and then? Or, are they going to be too busy with other matters? What are our leaders doing to encourage and train Bible class teachers? Study the Book of Nehemiah and see how important leadership is among God's people. Strong leadership is a must!

**Bible Knowledge** — I do not need to conduct a survey or get on the internet to learn what most mature members of the church have already observed. In general, the church is slipping when it comes to Bible knowledge. In days gone by, God's people slipped right into captivity because they did not know the Book (Hosea 4:6)! The church needs to maintain Bible classes that are real Bible classes and not a time to "share our personal experiences" or play games. Let us rekindle the fire for growing in the knowledge and grace of the Christ (2 Peter 3:18). Do that,

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*“For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men?  
for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”*

*Galatians 1:10*

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and the future of the church can be great! Become ignorant of God’s word, though, and stagnation and spiritual corruption are sure to follow.

**Commitment to Sound Doctrine** — The pastors must see to it that the flock is fed properly (1 Peter 5:1-3). The preacher(s) must preach the word of God (2 Tim. 4:2). But, and this is just as important, the membership must be committed to sound doctrine too! There can be no compromise of truth in order to keep folks happy. Truth saves (John 8:32), while false teaching takes people away from what is right (Titus 1:14). And, wimpy lessons produce wimpy saints whose wimpy faith cannot deal with the fiery darts of Satan (Eph. 6:16).

**Commitment to Young People** — Let us be clear, a young person is of no more value than one who is “on up in years.” Youth do not deserve preferential treatment. That being said, if the church expects those kids that are now 9-19 years of age to still be a big part of the congregation ten years from now, then we had better be committed to working with them. Bible class teachers and youth ministers (we call them “parents”), we better give our young people our ears, our hearts, and our love. We must put in the time to do our best to ground them in the Book. It takes time, yes, lots and lots of time. If we do not make a special effort with our kids, then you can write it down: they will not be at church a decade from now.

**Evangelistic Zeal** — Those churches whose single attempt to teach the Gospel in a year’s time is to hang out a sign the week of a Gospel meeting — if that is their only effort to reach out to the lost, those churches will die — guaranteed. The church needs to train seed-sowers (Luke 8:5,11)! We need to prepare our troops to open their mouths to teach the way of the Lord (Acts 8:35) and to be ready to give an answer (1 Peter 3:15). Converts come about only when teaching takes place. Faith comes by what? By hearing (Rom. 10:17). We must get ready to teach so people can hear!

Where will the church you attend be ten years from now? Only the Lord knows for sure. The matters we have noted are big-time factors. Consider them carefully.

## The Plumb Line

by Jim Bullington

Horrible injustices thrived in Jeroboam’s 10-tribe northern kingdom. God would wink no more. Judgment was coming. “Thus He showed me: Behold, the Lord stood on a wall made with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand. And the Lord said to me, ‘Amos, what do you see?’ And I said, ‘A plumb line.’ Then the Lord said: ‘Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore.’” (**Amos 7:7-8**).

The plumb line is a foolproof standard to which load bearing members of a structure must be compared. When the conscientious builder sets a vertical structural member, he must ask, “Is it plumb?” An off-plumb support can mean disaster for the structure. The question is not, “Does it look plumb?” Nor does it suffice that one vertical post is parallel with another. For his own satisfaction as well as the durability of the structure, he must determine, “Is it actually plumb?”

Relativism has no place in construction or in morals. Do I think its moral? Does it look moral? Will the world see it as moral? Is it as moral as what everyone else is doing? If the questioner stops here, he or she is doomed to failure. The real question is identical to that which the builder must ask. “Is it actually moral?” This question demands a standard of right and wrong. The standard of right and wrong is to morals what the plumb line is to the builder. It is a foolproof measure by which all deeds of mankind are adjudged.

Modern culture wants to deny the plumb line. Truth is subjective. The only thing wrong is thinking that something is wrong! Jesus explained why such thinking exists. “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” (John 3:19-21).

There is a plumb line! God holds it in His hand and it will not be wrested away. It is secure from every external

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Television	God’s Plan for Redeeming Man	Bible Reading Schedule
<p>The Truth In Love (Eddie Parrish) Sunday @ 7:00 am on KTAB</p> <p>In Search of the Lord’s Way (Mack Lyon) Sunday @ 7:30 am on KTAB</p> <p>Gospel Broadcasting Network Online: 24/7 @ gbntv.org</p> <p>Good News Today: Sunday @ 6:00 am on Dish: 259, DirectTV: 364, Harris: 208</p>	<p><b>Hear</b> Learn the saving message of Christ’s sacrifice (1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 10:17).</p> <p><b>Believe</b> Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24)</p> <p><b>Confess</b> Jesus as your Lord, Lawgiver, and King (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)</p> <p><b>Repent</b> of your sinful conduct (Luke 13:3,5)</p> <p>Complete your initial obedience to the gospel by being <b>baptized</b> for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)</p>	<p>Sunday...Genesis 3-5; Matthew 2</p> <p>Monday... Genesis 6-7; Matthew 3</p> <p>Tuesday... Genesis 8-10; Matthew 4</p> <p>Wednesday.. Genesis 11-12; Matt. 5:1-20</p> <p>Thursday... Genesis 13-15; Matt.5:21-48</p> <p>Friday... Genesis 16-18; Matt.6:1-15</p> <p>Saturday... Genesis 19-20; Matt.6:16-34</p> <p><i>Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Tim. 2:15)</i></p>
<p><b>Radio</b></p> <p>Preaching the Word (Michael Light) Sunday @ 9:00am on KOXE 101.3</p>		

# News & Notes

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force. Its ability to illuminate the dark recesses and show up moral corruption and sins will exist as long as time exists. There is a plumb line!

A theme park warned that people with certain health problems should not enter an attraction. Entering the room, everything seemed to be off-kilter. None of the angles were quite right. The floor wasn't level and the walls met in non-standard ways. As I moved through the attraction I found myself feeling like I was about to fall on my face even though all my visual references told me that I was standing perfectly erect. My eyes were arguing with my legs as they asked, "Which way is up?" Regardless of how I felt in the anti-gravity display, up was still up. Up didn't change merely because someone cleverly changed my visual reference points. A plumb line inside the display would have been perfectly parallel with one outside the display. Up was still up! God's promise to judge Israel by His plumb line of truth (Amos 7:7, 8), is similar in many ways. Just as the anti-gravity display altered visual reference points to create desired illusions, our culture intentionally or otherwise creates moral illusions. So have previous cultures: "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!" (Is 5:20). The changing of the moral compass is not restricted to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We used to know right from wrong and good from evil. We used to know that disrespect for authority was wrong. We used to know that truth existed. We used to know that the taking of the innocent lives of unborn babies was wrong. We used to know that those who lead us, whether in government or otherwise, should be people of character. We used to know, but the plumb line has been discarded or disregarded.

There is a plumb line and it is still right. It isn't wrong; those who contradict it are wrong. God's Word is that plumb line. It exists and it is right. Men may protest, the crowds may cry for tolerance and experts may testify to the contrary, but up is still up. Evil is not good and good is not evil. "Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven." (Ps 119:89). Or, as Paul put it, "...let God be true but every man a liar." (Rom 3:4). There is a plumb line and it is still right. Anything to the contrary is just a clever illusion!

## Visitation Program

Remember our **visitation meeting following** the evening worship services. Last week **41 contacts** were made.

## Ladies Bible Class

The **Ladies Bible Class** will resume this Wednesday, January 5th at 10 AM in the fellowship hall. We will be continuing our study of the Life of Christ — hope you can join us.

## Upcoming Events...

- ◆ Today: Join us for our **first Sunday potluck** lunch following the morning worship.
- ◆ Today and next Sunday (1/9) at 5:15 PM: **Bible Search Practice** in the high school room.
- ◆ January 16th: **Bible Search** at DeLeon at 2:30 PM. This test will cover Acts 13-16.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARY TO:

**January Birthdays:** Kathy Burcham (03), Billie Jean Walters (05), Debbie Perkins (11), Tom Wilcox (17), Anita Boyd (19), Jaceten Evetts (20), Lily Martinez (22), Charlie Perkins (22), Mattison Churchwell (25).

**January Anniversaries:** Peg & Jim Moore (22).

*"Rejoice with those who rejoice..." (Romans 12:15)*

*Mistakes? Left Out? Let Ryan know...*



	Recent Records	December 19, 2010	December 26, 2010
Bible Class		57	49
AM Worship		73	60
PM Worship		53	47
Wednesday PM		56	46
Contribution		\$1584	\$1520

Privileged to Serve	01/02/11 - AM	01/02/11 - PM	01/09/11 - AM	01/09/11 - PM
Greeters	Gene & Barbara Bannister		Mileen & Ashley Kalich	
Scripture Reader Scripture Reading		Michael Bickford Hebrews 10:19-22		James Fuller
Opening Prayer	Ken Maninger	Billy Chism	Garrett Barnum	Don Smith
Wait on Table	Jim Moore*, Don Smith Michael Fuller, John Barnum	Jim Moore	Ken Makuta*, Michal Bickford Allen Griffith, Matthew Churchwell	Ken Makuta
Closing Prayer	Hank Wheeler	Tom Wilcox	James Thomas	Jim Moore
Attendance Cards	Chase Churchwell Seth Smithey		Chase Churchwell Seth Smithey	
Wednesday Devotionals	January 5 Ken Makuta	January 12 Michael Bickford	January 19 Allen Griffith	January 26 Jim Moore

### Studies For The Week of January 2nd:

Sunday Class ..... *2 Corinthians (Chap. 3-4)*

Wednesday Class ..... *Micah (Chap. 4-5)*

#### Proper Motives (Matt.6:1-18)

*Do the right actions with the right motives (cf. Jn 4:24)*

1. **Actions:** Jesus discusses three things that are right to do.
  - a. **Giving of Alms** – benevolent actions; certainly right to do when the intent is not to draw attention to ourselves (James 1:27; Luke 21:1-4; 1 John 3:17).
  - b. **Prayers** – proper to do in the right manner (Col. 4:2) which did not include trying to impress men or be selfish. Even in the model prayer, Jesus shows a proper motive in what we ask.
  - c. **Fasting** – again can be a good action; seemingly not commanded in the New Testament but permissible – but again not to draw attention to ourselves.
2. **Motive:** What made these actions wrong was the motive behind them; they were concerned about the wrong audience.
  - a. **Not to be seen of men.** They were doing these things to make sure others noticed their actions, and so they have their reward of men and should not expect on of God.
  - b. **Not to be seen of ourselves.** These things should not be done to have something of which to boast (Jas 4:10; Matt. 23:12).
  - c. **But we will be seen of God.** Not to make God our audience in the sense that we try to show Him how good we are (Lk. 18:11-12; 17:10), but know that what we do in secret is noticed by God (Rom. 2:16). Will we do what is right even if no one else knows, simply because it is the right thing to do?

#### Learning What We Have...From Job

*Sometimes to appreciate what we have, we have to understand what it would be like to live without it. Consider this as we look at Job:*

1. **Job saw no redeemer and not hope (Job 9:32-35)** - Job is left in despair seeing no way to answer God; this is the same condition of hopelessness that everyone has outside of Christ (Eph. 2:1, 12).
2. **Job longed for a redeemer to stand with him (Job 13:14-19)**
  - a. Job trusts God and is confident he will be justified, but he wished there was someone to plead his case alongside him.
  - b. He can only long for a mediator, but we know one exists in Christ (1 John 2:1).
3. **Job longs for the god-man redeemer (Job 16:19-22)**
  - a. He trusts God and knows God sees his record but wishes there was one who could mediate between him and God as a friend.
  - b. But what Job longed for we have realized in Christ, our mediator who is both God and man (1 Tim. 2:5; John 1:1, 14; Heb. 4:15; 9:24)
4. **Job knows there is a redeemer (Job 19:25-27)**
  - a. Job is sure there is a redeemer and God will do what is right.
  - b. Job believes his redeemer is alive and that he will hereafter be made manifest and that even though Job's body decays, he is confident he will see God.
  - c. We don't have to long for a redeemer as did Job, we can know Him—Christ Jesus (Rom. 1:4; Eph. 3:12, Heb. 4:14-16).

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Return Service Requested