

4th & Stewart church of Christ

"...upon this rock I will build my church;
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
~ Matthew 16:18



August 3, 2014

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

Wednesday:

Ladies Bible Class..On Break
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Elders:

Gene Bannister..... Billy Chism

Deacons:

Mike Bannister..... Don Smith

James Thomas

Preacher:

Johnny McCaghren

Works We Support:

Cherokee Home for Children
Gospel Broadcast Network
Heart of Texas Bible Camp (Bangs)
House to House, Heart to Heart
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.

Unified in Relativism & Allegiance to Equality

It has been more than twenty years since I read Alan Bloom's book, *The Closing Of The American Mind*. It still occupies a place on my bookshelf, and although published in 1987 it remains a popular and profitable book for the inquiring mind who desires to know what is happening to our society and why. An oft quoted part of that book is very revealing:

There is one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of: almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative...The students' backgrounds are as various as America can provide. Some are religious, some atheists; some are to the Left, some to the Right; some intend to be scientists, some humanists or professionals or businessmen; some are poor, some rich. *They are unified only in their relativism and in their allegiance to equality* [emphasis mine, TW].

The fruits of that kind of thinking are coming to fruition, and the harvest is not encouraging in the least. This particular philosophy (if we can call it that) has literally saturated the American society, yea, the whole of the western world. Part of that fruit is the insane stress on political correctness and the inability and lack of desire to judge any behavior as wrong or sinful. Like any other philosophy "*falsely so called*," this one is insidious and runs contrary not only to scripture, but to plain old common sense. The most recent example of political correctness is the furor over the Washington Redskins football team. A week or so back the Federal patent office stripped that club of its exclusive rights to the name "Redskins" in an effort to appease a small handful of native Indians who find the name "Redskins" offensive. Even though 9 out of 10 native Americans do NOT find the name offensive, the small percentage who do have won the day, and political correctness has claimed yet another victim. I am not a big football fan, but the intrusion of the government into matters that ought not to concern them is just another example of modern day sophisticated silliness. What concerns me, however, is the impact that this 21st century philosophy is having on our morals as a nation and the Lord's church in particular. Let me explain.

There are two planks in this insidious philosophy. The first is the desire for unity at any cost. Bloom calls it "allegiance to equality." Redistribution of wealth, a government nanny state, entitlement programs, equal pay for everybody-the list is endless but the goal is the same. All men must be brought to an equal plane in the name of fairness, regardless of the cost.

On the moral front this battle is being waged against those who want to "impose their morality upon others." Have you ever noticed that certain words and phrases have a connotation that will actually bias the thinking of otherwise reasonable thinking men and women? "Homophobia" is a good example here. The homosexual community is presently pushing for this particular kind of equality. It is not an equality with regard to human rights, but an equality that wants acceptance, regardless of life style. The bottom line is that they desire a muzzle be placed on the mouths of all those who oppose their practice. This, my friends, is the kind of equality under consideration. If law makers can be convinced that opposition to ungodly behavior is really inequality gone to seed, then the politically correct crowd will succeed in muzzling the mouths of those who presently oppose their practice by passing laws favorable to immorality. On the religious front it is toleration and agreement to disagree. It is not so much the desire on the part of the leaders to become united in practice as it is the desire to muzzle any opposition. "You do your thing; I'll do mine; and let's not criticize one another." But in order to attain such "equality" it is necessary that there first be a removal of any absolute standard. Hence, the second plank: the modern gospel of relativism. "Nothing is absolute; nothing is certain; you can't know anything for sure." Now, one might expect the world to think this way. Wickedness and error have always sought to cast off the restraints of God's will (Psalms 2:3). But of late we are hearing some of our brethren advocate the same kind of thinking.

On the far left we find those who are nothing more than relativists. They have climbed aboard the bandwagon of relativism and proclaim without fear of God or man, "You can't know anything for sure!" (I wonder how they can be so sure about that!). But what is it that has backed them into this corner? It is, I believe, the desire for the kind of equality spoken of above - equality to do as they please, and simply agree to disagree, while muzzling the mouths of those who might criticize. Again, to accomplish their desired end, there must be a removal of any absolute standard. This is the very reason some of our once faithful brethren

(Continued on page 3)

"O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up"

Daniel 3:16-18



The Value of Training—Part Three

Our training as disciples can only have as much value as we accept and apply it in life. The apostle Paul told Timothy, “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The apostle included the New Covenant within his purview here because only the gospel can fulfill the promises he makes in this passage (Rom. 1:16-17) and because the context of judgment and the proclamation of the Word that immediately follows demands a New Covenant interpretation (Jn. 12:48). Scripture profits us not simply because God inspired it but because we receive its message, accept its reproof, heed its correction, and grow in righteousness. Only then can we mature in the faith, and only then can it prepare us for the moral undertakings of discipleship. The Holy Spirit did not inspire this message for our approbation but for our salvation. Therefore, disciples take seriously the inspired words of James, “*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves*” (Jas. 1:22).

God gave His Word to train and guide us, but it only fulfills its potential when we learn and grow. When we fail to appreciate and put to use the training offered through the inspired guidance of scripture, we either underestimate its import or overestimate human wisdom. This produces an immature Christian, ignorant of inspired truth and even more ignorant of his own spiritual weakness. “*For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who*

by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:12-14). For disciples to gain from spiritual training, they must value spiritual training. But that means they must also value the training manual. “*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*” (Heb. 4:12).

To be Jesus’ disciples, you must become (1) more like a child (2) more like our teacher (3) more willing to suffer (4) more of a servant (5) more like God’s Word says you should be—each and every day. God created you with great value. You have an eternal spirit, made in the likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Furthermore, God declared the value of your soul when He sent Jesus to die on the cross of Calvary. “*You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men*” (1 Cor. 7:23). God valued the potential of your soul before you were ever born.

Sadly, many people do not value themselves or their souls. They dirty them and stain them with sin. They act as if they are only highly thoughtful animals. They devalue all that God has made them to be. But God is longsuffering, and He is ready to create anew by redeeming that soul through the blood of Jesus Christ and reforming it in His image so that its value might be restored and take on new heights. But this is only possible by becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ. Therefore, God has already answered the question of what He thinks your soul is worth. What do you think your soul is worth? “*For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*” (Mt. 16:26).

Kevin Rhodes

Television

The Truth In Love (Robert Dodson)
Sunday @ 7:00 am on KTAB
In Search of the Lord's Way
Sunday @ 7:30 am on KTAB
Gospel Broadcasting Network
Sunday @ 6:30 am on Dish:267, DirectTV:376

Radio

Preaching the Word (Michael Light)
Sunday @ 9:00am on KOXE 101.3

Internet

TheGospelRadioNetwork.org
Gospel Broadcasting Network
Gbnv.org and on Roku

God's Plan for Redeeming Man

Hear Learn the saving message of Christ’s sacrifice (1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 10:17).
Believe Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24)
Confess Jesus as your Lord, Lawgiver, and King (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)
Repent of your sinful conduct (Luke 13:3,5)
Complete your initial obedience to the gospel by being **baptized** for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)
Live faithfully (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)

Bible Study Schedule

Once again, we have come to the end of a study guide that someone started developing but never completed. If anyone knows of a good daily Bible study guide (looking for more than just a daily reading schedule), please let me know. I am certainly open to suggestions. Continue to study along with our current series in Mark, Luke and Daniel.

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
(2 Timothy 2:15)



- ♦ **October 5-8—Fall Gospel Meeting** Speaker: Johnny McCaghren, Theme: "The Scheme of Redemption"

In The Area

- ♦ **This Week: Aug. 5 SYS @ 5th & Grape (Abilene)**—"Proving Yourself from Your Youth"
- ♦ **This Week: Aug. 6-8 VBS @ Hamilton**—"Whole Armor of God" Classes for cradle roll thru adult
- ♦ Sept. 13 **Ladies Day @ Hamilton**—"Being at Peace" Mona Popejoy. Flyer on bulletin board.
- ♦ Sept. 27 **Annual Auction @ Cherokee Home for Children** (Requested donation list on bulletin board)
- ♦ Oct. 2-4 **Texas Ladies in Christ Retreat.** Information & registration forms are on the bulletin board.

(Continued from page 1)

have abandoned a proper approach to the Scriptures and are now calling for a "new hermeneutic." There is simply no way to authorize what they desire to practice, so every attempt is being made to approach the way we view Scripture. "It is a love letter," "We must focus on the 'core gospel,'" "Doctrine is not important," et al have all become the flag around which the liberals rally, all in the name of relativism and equality.

We are presently witnessing a headlong plunge into a full acceptance of this two planked error in the Lord's church. First, there is the desire for some kind of unity. A noble desire, based of course upon the prayer of our Lord recorded in John 17, but alas not the type of unity of which Jesus spoke. Enter plank one: "Let's agree to disagree." Workshops are organized which invite men of every shade and color (doctrinally speaking) with no intention of addressing error, but rather presenting a "united front" regardless of differences in doctrine. Known false teachers are not rebuked, but revered and respected. Opposition is squelched by subjective thinking rather than objective reasoning. No longer is it the false teacher who is the enemy, but those who cry out for truth and justice. Enter plank two: remove or ignore the standard. Lip service is given to a "thus saith the Lord" while sound, Biblical arguments are ignored. The "fruit" which error bears is looked at through colored glasses, and the circle of relativism and equality is now complete.

The Lord is the epitome of truth and righteousness, and He never subscribed to the kind of nonsense plaguing the thinking of some. To the contrary, He was plain, pointed, and precise in what He taught and practiced. He rebuked error, refused to compromise in the least, and lived a life that was absolutely sinless in every respect. His message, and that of His apostles, was anything but political correctness. Hear their message: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruit ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:15-16). "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them" (Romans 16:17). "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them" (Ephesians 4:11). Does that sound like political correctness? Quite the contrary. I close with the admonition of the apostle Paul: "Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

Tom Wacaster

Visitation Meeting

- ♦ Each Sunday night immediately before the evening worship. Last week **30 contacts** were made.

Special Announcements

- ♦ **We need everyone's help as we host the Summer Youth Series here next Tuesday.** There is a sign-up sheet on the back table to indicate what you can bring to help with the meal.
- ♦ Study sheets are available for Daniel Chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4.
- ♦ We need to get pictures of Justin Waldrip and Daphne Escamilla. Please see Tom Wilcox.
- ♦ If you have updates / information for the bulletin, please have them to Johnny by noon on Fridays, if possible.

Upcoming Events

- ♦ **Today—~~Cancelled~~—Fellowship Meal and Elders/Deacons/Preacher meeting.**
- ♦ **Today**—We will be providing a **meal for the Julie Baker family** at 12:30 in the fellowship hall.
- ♦ **August 12—Summer Youth Series**—Wes McAdams from Baker Heights in Abilene will be our guest speaker.

Celebrate

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

August Birthdays: Joe Dennis (9), Michael Fuller (10), Jessica Dennis (13), Don Smith (14), Royce Ford (16), Roy Dodson (29).

August Anniversaries: Susan & Chipper Bridges (1), Matthew & Kaci Churchwell (15), Terry & Pam Teague (16), Don & Darlene Smith (29).

Mistakes? Left Out? Let Johnny know...



Records

	July 20, 2014	July 27, 2014
Bible Class	48	46
AM Worship	83	61
PM Worship	34	49
Wednesday PM	47	43
Contribution	\$1,965	\$1,894

Privileged To Serve

"...be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1)

	This Week: 8/3/14		Next Week: 8/10/14		August 2014 Make Announcements: Joe Dennis Prepare Communion: Don & Darlene Smith Clean Building: Cindy Fuller Keep Grounds: Tom Wilcox September 2014 Make Announcements: Ken Maninger Prepare Communion: McCaghren Family Clean Building: McCaghren Family Keep Grounds: James Fuller
Sunday AM:	Song Leader: Mike Bannister		Song Leader: Mike Bannister		
Greeters	Tom & Carol Wilcox		Maninger Family		
Opening Prayer	James Thomas		Hank Wheeler		
Communion	John Barnum*,Don Smith Ken Maninger, Chase Churchwell		Gene Bannister*, John McCaghren Tom Wilcox, Kevin Wilcox		
Closing Prayer	Joe Dennis		Billy Chism		
Attendance Cards	Caleb Dennis		Chase Churchwell		
Sunday PM:	Song Leader: Joe Dennis		Song Leader: James Fuller		
Opening Prayer	Allen Griffith		John Barnum		
Scripture Reading	Kevin Wilcox		Garrett Barnum		
Communion	John Barnum		Gene Bannister		
Closing Prayer	James Fuller		Don Smith		
Wednesday Devotionals:	August 6 Tom Wilcox	August 13 Kevin Wilcox	August 20 Garrett Barnum	August 27 Don Smith	

Search the Scriptures

Be like the Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11)

Studies for the week of August 3, 2014		Sunday Class Unity in the Body of Christ Wednesday Class Mark 14
Studies in Luke—By What Authority?—20:1-8 Establishing authority is always important. In personal evangelism the Bible must be mutually agreed upon as the authority, or there is no foundation upon which to build the study. The authority by which we do things, especially spiritual things, is crucial. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, He first went to the temple and drove out the merchants, then He began to preach and teach there. He was then confronted by the Sanhedrin, "Tell us by what authority you do these things, or who it is that gave you this authority" (2). ♦ The Conflict ♦ Jesus was the master of the use of logic. ♦ The "horns of a dilemma" - a position with only two options and either option puts the one making the choice in a difficult position. ♦ Jesus' response: "I also will ask you a question. Now tell me, was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?" ♦ "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why did you not believe him?'" [horn #1] ♦ "But if we say, 'From man,' all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet." [horn #2] ♦ "So they answered that they did not know where it came from." ♦ The Dilemma ♦ If they said John's baptism was from heaven, Jesus would say, "Why did you not believe him?" Believe what? ♦ John called Jesus, "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn. 1:29). ♦ John the apostle said of John the baptizer, "He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light" (Jn. 1:8). ♦ They were to cowardly to say John's baptism was from men. ♦ The Principle ♦ All that we do in faith and practice is done either by the authority of God or by the authority of men. God must be our authority!		Daniel 3—Destruction Attempt The faithful friends fearlessly face the fiery furnace ♦ Erection of an image and the edict to worship it (1-7) ♦ The image (1-3) ♦ Whatever the image may have represented, it was to be worshiped ♦ The edict read (4,5) ♦ Command to "peoples, nations and languages" - no exceptions. ♦ The command is purely religious. ♦ The warning stated (6,7) ♦ The Jews could not worship this image and be faithful to Jehovah. ♦ Example of faith and refusal to worship the idol (8-12) ♦ The Chaldean's accusation (8-11) ♦ The accusation implies a charge of ingratitude (12) ♦ Entrust their souls to God (13-18) ♦ Anger of the king (13) ♦ Appeal of the king (14,15) ♦ Nebuchadnezzar does not believe a god exist that can deliver them from his hand. ♦ Answer of the three (16-18) ♦ They offer no defense or apology. ♦ Their put themselves 100% into God's hands. ♦ Execution by fire and the result (19-30) ♦ Their sentence: the destruction (19-23) ♦ Seven times hotter. ♦ Their salvation: the deliverance (24-27) ♦ Three are cast in, but four are seen walking in the midst of the fire ♦ "The hair of their heads is not singed", etc. ♦ Their standing: the decree (28-30) ♦ Nebuchadnezzar is forced to admit there is a God who can deliver ♦ Nebuchadnezzar respects the three's conviction and faith.