

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



December 14, 2014

Contact Us:

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Brownwood, TX 76801

325-646-7102

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Meeting Times:

Sunday:

Bible Study9:45 AM
Worship10:40 AM
Care, Inc. Service 2:30 PM
Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday:

Ladies Bible Class.10:00 AM
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.

Are We Out-Of-Touch With Culture, Or Out-Of-Touch With The New Testament?

It is a fact: we live in a new, weird world. A world of “selfies” and “memes.” “Google” is a frequently used verb. Jay Leno has been replaced by Jimmy Fallon. Thirty-three homosexual “marriages” were performed on stage this year at the Grammys. Twerking is a thing. What Kim Kardashian does matters for some reason. And she named her daughter “North.” Then John Travolta named someone “Adele Dazeem.” Ebola was going to destroy the world, and then it wasn’t. There are “beliebers.” ISIS. Entire jetliners can still go missing. Racism is evidently making a comeback. Bill Cosby is no longer viewed as a funny, upstanding family man. We landed a 4-foot-wide box on a comet 317 million miles away. And we’re all about that bass.

The age of private health insurance, incandescent light bulbs, Norman Rockwell, and Andy Griffith are increasingly distant memories.

Our religious landscape is rapidly changing, too. Less than half of all Americans (49%) now attend some sort of “church assembly” once a month. And a growing number have completely stopped attending “church” (33%) or never attended “church” to begin with (10%). Why are people deciding to leave religion?

Decisions people make today aren’t based upon logic and reason so much as they are feelings and the perception of ‘fairness.’ We are leaving a modern world and entering a post-modern one. More and more people are asking, like Pontius Pilate, “What is truth?” (John 18:38). To a growing number of Americans, *what* is true and right are irrelevant if taught in an impersonal, impassionate, and indifferent way.

Our changing culture is abundantly evident when contrasted with the church today. Granted, the church has always been counter-cultural. Even in the first century, Christianity was “spoken against everywhere” (Acts 28:22). Jesus and His message and mission will always be hated by the world (John 17:14). Therefore, the church today should expect to be spoken against (2 Tim. 3:12).

But *why* are we spoken against today? We need to be persecuted specifically for our righteousness (cf. 1 Pet. 3:13-17), not because we are out of touch with culture or God’s Word. The church needs to be spoken against because of what it is – the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15; cf. Acts 6:41) – not because of what it is failing to be.

The church today must know the needs of the culture if it wishes to adequately spread the gospel. How does our immediate culture think? What are the strengths and shortcomings of culture? What is our culture missing? What does our culture value? It is entirely possible (and all too common) to be so in touch with our doctrine, traditions, politics, and church buildings that we do not know how to communicate the gospel in a relevant way. The inverse is also true; it is entirely possible (and all too common) to be so concerned with being culturally relevant that we lose our dedication to the apostolic pattern.

Perhaps the best way to be “in touch” with the needs of our culture is by becoming more like the church as found in the New Testament, and less like the church as it has traditionally been in America. Consider the following:

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“I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching...be sober minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” **2 Timothy 4:1-2,5**

(Continued from page 1)

We are out-of-touch if we think of “missions” as an isolated church department primarily concerned with sending money to foreign, impoverished countries. All Christians are missionaries (cf. Acts 8:4), and we are living in an increasingly post-Christian culture. The church will continue to shrink if members do not live their lives according to Christ’s mission – “to seek and save the lost” (Acts 19:10). The lost are our next-door neighbors. It’s time we start treating them like they are lost.

We are out-of-touch if we think it is the job of the preacher or church leadership to do a majority of the church’s work. All members should be workers – each using their talents for the Lord (Rom. 12:3-8). We rob God when we expect others to do our work (cf. Eph. 2:10).

We are out-of-touch if we think of our theology as “liberal” or “conservative” (and the two sides fighting against one another) instead of Biblical. The desire to be *conservative, liberal, traditional, etc.*, should always take a back seat to being true to Jesus Christ and His New Testament. The “conservative/liberal” mentality is not found in the Bible, but what it *does* give is a warning against anyone who departs from pattern of sound words (2 Tim. 1:13) and the teachings of the apostles (2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6).

We are out-of-touch if we think we can appeal to our post-modern culture with impersonal, modern, formulaic methods. The postmodern mind is not interested in modernistic, logical reasoning. Yes, salvation depends – and will always depend – on the logic of God’s Word and finding truth by reasoning through the Scriptures. After all, God paying the price for our debt is intrinsically *mathematical*. He expects us to reason through the Scriptures. But a growing number today are increasingly unwilling to listen to your message unless they first know you *care about them personally*. Feed them, cloth them, laugh with them, look after them, have a conversation with them, and make yourself vulnerable to them. Then they will listen.

We are out-of-touch if we think of our church buildings as ‘sanctuaries’ where people must act reserved and dress formally. Of course, our times of worship and teaching must be done “decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40), with excellence (Col. 3:23), and with deep respect for the Lord (Psa. 2:11). But the attitude that our assemblies must be stiff and formal is a relatively new development in the church. Our postmodern society sees this as pretentious and is subsequently repulsed by it. We

must cultivate an atmosphere of a spiritual family – a family that has all things in common (Acts 2:44; 4:32) and demonstrates a very personal love for one another (John 13:35; Rom. 12:10-11).

We are out-of-touch if we think of Christianity from a political perspective of having to regain power and influence in society. Attending church should not feel like a political rally or an NRA convention. We should avoid the “take back America” mentality, just as I doubt there was a “take back Rome” mentality in the church during the first, second, and third centuries. While government must legislate morality, laws – at the end of the day – do not save souls. Souls are not saved when sin is outlawed (things simply become more comfortable for the righteous). **Our time is better spent planting the gospel in the hearts of those in society**, because when the heart is changed, everything else follows suit (Matt. 15:18-20).

We are out-of-touch if we think that we must keep our faith and our passion to ourselves. Faith shouldn’t be stoic. We need to be actively encouraging one another to greater faithfulness (Heb. 3:13). We need to be confessing our sins to one another (Jas. 5:16). We need to be expressing our joy in the Lord to one another (Eph. 5:19). Worship should not be restricted to a few hours a week – we need to be known for our worship *throughout* the week (Heb. 13:15).

We are out-of-touch if we think that most people in our culture are members of a denominational church, understand the Bible, and believe in the Christian God. Our culture is increasingly “post-Christian,” and thus increasingly confused. We need to stop assuming our neighbors have the same perspective of God and His Word as we do. For example, very few people actually acknowledge the Bible as the Word of God, the Bible as finished (Jude 3), complete (2 Tim. 3:16), and the sole pattern for Christianity (2 Tim. 3:17).

Our cultural backdrop makes it easier for us to see our Biblical shortcomings. There is a reason why the Lord’s church is shrinking today. Perhaps it is because we have not adapted our methods to meet the needs of our culture. Perhaps we need to do a better job being the New Testament church instead of being the “traditional” church, the “popular” church, or the church “we grew up in.” It is indeed possible to be both doctrinally committed and culturally relevant – and when we achieve this balance, the church will grow.

Ben Giselbach (via plainsimplefaith.com)

Television

The Truth In Love (Robert Dodson)

Sunday @ 7:00am on KTAB

In Search of the Lord’s Way (Phil Sanders)

Sunday @ 7:30am on KTAB

Life In The Light (Chris McCurley)

Sunday @ 10:30am on KTAB

Radio

Preaching the Word (Michael Light)

Sunday @ 9:00am on KOXE 101.3

Internet

TheGospelRadioNetwork.org

Gospel Broadcasting Network (Gbnv.org)

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 Reading Schedule

- Dec. 14** Acts 27-28
- Dec. 15** Colossians; Philemon
- Dec. 16** Ephesians
- Dec. 17** Philippians
- Dec. 18** 1 Timothy
- Dec. 19** Titus
- Dec. 20** 1 Peter
- Dec. 21** Hebrews 1-6

“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)



Visitation Meeting

- ◆ Each Sunday night immediately before the evening worship. Last week **21 contacts** were made.

Special Announcements

- ◆ **Ladies Bible Class** will meet this week at Cindy McCaghren's home. Bring something to share for lunch, a gift (\$5.00 or less) for a gift exchange, and your favorite bible verses to share. This is the last class for this year. Class will resume January 7, 2015.
- ◆ Continue to pray for our elders and the congregation as we look toward adding additional elders and deacons in the future.
- ◆ Pray for our Personal Evangelism class and for its use and application in our community. Pray that we might find those who are lost and searching.

On the Calendar

- ◆ **Dec. 21—Ladies Holiday Get-Together @** Kristi Manger's home, 4:00pm (come & go), refreshments provided.
- ◆ **Dec. 31—New Year's Eve Party @** Jessica Stultz's home, following Wednesday night services. Bring snacks, games, etc.
- ◆ **Mar. 29 - Apr. 1—Spring Gospel Meeting with Chris McCurley.**
- ◆ **Oct. 4-7—Fall Gospel Meeting with Bobby Wheat.**

Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?

It was a fact that Jesus was innocent. The Roman governor in charge of Judea, Pontius Pilate, so stated himself after having examined Jesus personally (John 19:4). It is also a fact that Jesus never even committed a single sin (Heb. 4:15). And yet, they fashioned the crown of thorns and placed a purple robe upon His shoulders in mockery, and delivered Him to be crucified. He bore His cross to a place called Golgotha, where they crucified Him (John 19:17-18). The Bible tells us about the state of mind of some of the people who were there.

Soldiers. These Roman men oversaw the crucifixion. They were of cruel mind (Mark 15:16-20), mocking Him even as He hung on the cross (Luke 23:36-37). They were also hard-hearted and indifferent, as shown in John 19:23-24, where they cast lots for Jesus' clothing. This act was foretold in Psalm 22:18. Jesus forgave these men (Luke 23:34)!

Mary. Also there at the crucifixion was Mary, the earthly mother of Jesus (John 19:25-27). The Bible doesn't say much about her state of mind, but every mother can easily understand the pain she must have felt looking upon her son hanging on that cross, slowly and painfully dying.

Priests. These men were full of hatred toward Jesus (Matt. 27:41-43). They admitted Jesus had "saved others," likely referring to those He had healed. They now torture Jesus with their words, saying, "If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him." Jesus, of course, could have come down from the cross if He had desired, but he persevered in accomplishing God's plan!

Thieves. Two robbers were crucified on either side of Jesus (Matt. 27:38). One was full of blasphemy, the other humility, admitting his own guilt (Luke 23:39-43).

Centurion. Though he was part of the soldiers, this man made a startling admission. His state of mind was acceptance that Jesus was the Son of God (Mark 15:39).

You. Not personally, of course, but representationally. Jesus bore your sins in His own body on the cross (1 Peter 2:24). As He hung there dying, surrounded by heartbroken supporters, vicious gawkers, grim soldiers and proud religious leaders, He did so as a perfect offering to God for each one of them, and for each one of us. Since He died for you, will you live for Him?

Matt Clifton (via bulletindigest.com)

Celebrate

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

December Birthdays: Estelle Guthrie (7), Laverne Thomas (13), **Veneta Nolen (17), Kaci Churchwell (18), Linda Griffith (20), Mia Stroope (22), Joyce Hill (24), John McCaghren (27).**

December Anniversaries: **Allen & Linda Griffith (20), Ken & Jo Manger (25).**

Mistakes? Left Out? Let Johnny know...



Records

	Nov. 30, 2014	Dec. 7, 2014
Bible Class	48	42
AM Worship	64	52
PM Worship	34	49
Wednesday PM	33	39
Contribution	\$1,870	\$1,562

	This Week: 12/14/14	Next Week: 12/21/14	December 2014	
Sunday AM:	Song Leader: Mike Bannister	Song Leader: James Fuller	Make Announcements: James Fuller	
Greeters	John Barnum Family	Tom & Carol Wilcox	Prepare Communion: John Barnum Family	
Opening Prayer	Gene Bannister	Joe Dennis	Clean Building: Cindy Fuller / Jessica Stultz	
Communion	Hank Wheeler*, John Barnum Don Smith, Tom Wilcox	Ken Maninger*, Chase Churchwell Gene Bannister, Allen Griffith	Keep Grounds: Jack Turner	
Closing Prayer	Ken Maninger	James Thomas	January 2015	
Attendance Cards	Chase Churchwell	Caleb Dennis	Make Announcements: Don Smith	
Sunday PM:	Song Leader: John McCaghren	Song Leader: James Fuller	Prepare Communion: Billy & Peggy Chism	
Opening Prayer	Allen Griffith	John Barnum	Clean Building: McCaghren Family	
Scripture Reading	James Fuller	James Thomas	Keep Grounds: James Fuller	
Communion	Hank Wheeler	Ken Maninger		
Closing Prayer	Billy Chism	Don Smith		
Wednesday Devotionals:	December 17 Tom Wilcox	December 24 Don Smith	December 31 Gene Bannister	January 7 Prayer

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 December 14, 2014	Sunday Class Acts 2:17ff
	Wednesday Class Personal Evangelism
<p>Church Leadership: Servant Leader / Soul Winner</p> <p>I. Be a Servant Leader.</p> <p>A. Sometimes people view leadership as dictators.</p> <p>B. Notice Peter's exhortation (1 Pet. 5:1-3).</p> <p>C. Consider eight principles of a servant leader: Healing, Awareness, Listening, Persuasion, Foresight, Time management, A commitment to the growth of members, and Interested in the church's image</p> <p>D. The Servant Leader is a <u>servant</u> first.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It begins with a natural feeling that one wants to serve, to be a servant first – then choose to desire leadership. 2. Being a servant takes more work than being a dictator. 3. Comes by studying God's Word, working in the Lord's church, and prayer. <p>E. At the end of Jesus' last supper, He gave us the perfect example of being a servant – by washing the disciple's feet (Jn. 13).</p> <p>F. Are we greater than Jesus? Do we serve?</p> <p>II. Be a Soul Winner.</p> <p>A. If the church fulfills her mission of evangelizing the world (Mk. 16:15-16), it is the duty of the eldership to see that it is done.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This includes the local community, our nation, as well as the world. 2. Soul winning elders develop soul winning congregations. <p>B. An elder must be a true soul winner.</p> <p>C. One of the greatest needs in the Lord's church today is for leaders to follow Biblical examples and be soul winners.</p> <p>D. There are many examples in the New Testament of being soul winners.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jesus is the best example of soul winning. 2. Peter is another example of a soul winning leader. 3. Paul was a tireless preacher of the gospel. 4. If an elder has this desire in his heart he will be a soul winner. <p>E. When we win a soul for Christ, God is the true soul winner.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is the Holy Spirit, through the Word, that brings the good news to the sinner. 2. It was Christ who died that we might have eternal life. <p>F. Key words we should give much thought to: "seek," "teach," "not be ashamed," "desire," "Scriptures."</p> <p>G. What happens if we fail to be evangelistic leaders?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We are commanded to be soul winners. Do we dare disobey our Lord? 2. It is a failure to produce fruit. 3. It is a missed opportunity to do good. 4. It shows a lack of love for the lost. 5. It causes us to procrastinate, when today is the best time to start. <p>H. To be a soul winner and to help others be soul winners, elders should develop a passion for soul winning and do it with enthusiasm.</p> <p>I. Soul winning is the main focus of the family of God, everything else we do should be an extension or support of this primary work.</p> <p>J. The goal of an evangelistic elder should be to turn the world "upside down".</p>	<p>1 John 2:18-29 – Warnings Against Antichrist</p> <p>I. God is Light 1:5-2:9</p> <p>H. Warnings Against Antichrist 2:18-29</p> <p>18. <i>It is the last hour.</i></p> <p><i>Antichrist.</i> One who comes "instead of Christ" or one "who opposes Christ. Not so much a person as a principle – actively opposed to God and His Christ. <i>Is coming [shall come]. "He is coming."</i></p> <p><i>Have come [are there].</i> Have come to be and are.</p> <p>19. <i>They went out from us.</i> They had been part of the church.</p> <p><i>But they were not of us.</i> They were not of the same persuasion (doctrine). <i>That it might become plain.</i> Made manifest, brought to light, revealed.</p> <p>20. <i>Anointed [unction – KJV].</i> Miraculous – in order to discern false spirits. They received the truth with which they could defeat these false teachers.</p> <p>21. <i>But because you know it.</i> You already know this, therefore, compare this with what you are hearing from the false teachers.</p> <p>22. <i>Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?</i></p> <p>To deny Jesus is indeed to be the master of lies.</p> <p>There are three Scriptural confessions of Jesus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Son of God (Mt. 16:16; Jn. 9:35-38) b. Lord (Phil. 2:9-11) c. Messiah (Christ) – this verse & Mt. 16:16. <p>23. Restatement of verse 22.</p> <p>24. <i>What you heard from the beginning</i> = the truth, the gospel.</p> <p><i>You heard.</i> With the idea of acceptance of what was heard.</p> <p><i>Abide ... abides [remain] ... abide [continue].</i> A play on words in the Greek. <i>Abide [continue].</i> Shows our continually remaining in the Father and Son through our faith and obedience.</p> <p><i>Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you.</i> This tells us we must keep ourselves in the truth. Truth keeps us in fellowship (John 15:1-10).</p> <p>25. <i>Eternal life.</i> The ultimate promise!</p> <p>26. A summary of this section to his "little children."</p> <p>27. <i>From Him [of Him].</i></p> <p><i>You have no need that anyone should teach you – anything else for salvation. Just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.</i></p> <p>They already have all the necessary knowledge needed for salvation.</p> <p>28. <i>When He appears.</i> A reference to the second coming of Christ.</p> <p><i>Confidence.</i> Speaking everything, openness, boldness, confidence.</p> <p><i>Shrink from him in shame.</i> To be put to shame, to be made ashamed.</p> <p>Those who are unprepared on that day will be ashamed!</p> <p>29. <i>Everyone who practices righteousness</i></p> <p><i>Has been born.</i> Exhibits the parent's character - shares the parent's nature.</p> <p>A man can prove he is abiding in Christ is by the righteousness of his life.</p> <p>The profession a man makes will always be proved or disproved by what he practices in his life.</p>