

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



September 30, 2018

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:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

Elders:

Gene Bannister..... Billy Chism

Deacons:

Mike Bannister..... Don Smith

Evangelist:

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.

Christianity That Is Appealing to Atheists

I was a happy atheist. I didn't sense a need for any kind of religion in my life. However, I wasn't completely closed-minded toward religion. I visited a Baptist service, a Catholic Mass, and dabbled in the teachings of Buddhism (my favorite at the time). Yet, religion in all of its forms still seemed like nothing more than a collection of antiquated fairy tales—and I felt this way particularly about Christianity. It seemed so divided, contradictory, intellectually dishonest, and hypocritical. If you had asked me what I thought about Christianity, I would have said that Christians lived with an illogical, fear-inspiring blind faith in some kind of magic old guy in the clouds with a beard. (Today I shudder to think how blasphemous these words truly are.)

Slowly, as I exposed myself to Christianity, I became impressed. Christianity started to make sense. I couldn't stand it because I wanted my assumptions and biases to be true, but a shift was occurring.

As I reflect back on my time as an atheist visiting with and studying the church, there were certain characteristics of Christianity that were appealing, especially for me—someone with no faith at all.

Genuine Christianity

Hypocrisy has dealt a large blow to Christianity. One hypocrite can scar an unbeliever for life. While those in the church should have faith rooted in God and therefore be undismayed (though disappointed) by hypocrisy, we can't expect those who are skeptical of Christianity to do likewise. Hypocrisy doesn't necessarily prove that Christianity is false, but it certainly will not attract non-Christians. The New Testament is clear that our conduct as Christians can either help or be a detriment to those outside of the body (cf. John 13:35; 17:21; 1 John 2:5, 10; 3:10-14; 4:20-21).

When Christians let their light shine and "*keep their conduct among the Gentiles honorable*" (1 Pet. 2:12a), even atheists may eventually "*glorify God on the day of visitation*" (1 Pet. 2:12b). We cannot expect to get anywhere with atheists if we ourselves do not live as Christ in our daily lives. When I, as an atheist, was surrounded by *genuine* Christians, I was much more eager to hear them out.

Intellectually Honest Christianity

Atheists (for the most part) have thought their way into atheism (or at least have seemingly logical reasons for having no faith). If you ask an atheist why they have no faith, they will more than likely give you several reasons grounded in thought. So, when an atheist gets into a discussion with a Christian and that Christian cannot offer any ounce of reasoning, rationale, or logic for why they believe what they believe, that atheist will feel as if Christianity has nothing to offer him.

(Continued on page 2)



For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Rom. 6:20-23**

(Continued from page 1)

More than likely, those who have rejected Christianity do so for what they see as intellectual reasons (though emotion always plays a part). So, Christians should be able to reason about their faith efficiently and courageously (1 Pet. 3:15). Christianity that is appealing to atheists must be intellectually honest, and logically sound. Thankfully, biblical Christianity is just that. Once I was exposed to Christianity defended by sound logic and rationale, I was immediately interested as an atheist even when I wasn't yet convinced.

Christ-Magnifying Christianity

As an atheist, I lacked any kind of spiritual fulfillment. Of course, I was spiritually ignorant and assumed true spirituality was some kind of superstitious, tingly feeling. As it turns out, spiritual fulfillment is more than a feeling. It is something you can know (1 John 5:13) and is only found in Jesus Christ (John 14:6). Christianity that magnifies Christ is vital if we are to appeal to atheists because Jesus Christ is the most significant figure in history—the source of reality and truth, the head of the church, and the foundation of the faith. His existence is rationally undeniable, His words are challenging, His love is incomprehensible, and His example is unprecedented.

Often times we are scared to discuss the challenging teachings of Jesus with skeptics (i.e. Matt. 18:8-9; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 13:3; 14:26). But the blunt truth is that we cannot win people to Jesus if we're ashamed of *any* of His teachings. The fact of the matter is, nobody else has ever taught with the authority of Jesus. His words prove His divinity. Likewise, the prophecies He fulfilled and the love He displayed are some of the strongest proofs. Ultimately, it was Jesus who drew me to Christianity.

Udenominational Christianity

As an atheist, one of the most unappealing aspects of Christianity was the division I saw in Christendom. The fact that I could find 20 different churches on one street that all disagreed with each other on major doctrines seemed to contradict their claim to be from God. There-

fore, I thought, Christianity must be a sham. There was simply too much division for it to be from God. I still remember explaining this sentiment to a Christian I was studying the Bible with and them responding, "You're right! I agree." I was shocked. Then, as I began studying the New Testament myself I realized that the denominational division we see today is completely absent from the Christianity described in the Bible.

I began connecting Scriptures like Matthew 16:18, where Jesus says that He will build His church (singular), with Scriptures that describe the church as Christ's body (Eph. 1:22-23) and that—if Christ is the head—there can only be one body (Eph. 4:4; Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 20). I remember thinking that the division in Christendom today was even more extreme than the division so heartily condemned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:10.

I understand why Jesus prayed that His followers "*may all be one*" so that "*the world may believe*" that God sent Him (John 17:21). When the division that exists in Christendom today is present, it becomes a hurdle for unbelievers.

Udenominational Christianity appeals to atheists because the contradiction and division of denominationalism is blatantly illogical and, to my initial surprise, unbiblical. When I realized that I could simply follow Jesus and not participate in man-made and God-condemned division, I was even more interested. For some skeptics this might not be a big deal, but it was for me.

Conclusion

Sometimes, it is easy for the faithful to read verses like Hebrews 11:6 and conclude that atheists are too far gone to try to reach with the gospel. But, when Christians are genuine, intellectually honest, Christ-magnifying, and udenominational, a lot of good can happen. Hopefully, Christ's body can continue to reach out to those with no faith at all. I know firsthand that such people are not a lost cause.

Forest Antemesaris (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 @ 10:00am 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

Sept. 30 Amos 5—9; Obadiah

Oct. 1 Jonah; Micah (video)

Oct. 2 Nahum; Habakkuk

Oct. 3 Zephaniah (video)

Oct. 4 Haggai

Oct. 5 Zechariah 1—7

Oct. 6 Zechariah 8—14

Oct. 7 Malachi

"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 **34 contacts** were made.

Announcements

- ◆ There will be a **Ladies' Day planning meeting** immediately after services this morning to discuss roles and responsibilities for our upcoming Ladies' Day. All our ladies are encouraged to attend.
- ◆ Ralph Berry (Johnny's step-dad) will be getting married Saturday afternoon at 4:00, at the Nimrod Baptist Church. The bride-to-be is Wanda Blackwell.

Upcoming Special Events at 4th & Stewart

- ◆ November 3—Ladies' Day w/ Evelyn Bonner
- ◆ March 24-27—Spring Gospel Meeting w/ Rick Brumback

Other Upcoming Opportunities to Learn and Grow

- ◆ **Oct. 4-6—Texas Ladies in Christ Retreat (Brady)**
- ◆ Oct. 7-10—Gospel Meeting @ Lawn w/ Dave Rogers
- ◆ Oct. 13—Ladies' Day at 9th & Main (San Angelo) w/ Tonne Williamson. *"Generation to Generation"*.
- ◆ Oct. 14-17—Lubbock Lectureship: *"Jesus Christ and Him Crucified"* (Johnny speaks Monday @ 3:00pm)
- ◆ Oct. 20-21—Lectureship @ Hamilton.
- ◆ Oct. 21-24—Gospel Meeting @ Bangs w/ Lee Wright

Are you a church member or a church customer?

So many people treat the precious, blood-bought church like a cheap discount store. "The church's job is to serve me, and if it doesn't, well, we're out of here." How often have I heard someone say, "That congregation did nothing for me."

This attitude is the absolute opposite of the Lord's will. He calls on us to serve, not be served:

"It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt. 26:26-28).

"You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet" (Jn. 13:13-14).

The very ethos of Christianity is not to be served, but to serve. If one were to declare that it was the responsibility of others to serve him, note well, he did not miss the main point of serving God, he missed serving God entirely!

To be Christian is to serve; not to serve is to fail to be Christian. There is no third choice!

Are you an integral part of a congregation of God's people? I am not asking necessarily if you are delivering sermons or leading songs, but I am asking, do you make a difference in your congregation, consistently regularly, definitely?

Churches do not make a difference in their community by accident. Churches do not help the poor and hurting by accident; Churches do not raise faithful children by accident.

Someone, somewhere, must serve!

We serve the weak, the sinner, the little child, the poor, the missionary, the elderly; we serve, or we're not living the life for which Christ called us!

The church is the vehicle through which we serve the world. When we serve as members of a church, Christ gets the credit, not us; when we serve as members of the church, the Lord is given the glory, not us (Mt. 5:16).

So I ask it again, beloved: Are you a church member, or a church customer?

Stan Mitchell (forthright.net)

Celebrate

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

October Birthdays: Lisa Greer (5), Matthew Churchwell (7), Jo Maninger (12), Hank Wheeler (13), Tina Barnum (14).

October Anniversaries: Ryan & Caitlin Settles (7), Rafe & Becky Smith (16), Mike & Patti Bannister (27).

Mistakes? Left Out? Let Johnny know...



Records

	Sept. 16, 2018	Sept. 23 2018
Bible Class	55	44
AM Worship	64	50
PM Worship	44	42
Wednesday PM	41	39
Contribution	\$2,151	\$1,868

	This Week: 9/30/18	Next Week: 10/7/18			
Sunday AM:	Song Leader: Mike Bannister	Song Leader: Mike Bannister	September 2018 Make Announcements: John Barnum Prepare Communion: Tom & Carol Wilcox Clean Building: Fuller / Stultz October 2018 Make Announcements: James Fuller Prepare Communion: John Barnum Family Clean Building: M. & P. Bannister / Greer		
Greeters	James & Cindy Fuller	Dennis Family			
Opening Prayer	Allen Griffith	Gene Bannister			
Communion	Randy Huckaby*, Ryan Settles Joe Dennis, Caleb Dennis	Allen Griffith*, Jack Turner Hank Wheeler, James Fuller			
Closing Prayer	John Barnum	Don Smith			
Attendance Cards	Jaceten Evetts	Aaron Smith			
Sunday PM:	Song Leader: James Fuller	Song Leader: Ken Maninger			
Opening Prayer	Gene Bannister	Tom Wilcox			
Scripture Reading	Tom Wilcox	Ryan Rudloff			
Communion	Randy Huckaby	Allen Griffith			
Closing Prayer	Don Smith	John Barnum			
Wednesday Devotionals:	October 3 Prayer Night	October 10 Joe Dennis	October 17 Rafe Smith	October 24 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 September 30, 2018

Sunday Class **Romans 14:13**
 Wed. Class **Old Testament History—Genesis 32:13**

Living Right in a World Gone Wrong: Remember that Sin Has Consequences

A study of some of the ruin and destruction sin will work in time and in eternity.

- I. **Sin will destroy our good name.**
 - A. *The Scriptures assert the value of a good name* (Prov. 22:1; Eccl. 7:1).
 - B. *The Scriptures, and secular society, attest to the fact that sin will ruin a good name.*
- II. **Sin will destroy our character.**
- III. **Sin will destroy our body.**
 - A. *Some sins that will destroy our bodies:* Immorality, alcoholism, smoking, gluttony, worry, etc.
 - B. *We are to care for our bodies* (Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 6:13-20).
- IV. **Sin will destroy us emotionally.**
 - A. *Sin will divide a man from his better self* (Gal. 5:17).
 - B. *A word about guilt.*
- V. **Sin will destroy our prayer life** (Isa. 59:1-2; Ps. 66:18).
- VI. **Sin will destroy our conscience.**
 - A. *We can lose spiritual sensitivity* (1 Tim. 4:1-2; Eph. 4:17-19).
 - B. *From all accounts, the impenitent thief had rendered himself incapable of turning to the Lord* (Mt. 27:39-44; Lk. 23:39-43).
- VII. **Sin will destroy our home.**
- VIII. **Sin will destroy our home congregation.**
- IX. **Sin will destroy our city, community, and nation.**
 - A. *Some historical studies.*
 - B. *Does America have any cause for alarm or concern?*
 - C. *"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people"* (Prov. 14:34).
- X. **Sin will destroy our children.**
 - A. *David's children suffered because of his sins.*
 - B. *The children of Manasseh suffered because of his sins.*
 - C. *The children of Jeroboam suffered because of his sins. His sins cast their*
- XI. **Sin will destroy our opportunity to live eternally with God.**
 - A. *Sin will result in spiritual death* (Ezek. 18:20; Jas. 1:13-15; 5:20; etc.).
 - B. *Sin will result in eternal death* (Rev. 21:8; 20:6, 14; 2:11).

Let us stop treating sin lightly.

Sin is exceedingly sinful (Rom. 7:13).

Understanding Christ's Gifts for the Church (2) – Ephesians 4:12-16

- III. **The Practice of the Glorious Church** (4:1 – 6:20).
- C. **Understanding Christ's Gifts for the Church** (4:7-16).
 3. The purposes of the gifts that Christ gave (12).
 - a. *For the equipping of the saints.*
 - b. *For the work of ministry.*
 - c. *For the edifying of the body of Christ.*
 - d. *Through the work of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, Christ equipped the church to function properly during the first decades of its existence.*
 4. The goals of the gifts that Christ gave (13-16).
 - a. Maturing of the infant church (13).
 - 1) *The equipping of the saints for the work of ministry and the edifying of the body were to continue till we all come to the unity of the faith.*
 - 2) *The infant church was to attain unity in three ways.*
 - a) *First, the members were to "come to the unity of the faith".*
 - b) *Second, to attain the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God.*
 - c) *The church was to attain the unity found in maturity, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*
 - b. Growth of each member of the body (14-16).
 - 1) *Although Paul was writing to the infant church that was not fully mature, he said, "That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine."*
 - 2) *Paul issued a warning about false teachers: by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.*
 - 3) *In v. 15, a contrast is seen between what these Christians were to do and what false teachers were doing: But, speaking the truth in love.*
 - 4) *May grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ.*
 - 5) *Having named Christ as the head, Paul added, "From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies."*
 - 6) *According to the effective working by which every part does its share was a reminder to the Ephesians of the important place and function of each member of the church.*
 - 7) *This causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*