

THE BIBLE AND THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The church, to a lot of people, is a pleasant community where your children attend Sunday School; adults go to worship occasionally and where you go during the week to meet nice people.
- B. Social activities have become so much a part of many or most churches that people commonly think these activities are identical with religion and people are unconcerned about what the Bible says concerning the church.
- C. We have cheapened the church of the Lord and made it into a glorified social center, thereby bringing it down from its mission revealed in the Bible

DISCUSSION: (TITLE)

I. WHAT THE CHURCH IS NOT: (IN NATURE OR WORK)

- A. The church is not a **DENOMINATION**
 - 1. Not part of something but the whole of God's people
 - 2. Teach the same thing - nothing distinguishes one congregation from another
 - 3. Denomination: a religious organization smaller than the whole church and larger than local church
- B. The church is not **POLITICAL**
 - 1. Kingdom not earthly, political force Jhn 18:33-38
 - 2. Christians subject to government, but church and state is separate in mission and function
- C. The church is not **ECONOMICAL**
 - 1. Great gain is not godliness 1Tim 6:5
 - 2. Pattern for financing work 1Cor 16:1,2; 2Cor 9:7
 - 3. The church is out of place involved in business
- D. The church is not **EDUCATIONAL** from secular aspect
 - 1. No business in secular education 1Cor 1:20,21; 2:1-5
 - 2. Secular schools that also provide Bible study should not be overseen by church; since secular education is not the function of the church
- E. The church is not **SOCIAL** (in common usage of word)
 - 1. The kingdom is not "eating and drinking" Rom 14:17
 - 2. Ones drawn by physical are converted to physical
 - 3. Yes, Jesus fed hungry & healed sick, but his purpose was to prove his Sonship Acts 2:22; Jhn 20:30,31
 - 4. Those following for loaves and fishes turned back when teaching was "hard" to them Jhn 6:26,60-66
 - 5. Social, recreation and benevolence never offered in N.T. as a means to cause people to be Christians
 - 6. Gospel God's drawing power 2Thess 2:14; Rom 1:16
 - 7. Social and recreational activities work of the home 1Cor 11:22

II. CHURCH OF THE BIBLE PLACES EMPHASIS ON SPIRITUAL RATHER THAN THE MATERIAL

- A. Note Paul's emphasis in his letters Eph 1:3; 2:6; 4:1-3; Col 1:9-13; 2:6-8; 1Cor 3:1.18.19 and many others
- B. Great contrast between this and modern religious ideas
 - 1. Emphasis on ritual and splendor of ornamentation
 - 2. More concern about preacher's social qualities and education than his spirituality Matt 3:4; Acts 4:13
- C. Church of Bible concerned with saving with the gospel

III. IT IS INTOLERANT TOWARD EVERY KIND OF EVIL

- A. Rebuked division; fornication; going to law; idolatry & lust 1Cor 1, 5, 6 & 10 and demanded punishment when necessary 1Cor 5; 2Thess 3:6; Tit 3:10
- B. Evil everywhere condemned Gal 5:19-21; Col 3:5-10; Tit 2:11,12
- C. Great contrast between this attitude and that of today
 - 1. Worldliness & sin popular, rarely rebuked, won't preach against sin, sometimes fire preachers who do
 - 2. Adultery, drunkenness, evil speaking, lasciviousness etc, lightly regarded by church members

IV. CHARACTERIZED BY LOYALTY AND DEVOTION TO CHRIST AND TRUTH

- A. Turned to the Lord Acts 9:35; 11:21
- B. Peter, John, Stephen, Paul & others Acts 4:19; 5:29; 7:51; 9:22-29; 2Cor 11:24-28
- C. Secret is SACRIFICE, self denial Matt 16:24

V. IT IS EXCLUSIVE NOT "RIVAL" OF OTHER RELIGIONS

- A. It is "above" not merely "as good as": remember the church condemned error wherever it was found
 - 1. Paganism (Athens, Corinth, Ephesus) Acts 17,18,19
 - 2. Judaism and the Law was fought as hard as paganism (Jerusalem & everywhere) Acts 15; 17:1-9
 - 3. Even Judaism taught by church members was refuted Gal 1:6-9; 2:5; 5:1-4
 - 4. Theorists and innovators in the church opposed as others, even named Gal 2:1-5; 1Tim 1:20; 2Tim 2:17
- B. Such preaching is unpopular but badly needed
 - 1. We need to oppose and expose denominationalism
 - 2. Also errors and innovations of brethren
 - 3. Note exhortation to Jeremiah Jer 1:10
- C. It was this exclusiveness that made Christianity so powerful in the first century

CONCLUSION:

- A. We must be active in trying to make sure we have the church today which the Bible reveals
- B. If we don't have it as the Bible revealed it, then it is not the church "of" Christ.