

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

(Is Community Church Worship Scriptural?)

(Is the Community Church Movement Scriptural?)

“Oh, the drums go bang and the cymbals clang and the horns they blaze away”¹ as the band plays on with vigor. Singers of the chorus and the musicians are at par with trained professionals. The worshipers, with arms raised, are swinging to the beat of the music. No doubt, all are enjoying themselves! Most of the congregation is participating with the enthusiasm and ecstasy of the moment. There is a flood of so-called *Community Churches* in our neighborhoods. These churches entertain folks, they will grow in number, this is certain.

In researching Community Churches, it seems that they have a *statement of beliefs* that covers many denominational creeds and doctrines. There are also affiliations with movements such as the “Consultation on Church Union (COCU), the National Council of Churches, and the World Council of Churches.” One in this movement is, “**The International Christian Community Churches**”. In their statement, they say, that they “celebrate the diversity of God’s people and their mission to bring others to Christ. All of our churches are open.”

Local Community Churches are *diversified in beliefs* with the approach, *come as you are*. Their dress code may be of a casual nature. Those attending these type worship services are not pressed to be obedient to any code, creed or doctrine. Again the idea seems to be, “*We accept you no matter what you believe.*” “*We are tolerant and we judge not, so come and worship with us.*”

It is very common to have this tolerant and liberal type of worship in today’s society. Such has become the norm! So goes the many as they conduct their worship. It is also our observation that the parking lots are always full. Yes, “*Let us entertain you!*” Question: “Is there Biblical New Testament authority for this type of worship services?” We also add: “Is there any scriptural authority for this Community Church Movement?”

Without going into a deep Biblical study on what constitutes Christian worship, we can, in plainness, prove what Christian worship was in the First Century. We find that Christians worshiped on the First Day of the Week. “*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow: and continued his speech until midnight.*” (Acts 20:7)

THE NEW TESTAMENT RECORDS FIVE ASPECTS OF AUTHORIZED WORSHIP

1. Teaching – Preaching as Worship: “*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine*” (2 Timothy 4:2).
2. Praying as Worship: “*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer*” (Acts 2:42).
3. Singing as Worship: “*Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*” (Ephesians 5:19). “*Let the word of Christ, dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord*” (Colossians 3:16). Note: There is no reference to the use of instrumental music in church worship found in the New Testament.²
4. Contributing as Worship: “*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come*” (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
5. The Lord’s Supper as Worship: “*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*” (1 Corinthians 10:16).³

Donald R. Fox
Saltillo, MS

¹ “Oh, the drums go bang, etc.” From an old Irish song “MacNamara’s Band” (Shamus O’Connor & John J. Stamford - 1917).

² From a secular source for Christian worship in the first century: *See pages 460-465, Volume I, Apostolic Christianity, A.D. 1-100, History of the Christian Church by Philip Schaff.*

³ Additional scriptures can be found in the New Testament as to Christian worship unto God Almighty. The above is only a sampling of such authority for worship in the church of Christ.

BELVEDERE BEACON

“Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14)

Volume 10 Number 13 March 29, 2009

A PUBLICATION OF THE BELVEDERE CHURCH OF CHRIST

535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841-2574

(Greater Augusta, GA area)

WHAT SHOULD THE CHURCH BE CALLED?

More correctly, how should we refer to the church in that it does not have a title or proper name? The Apostle Peter stressed, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God;” (1 Peter 4:11). Thus, we are to use Biblical terminology in referring to the church as well as for anything else discussed in the scripture. The church is of God because it has an essential place in His eternal purpose in the salvation of humanity (Ephesians 3:9-11). It should therefore be referred to as belonging to God; and in such passages as First Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1; and 1 Timothy 3:15 that is exactly how it is used. Two of those references speak of “the church of God,” while the other scripture speaks of “the church of the living God.” These references depict ownership, not a proper name. The Greek word “ekklesia,” that is usually translated as “church” means, “that which is called out of.” The church consists of those called out of sin into the family of God. To speak of the church of God is to depict the church, which is the redeemed, as belonging to God.

To speak of the saints as being the church of Christ is to recognize our Lord and Savior as its redeemer. Our Lord promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18). Hence it is scriptural to speak of the church as the church of Christ. In the first century more than one congregation were called “the churches of Christ” (Romans 16:16). Jesus Christ is the savior of the church because He shed His blood and gave His life for it (Ephesians 5:23, 25).

When the New Testament has reference to the church as being “the church of God” and also as “the church of Christ,” it is not referring to two different institutions. Since the church is the saved (Acts 2:47), it is made-up of those who are in spiritual fellowship with the Godhead. The Godhead consists of the Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit (Colossians 2:8-9; Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20). We cannot have fellowship with one without being in covenant relations with the other two divine persons of the Godhead (2 John 9).

There are other scriptural terms for the church such as: “the house of God” (1 Tim. 3:15; Ephesians 2:19); “the temple of God” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17); “the body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:27); and “the kingdom of God” (Romans 14:17).

Man has the tendency to drift away from the inspired Word of God. In doing so, he is inclined to innovate in religious matters in ways not authorized by God in the scriptures. One such obvious area in doing so is by giving unscriptural designations in naming a church after a religious practice, in the name of some person, or by some other terminology not found in the New Testament (Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 4:11; Acts 4:12).

Dub Mowery
Pritchett, TX

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.

Morning Worship 11.00 am.

Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

EVANGELIST: Ken Chumbley - Tel. No. (803) -279-8663

www.belvederechurchofchrist.org E-mail church@belvederechurchofchrist.org

DON'T HAVE TIME TO PRAY – DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!

So you don't have time to pray as you should, don't worry about it there is now an online service that will take care of the task for you! That is if you are prepared to pay for the privilege but even then they advertise special deals for certain prayers to be repeated on a daily basis.

This "wonderful!!!" new web site is found at <http://www.informationageprayer.com/faq.html>. Right now they only offer prayers for Roman Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, and Jews but they are working on prayers for other religions. They even have a section entitled "Unaffiliated Prayers" that is clearly for those who think they should pray but are not a part of any religion. One can get "special deals" for prayers being said each day for a month for \$3.95. Roman Catholics can get a real bargain; a "Hail Mary" only costs 7cents each! You can even get special discounts if you select a number of prayers! However, they will allow for one free prayer – for luck!

Now, before you get out your credit card and start opening your web browser, stop for a moment and see what the Scriptures have to say about prayer. Can we have someone to do our praying for us? (We are not talking about someone praying on our behalf but someone being our "substitute,") Can we pay someone to pray for us? (Such reminds us of the Roman Catholic practice of having a "priest" pray for the dead – for a fee!). Note what Jesus said: "*But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly*" (Matthew 6:6). The Lord wants His people to pray – not someone else doing their praying for them. Paul in writing to brethren asks that they pray for him – not hire someone to do it (II Corinthians 1:11; I Thessalonians 5:25; II Thessalonians 3:1). Likewise he exhorted them to pray (Romans 12: 12; I Corinthians 7:5; Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2; I Thessalonians 5:17) and to pray for others (I Timothy 2:8). Peter, James and John also exhort the brethren to pray (James 5:13, 15-16; I Peter 4:7; John 5:16) as does the writer of the Hebrew letter that prayer be offered for him (Hebrews 13:18).

Note especially what James states: "*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*" (James 5:16). What kind of pray "*availeth much*"? It is the prayer of a "*righteous man.*" Can those who would "*make merchandise*" out of prayer be righteous? Can those who would say prayers for Protestant, Roman Catholics, Muslims, and Jews and be planning to say prayers on behalf of those of other religions and no religion be "*righteous*" men? We know that such cannot be so those who would be "*righteous*" men would only pray to the heavenly Father, as Jesus taught us to pray (Luke 11:2).

Leave your credit cards in your billfold. Don't pay for others to be doing your praying – it would be a waste of money! Instead, make time to pray but be sure that you are "*righteous*" in God's sight – that is one living in harmony with the Gospel of Christ and obedient to His will.

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, and Rachel Fitzpatrick's aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer, Maomi Aaron' sister who is having health problems, Myrtle Grimsley, Lanny Niver together with his daughter, Justine Hall's husband, Joe and Tim Smith.

Lanny Niver was still in Tennessee last Sunday.

Susan Arnold had sick children and was not able to be out Sunday. Aiden was able to come with Kathy Treadway.

There will be a pot luck fellowship meal following the morning worship today. Stay and eat with us.

March 22, 2009

Attendance:	
Bible Classes	18
AM Worship	26
PM Worship	16
Wednesday PM	12

Giving:	
Contribution:	\$ 793.00
Contribution YTD	\$ 17552.00
Budget:	\$ 1000.00
Budget YTD	\$ 12000.00
Weekly Average	\$ 1462.67

THE GOSPEL'S POWER TO SAVE

There must be some connection made between power and the thing to be moved. There is great power in a locomotive, but it cannot move the train of cars till proper connection is made with power.

There is sufficient power in the gospel to move every sinner out of sin into the blessings of salvation, but that power moves no one until proper connections are made. Preaching is the means of establishing that connection. It is God's way of bringing the sinner under the influence of his saving power. For that reason, Paul was not ashamed to preach it. **(Rom. 1:16).**

The gospel exerts no power over the heathen who has never heard it, or over the infidel who will not hear it, and it exerts but little power over him who looks for the power to come some other way. It exerts a power over us for good to the extent that we place ourselves under the influence of its teaching. The cyclone has no power over the man who is safely hidden away in his storm cellar, but it would be foolish for him to come out after the storm and confidently affirm that there was no power in the cyclone, but no more foolish than for a man who will not heed God's word to affirm that there is no converting power in it.

*R. L. Whiteside
Deceased*