

ALL CHURCHES SEEM BUSY!

Elder Joe was worn out as he painted the walls in the staircase. Well into his 70s, it was not a reasonable thing to do. It needed to be done and he was willing to do whatever it took.

The congregation was in a beautiful old building, and once was one of the leading congregations in Houston. Although no congregations were specifically “planted”, several other currently leading congregations would trace their roots back here. Once a congregation of 500, the attendance was down to about 20.

The remaining members were “busy”, mostly surviving. The congregation had always considered themselves a “busy” congregation.

From an outside or former member point of view, one might conclude that they were not so busy after all. But, what is the measure of “busy”?

Having never heard a congregation say that they were not “busy”, one must wonder about what the measure is.

A factor in this is indicated by the saying “work expands to fill the time allotted”. This generally teaches the human condition that whatever you do will seem busy to you because you will make it complicated enough to fill your time.

There can be no happiness when the things we do are different than

The best vitamin for Christians: B1

Consider the 80/20 rule. It generally teaches that 80% of the work will be done by 20% of the people. When the inner circle of management, i.e. 5%, relate primarily to the next circle, i.e. the next 15%, everyone can seem involved and overloaded. The inner 5% are buried in responsibilities, the next 15% are busy as bees, and 80% simply do nothing (are disenfranchised). All people “willing” to do something are busy (overworked). This seems to be a common pattern in congregations.

To a large extent, this pattern can lead to a congregation which is not growing, but is simply not making mistakes. Not making mistakes is good, but is it sufficient?

Revelation 2:1-5 says “1. To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: the one who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands,

What is the measure of “busy”?

says this:
2. I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not and you found them to be false;
3. and you have perseverance and have endured for My names sake, and have not grown weary.
4. But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.
5. Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.” NASV

ALL CHURCHES SEEM BUSY

P2

The church at Ephesus is commended for perseverance, not enduring evil men, putting false apostles to the test, enduring, and not growing weary. Not a bad thing to be said about a congregation. Those are the things most of us aspire to.

However, John goes on to report in verse 5 that they are so bad that their candlestick is about to be removed. The primary complaint is that they were not "doing the deeds they did at first". This appears to not be a "scriptural" matter at all. It appears they were no longer "busy" about the Lord's work. The church at Ephesus was in a "not making mistakes" mode. Revelation indicates that it is not adequate.

This is where it is appropriate to insert the magic formula for how to stay busy. Bad news is that there is not one. God has made us incredibly complex individually, and group dynamics is simply complexity upon complexity.

There are some suggestions. First, note that on the next to last page of this newsletter is a set of activities to be involved in which are absolutely scriptural and guaranteed to cause your congregation to grow. The guarantee is \$1000 cash to be donated to the church of Christ related children's home in your name if you do not grow 10% per year. This offer has been made in several area wide church forums, and no one has ever said that it would not work. Of all the congregations not growing, we know of no congregation who has tried these steps in which everyone asked about has agreed will work.

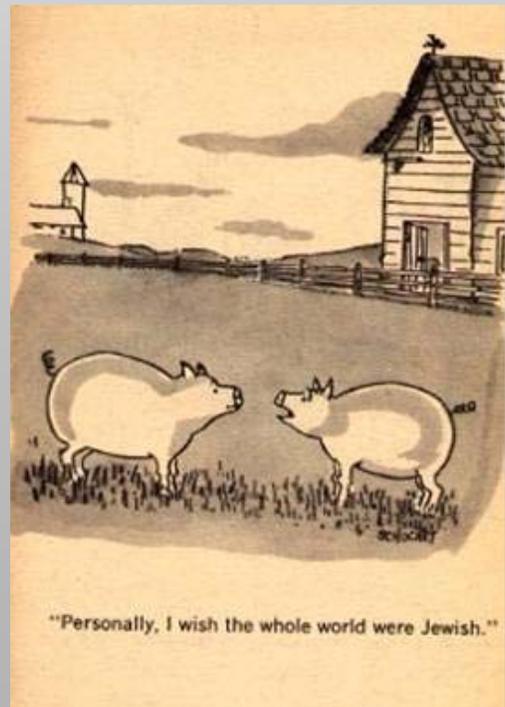
Secondly, try the 60/40 rule (We made that up). Don't make a program which presumes that everyone is going to do anything. Instead, figure out how to expand your 20% of involved members to 30% or 40%. If you achieve twice as many members being involved as are presently involved in you slowly dying congregation, can you disagree that you congregation will begin to grow dramatically. That is all you have to do. It is almost the same suggestion as the first one, just worded differently.

If you agree that the steps in the guarantee can be done, if you agree that doing these steps will likely lead to significant church growth, what choice do you have but to do something like this. Your flavor might be different to suit your specific situation, but if you are in responsible charge it is imperative that you do something.

The candlestick was removed from Elder Joe's congregation long ago. It must not happen to yours.

The purpose of government is to facilitate citizens in making a living, not providing the living for them.

The purpose of the church is to facilitate members Christianity, not to do it for them.



IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION—HORSE’S TAILS

Recently on a visit in the country, a cow in a nearby pasture raised his tail and “went to the bathroom”. What got attention at first was not that the cow did this, but that his tail has a distinct bend in it. It was like it was broken, but still worked.

While watching, it became obvious that the cow was raising her tail so that it would not be soiled during the bathroom process. This has been added to the presentation on Christian Evidences as a horse’s tail rather than a cow’s tale, because horses are more appealing.

Switching now to horses, a horse does not know he has a tail. He can sometimes see the end when he swishes flies off himself, but he never sees the first 1/2 of it which would get soiled in the bathroom process. If a horse was going to evolve the muscles and nerves required to lift his tail, he would have to know he had a tail.

By definition a horse does not care if his tail is dirty, given that he basically doesn’t even know he has one. Maybe a real smart horse can conclude that because other horses have a tail, he must have one also. If over the years the really smart horse and his offspring get tired of looking at dirty tails, can they “will” new muscles and nerves into being to raise his tail?

Turns out horses are relatively dumb. Pigs appear to be smarter. People are much smarter than pigs. Can you say that you would learn to control a muscle that you can’t see and basically don’t know it is there, for a purpose you are not aware of?

It is clearly impossible for you to control a muscle you are not aware of to do some task you do not know about, and we presume you are smarter than a horse or a pig.

The Coat Hanger - too funny!!

A woman was at work when she received a phone call that her small daughter was very sick with a fever. She left her work and stopped by the pharmacy to get some medication. She got back to her car and found that she had locked her keys in the car.

She didn't know what to do, so she called home and told the baby sitter what had happened. The baby sitter told her that the fever was getting worse. She said, "You might find a coat hanger and use that to open the door."

The woman looked around and found an old rusty coat hanger that had been left on the ground, possibly by someone else who at some time had locked their keys in their car. She looked at the hanger and said, "I don't know how to use this."

She bowed her head and asked God to send her help.

Within five minutes a beat up old motor cycle pulled up, with a dirty, greasy, bearded man who was wearing an old biker skull rag on his head. The woman thought, "This is what you sent to help me?" But, she was desperate, so she was also very thankful. The man got off of his cycle and asked if he could help. She said, "Yes, my daughter is very sick. I stopped to get her some medication and I locked my keys in my car. I must get home to her.. Please, can you use this hanger to unlock my car?"

He said, "Sure." He walked over to the car, and in less than a minute the car was opened.

She hugged the man and through her tears she said, "Thank You So Much! You are a very nice man."

The man replied, "Lady, I am not a nice man. I just got out of prison today. I was in prison for car theft and have only been out for about an hour."

The woman hugged the man again and with sobbing tears cried out loud, "Oh, thank you God! You even sent me a Professional!!!"

Is - GOD GOOD - or what!!!!???

TESTING MY FAITH

Elizabeth Brown, Texarkana, TX

About the time I was ready to write this article my computer decided to self test. Of course, it asked politely for permission to test, and thinking I could spare thirty minutes, I clicked OK. It then proceeded to do a monthly hardware diagnostic tools and scheduled maintenance program for three hours. Remarkably, it has been engineered to correct some of its own problems!

God expects me to examine myself to see whether I am in the faith. His command is that I should test myself and he expects me to do a bit of self-correcting too. He promised to help and has given me his Holy Spirit to prompt and guide me in remaining faithful to his Word.

The ultimate self test is comparing my belief system with the entire Bible. But a shorter test is to read what Jesus says in the red letters of my New Testament. Have you noticed what outrageous things he says? Love your enemy. Pray for those who persecute and use you. Give to those who ask without expecting anything in return. Radical. I rarely live up to all of Jesus commands.

Attending Bible class and listening to sermons becomes my regular weekly self test. Not really for more information; but as a tool to gain understanding and wisdom about all the things I miss in my reading. I am grateful that God has provided the church for teaching and counsel to help me remain faithful.

The Lord's Supper brings me to the most in depth test. Jesus gave his life for me and I want to give my life back to him. It is a time for soul searching, repenting and committing my heart to Jesus. In prayer I acknowledge God's presence and work in my life. I ask for and commit myself to his training and discipline. David expresses it best.

"Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression." Psalm 19:12-13

Computers errors and glitches are completely hidden until they become an inconvenience. Manufacturers figured out that we are so unaware and disinterested in maintenance that they programmed it right into the computer. God expects us to test our own belief system and remain faithful. He is on the job working through the Spirit and the Word and has provided an awesome array of tools to assist us.

ARRAYISMS:

Authority not properly delegated is authority lost.

The hardest thing you do will be hard for you to do.

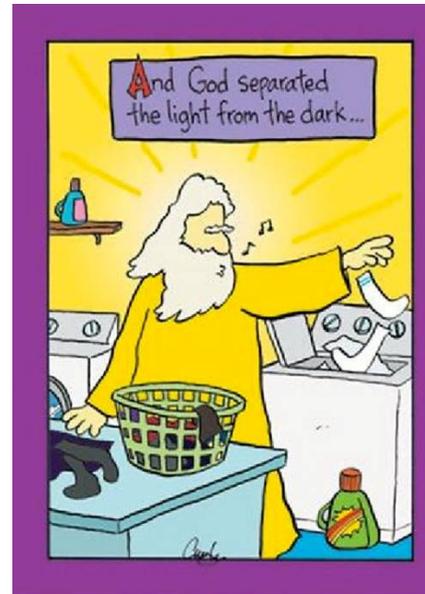
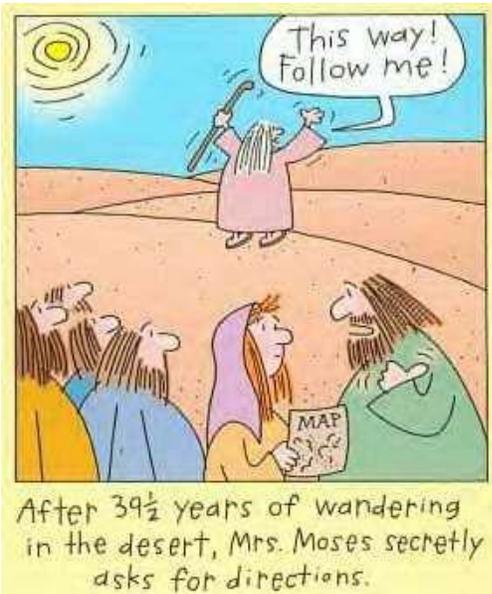
Whatever you do will seem busy to you.

If you want to see busy, visit Impact or Fifth Ward.

You don't have to be perfect to be a success, you just have to be a little better than your competition.

The following is a link to an interesting lifespan calculator. Paste in your browser toolbar:

media.nmfn.com/tnetwork/lifespan/index.html



SPRING BRANCH CHURCH OF CHRIST

5300 Hammerly

It is about 1 block east of Blalock. They have Spanish, English, and Korean services

Bible Class is at 9:00 a.m.
Morning Worship is at 10:00 a.m.
Evening Worship is at 6 p.m.

For more information contact Jim Culpepper at
jim@culpepperlaw.com

THE CHRISTIAN ARRAY

DEDICATED TO SUSTAINED SCRIPTURAL CHURCH GROWTH IN OUR GENERATION

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WHAT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS NOT

A local group of Christians who believe that the Bible can be updated by contemporary council decisions.

A church which receives the permission from an earthly headquarters to plant a new congregation.

A church which attempts to duplicate a 19th or 20th century pattern for a church.

A church which believes you can pick and choose what part of the Bible you want to believe and follow only those parts.

A church which believes that we should judge that we are all in a community of believers as long as we say we believe in Jesus, irrespective of what we do and preach. A church which should assure all others that they are saved.

A group who makes decisions based on popularity rather than scriptural basis.

A group which simply skips over Acts 2:38.

A group which finds more convenient ways to simulate baptism.

A group which votes on what it suits them to believe and preach or a group which believes that they are still getting direct revelations from God.

A group who believes we are here to entertain ourselves.

For those bound & determined to change the church of Christ to be the Christian Church, wouldn't it be easier to simply join the Christian Church.? Is the problem that your conscience won't allow you to join the Christian Church, but if you can reduce the church of Christ to being the Christian Church you will not offend your conscience?

WHAT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS

The church of Christ is a local group of Christians which try to speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent.

The church of Christ tries to reestablish the first century pattern and teaching of the New Testament era at each location.

The church of Christ tries to reestablish the scriptural organization of the church at each location.

The church of Christ has members who believe they are following the scriptural teachings as best they can.

Church of Christ members believe that we should not judge others' eternal reward, but that it is not reasonable to give comfort to others who follow their own preferences rather than teachings of the Bible.

A non-instrumental body as instruments were available in the first century and not used, and not used for several centuries.

A group who teaches Acts 2:38.

A group which teaches baptism by immersion for the remission of sins as that is what is taught in the Bible.

A group which believes all revelation was given in the first century.

A group which believes we are responsible to take the Gospel to the world.

MONEY PAGE

GUARANTEED CHURCH GROWTH

If your congregation does the following, BCE Publications guarantees that it will grow.

Poll your congregation three times at 6 months intervals with the following results:

- 50% of the members know who their elder is
- 50% of the members will say that a minister is their friend
- 50% of the members will say that they are uplifted by the song services
- 50% of the men will say that their input is considered before physical decisions are made
- 50% of the members will say they are an important part of the work
- 50% of the members will say they are aware of the goals of the congregation
- 50% of the members will say that they know what their part is in achieving your goals

GUARANTEE: For the first congregation which does this and does not grow by at least 10%, we will send \$1000 to the church related children's home of your choice in your name.

I have never met a person who said that if they did this their church would not grow. If your congregation is not growing, what have you got to lose? (Offer made since 2001)

IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION?

We will offer \$100 to the first person who can explain how we could have violated the first law of thermodynamics and have come into existence without God.

We will offer \$100 to the first person who can explain how we could have violated the second law of thermodynamics and have existed forever without God. (Offer first posted 8/08)

IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION!

This publication continues (since 1991) to make a standing offer of \$100 to the first person who can give any reason (1 or more) as to why atheistic evolution is a better explanation for the universe and/or life than creation by God, The Father of Adam, Abraham, and Jesus; as revealed in the Bible.

We will also give you \$100 if we cannot give you 12 reasons why atheistic evolution is impossible as an explanation for our existence.

We will discuss this any place, any time, and in any forum. (Offer posed since June, 1991)

RUN AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT:

We will offer \$100 to the first person who can refute the logic that a person can in fact run at the speed of light as presented in the September 2009 issue of this newsletter.

THE MONEY PAGE:

This page may seem odd, even irreverent to offer money for something like this. It is 3 simple statements on church growth, that we cannot be here without God, and evolution is not possible. The steadfastness of putting money on the line for this is to try to be of assistance against those who would discourage church growth, believe in atheism, or promote atheistic evolution.

The page is intended to be a continuing reinforcement.

THE CHRISTIAN ARRAY

DEDICATED TO SUSTAINED SCRIPTURAL CHURCH GROWTH IN OUR GENERATION

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AREA WIDE ACTIVITIES

2nd Tues. Preacher's Luncheon at Golden Island Buffet, 901 N. Shepherd,
confirm with Dale Foster at dalefost@gmail.com

December Annual Sacred Harp Singing

Mar, 2012 Area Wide Men's Retreat

May, 2012 Foster's Home for Children Golf Tournament, NW Houston

Aug 4-8 Area Wide Gospel Meeting—George R. Brown Convention Center

Texas Mentoring is recruiting for Foster Parents, if interested contact Victoria @
713-432-0827

YAHOO GROUP

HoustonCofC is a Yahoo group hosted by Steve Sandifer [steve.sandifer@sbcglobal.net] for the purpose of communicating Houston area news among the brethren. It is open to any member of the church at no cost.

The Christian Array Newsletter

This newsletter will be sent to members of the church on a monthly basis as an attempt to promote area wide activities and church growth. If you do not want to receive this newsletter, send an e-mail to info@thearray.org and it will be stopped.

If you know of anyone who would like to receive this newsletter, send their e-mail addresses to info@thearray.org. All past copies of the newsletter can be found on the website "thearray.org".

If we are not a Christian nation, what are we?

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

A goal of this newsletter is to develop a mailing list of as many members of the church as possible and to communicate church related information to as many members as possible. In that light, we would appreciate:

The Christian Array is dedicated to support the sustained scriptural growth of the churches of Christ. It is published by BCE Publications, a 501(c)(3) organization with Benton F. Baugh, Ph.D., P.E. as editor BCE is solely responsible for the content. Any announcements, requests for publication, or comments should be e-mailed to info@thearray.org.