

FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLY?

It was suggested in a recent Bible class that it is **not a sin to not go to church** (presuming one is available). It was recognized that Hebrews 11:25 says “not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, all the more as you see the day drawing near”.

It was explained that it only says this once, and it does not say it is a sin. So a second question arises, is missing an occasional service the same as forsaking?

First, discussing whether it is not a sin if it does not say it is a sin. It is a clear instruction for the brethren to follow, so first inclination would be that it is sin not to do so.

It makes an interesting comparison to drunkenness. The New Testament lists 12 places where drunkenness is condemned clearly as being wrong. These are Luke 12:45, Luke 21:34, John 2:10, Acts 2:15, Rom. 13:13, 1 Cor. 11:21, Gal. 5:21, Eph 5:18, 1Thes 5:7, 1 Pet. 4:3, Rev. 17:2, and Rev. 18:3.

No one would disagree that drunkenness is a sin. However, in none of these verses is drunkenness called a sin. Galatians 5:21 says “envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” and 1 Peter 4:3 says “For the time already past is sufficient *for you* to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.”

That provides a pretty clear message that drunkenness is not on the God approved list - but it never says it is a sin. That should make it reasonable to say that something can be identified as a sin, even if it does not have the “sin” word in the same verse.

In all fairness, in the NIV paraphrase edition of Romans 13:13-14 says “Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature”. The Greek word given is “lust” (Nestle Greek-English In-

THE ELDER'S OF CENTRAL CHURCH OF CHRIST EXPECT THAT MEMBERS UNDER THEIR OVERSIGHT WILL AT A MINIMUM EACH WEEK AVERAGE ATTENDING A WORSHIP SERVICE, ATTENDING A BIBLE CLASS, AND DOING 1 HOUR OF SERVICE WORK.

terlinear), and the NIV reasonably paraphrases it as sinful nature for our easy reading, in case you are more interested in easy reading than literalness.

As a matter of fact the next verse after Hebrews 10:25, Hebrews 10:26 says “For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins”. It should be reasonable to conclude what was previously discussed (forsaking the assembly) was a sin. It is good to remember here that in the first century, there was no such thing as verses to divide this up. It was merely the next sentence.

FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLY, PAGE 2

For most of us it is easy to conclude that it would be a sin to forsake the assembling of the saints all together when it is possible to attend. Conflicts with working time , travelling, and sickness are certainly reasons to restrict you attendance.

Alternately, it is obvious that there is a pattern that some members stop attending on Wednesday night, stop attending on Sunday night, stop attending Bible class and then stop altogether. Do we get worried when they stop on Wednesday night? Is it all over when they stop attending Bible class?

A first question is how often are you obligated to attend? It is good to attend all services, but how much are you actually obligated to attend?

It is the suggestion of this article that to a large extent determined by your elders. Clearly anyone at any time must attend a regular worship service if possible, which we will presume as a default is the Sunday morning worship service.

At that time if your elders say they would like you to attend the Sunday evening service, it would be your choice whether to attend. If your elders instruct that you are to attend if possible, you are to attend if possible. It is not an option.

If your elders say you must attend Sunday evening even if you must quit your job or get out of a sick bed to do so, you must attend as long as you are under their oversight. That would seem like a really good time to move to another congregation. God would deal with them on judgment day.

For expectations, it was recently said that at one fast growing congregation the elders simply told members that they expected members under their oversight would at a minimum average attending a worship service, attending a Bible class, and doing an hour of service work. It is in the box on page 1.

FIRM FOUNDATION

Bound volumes of past years Firm Foundations issues are available in years 2006, 2007, and 2008. Regular prices \$34.95, order now for \$23.95.

Numerous commentaries are discounted for sale. See attached PDF listing.

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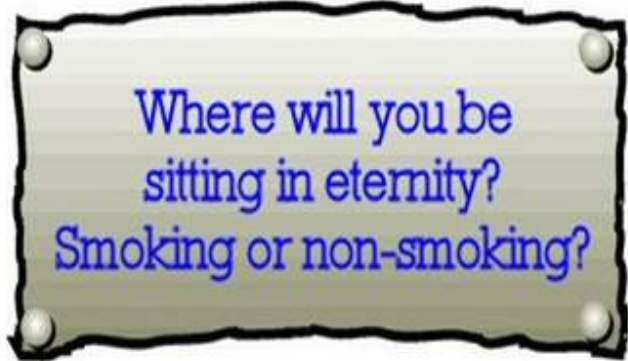
Foster's Home for Children

*"More than a home,
A sanctuary."*

Placement applications accepted.
Employment applications welcome.
Applications and donations available online
at

www.fostershome.org

Stephenville, Texas



Where will you be
sitting in eternity?
Smoking or non-smoking?

FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLY, PAGE 3

Can you imagine the impact of having all members do something each week instead of 20% of the members overworking and 80% being on retirement. Effectively communicated, the pool of workers which that philosophy would generate might change the world.

In summary, we need to be in the position of not being concerned about attending once a week, but rather in communicating that members need to be involved. It means that congregations should have programs to make sure there are roles for all members to fulfill.

It is certain that an involved member is far less likely to stop attending church than one who simply occupies a pew on Sunday morning.

Alternately, a proof reader of this article said that if his elders were to make such as statement as is indicated in the box on page 1, 80% of the members would leave. Whereas that is surely an exaggeration, if you change anything significant, some people will be unhappy.

If your goal is to make no one unhappy, you will certainly have a goal Jesus did not fulfill.

If you tell your members you actually expect them to do something, make sure resulting evangelism and fellowship more than offset any members who chose to retire to a different congregation rather than doing something.



December 18, 2011

Dear Brethren:

Please share this with anyone you know who might be qualified and interested.

Public Relations Officer Needed for Cherokee Home for Children

In cooperation with the Director of Development and Executive Director primary responsibilities will include...

1. Design and production of periodic fundraising and public relations mailings. This includes database management, in-house printing and mail processing, off-site purchasing of printing services, and other donor communication processes.
2. Coordinating or assisting as needed with special events on and off campus. This will include the Cherokee Day food drive and barbeque, an annual on-campus auction, regional fundraising and planned giving dinners, development council management, and numerous campus visits and activities with volunteer groups coming to the campus.
3. Travel to and speaking with churches, lectureships, and civic and educational groups representing the home.
4. Planning and implementing public relations goals on the Cherokee Home website, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and other social networking and web-based sites as needed and developed. This will include design, updates, and outcomes management of these media outlets.
5. Other tasks to fulfill the mission of the home may be required periodically.

We offer a modest salary with all living expenses provided. This includes housing and utilities; food; fully paid health, life and dental insurance for yourself and dependents; and a retirement program.

Cherokee Home for Children is a 53 year old Church of Christ affiliated residential children's home located in the north edge of the Texas hill country in central Texas. The home takes care of about 32 neglected, abused, and at-risk children at a time. Most of the home's funding comes from Churches of Christ or concerned individuals.

Applicants must be male due to church speaking appointments and must be an active member of the Churches of Christ as verified upon checking references. Both single and married applicants will be considered. All resumes should be sent as a PDF file to Delton McGuire, Executive Director, Cherokee Home for Children at chcdd@centex.net. Our website is www.chc4kids.org. Delton McGuire, Executive Director Cherokee Home for Children P O Box 295, Cherokee, Texas 76832 325-372-7621

Healing the Hearts of Children
In the Heart of Texas



THE CHRISTIAN ARRAY

AN E-MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO SUSTAINED SCRIPTURAL CHURCH GROWTH IN OUR GENERATION

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FILL-IN PREACHERS AND SPECIAL SUBJECTS

We would like to investigate the possibility of having a list of available preachers for fill-in at smaller congregations or for specialized topics.

The topics presented below are presently prepared programs intended to be available at a moment's notice. All expenses are assumed to be taken care of by the speaker unless specifically otherwise agreed in advance. The home congregation is identified for the speakers for your information, but it does not imply in any way that the home congregation is responsible for the content of the lessons.

If you have one or more (max. 5) lessons you would like to present on this basis, send the information to bbaugh@thearray.org and we will post it.

If you are interested in using the services of one of these brothers (or sisters in the appropriate context), contact them directly. If you use one of them, we would appreciate hearing of the results.

The two samples following are a conventional sermon/Bible class situation and a special topic speaker:

Sermons: "Set Forth To be a Propitiation"; "Christ and the Church"; The Theme of God's Eternal Purpose

Classes: God's Eternal Purpose; Personal Evangelism Training; Jude; Romans
KIRK CASTLEMAN, Spring Creek Church of Christ Tomball, Texas, [832-458-4470](tel:832-458-4470), Preaching and Mission Work since 1965.

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES (IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION) Presentation of Biblical, scientific, and logic reasons to believe in Jehovah and Jesus. Presentation for worship service, Bible Class or youth group.

By Benton F. Baugh, Ph.D., P.E., Memorial Church of Christ, bbaugh@thearray.org, 281-599-9914 (Engineer)

The Lakewood Church of Christ in Baytown, Texas is seeking a full time minister. We are currently averaging 150 in our Sunday morning attendance, which includes a diverse age group. We have a very active congregation, with activities such as Life Enrichment Group, children's programs, active teen groups, Sunday and Wednesday Ladies Bible Classes, etc. We have a full time youth minister and are looking for a minister to help us continue doing the Lord's work and grow our congregation. Please send all resumes to the attention of the Elders, Lakewood Church of Christ, 7701 Bayway Drive, Baytown, Texas 77520 or e-mail to bo@bcdventures.com

The Church in Utopia, Texas is looking for a preacher.
They have 40-45 members.



SAVE THE DATE!
HOUSTON AREA WIDE CAMPAIGN FOR CHRIST
AUGUST 4-8, 2012

IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION

THE INCREDIBLE EDIBLE EGG! - 3

In 21 days a fertilized egg becomes a chick. All the egg yoke and egg white are consumed to make the chick. When the process begins, there is virtually no air in the egg shell. The egg has a hard porcelain type shell which securely contains all the liquids inside.

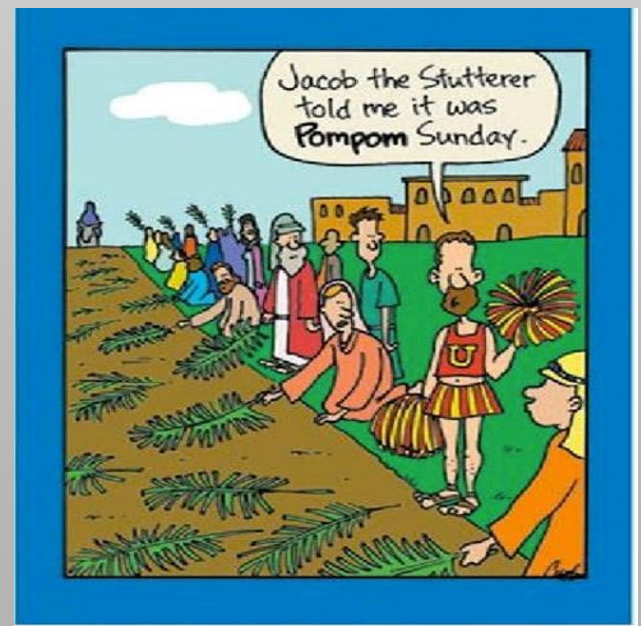
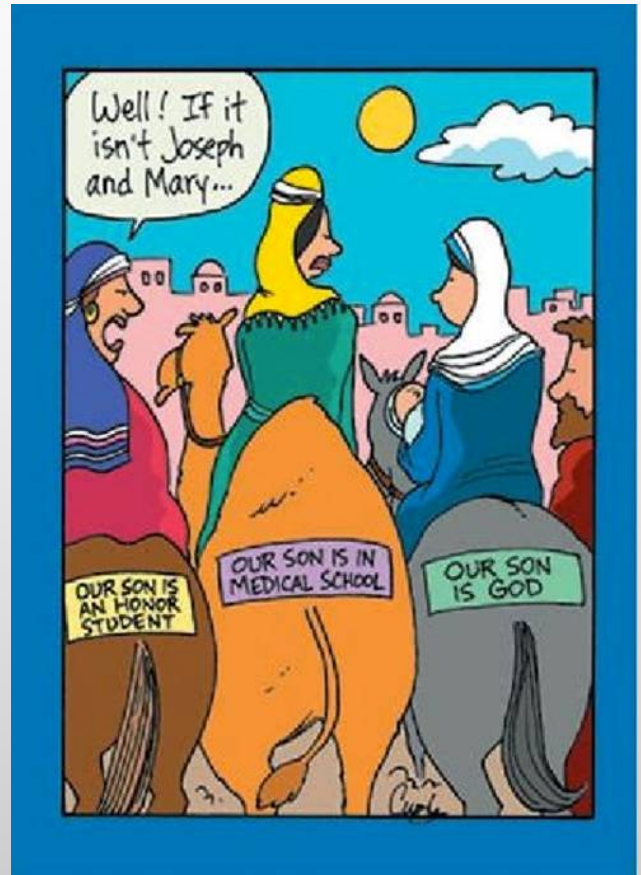
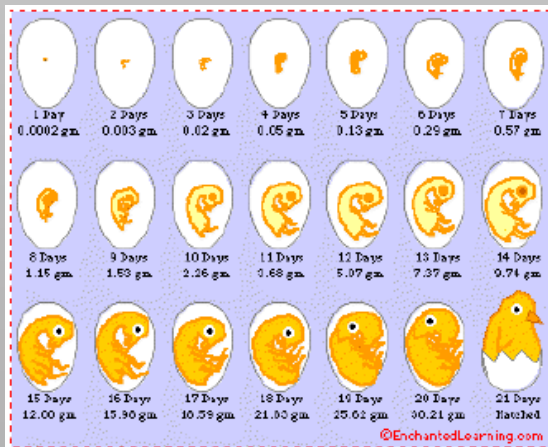
The chick is a living breathing animal, and breathing at least the last few of the 21 days. How does the chick breathe when there is no air?

Turns out that the shell is not completely solid, it is porous. It has holes in it large enough to pass oxygen in and carbon dioxide out. It is made of calcite, a crystalline form of calcium carbonate.

This is not the territory of evolutionary experimentation. If it is not porous enough, the chick suffocates. If it is too porous the liquids seep out of the shell. It must be just right.

The generally means that a chicken must conjure up exactly the right chemical mixture for a shell, make glands to produce it, surround the egg liquids with it, cause it to quickly harden within the moist environment inside the chicken, and lay it.

Even a small child can appreciate that this is the work of God. Only an over educated genius can be so blind as to not see it.



LEARNING CURVE: WHAT DO YOU NEED FOR 2012

Do you need a fresh start for the year? Do you need perspective and purpose? Would you like wisdom and insight to handle pressures and problems? Is your patience depleted and courage sagging? Do you need strength to think clearly and serve creatively?

You have the most powerful resource known to man right there in your hand. Thank God that you can read! Be grateful that you have the freedom and choice to read your Bible. Choose to read!

It is an excellent thing to read the entire Bible through in a year, but don't be intimidated if that doesn't seem possible to you. Read a chapter a day. You can easily read through the New Testament in a year.

Many scholars select one book, such as Philippians or Ephesians and simply read it daily for a year. You might select a topic for the year such as faith or joy and look for the word as you are reading. Be creative, start in the middle or at the end and read backwards.

For that renewed spirit, new purpose and perspective, wisdom for the way and insight for the day, read your Bible! Let the living word of God flow into your heart and out into your life.

Elizabeth Brown, Texarkana, Texas

Dear Christian brethren: I am Henry Vaughn a member of the Third Ward Church of Christ and McCarty student center at Texas State University - San Marcos. The McCarty Student Center is a ministry of the University Church of Christ in San Marcos, TX. The purpose of McCarty is to provide a place for Christian students to commune on a college campus with others who may not have the same goals. I am writing you to ask for financial support to participate in a mission trip to St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica.

For my 2012 spring break I have been given the opportunity through the McCarty Student Center to deliver the gospel to a people who are less fortunate so that they also might be saved. This is also an opportunity for me and many other college students to work to purify our faith in the Lord. There is a great number of people who deserve to hear the gospel just as we have which is why I am requesting your help. While the amount of aid needed may seem extraneous it will in no way compare to the souls that will be saved.

The total amount of assistance needed is \$1300 but whatever you can give would be greatly appreciated. This will cover plane tickets, living arrangements, food and other necessities. Thank you for all of your help and prayers.

Sincerely
Henry Vaughn

Phone: 832-213-6639
Mailing Address: 506 N. Guadalupe St. , San Marcos, TX, 78666

Foster's Home For Children

2011 GOLF TOURNAMENT



BlackHorse Golf Club

12205 Fry Road (1.4 Miles South of 290, Cypress)

11:00 Registration

11:30 Blackhorse Deli Lunch

1:00 Shotgun Start

5:30 The Mixed Grill Dinner and Awards

Sponsor a team: \$500

Individual Players: \$125

May 22, 2012

Includes: green fee, cart, range balls, snacks, lunch, dinner, and prizes

Reservations can be made by e-mail to BFore@thearray.org. Payment can be made by e-mail to BFore@thearray.org using Visa or MasterCard. Indicate card number, name on card, expiration

Organizing Committee:

Benton Baugh (Memorial)

Philip Uhrhan, (Jersey Village)

Bo Cox, Foster's Home Board

Mark Lambert (Memorial)

Matt Miller (Memorial)

Glenn Wolfe (Cinco Ranch)

Bron Fore, Treasurer (Memorial)

For information: bbaugh@thearray.org

Foster's Home For Children is a 501c3 children's care facility located on 55 acres northwest of Stephenville, Texas which has provided for the needs of more than 2000 children since 1960. It is supported by more than 300 Churches of Christ and numerous individuals. For more information visit [www. Fostershome.org](http://www.Fostershome.org)



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.

AREA WIDE ACTIVITIES

**March 11 Rally for Campaign for Christ at Garden Oaks 5:00 p.m.
4926 North Shepherd.**

May 22 Foster's Home for Children Golf Tournament, NW Houston

**Aug 4-8 Area Wide Campaign for Christ
George R. Brown Convention Center**

**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

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".

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:

1. Your forwarding the church member e-mail addresses which you have.
2. Sending the directory of the congregation you attend or any other directories which you might have.
3. Give us an idea of how to collect church member e-mail addresses.

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.