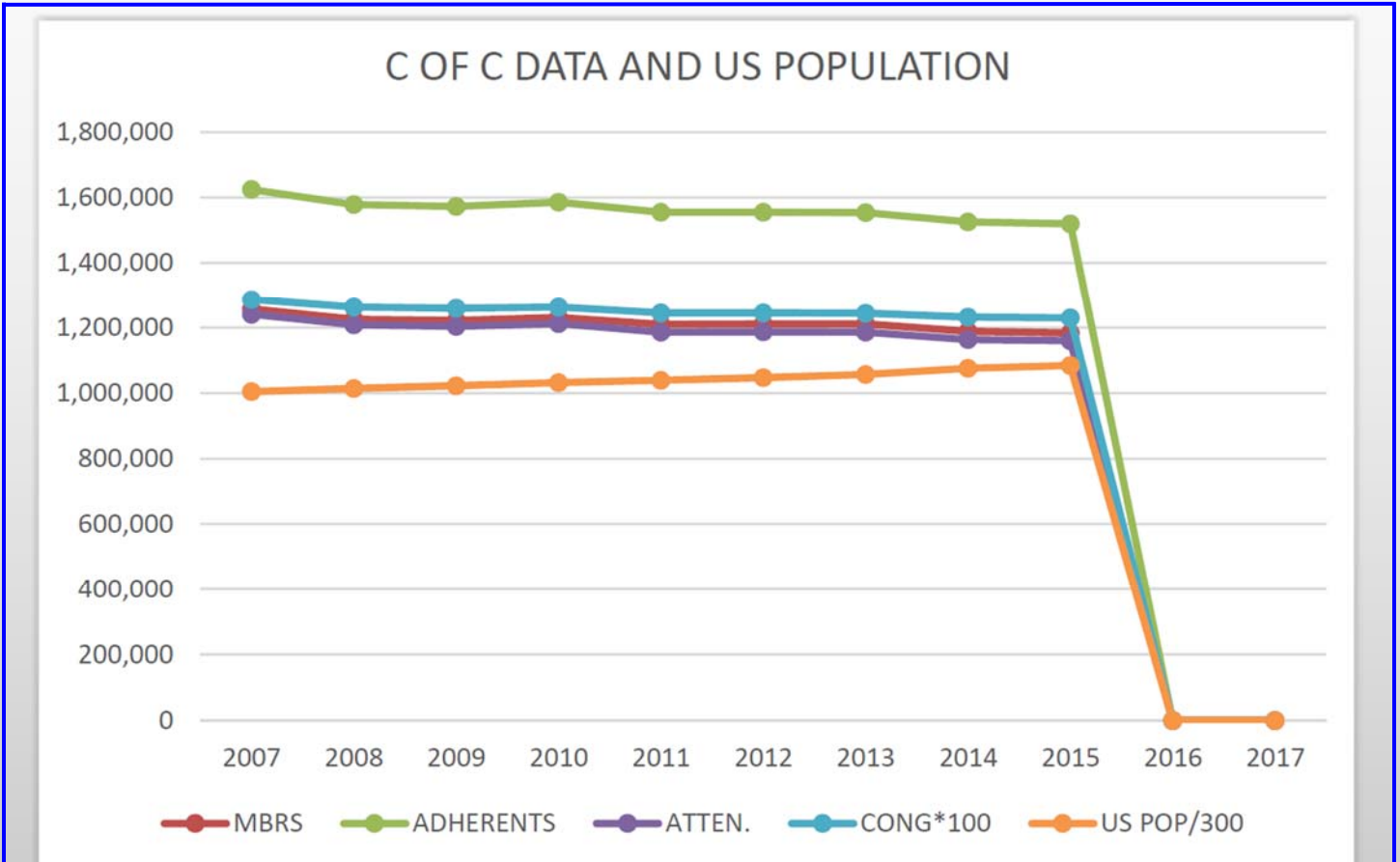


CHURCH STATUS!



The gold bar in the graph above shows that from 2007 until now the US population (our prospect base) has increased by 7.93% (24 million more). Our Sunday morning attendance during the same period has declined by 6.55% (down 81,290) and our number of congregations has declined by 4.48% (down 563)

To display the information on one graph, the number of congregations is multiplied by 100 and the US population is divided by 300. This functionally means that the average congregation has about 100 members and about 1 in 300 US residents is a member of the church.

The graph is reasonably self explanatory, that the US population is continuously growing and

the church is continuously shrinking.

On one hand it means that it will take the church 129 more years to disappear at this rate, but on the other hand that is terrible.

Continued on page 2

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STATUS OF THE CHURCH - P. 2

Can you imagine going to judgment day and telling Jesus that we were in responsible charge of the church and we simply let it die.

We can tell Jesus that religion was having a tough time, and everyone else was having difficulty also.

We can tell Him that we followed our 19th century customs as best we could and it just didn't work in the 21st century.

Maybe we can tell him that we preached the word just like it used to work, so maybe He didn't do His part. Maybe we can tell Him we did not know the parable of the talents or about the church at Laodicea.

Perhaps there is a better idea. Churches seem to go thru a characteristic growth period, then transition to a non-growth lukewarm period, and then go cold. Imagine if we could figure out what we are characteristically doing wrong and communicate that information to congregations across the country.

The Oklahoma Christian Church Growth Think Tank is working to determine the reason(s) for this characteristic change of churches from hot to lukewarm. Perhaps you have an insight to this situation. If you have a suggestion, send it to bbaugh@thearray.org and it will be delivered to the Think Tank.

Together we can determine new, innovative, and scriptural solutions and methods to help the church grow. Then the real work begins.

For these ideas to be developed and communicated to a large percentage of the congregations, a lot of work has to be done.

This means that a lot of members must be involved in doing this "lot of work". In case you have not gotten the drift, this is a call for you to

volunteer and commit. The Think Tank doesn't need a couple of volunteer, it needs hundreds of volunteers who make a substantial commitment if we are to make a serious impact.

A sample of the work which needs to be done:
Phone calling (we need to call every US cong.)
Preparing 4 page papers on specific topics
Proof reading
Data Loading
Database programming
Doing Mystery Guest visits at a local cong.
Identify new ideas at your cong. we can use

All of these tasks are to help communicate to local congregations (like yours) some fresh ideas and methods which might help to better do the scriptural Great Commission in a scriptural way.

To say that another way, we need your help now, and then we need you to help your congregation with the ideas and methods which specifically apply to them.

We pray that you will use a part of your service time to assist in this work.

Benton F. Baugh
Chair, OC Church Growth Think Tank





HAVE A READY DEFENSE DON BROOKS

In everything we do we have to come back to 1 Peter 3:15-16 - "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who ask you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed."

There is no question in my mind that this is a very direct commandment. All we have to do is fulfill it by telling our story of why we are a Christian. Very simple, very plain, and I am not putting the other things down because most are still viable tools. Doing what Peter says does not require Jule Miller Film strips, School buses, computer programs etc.. Doing it Peter's way, just you and your buddy over a cup of coffee telling your story of redemption.

I rediscovered those verses about 4 years ago and realized how important they are.

Also, we have Acts 2:38 with clarity on the first part but we can be hazy on the Holy Spirit. Roman 8:6-8 shows the spirit helping us, and we sort of deny that or gloss it over... My opinion....

Also, we need to teach that all the teaching and doctrine comes through the Ephesians 3: 9-10 and verse 21.

I guess I am trying to say, that we need to sell our congregations on 1 Pet. 3:15-16. Also show our congregations we do not do it alone, but with the Spirit. The Church is the bedrock because it is us....Elders supervise and lead.

Don Brooks, Jersey Village, Houston, TX.

PURSUE PEACE ELIZABETH BROWN

They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. (1 Peter 3:11)

When you wake up in the middle of the night with the same unresolved issues still churning around in your mind – you need peace. When your days are distracted with worry about things you can't control or fix – you need peace. Protect your mind with sensible limits – don't watch the 24-7 news cycle every day. Only read and watch uplifting books and movies. Your life has enough drama without adding more pictures to your brain. Remember that everything that goes in stays there. You can never erase the tape or hit the delete button.

Pursue peace through God's Word: Reading the Bible is a good way to find peace. It contains every topic in exactly the emphasis that God intended. *"The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. (Psalm 28:7) "Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it." (Psalm. 34:14)* And set your mind on things above, look to Jesus for peace.

Pursue peace through prayer: *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:6, 7)*

Pursue peace with confidence: Peace doesn't fall from the sky, we need to pursue peace. Pay attention to what disturbs your peace and avoid it. Think on godly things and trust that God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. *"Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you." (2 Thes. 3:16)*

Elizabeth Brown, Texarkana, TX

CASTLEMAN COMMENT

WHAT A JOY!

The Holy Spirit speaks to us from the love letter the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Philippi. It is evident that a couple of sisters in this congregation needed to learn to agree in the Lord, Philippians 4:2. Is it possible for dedicated Christians to have severe disagreements and even disunity?

Yes, obviously. Paul and his missionary companion, Barnabas, had a sharp disagreement (ESV, from paroxysm, a convulsion, a sudden violent emotion or action, Hebrews 10:24; Acts 17:16; 1 Corinthians 13:5, Acts 15:39). Some believe that Christians will not have disagree-

We are happy to announce that the 2015 Schedule of Daily Bible Readings and Questions is ready to print. Our printer tells us that it will be about \$15/copy. Please publicize this to your family and "circle of friends" through your internet contacts. This is non-profit and we want it to be to the Glory of God! We just want folks to read their Bible every day! We will be glad to mail/ship copies to you, so please help us. Each copy will average about \$5/copy, which includes postage and mail envelope.

Kirk and Linda Castleman 7419 Bairnsdale Lane, Houston 77070

kirk.castleman1942@gmail.com

830-900-9771 Any extra funds will be used to print copies to give away for evangelism. Love and blessings to all, Kirk and Linda

ments. This is humanly impossible.

Paul provides a simple outline in Philippians 4 that corresponds with the procedures Jesus listed in Matthew 18:15f. It is worthy of consideration by all Christians and is as follows:

1) The two women who labored with Paul

and whose names were in the book of life were to think the same thing in the Lord, personally and privately (Matthew 18:15f; note "sins", but the principle applies to opinions).

- 2) A helper should be employed to resolve the disagreement before any public meetings, Matthew 18:16,
- 3) Maintain the fruit of the Spirit, joy!
- 4) Keep sweet reasonableness as a priority.
- 5) The Second Coming defines what is important. Is this issue really that significant?
- 6) Major in grateful prayer, before, during, and after any confrontation.
- 7) Focus on excellent thinking.

If these simple procedures were followed what unity in churches there would be; what growth could happen. May God help us.

Kirk Castleman



IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION #49: SYMPHONY OF FEATHERS

In issue #40 we talked about the great and impossible complexity of putting simple stripes on a feather, with the feather below as an example.



We have shown other examples of the intricate design which were of no evolutionary purpose, but are simply God's message to you that He exists. The Peacock below is an example.



We have considered this as individual feather examples of extremely intelligent design.

Last week in the valet parking area of the Marriott Hotel in the Houston Medical Center, the pigeon in the next photo was walking around as if he owned the place. Having only my I-Phone which doesn't zoom well and having a pigeon who would not sit still for a picture, the somewhat out of focus is the best picture taken.

This pigeon has the characteristic identified in issue #40 of stripes on a feather, which is spectacular. However, the lowly pigeon takes it to

the next level.



Note that the stripes on individual feathers are actually aligned so well that they make a stripe across the entire bird's body. Feathers do not leave a bird's skin in sharp rows, but rather exit in a semi-random pattern. This means that a group of feathers do not all have the same program such that the strip is a specific distance from the start of the feather. They must have a varying distance from the start to the stripe to compensate for the varied locations of the start.

That is an impossible complexity on top of another impossible complexity for no evolutionary survival of the fittest reason. It can only be the message of an intelligent designer to you, and that intelligent designer is Jehovah.

How many other spectacular ways does God communicate to us that we simply go through life without noticing?

Benton F. Baugh, Ph.D., P.E.

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DO
YOU
BELIEVE
THE
BIBLE?

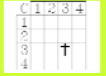
The Bible teaches that we cannot prophecy the time of Christ's return (II Peter 3:10)

If your religious group teaches something else, you might like to visit your local Church of Christ.

The Churches of Christ attempt to speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent. (Rev. 22:18-19)

THE CHRISTIAN ARRAY

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



HOUSTON AREA WIDE ACTIVITIES

2nd Tues. Houston Preacher's Luncheon, confirm with Dale Foster at dalefoster@gmail.com for address.

5/20/15 Houston Foster's Home For Children Golf Tournament—Blackhorse

5/30/15 Houston / OC Area-Wide Elder's Workshop

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 E-Magazine

This e-magazine is sent to members of the church on a monthly basis as an attempt to promote scriptural teachings, area wide activities and church growth. If you do not want to receive this e-magazine, send an e-mail to bbaugh@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 bbaugh@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 it if you would:

1. forward the church member e-mail addresses which you have,
2. send the directory of the congregation you attend or any other directories which you might have, and
3. give us an idea of how to collect church member e-mail addresses.

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