

HOME CHURCH FELLOWSHIP STYLE

NUMBER 118

JUNE, 2017

Home churches provide a scriptural forum which gives an imminently better method for fellowship than large auditoriums. Large assemblies are synonymous with a large percentage of the members being simply a non-committed audience. A majority of the members being simply a non-committed audience is probably a good definition of a lukewarm congregation, even when a small percentage remain highly active.

Home churches also provide a sensible forum for praying for one another and confessing faults. To go before 600-1200 members, most of whom you don't even know, to confess faults is uncomfortable at the least.

What a large congregation might do is to divide up into smaller groups where a more intimate relationship between members can happen. A shepherd can be assigned to that group and members can ask for prayers in the more intimate group.

The smaller group can do work projects, discuss personal evangelism activities, and host social events. It could be a valuable resource for fellowship and evangelism.

A question would be when the more intimate group would meet. Another Tuesday evening meeting in our busy schedules perhaps? For a 1 hour meeting the preparation, meeting, and travel typically requires a 3 hour investment of all participants.

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BE VERY CAREFUL HOW YOU LIVE

Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.” (Eph. 5: 15-17)

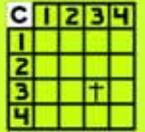
Be very careful. Every unrepeatable, irreplaceable minute is of monumental value. Don't waste this costly commodity; treasure and savor it. This is not something that we can do over. One life, one time around and God holds us accountable for its use.

Live wisely. We are to live lives that are wise and not foolish. Wisdom is developed with purpose and prayer. It is discernment, sound judgment, depth of insight and understanding that comes from God. It take more than asking, we study and practice doing the right thing. Why would we use our valuable time and energy in foolishness?

Continued on page 2



"I'm signing up for church camp even if they do rough it there. Did you know they don't even have wifi?"



HOME CHURCH FELLOWSHIP STYLE, P. 2

Consider instead Bible class time. We are already there. In the typical 45 minutes, spend the first 15 minutes to do these activities and then do the lesson. Let a Class Host and/or the shepherd be in charge at that time rather than making it one more duty of the over-worked teacher (call it member involvement).

In the ultimate embodiment of this, the class would be identified with the class host rather than the teacher. The teacher who has just developed a quality lesson plan goes on to another class to give them the benefit of his study. Literally, the teacher is the transient member of the class(es).

Just imagine that you are praying for one another, discussing class member situations, discussing the next service project, discussing the next social situation you can invite visitors to attend, and discussing how to help one another. Consider the average member actually gets to know one another rather than simply saying "Hello" when you pass in the hall.

As the shepherd's primary role is shepherding, think of how much better he can do his job when he starts with this much current information. If this were the default mechanism for shepherding, any shepherdees not in attendance would be clearly identified for recruiting and encouraging. Shepherding lists could be tailored to the class situation rather than some other arbitrary listing.

This would combine the more intimate relationships of a home church with the resources of a large congregation. Functionally the best of both worlds at no extra cost.

FELLOWSHIP MEAL: At least some of the time a fellowship meal accompanied worship services in the first century. This is difficult at the least to do in a large congregation, and there is not much fellowship when you do. If a fellowship meal is associated with a smaller group meeting in a Bible class situation, it becomes much more practical and intimate. If

you have 4 or fewer adult Bible classes, they could take turns using the church facility on a once a month basis. With 8 or less the same would apply, only every other month. Other alternatives might be meeting in the homes of members or at a local cafeteria.

If this is done, it should not become a closed "social" club of members. You need to always be considering how to invite prospects and integrating them into the activities. You should be continually training new leaders. This can be a very effective part of your Great Commission activities.

Surely it is better to make better use of the existing organization than to create a competitive one. This would not be the "be-all and end-all" for your congregation, but it could certainly be a step in the right direction.

More on Bible classes next month.

BE VERY CAREFUL HOW YOU LIVE, CONT.

Seek wisdom in God's Word. *"Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. Cry out for insight and ask for understanding. Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures. Then you will understand what it means to fear the Lord, and you will gain knowledge of God."* Proverbs 2:2-5 NLT)

Make the most of every opportunity. *"Lost: Somewhere between sunrise and sunset, two golden hours, each set with sixty diamond minutes. No reward is offered, for they are gone forever."* Horace Mann

Understand what the Lord's will is. *"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect."* (Romans 12:2 NLT)

Elizabeth Brown

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8 SIGNS YOUR CONGREGATION IS CLOSING SOON

Taken from the Thom Ranier website:

1. **There has been a numerical decline for four or more years.** Worship attendance is in a steady decline. Offerings may decline more slowly as the “remnant” gives more to keep the church going. There are few or no conversions. Decline is clear and pervasive.

2. **The church does not look like the community in which it is located.** The community has changed its socioeconomic makeup, but the church has not. Many members are driving from other places to come to the church. The community likely knows little or nothing about the church. And the church likely knows little or nothing about the community.

3. **The congregation is mostly comprised of senior adults.** It is just a few years of funerals away from having no one left in the church.

4. **The focus is on the past, not the future.** Most conversations are about “the good old days.” Those good old days may have been 25 or more years in the past. Often a hero pastor of the past is held as the model to emulate.

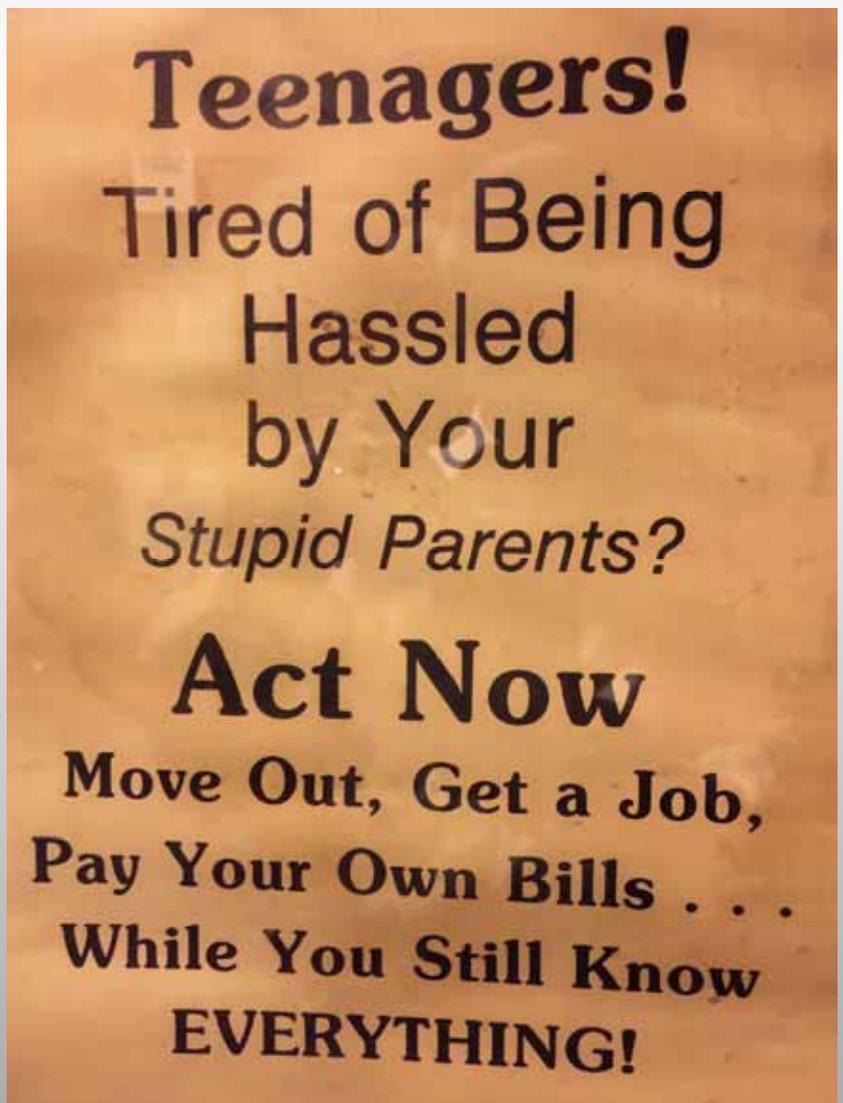
5. **The members are intensely preference-driven.** They are more concerned about their music style, their programs, their schedules, and their facilities than reaching people with the gospel. Their definition of discipleship is “others taking care of my needs.”

6. **The budget is severely inwardly focused.** Most of the funds are expended to keep the lights on and/or to meet the preferences of the members. There are few dollars for ministry and missions. And any dollars for missions rarely include the involvement of the members in actually

sharing the gospel themselves.

7. **There are sacred cow facilities.** It might be a parlor or a pulpit. It could be pews instead of chairs. It might be the entirety of the worship center or the sanctuary. Members insist on holding tightly to those things God wants us to hold loosely.

8. **Any type of change is met with fierce resistance.** The members are confronted with the choice to change or die. And though few would articulate it, their choice by their actions or lack of actions is the choice to die.



IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION - SPLINE - SYNOVIAL JOINTS

Spines are an incredibly complex design, providing support and flexibility for the body. The design includes structural vertebra disks separated by intervertebral disks. Housed within this structure is the Spinal Cord, or the communication path to and from the brain to the body.

Incredible as the Spinal Column is, this "impossible" is about a small detail. The Facet Joints act as a limit to the rotary motion of the Spine and your back. The detail we are pointing out is between the Facet Joints portions. Notice in the photograph of the model of a Spline, between the Facet Joints is a white area. This is a Synovial Joint. It doesn't even show up in graphics like the one on the left below.

The Synovial Joints mean each joint is surrounded by a capsule of connective tissue and produces a fluid to nourish and lubricate the joint. The joint surfaces are coated with cartilage allowing joints to move or glide smoothly (articulate) against each other.

The Synovial Joint is not needed until all the other complexity of the Spine is already in place. If you were to consider evolving one, you would need to presume that the Spine was already evolved and in operation. At that point you would need to rub half of the "evolved" Facet

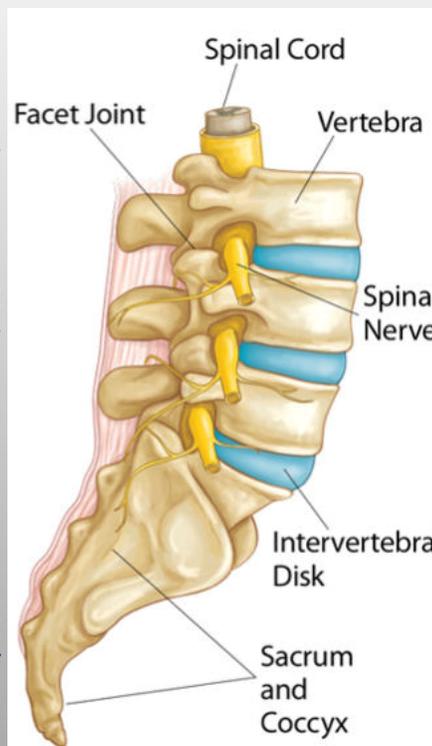
Joint on the other half and cause a wearing problem, and recognize it as a problem. At that point you don't simply make the Facet Joint faces harder, you invent something completely new to keep them separated. Then you have to add it to every vertebra, not just one.

You can back that logic up to why did the faces exist to limit the back's rotation in the first place. Could evolution come up with those when our ancestor's backs were being twisted too much? At least they were a reuse of the already existing bone type material.

Surely it is more reasonable that this is the work of a highly intelligent designer than blind luck evolution. This would be impossible for unguided evolution to achieve.

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

Dr. Gary Lawrence, Edmund, OK



DNA MUTATIONS - WE HAVE A NAME FOR IT

The picture is an actual drawing by Charles Darwin of the Finches he saw on the Galapagos Islands. They show the beak size of Finches becoming sized (micro-evolution) in accordance with the food supply available on different islands. They do not demonstrate creative or macro-evolution. It is necessary but not sufficient proof.

It was roughly like saying you can throw a baseball, so you can throw a baseball into orbit around the earth. Being able to throw a baseball would be necessary proof that you could throw a baseball into orbit, but it is not sufficient proof.

With 3 billion coded pairs of DNA nucleotides in each of our 37.2 trillion cells, atheistic scientist's theories are that this amazing structure was developed by chance mutations. That would be millions of positive or creative mutations in a row. These scientists who claim to be scientific, say religion is a bunch of myths.

"Science" is usefully defined in the "scientific method". The "scientific method" is systematic observation, measurement, experiment, formulation, testing, and modification of hypotheses.

We have a geological record which generally shows that much of life has been displayed in stages. This does not prove whether it was acts of God or accidents of evolution. The "scientific method" cannot answer this ques-

tion, as it is prehistory. However, we can observe DNA mutations today to see if they are compatible with the theories. Do the observable mutations indicate a positive creative trend to the accidents?

The answer is that all observed mutations to the DNA coding have been damaging. There is not a single observed incidence of accidental DNA mutations providing a positive

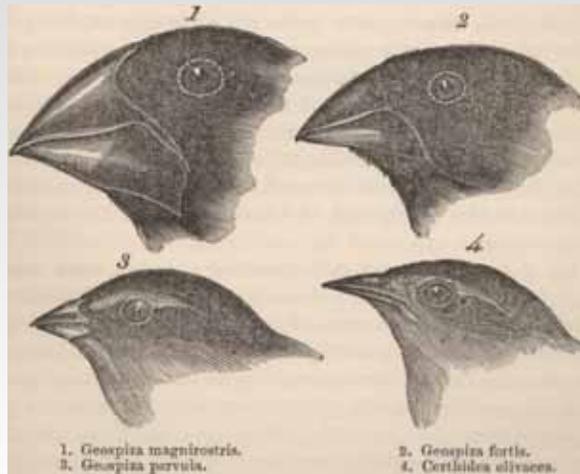
result. If such a thing were to happen, the "scientists" would be more than happy to tell us.

We do have names for the genetic or DNA mutations which we can observe as happening today. Some are:

- CANCER
- DOWN SYNDROME
- SICKLE CELL ANEMIA
- HEMOPHILIA
- COLOR BLINDNESS
- BIRTH DEFECTS
- MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY
- CYSTIC, FIBROSIS

See website: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_genetic_disorders for more than 180 diseases associated with genetic mutations.

The point should not be lost here that the atheistic viewpoint of accidental DNA mutations is dependent upon a series of millions of beneficial mutations in a row, but we can only find negative mutations happening today. Observable science says it is not true.



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Vacationers

As you travel this summer, you can be of assistance in local congregations in helping them to understand how they are seen by potential visitors and prospects.

On the occgthingtank.org website, Project Papers tab is a paper titled: **MYSTERY GUEST PROGRAM**

This paper and the forms included will help you anonymously communicate with the congregation and improve their "curb appeal".

A project of the OC Church Growth Think Tank
www.occgthinktank.org



Meeting at Tom Wilson Elementary
5200 Falcon Landing Blvd.
Katy Texas, 77494.

Bible class at 9:00 am
Worship at 10:00 am.

Please plan to attend and tell your friends and neighbors. Most importantly, please pray for this mission effort.

www.nfbcoc.org

For more information, contact:
info@nfbcoc.org

PREACHING SPECIALISTS

Congregations sometimes need fill-in preachers and speakers with special subjects which are difficult for the local minister to become proficient in. Following are a list of speakers with topics which may be of interest to you. Each of the speakers are known to us and reliably present the Word.

If any of the topics are interesting to you, contact information is provided. Some speakers may require expenses and/or stipends.

- **CHRISTIAN COLLEGE IMPACT ON CHURCH FAITHFULNESS**
- **CHRISTIAN COLLEGE IMPACT ON MARRIAGE**

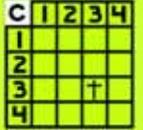
Kent Allen, Oklahoma Christian University
405-315-3008

- **CROSSING THE LINE IN ADDICTION**
Philip Bailey, Memorial Church of Christ, Houston, TX, 713-304-0011
Pbailey@gpbaileyconsulting.com
- **WHY YOU SHOULD BELIEVE IN GOD**
- **IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION**
- **WHAT ATHEIST ARE GOING TO TELL YOUR CHILDREN, WITH ANSWERS**

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

Memorial church of Christ Houston, TX
713-419-8683

bbaugh@thearray.org



OCCG THINK TANK CHURCH LEADERS WORKSHOPS

Members of the OCCG Think Tank would be pleased to come to your area and present our Church Leaders Workshop with some of the information we have been studying and developing.

Real and practical suggestions will be made on how to better engage your members in accomplishing our part of the Great Commission in our time.

Workshops are formatted as:

Area Wide Workshops meeting at the location of a host congregation,
or Individual congregational workshops.

If you would like to host a workshop for your area or would like one scheduled for your congregation, go to the occgthinktank.org website, contact us tab, and send your information.

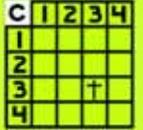
The **OCCG Think Tank** is studying how to promote methods which will return the churches of Christ to a growth mode while maintaining a firm scriptural basis. We solicit everyone's ideas on how to do this, but even more than this we need your assistance in making this a reality.

It is clear that having some ideas is different than translating the ideas to a beneficial form and communicating these ideas to the our congregations.

Whereas we would encourage all to dedicate your service time to your local congregation, if you have extra service time and energies, we need your help. There are many ways to help including:

Working on Webpage design
Microsoft Access programming
Phone app for ready access to Bible teachings
Develop Bible teachings into a standardized format
Develop standardized information regarding denominations

If helping in these areas is interesting to you, contact bbaugh@thearray.org



THE CATALYST INITIATIVE

GOAL: Help the kingdom grow by encouraging those without a neighborhood congregation to start one.

PREMISE: The difficulty of doing personal evangelism is proportionate to the distance you are from your congregation.

If you live far enough from your established congregation that it makes it difficult to do personal evangelism and would like to consider starting a new local autonomous scriptural congregation, let us know.

We have experienced volunteers available to assist you in starting your new congregation or to discuss the possibility.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE: www.thecatalystinitiative.org

Led By:

Philip Bailey, 713-304-0011, pbailey@thecatalystinitiative.org
Benton F. Baugh, 713-419-8683, bbaugh@thecatalystinitiative.org

THE CATALYST INITIATIVE

Is seeking members who are an employee of or knows someone with a relationship with connections to retirement centers.

If you do or know someone who does, contact:

Philip Bailey, 713-304-0011,
pbailey@thecatalystinitiative.org

or

Benton F. Baugh, 713-419-8683,
bbaugh@thecatalystinitiative.org

Foster's Home for Children

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A sanctuary."*

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THE CHRISTIAN ARRAY

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

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EEM (EASTERN EUROPEAN MISSIONS)

Many Eastern European administrators, librarians and teachers believe giving the Bible to their children will change the future of their country.

What can you Do? You can supply Bibles and biblical materials: For \$1000 for a school, \$150 for a class, \$50 for ten students, or \$5 for a child!



Dirk Smith 501-2789-1728 dsmith@eem.org
Eastern European Mission 800-486-1818
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Info or assistance call 615-833-0888 or 1-800-541-2848
Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort, Inc.
P.O. Box 11180, Nashville, TN 37222-1180
dsastrlf@aol.com www.disasterrelief.org



Jerry Heiderich: Director
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

311A East Calhoun Street, El Campo, TX 77437
Clinic 979-578-9091, Cell 214-862-8964

jerry@gulfcoastchristiancounseling.com



Lance Decker

Certified Grief Recovery Specialist

Tomball, TX

+1 (

832) 534-0730

lance@lancedecker.com

www.lancedecker.com

Grief Support/Recovery Groups meet at Spring Creek Church of Christ in Tomball, TX at no cost.

Individual programs available for a fee.

Programs

The Grief Recovery Method: For all Grief Experiences
When Children Grieve: Helps parents help children grieve

Pet Loss: Program specifically for the loss of a pet

Also available for speaking to groups/
congregations about grief.



Mental and Behavioral Health Crisis Solutions

Jeremy Sprott LPC, Owner

Web: www.mentalhealthresponse.com Phone: (832) 518-7933

Email: jeremy@mentalhealthresponse.com



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AREA WIDE ACTIVITIES

- Each Wed. Northeast Houston Preacher's Meeting, Darien Loop CofC, 7014 Darien St., Houston, 11:00—1:00, Contact Cecil Herndon, aj10@ridemetro.com for more details
- 2nd Tues. Northwest Houston Preacher's Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Rancho King Buffet, 5900 N. Frwy., Houston, confirm with Dale Foster at dalefost@gmail.com for info.
- 7/10/17 Houston Area Wide Youth Devotional at Memorial, 900 Echo Lane, 6:00 - 8:00, IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION presentation by Benton Baugh (see flyer) followed by pizza and cokes
- 9/2017 Greater Houston Area Church Leader's Workshop—ELDERS AS SHEPHERDS
- 8/2018 Greater Houston Area Campaign for Christ

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.

Permission to reuse information:

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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.

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 bbaugh@thearray.org.