

Chapter 7 – Christian and Non-Christian Attitudes

The Church without a Name

By Kathleen Lewis

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CHAPTER 7 Christian and Non-Christian Attitudes

Irvinism Is Legalism

The workers quote Hebrews 5:9, ***“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey Him.”*** to support their premise that man must become perfect through obedience. Their obedience is not to the Holy Scripture, which they cut and paste to fit their whims. Rule keeping, or Phariseeism is Legalism. It has been said, “Legalism is a cultural manifestation of neurotic Christianity.”

Peter Wilkes, in his book, **“Overcoming Anger”**, has identified signs of legalism. It is a remarkable description of this church.

1. Legalism is law oriented. Legalists declare salvation is through their rules, written or unwritten
2. Legalists exploit peer pressure.
3. Legalists spend a great deal of time running down outsiders. Being outside the group is spiritual death
4. Legalistic teaching is unbalanced. Certain parts of the scriptures are used repeatedly, while the majority of scripture is ignored.
5. Legalists are joyless. Nothing kills happiness like constant self judgment or busy judgement of others.
6. Legalistic teaching is self-righteous. The pride of “humility” and stoicism sooner or later marks every legalist.
7. Legalistic teaching proclaims God’s forgiveness for conversion but denies it after conversion.
8. Legalists never forget. Whatever you did in the past may be forgiven but they remember it.
9. Legalists are terrified of “worldliness”. The “world” is a sea of contamination.
10. Legalists recognize no good outside themselves. Other churches are full of hypocrites, the devil or misguided people.
11. Legalists are hard on women and children. Legalism is a bullying philosophy.
12. Legalism is depressing.

Irvinism Is Pietism

Early Christians saw that Christ’s commandments worked for real people with real problems in a real world. In other words, Christ dealt with the totality of life. Christianity is a life of wholeness, spiritual, physical, natural oneness with God. In eternity we will have glorified bodies, that are both natural and spiritual. However, in the seventeenth century, Pietism drew many people into a one-dimensional religion. Although it began as a renewal movement it degenerated into personal religiosity that only affected one’s appearance, religious rituals and manners. Just as many Jews had lost their understanding of the reason for their service to God and became entrenched in tradition, some Christians turned to Pietism, a formalized form of Christianity. Their faith became privatized and ceased to affect natural life. Pietism was already well established in lukewarm churches when William Irvine began preaching. He rebelled against the polished mannerisms of the mainline churches and developed his own style of piety, which was disdain for ownership of property, traditions, family life, and systematic theology.

Aside from the supernatural spiritual and eternal aspects of it, the power of Christianity on earth is the truth and power of its principles regarding natural life here and now. It isn’t just a system that controls one’s appearance, manners, the church administration, methods and where to meet. If Christianity has nothing to say about logic, creation, the future of the world, principles for decision-making, education, science, medicine, morals, family life, government, ethics, money, life, death, and politics, what is it? It is nothing but a set of social customs and manners! We are made in God’s image and He intends for us to physically live according to His Word now and in eternity.

Irvinism Is Humanistic

The workers are aware of the inconsistency of their beliefs, so they find ways of excusing it or mocking those who comment on it. Willie Jamieson had a little saying, *“Ahh! Consistency! The bugaboo of little minds.”* to intimidate anyone who realized that the friends’ and workers’ perspectives or behavior were inconsistent with scripture. He also said, *“You educated people need to learn to keep your mouths shut!”* And remember the other amazing statement, *“God gave us a brain and then asked us not to use it.”*

The workers claim to understand and obey the Bible, yet their humanistic viewpoints are in direct conflict with scripture. Humanism is an anti-Christian, atheistic philosophy based on the theory of evolution. It is centered on self. Since professing people do not understand or study what the Bible says about creation and God's word about life many of them hold the worldview taught in the public schools, secular humanism. Most friends and workers read secular information exclusively. Workers have excused their secular humanistic views by saying, *"Oh, that is just politics! It isn't spiritual!"* Politics are about moral law. Moral laws are spiritual laws.

Professing people read and believe the secular media more than they trust Christian sources and Christian logic. Christianity is based on faith in God and God's order of the universe. Since the workers don't preach from the whole Bible, the friends don't know what the Bible says about important issues. Of course, there are some professing people who do have Christian viewpoints but they haven't learned them from workers' sermons, they have learned them from their own study of scripture or from other sources.

Revelation 4:11, says ***"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created."*** Colossians 1:16, ***"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him and He is before all things and by him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell."*** These verses are speaking about Jesus Christ as Creator. Christians who respect the authority of scripture and the authority of Jesus Christ should not respect evolution and atheistic conclusions about God's universe.

Irvinism Is Deism

A deist is one who believes God set the world in motion and then left His creation to take care of itself. In contrast, a Christian believes that God rules in the affairs of men, that He upholds His creation every second, every minute, meeting our needs. They believe that He is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. They believe He intervenes in their behalf whenever He chooses to and when the prayer of faith so moves Him. Christians believe that God is sovereign over every area of the universe and our lives. They believe He is sovereign over their finances, marriage, children, politics, education, church, law, nation, science, medicine, etc. Christians believe God rules in small things as well great things. In ***believing*** He is sovereign, they acknowledge His right to rule and try to work with Him instead of against Him.

Professing people ***say*** that God is in control but they ***usually feel***, live, speak and think more like deists. The workers have taught them that God takes care of the workers but the friends must look out for themselves. This dichotomy produces people who feel like deists. They don't think God cares about the world at all. They think *"He is only interested in His chosen faithful few,"* and that He only cares about their spiritual life, not their natural life. This is a depressing and insecure way to live and feel.

An unusually independent professing man once wanted to run for political office as a State Representative. When he told the sister worker in the field about his desire, she said, *"Oh, that's too bad. If you win, you won't be able to take part in meeting."* Where did she get the idea that he wouldn't be able to take part in meeting if he became involved in politics? What would the workers have done with King David or Moses or all the Judges and Kings in the Bible? Would they have rejected them? The threat of not being able to take part in meeting is like an excommunication. It is assumed that you have lost out, are in disgrace or among the worst of sinners.

Some workers believe it is wrong to vote and other workers believe in voting. Most workers believe that everything will come to pass according to God's will. So, why bother with the laws of men? They are fatalistic believing it doesn't matter what we do, things will turn out the same way. That attitude is the Islamic attitude of "Allah wills it." It is a false premise to believe that all that happens is God's will. Man has consistently gone against God's will. Christ wept over Jerusalem because it was disobedient to God's will. It is true that everything is in God's sovereign control but that does not mean that men are doing God's will. If God's will was actually being done by all men on earth there would be no need to preach the gospel. There is a huge difference between what God approves and what God allows.

God gave Christians the opportunity to make a difference in the universe by their lives, their prayers and their voices. That's what it means to be salt and light.

Freedom isn't important to the workers because they don't allow their followers much freedom anyway. They have none, so why should anyone else be free? The worker's see the wickedness in the world as part of God's will so ***"don't get upset and don't get involved"***.

Professing people are quietly waiting for Christ to return. They ignore God's command to "occupy" until He returns. Or maybe they interpret the word "occupy" to mean simply "exist". The rightful ownership of heaven and earth is the Lord's. He gave man the dominion and rule over it, and specifically appointed His people to be salt and light in it and to glorify His name. When His people refuse to exert a godly influence on society, they are good for nothing but to be trampled under the feet of men.

Irvinism Is Gnosticism

The belief that there is a division between the natural and spiritual realms is called Gnosticism, and it was the first heresy to invade the Christian church. Colossians, Ephesians and the three epistles of John were written to warn the church against it. Gnosticism is a system of logic that combines Greek philosophies of Pythagoras and Plato to Christian thought. Gnostics believed that the natural side of life, all physical matter is carnal and evil and that all spiritual things are holy. Gnostics believed the resurrection and second coming were spiritual, not natural. They believed that Jesus was Human and Christ was the Spirit. Some Gnostics believed it was all right to be sexually immoral because sexuality was just the physical side of life so it didn't affect the spirit. They believed that angels

had created the world. The Gnostics refused to write down their beliefs because they believed it was impossible to write about spiritual things. Gnostics believed they had received special knowledge from the Spirit that other people didn't have.

Irvine used the word "spiritual" to hide his heresies. When Paul used the word "spiritual" he did not mean non-physical, he was referring to God's Word. To be spiritually minded is to be filled with the knowledge and understanding of God's Word. Jesus said ***"The words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life."*** Irvine and his followers have misunderstood and misused most biblical words.

The workers' have refused to document and publish their beliefs, thus avoiding responsibility for their ignorance. But God recorded His Truth. And the early Christians were equally concerned about recording what Christ and His apostles taught them. Scripture is the most accurately recorded information on the face of the earth, in spite of what its critics have insinuated.

Gnosticism brought impotence to Christianity by separating God's Word from having meaning for the natural world. It made people think they have no right to promote righteousness in society because they believe the Kingdom is not of this world. But Jesus said the Kingdom of heaven had come to earth when He came to men. God intends for wholeness to exist on earth. Gnosticism causes separation on earth and people to withdraw from society. Nothing could be more harmful to society and to Christians.

The only law that has authority on earth is the Word of God. It is the only influence that can help men here and forever. The Word of God speaks to the natural and spiritual life at the same time. One cannot divide life into two parts. The world belongs to Christ. He created it and bought it with His blood. It isn't unspiritual or unholy simply because it is made of visible matter. The new heaven and new earth will be of visible matter also.

Ephesians 6:12 says *"We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."* This verse makes it clear that evil springs from the spiritual world. The spiritual realm is fallen also. Therefore, it is naive to think that anything spiritual is holy and anything natural is evil. The Lord isn't Lord of our lives unless He is Lord of the natural side of our lives, as well.

Traditional Christianity has always been an objective belief. It views the world as real, the handiwork of a personal Creator. It presents God as acting in space-time history and as revealing Himself in human flesh using human words. It teaches that God came to earth in the full flesh of mankind, as Jesus Christ, in order to sacrifice Himself, His Blood to atone for the sins of all men. It looks ahead to a definite, although not predictable, end of earth history with the actual, bodily return of Christ. It has been said, "The most spiritual moment of history (the crucifixion of Christ) was also the most physical moment. Christ bore the pain of all the sins of the world on His Body."

Romans 8:5-11 ***"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."*** Irvine and the workers use this passage in a Gnostic sense in order to yank all the good things away from people that God has given us to use and enjoy while here on earth.

The workers have used the words flesh, body, world always in a negative sense and they always view the words spirit and spiritual in a positive sense. When scripture describes our flesh in a negative way it is in reference to the heart of man being deceitful and desperately wicked. Our mind and will are corrupt things that we cannot trust. Our flesh wars against our soul and the Spirit of God. The wrong emotions (lust of the flesh) are the things that proceed from our heart, that lead us to sin. These thoughts can be brought into captivity through the power of the Holy Spirit and the understanding of scripture. The body of flesh is a temporary dwelling place for our soul and God. In itself, it isn't bad. God had a body when Jesus was on earth. Irvine used the words of scripture in such a Gnostic sense that he always threw the baby out with the bath water.

Christianity does have a spiritual, supernatural side but never at the expense of its natural side and an objective understanding of scripture. The rationality of Christianity spawned the first rational examination of natural science and medicine. It is the foundation of western law and the constitution of the United States. The rationality and mercy of Christianity is the foundation of every good thing man enjoys on earth.

Whenever its rationality and mercy is sacrificed for mysticism, hedonism or legalism, people suffer in many ways. In Acts 20:29, Paul warned, *"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."*

The workers think it is wrong to ask God for any natural help. Willie Jamieson spent time in a Japanese internment camp said that he didn't once pray for natural help or intervention from God. His refusal to pray for God's intervention glorified his own stoicism rather than God's mercy and willingness to help His servants.

Professing people and the workers look forward to death because they don't enjoy this life very much. But if they haven't been born again, life in the next world isn't going to be fun either.

The stories told by hundreds of Christian missionaries in the same circumstances bring more glory to God. They prayed constantly for God's help and though they also went through devastating experiences, there were many evidences of God's intervention in their behalf and in behalf of other praying believers. They also testify to how God used them to draw people to salvation through faith in

Jesus while they were in the prisoner of war camps. Of course, there were many praying Christians who weren't rescued, who suffered and died martyrs' deaths, yet their stories also glorify God because of the supernatural strength and courage they experienced from God's hand. Christians believe that God will answer prayer that is prayed with the intention of bringing honor and glory to God. Christians recognize that they will suffer here on earth for His sake and can't coerce God into rescuing them in every situation. They realize that they are here for His glory, to do His will but Christ encouraged all believers to pray and keep on praying when they need God's help. If God had not intended to answer prayer He would never have commanded its use. Christians who suffer and die a martyr's death will receive much greater honor in eternity than those who are rescued down here. When they die at the hands of unbelievers it doesn't mean that God didn't hear or answer their prayers. He just had a different plan for their lives and will reward them for their faithfulness in eternity. Even Jesus asked to be rescued from Calvary if it were possible, but He concluded, ***“Nevertheless, Thy will be done.”*** And that should be a Christian's prayer, as well. We can ask God to help us, nevertheless, we want God's will to be done!

One professing woman, during a morning Bible study with the sister workers, expressed her thankfulness to God for His care and provision for her family when they went through a particularly difficult financial crisis. She said she was “so grateful that we can totally trust in God to meet **all** our needs.” The verses she was referring to were *“Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat... If God so clothe the grass... Take no thought for the morrow for the morrow shall take thought for itself.”* Matthew 6:25-34 The sister worker looked startled and said, *“Why, that doesn't apply to you, those verses apply to the workers!”* The workers cut scripture up into pieces that apply to themselves and that apply to others.

Scripture indicates that many of our natural problems and even illnesses are sometimes the result of natural behavior that has been inspired by evil spirits and Satan. It is impossible to divide our lives in half. It is impossible to divide Jesus Christ in half.

Because of Irvine's influence, professing people fail to see that natural choices are affecting spiritual blessings as well as natural blessings. They also fail to see the need of meeting the natural needs of other people. The workers have said that it isn't necessary to help people because there are all kinds of government agencies to do that. Yet they aren't supportive of government agencies either. One older worker who was planning to leave the work asked a professing accountant to help him apply for social security and when asked if he had paid into social security, he said with shocked sincerity, *“No! I don't believe in that!”* He believed in drawing out of the social security fund, but he didn't believe in contributing to the social security fund! This is atrocious dishonesty and/or ignorance.

Early Christian missionaries such as David Livingstone worked to help new converts find other means of earning a living than the slave trade or other ungodly activities that pagans were involved in. They saw their role as Christian teachers to encompass the whole realm of life, not just preaching to save souls from hell. They brought modern medicine to primitive people in order to release them from the fear of the witchcraft. They wanted them to be free to serve Christ without fear of sickness or death from the power of demons. And, although they didn't have the miraculous healing ability of Christ, they wanted to follow His example of healing the sick. But there have been many miraculous healings by God through the prayers of Christian missionaries in foreign lands among pagan people!

Christians established orphanages to protect orphans and unwanted children from being murdered or neglected. In other words, they worked to help their converts be victorious Christians. The workers see no the need for those things, for William Irvine condemned them as being too concerned with the world.

The workers rarely discuss answered prayers with the congregation. This is because people don't pray for natural things so they have nothing tangible to talk about. They often speak about the fact that if one asks for certain virtues of patience, faith, and love that adversity will come to work those virtues into one's life. So, who wants to pray for things that will bring adversity? They contradict Christ's words, *“What father will give his child a stone when he asks for bread?”*

Irvine mocked people with money, saying they were going to hell because possession of material things was proof of carnality. But, in some cases wealth is because of God's blessing

Even though money is often a corrupter, it isn't the only corrupter. Power corrupts, sexual lust corrupts, scriptural ignorance corrupts, demonic activity corrupts, the adulation of men corrupts and self righteousness corrupts. Corruption comes from within, not from outward things. Things are only tools for this life.

When other Christians praise God for natural healing or meeting a tangible need, the workers say that the devil is the one who answered those prayers. Why would Satan do something good for people whom he hates? Satan is a liar, a destroyer and a murderer. Is he more merciful than God is? Would he want God to get the glory for something he did? These are serious charges to attribute good things to the work of Satan. Satan is not omniscient or omnipotent. What if God worked those miracles and a Christian attributed them to Satan? That would be blasphemy. Would God be pleased or glorified? The scripture says that ***all good things come*** from God.

“Walking by faith” means to trust that each obedient step we take is directed and supported by God. The workers believe that walking by faith means God will help the workers. Professing people think walking by faith means believing that the workers are the only true preachers of God. Professing people feel they must take care of themselves because God doesn't care about their natural lives. Professing people worry a lot.

Ephesians 3:20 says, ***“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church.”*** Christ not only answers our prayers but He answers them better than we can imagine because he answers out of the abundance of His glory.

James 4:2-3 ***“You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.”*** These verses are a warning against asking for pleasures, but it wasn’t warning against asking for needs.

Matthew 21:22 ***“Whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”*** Luke 11:9, ***“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened unto you. For everyone who asks receives and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you will he give him a stone?”*** This portion of scripture is a sermon on prayer, ending with the statement that the Father would give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him. The Holy Spirit is God who lives in believers and supplies our needs and who helps us pray for what we need. Sometimes He gives us things we don’t need but just because it brings Him glory.

John 14:12-14, ***“Verily, I say unto you, he who believes in me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do because I go to the Father and whatever you ask in my name that I will do that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My Name I will do it.”***

Perhaps the reason the workers and friends don’t have much faith in answered prayers is because there is so much depression and adversity in this church and there are not many examples of answered prayers.

Gnosticism, humanism and deism are philosophies found in liberal churches that use allegorical reference to the scripture and who view Christ as a ***ministerial or moral example rather than an atoning sacrifice***. When the scripture is approached symbolically on a regular basis it strips the word from having real meaning and consequences.

The Bible doesn’t need interpreters as the workers have claimed. It only needed to be translated into the common language of people so we could know what it says. The Old and New Testaments must be viewed literally except for the texts that are specifically prophetic or metaphoric. The Old Testament is not to be ignored. Jesus said in Matthew 5:18, ***“Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the law till all be fulfilled.”*** He was upholding the law and said that he did not come to destroy the law or the prophets. There are many prophecies in the Old Testament that yet must be fulfilled in the second coming of Christ, so the Old Testament cannot be ignored. We must understand the law so that we will understand what sin is and see the need for Christ’s redeeming work and the need to repent and avoid sin.

The early workers (Willie Jamieson and others) used to say that Jesus and the apostles spoke Aramaic, inferring that the Greek and Hebrew translations weren’t accurate. They discouraged the study of Greek and Hebrew and looked down on the early translators of scripture. This is also what other cult leaders have said in an effort to draw people away from faith in the inspired Word of God. Even though Jesus spoke in Aramaic, God chose Hebrew and Greek for the Bible to be recorded in. God is in charge of how His Word has been kept. This is just an excuse for people who don’t want to bother studying God’s Word.

Even though the Two by Two emphasis is on the spiritual realm, the workers have very little to say about heaven. The most common statement made about heaven is, ***“Unprofessing people could never be happy in heaven because it is just like our sweet fellowship here on earth. If they don’t enjoy it now, they never could.”*** Well, the friends and workers don’t enjoy their fellowship that much either. The number of friends and workers who consider suicide attest to that fact.

Interestingly enough, a statement made by William Irvine, reported in The Impartial Reporter and Farmers’ Journal, July 18, 1907, describes hell. ***“Hell is a place where every man will be made to serve God in the Jesus Way.”***

Irvinism Is New Age

Another predominant philosophy found among professing people is New Age. It is a natural consequence when mysticism is emphasized over the reality of Biblical truth. Two by Twos talk more about “the Spirit,” or “Christ Spirit” and claim to have special access to the Spirit. Their Gnostic views about the Spirit have evolved into the New Age claim of being Godlike. New Agers claim to be “Gods.” Remember, William Irvine said the gospel was ***“God in a man speaking.”*** If each person “is God” or “has God speaking through him,” then authority rests in the individual, making the Creator unnecessary. If the gospel is “God in a man speaking” then the universe is in trouble. There are many exworkers and exprofessing people who turn to New Age beliefs when they lose faith in the workers because it is a natural result of Irvine’s influence. Yes, God indwells believers but that doesn’t turn us into gods who can tell others what to do and it doesn’t mean we can independently accomplish anything. We depend on the Holy Spirit and scripture.

Irvinism Is Harmful And Selfish

The intrusion of Irvinism into people’s lives destroys their sense of responsibility because they don’t learn to make choices for themselves. They don’t feel responsible for their behavior. Irvinism destroys their initiative and hope for the future. Irvinism takes the joy out of life. Irvinism causes panic attacks in some people because they don’t understand scripture or what God says about life and the future. They don’t have peace with God. They aren’t able to use the gifts God has given them to do the work He would like them to accomplish because the workers have convinced them that they aren’t supposed to do anything except go to meetings and give their testimonies. Irvinism is an obstacle to every success they might have had as Christians. It creates boredom, frustration, depression and anger. Irvinism is harmful to family life, is divisive to husbands and wives and alienates parents from children. Irvinism creates social isolation and loneliness. Irvinism is harmful in every way and is not scriptural. How many ways can it be said? Irvinism is not Christian!

Irvinism is selfish. The friends are helpful to one another as long as it doesn’t cost them any money. They react with indignation if they think someone would like them to donate money to any cause whatsoever. Families with special needs usually don’t have much

status within the group so people ignore them. If the people with problems express their financial needs they are usually surprised by the lack of concern from others.

Doctrinal Tests

Christian theology is founded on the rock of Holy Scripture. But Irvine, Cooney and their followers mocked Christian theology calling it “vain philosophy.” They claimed that **their words** were founded on the Rock of scripture. Philosophy is based on men’s reasoning. The workers’ quotations make it clear that their foundational beliefs are based on William Irvine’s prejudices, attitudes, and strange use of portions of scripture; not on the totality of scripture at all. The workers and their followers were only united in their opposition towards Christianity, not in their understanding of scripture or of one another’s beliefs. This becomes apparent when you question the average professing person and find out his or her own personal philosophy towards life and God. Because they have not been trained in scriptural thinking they have very few cohesive viewpoints. All they can agree on is meeting in the home and the necessity of the workers for their salvation. All they can do is quote worker clichés.

The best response to their clichés is to ask very humbly, “So... Why do you think that means anything? That isn’t a command, it isn’t scriptural.”

The workers say they **know** the **Truth is the only true church** because it works without any organization. They believe the fact that the Two by Two church exists at all is because God is with them. They feel that other churches exist because men have organized them and financed them with millions of dollars. They think that organization is a **bad, bad thing**. If they looked at God’s creation they would see that God has organized life and the universe better than anyone ever could. All organisms created by God are organized. Families are organized. Organization doesn’t exclude love. It makes love work more effectively and efficiently. Men’s organizations are puny in comparison to the Kingdom of God. The Church is comprised of small local churches scattered all over the world, communities of believers bonded in service to the Lord. They represent many different denominations or non-denominations; and of course they are organized. That doesn’t mean anything, good or bad. It is just a way of doing things to prevent dishonesty, waste, offenses and unscriptural behavior. Criticizing organized churches is like criticizing a man for being organized in his work responsibilities. It is good stewardship.

The workers are organized, financed and controlled through the management of the headworkers. The people who sold all they had and went into the work were the original sources of income but since that time many people have given money to the workers and willed money to the head workers. This money is what finances the traveling, conventions and all the other activities. Most people privately give the workers a little money when they write to the workers or every time the workers come to visit them. Some of the early brother workers acquired money by wearing shabby clothing and making people feel sorry for them.

Whether something works or not is not the scriptural test of truth. Paul said to judge a church leader by his doctrine. Does he agree with scripture?

What do the church leaders say about God, Jesus Christ, Holy Ghost, Scripture, Creation, Doctrine, Sin, Repentance, Redemption, Salvation, the Gospel, Heaven and Hell? How do the workers’ statements compare to the scripture on all those subjects? Jesus says to judge a church by its love and its fruit (good works). In other words, does its behavior coincide with scripture? One man who challenged a decision of the workers was told in no uncertain terms that, “*You don’t have the fear of God!*” This remark is a clear indication of the mindset. The man definitely feared God, he just didn’t fear the workers and he was pointing out to them that the workers weren’t obeying scripture.

The workers always fall back on the old argument that there is only **one way** to heaven and there are too many churches. Therefore, their church is the one and only church. Yet, the book of Revelation mentions Seven Churches and they all had distinctly different strengths, doctrines, activities, weaknesses, attitudes and challenges. The workers think that those seven churches were all Two by Two churches located in different homes in different towns. They condemn all other Christians because they attend different denominations or non-denominations.

The workers give their followers the impression that all the other churches are constantly battling and arguing over details. They talk as if other churches are in competition with each other for members.

Yes, there are people who argue every point they can think of. There are many disagreeable Christians and even more disagreeable non-Christians. It’s not our job to decide whether they are “worthy” or “saved” or not. We must look at scripture and doctrine and examine the (fruit) consequences of what the church is doing. We are to love one another and let God do the rest. But most Christian churches do agree on more scripture than they disagree on. There are a few points where they differ that do not pertain to salvation. There are some areas that Christians have allowed to be areas of disagreement because certain verses can be viewed in different ways. Christians can’t let those people destroy their confidence in scripture or their love for one another. Even people in false churches may be saved. We don’t know. God alone knows. We must be loving and kind to all.

God tells us to love one another, pray for each other, encourage one another, admonish each other, greet each other, serve each other, teach each other, be devoted to one another, honor each other, bear each other’s burdens, forgive each other, submit to each other, discipline one another, baptize each other. It does not tell us to condemn or judge or excommunicate each other over disagreements. Excommunication may have its place as a last resort, but it should be about sin, or doctrine, not about power struggles. The excommunication shouldn’t be done secretly.

A church family helps us keep from backsliding. A church family helps us grow and mature and build our spiritual strength. A church family keeps us from being self-centered and selfish. A church family helps us raise our families and face our sorrows and burdens.

We are members of the Body of Christ.... the universal body...the Kingdom of Heaven. We aren't just members of some little congregation in a small community of some denominational flavor.

Christians believe that every Christian should have a ministry to the church and a mission to unbelievers to share the gospel or to serve others. Christian Churches from different denominational backgrounds cooperate on all kinds of projects. They jointly send missionaries overseas, they support orphanages, and outreaches to street people. They sponsor evangelistic crusades, they train musicians to share the Gospel through music, they support Bible translators for remote tribes, they sponsor Creation seminars, they sponsor Counseling seminars for family life, alcoholics or other special needs, they work together on relief organizations overseas for people who need medical care, food and clothing, education and agricultural help.

Of course Christians have strong preferences for their own churches, just as they have strong preferences on other subjects. But for the most part they try to love one another without being judgmental. However, wherever cultic and heretical beliefs are discovered the beliefs are vigorously opposed. Christians who are too lazy or blind to the danger of false teaching are the first victims of false teachers.

Christians who cooperate on mission projects are just average people, with families, from different denominational backgrounds. They sometimes spend their whole lives, sometimes just a summer, or a few years in ministry. Some of them use their own funds to provide for themselves, some of them go without any financial backing and some receive regular contributions from their church congregation. No one expects them to do these things or puts pressure on them if they stop doing them. This is left up to the Holy Spirit to inspire and equip them for.

Christ said, ***"I am the True Vine and my Father is the Husbandman."*** John 15:1 Christ is a vine with many branches. The Father will cut off branches that don't bring forth fruit. He is the Husbandman. It is not the branches' duty to cut off branches. God will do the pruning. In Matthew 13:31 Christ said, ***"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed... when it is grown it is the greatest of herbs and becometh a tree."*** Christianity is like a tree with many branches. The branches are connected to Christ. The tree will bear the same fruit although the branches may bend in different directions and some branches are older than other branches. Christianity is a relationship with Christ, not a religion about Christ.

The scripture warns Christians against men who teach false doctrine. Christians are to beware of them and deal with them meekly, yet defend the faith with great courage, also. In order to beware of false doctrine Christians must know what true doctrine is. Too many

Christians are presumed to know what the ***true gospel*** is when they really don't. This is sometimes their fault for not loving God enough to find out what He has said.

Go To: Chapter 8