

## “CHURCHES” WITHIN THE CHURCH

Everyone familiar with the scriptures, and the pattern for New Testament unity, is aware that the Lord’s church is supposed to be “one” (1 Cor. 1:10ff; 12:12ff; Eph. 4:1-5; Phil. 2:1ff). Clearly, this is the Father’s will. Tragically, however, that is not the case in fact. Within the broad scope of “the churches of Christ,” we have many splintered groups. Some are identified by doctrinal peculiarities (e.g., “one cup,” “no class,” “non-institutional,” etc.). Others are not clearly distinguished, but exist nonetheless—dispersed throughout the brotherhood, and within many congregations.

First, there is the **Worldly Church**. This is that segment of our fellowship that identifies with us in “name,” but not in practice. These want an affiliation with “Christianity,” for they are fearful of being unbelievers. Yet they have never made the commitment of purity to Christ. They are the sexually promiscuous, boozers, snorters, puffers, profane, revelers, and flesh-flouters. These have but a pretense of godliness (2 Tim. 3:5).

Second, some are to be identified as members of the **Superficial Church**. In his parable of the sower (Mt. 13; Mk. 4; Lk. 8), Christ spoke of those who “believed,” but they could not produce because their “soil” was so shallow that the grain could not take root. In a similar category were the “thorny” disciples—those who had so many distractions they were virtually worthless to the cause of Christ. These are those who may not be overtly worldly, but just hang on by their fingernails to the bare bones of the body of Christ. Frequently they are “loose” doctrinally, not faithful in

attendance, and too “strapped” to give into the treasury as Jesus requires. They are zealous for fleshly family members, but care little for association with Christians. They are addicted to sports, shopping, and jobs. The church runs a distant last in their lives.

Third, there is that element that can only be characterized as the **Pharisaical Church**. This disposition is reflected by those who are “church of Christ.” They want it known that they are members of the “Church of Christ”; they were “baptized by immersion” (is there any other way?) by a “Church of Christ preacher.” Their folks were members of the church so they have the pedigree. In reality, however, their identity with the true church is more formal than factual. They are more Calvinistic than Christian, because they believe that so long as they have the “name” connection with “the right church,” it doesn’t make any difference how they live; they never can be lost! They would “argue” till blue in the face that a Christian can fall from grace, but their personal dedication is zero. They already have fallen away; they just do not acknowledge it.

Fourth, the **Contentious Church** makes its obnoxious presence felt wherever it can. This is the self-deputized church posse that monitors everything and everyone within its range of knowledge. If a church across the country has an internal problem, the bully boys quickly assess the situation, determine who is right and who is wrong, write up an analysis for the entire brotherhood, and “mark” everyone who does not come down on “their side” of the determination. These are the omniscient ones who comb through the brotherhood lecture programs and note the “heretics” who have been invited to participate. They then proceed to castigate

every other brother on the program as “liberal” - because obviously they are in fellowship with “liberals.” The only exceptions will be their own cronies—who themselves have been on a program with someone else, who has been on a program with someone else, who has been on a program with someone who might have been to the “right” or “left” of their standard. If we all followed this procedure, could anyone ever avoid being “tainted”?

Quite frankly, a portion of the brotherhood is in a real mess. And it will not get better until deeply spiritual brethren, seasoned with some common sense, work at it.

**Wayne Jackson** *from The Eastside Edifier*

*Learn how to be a neighbor for Jesus at our...*

## **Family Bible Studies**

*“Neighbors For Jesus”*

**July 23 – 27, 2007**

**7 – 9 p.m. each evening**

**Classes for all ages**

***Adult teacher: Jim O’Connor***

**OLATHE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**515 West Park Street**

**913-764-2325 \* olathecoc.org**

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Evan Pflugradt, 07-07; Abby Stillwell, 07-17;  
Erin Stillwell, 07-17; Cindy Nelson, 07-19.

## **ILL**

**Sunday:** Chris Edwards; Joy and Natalie Parish.  
**Wednesday:** The Brown family, Gary and Melissa Cole;  
Chris Edwards. Louise Dodson had an outpatient  
procedure on Monday. Kathleen Camp continues to  
recover from her foot surgery at her apartment.

**Those battling cancer:** Jamal Abyad, Diane Cannon,  
David Cole, and Ledgia Campbell. Please remember  
these in your prayers, as well as: Meredith Greer, Millie  
Robertson, Allen Scott, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

## **HOME BOUND**

Bob Adams resides at Room D-4 of the Johnson County  
Nursing Center in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home.  
Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

## **OUT OF TOWN**

The Carter's were on vacation in Minnesota and  
Wisconsin last week. Wilba Hopkins was in Springfield  
last weekend. Chelsea Nelson and Erin Stillwell were at  
Little Blue Bible Camp last week. Ted and Julia Thrasher  
were in Springfield and Branson part of last week.

## **FAMILY BIBLE STUDIES**

Remember our **Family Bible Studies**, "*Neighbors for  
Jesus*" **July 23-27**. There is a cookie sign up sheet on the  
bulletin board for those who would like to donate  
refreshments.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Sunday AM, 41; Sunday PM, 33; Wednesday PM, 25.

*"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,  
and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is  
the first and great commandment. And the second is  
like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as  
thyself."*  
**Matthew 22:37-39**

## **Those To Serve**

July 15, 2007

**BUILDING AND COMMUNION.....Cole**

### **MORNING WORSHIP**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS..... Joel Nelson**  
**SONG LEADER..... George Thomas**  
**OPENING PRAYER ..... John Dodson**  
**PRESIDE.....Jeremy Keifer**  
**ASSIST.....John James**  
**ASSIST.....David Parish**  
**CLOSING PRAYER.....Jared Nelson**

### **EVENING WORSHIP**

**OPENING PRAYER ..... Jeff Nemechek**  
**CLOSING PRAYER.....Steve Brown**  
**LORD'S SUPPER.....Jeremy Keifer**

### **WEDNESDAY 18th**

**SONG LEADER..... George Thomas**  
**INVITATION ..... Jeff Nemechek**

## **WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

### **Sunday**

Bible Study ..... 9:30 AM  
Morning Worship ..... 10:30 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

### **Wednesday**

Ladies Bible Study ..... 10:00 AM  
Bible Study ..... 7:00 PM

**Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher**

**Phone: (913) 764-2325**

**E-mail: olathecoc@sbcglobal.net**

**CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**515 WEST PARK**

**P.O. BOX 482**

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