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CHRISTIANITY - MORE THAN JUST GOING TO CHURCH

J. F. Dancer

To many children of God all that is involved in being a Christian is "going to church," taking the Lord's supper, being listed in the church directory ... all this because they were baptized. It has never entered their mind that more is involved than this.

Christianity is a full time job. It involves how one thinks, talks, acts, etc., as well as where one goes and how he dresses. It involves how one makes his living and how they behave when on vacation. It guides one's action while in school as well as on dates. It is the overshadowing influence as one works on the job and influences how one behaves at home. This is what Paul meant when he said that Christ lived in Him. (Gal. 2:20) It also seems to be what Jesus had in mind when he said His disciples were the salt of the earth and the light of the world. (Matt. 5:13-16)

Unless we let our religion flow over from attending services to affecting our daily lives it is of no use. This was the point Paul was making as he directed (by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) the

slaves to serve their masters well. (Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22-25) Their masters would not be so impressed with the fact that the slaves "went to church" as with the fact that the slaves were good workers, honest, dependable, etc., and showed no tendency to be rebellious. Their lives on a daily basis in all relationships demonstrated their faith and obedience to Jesus as Lord of all. So it should be now.

I will make very little impression for good if I talk of the one body, one baptism, one faith (Eph. 4:4-6), if my daily life is ungodly. In addition to being regular in attendance and being involved in the classes and other work of the church, I must also be a demonstration of it to the world on a day by day basis.

On the other hand if I live a life that is sober, righteous, and godly on a day by day basis I won't have to tell people how religious I am, they will see it in my life! Oh, I will still have opportunities to speak of the love of God

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and the gospel of Jesus Christ and to open my Bible and study at every opportunity. But my friends (and even my enemies) will see in my life as a student, a housewife, a salesman, a farmer, a factory worker, or whatever I may be that my religion is not just "going to church" and "taking the Lord's supper" and being "listed in a

church directory."

Paul said a saint belongs to God, both body and spirit. (I Cor. 6:20) By this saying he meant one belongs to God completely. If we are completely His then we will not be just "a church member." We will be a simple New Testament Christian and people will see Christ living in us. What do they see -- good or evil? We determine!

SHEEP DON'T WALLOW

Luther Bolenbarker

The story is told of a small lamb and its mother. It seems that the lamb passed a pig pen one morning on the way with its mother to the pasture. Watching the pigs wallow in the mud seemed like fun, and on an especially hot day the lamb asked his mother if he could jump the fence and wallow in the cool mud.

She replied, "No." Then the lamb asked the usual question, "Why?" The mother just said, "Sheep don't wallow!" This did not satisfy the lamb. He felt that she had "put him down," or that she had exercised force which she shouldn't have, etc. So as soon as the mother was out of sight, the lamb ran to the pig pen and jumped the fence. He was soon feeling the cool mud on his feet, then on his legs and soon on his stomach. After a few moments he decided he had better go back to his mother but found that he couldn't. He was stuck in the mud! Mud and wool do not mix. His pleasure had

bound by his own folly. He cried and finally he was rescued by the pig farmer. The farmer washed and cleaned him and returned him to the fold, upon which the lamb's mother said again, "Remember sheep don't wallow!"

Sin is like the predicament of the lamb in the pig pen - it sticks to you and makes it nigh unto impossible to get out of the sty. Also sin looks so nice to engage in, so easy to escape whenever we wish to do so, but it is not so! Pleasures, which we desired for but a little while imprison us for a life time, and will follow us ever into eternity.

Sin is like the pig pen, too, for because that is what we want to be in, even though we've been there a while and not to do it, but we're in it, we want to get out of it and then have someone help us. Jesus will help and cleanse you if you want out of sin. CHRISTIANS DON'T WALLOW!

"WE DO MANY THINGS THAT WE DON'T HAVE AUTHORITY FOR"

Edward O. Bragwell, Jr.

Sometimes brethren will suggest that the church engage itself in certain activities or claim that there would be nothing wrong with the church taking

certain actions. Conscientious brethren, as well they should, immediately ask for authority for such actions. All too many

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BOO continued

were enjoying their greatest spiritual growth? How many elders have planned a work around the demands of the spectators rather than the needs of the participants?

Spectators need to become participants and find out what it's like out there "on the field". Participants need to keep on doing their best, ignoring the "boos" while looking to their all-seeing and understanding "Manager" for approval. All

need to be preparing for judgment, where it will be the "doers of the word", not the critics, who will be saved. "Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers; be tenderhearted, be courteous" (I Pet. 3:8).

Christians like ball players make a to the "boo-birds".

TWO CRIPPLES

Two cripples entered the church one day;
Crippled - but each in a different way;
One had a body, strong and whole,
But it sheltered a warped and twisted soul.

The other walked with a halting gait
But his soul was tall and fair and straight!

They shared a pew. They shared a book.
But on each face was a different look.

One was light with hope and joy
And faith that nothing could destroy.
The other joined not in prayer and hymn,
No smile relaxed his features grim.

His neighbor had wronged him, his heart was sore,
He thought of himself and nothing more;
The words that were read from the Holy Book
Struck deafened ears and a forlorn look.

To one came comfort - his soul was fed,
The other gained nothing from what was said;
Two cripples left the church that day,
Crippled - but in a different way.

A twisted foot did one body mar,
But the twisted soul was sadder far!

-- Author Unknown

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Authority Continued

times when asked for such authority the response is, "Well, we do many things that we don't have authority for."

What should be our response to such dangerous reasoning? First of all, one who makes such a statement should be asked to give examples where we act without authority. If he is unable to cite any examples then his assertion can assumed to be a false one. If, however, he does cite examples then we need to boldly answer his charges and show him by what authority that we do the things we do. If, in fact, his charges are correct and we do not have authority for our actions, then we must cease the unauthorized practices at once.

What if it is true that "we do many things that we don't have authority for." That does not justify doing other things

for which we have no authority as many brethren would like us to think. Instead, it just means that we must cut those things out and not do them anymore. We, indeed, would encourage anyone to point out any unauthorized practice that we are engaged in so that we might correct the matter. We want to do all things by the authority of our Lord. (Col. 3:17)

Most of the time when brethren make such claims, they are just trying to shake our confidence and justify their own unauthorized actions. Don't be rattled by their tactics. Instead, "be always ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." (1 Pet. 3:15)

THE BOOING SPECTATORS

Bill Hall

Have you ever noticed who does the booing at a ball game? It's not the players on the field. They have made their own mistakes and they are not inclined to boo their fellow player when he makes his. They are pulling for one another, encouraging, helping. They are as a team, working together. There is no booing in a team. It is the spectators who boo. It is the spectators who boo in every walk of life. It is the spectators who do the booing, not the participants.

Unfortunately, in every congregation there are the spectators and the participants. The spectators never teach a Bible class, preach, lead singing, or preside at the table; they really don't get that much involved in the worship itself. But more often than not, they are the very ones who are found criticizing the preacher or song leader or Bible class teacher. They are the ones who are so embarrassed and incensed when someone inadvertently commits an "error" in his efforts to lead the group. They come wanting to hear something that is interesting and that will

make the time fly by. If they hear it, they "cheer"; if not they "boo".

But so with the true participants, those who are really involved in the Lord's work. They are the ones "cheering" for that "rookie" who is teaching his first class or leading his first song. They, too, when attempting to teach his first class, they are looking for ways to be helpful. They are sympathetic, they rejoice in the success of others; they mourn over the sorrows of others; they feel for the one who has failed, make allowances for him, encourage him to try again, and assure him that he will do better next time. They rejoice especially in the development of the young men and women in the Lord's work. They are just as nervous and excited when the young people make their first attempt at presiding at the table or teaching a class as they would be if it were their own children.

How many preachers have decided to move because of the booing spectators right at the time when the participants

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