

Oaks-West Church of Christ

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March 5, 2017

A Learning Church

by Steve Calvert

IN OUR FAST-PACED society of instant oatmeal, minute rice, fast foods, quick grits and 10-minute oil changes, it is easy for God's people to be led into believing in and expecting microwave maturity in Christ. "Why, in just 30 minutes a day—10 easy lessons—you, too, can learn to play the guitar just like Chet Atkins, the banjo just like Roy Clark, or the piano just like Floyd Cramer."

We, as Christians, need to be on special guard against believing that one can become spiritually mature in Christ by just memorizing a few pet verses and

arguments and "going to the right church." Spiritual maturity in Christ is something that cannot be reached by shortcuts. It takes dedication to learning the truth of God's word and practical application of

that truth to our lives so that the world can see Christ in us.

In the church of the New Testament, we see several basic characteristics that led to its

success in the first century. One of these, as seen in Acts 2:42, is their commitment to continuing "steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." It was a church

*"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."
(Acts 2:42 ESV)*

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dedicated to learning and growing in their relationship to God. By Acts 8, we find them going everywhere preaching the word and leading others to Christ. What enabled them to do this? Who trained them, and how?

We see in Luke 19:10 that the all-encompassing mission of Christ (thus the church—His body) was to seek and save the lost. Are we within the church adequately equipping ourselves to fulfill this mission?

True obedience to God is more than a canned 5-step process or a series of “doctrinally sound” external formalities. It is a commitment to knowing the God of our salvation (2 Thessalonians 1:8); to learning who He is and what He expects of us, His children; then, to obeying from the heart that form of doctrine (Romans 6:17), and completely surrendering our lives to His divine will and purpose. A congregation of God’s people can be a growing and learning church only if each Christian making up the church is growing and learning. Different ones have different abilities, but all work together toward the goal of knowing and serving God through the word—then using that to lead others to share in their relationship with God.

In Acts 2, we see these disciples dedicated to doctrinal soundness, an attitude not easily attained. Such an attitude causes

Christians to search the Scriptures—not just to prove others wrong and expose their false teaching (though that is a vital part of it), but with a view to helping each other to be more like Jesus Christ and fulfill our mission to lead others to Him. If 80 to 90 percent of our teaching is geared toward denominational and other religious errors, we breed a generation of experts on the errors of others who may know very little about Christ-likeness and the true divine mission of the church. We may end up “doctrinally sound—asleep” or as “God’s frozen chosen.”

The church’s internal goal is to develop spiritual grown-ups who, by their example and qualified instruction, can teach others the basics of Christian living, such as:

1. How to develop themselves in their own relationship with God, their Father, through Christ; how to develop and strengthen their own shield of faith through dedicated study of the word, motivated by dedication to doctrinal soundness—not as an end in itself, but rather as a means to knowing and serving God.

2. How to “pray without ceasing”—openly expressing to a loving and caring Father their fears, frustrations, failures, doubts, inadequacies, hopes and thanks; how to ask for, and then accept, His divine wisdom and guidance by seeking for themselves in

Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.



Men's Class - 10:00 a.m. March 14

Ladies' Bible Class - 10:00 a.m. March 14 at Zola's home.

Gospel Meeting - San Marcos with Gardner Hall, March 5-8

Gospel Meeting - Pflugerville with Joshua Ellis, March 23-26

Gospel Meeting - Cedar Park with John Lasater, March 26-29

Our gospel meeting - Mark your calendars for our spring meeting, March 26-29 with David Raif.

If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.

the word of God—the means by which He has chosen to reveal Himself intimately to man; how to pray to God about everything (Philippians 4:6)!

3. How to share the gospel with others so as to lead them into a faithful relationship with God; how to speak the truth in love, to pick up and use their own sword of the Spirit and have their feet shod with their own preparation of the Gospel (Ephesians 4:15; 6:10–20).

A mature church doesn't just happen. Just because a church has existed for 10, 15 or 25 years doesn't mean that it is what Jesus desires a church to be. It doesn't come by having the building paid off, paying a good preacher a good salary, or even by having elders. It doesn't come by hearing two sermons and two classes a week. It comes by being dedicated to learning, applying and then spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. It comes, not by being satisfied with "holding our own," but rather by being driven with a purpose to learn and apply the truth and then to share it as one beggar shares with another information about a new source of food.

(1987). Christianity Magazine, 4(9).

NOTES

ABOUT US

The Oaks West church of Christ is a group of individual Christians who have been added to the Lord’s body through baptism (Acts 2:38, 47; Gal 3:26, 27), and have joined themselves together (Acts 2:42ff) in an effort to do the Lord’s will.

We are not a part of any larger organization – we do not follow any man-made creeds and we do not answer to anyone other than the Lord.

Our standard of faith and practice is the Word of God. We believe in the God of revelation (Eph 3:1-7; 2 Tim 3:16-17) and follow his instructions in an effort to have an ongoing relationship with him (1 John 4:7-11; 5:3).

Our times of study and worship are open to all, and our members are happy to meet with interested individuals or families for study.

Evangelist

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SERVICE TIMES

Sunday

Bible Classes..... 9:45 A.M.
Worship. 10:45 A.M.
Worship. 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday

Bible Classes..... 7:00 P.M.