



House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 18 NUMBER 2

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A publication of the... Churches of Christ

- Founder: Christ – Mt. 16:18
- Place: Jerusalem – Isa. 2:1-3, Acts 2:5
- Time: A.D. 33 – Dan. 2:44, Acts 2
- Head: Christ – Eph. 1:22
- Organization:
 - Christ as head – Eph. 5:23
 - Elders oversee local church – Heb. 13:17, Titus 1:5
 - Deacons as servants – Acts 6:1-6, 1 Tim. 3:8-13
 - Members compose body – Col. 1:2
- Name (group):
 - Church of God – Eph. 3:15
 - Body of Christ – Eph. 1:22-23
 - Churches of Christ – Rm. 16:16
 - Bride of Christ – Rm. 7:4
- Name (individuals):
 - Disciples – John 15:8
 - Saints – Rm. 1:7
 - Brethren – Lk. 8:21
 - Children of God – Gal. 4:26
 - Christian – Acts 11:25-26
- Creed: Jesus/Bible – Acts 8:37
- Rule of Faith & Practice:
 - Word of God – 2 Tim. 3:16-17
- Worship: Jn. 4:24
 - Sing – Eph. 5:19
 - Pray – Acts 2:42; 1 Thes. 5:17
 - Teach – Acts 5:42
 - Communion – 1 Cor. 1:23-26
 - Contribute – 1 Cor. 16:1-2
- Mission: Save Souls – 1 Tim. 4:16
- Warning: Be Faithful – 2 John 9

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What Does the **CHURCH** Have to Offer Me?

Allen Webster

Many who had left organized religion are coming back. Some who got busy in college and drifted away now have families and want their children to grow up with effective moral and religious training.

Others who consciously left over a difference with a religious leader or a detrimental group have decided to give religion another chance, noting that one bad apple or even a barrelful doesn't mean apples aren't healthy for us.

Some who've been running the rat race chasing success, significance, salary, and sex are craving something more meaningful. A few who saw spirituality as a do-it-yourself project are warming up to the paint-by-the-numbers plan God has revealed in Scripture.

Some are in the market because they located to a new area or grew dissatisfied with a church because they were not growing spiritually in it or had observed departures from the Bible in it.

You may be one who is wondering, "What does the church offer?" Stated simply, the church of Christ provides the same remarkable "benefits package" today that it has offered mankind since Jesus set it up 1,980 years ago.

PEACE THAT PASSES UNDERSTANDING

Those present on Pentecost lost their peace of mind upon learning that they had contributed to the death of an innocent man. By wicked hands they had crucified the very Son of God (Acts 2:22-23).

Seeking a solution, they inquired, "What shall we do?" (2:37).

Offering divine absolution, Peter responded, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus."

Making a resolution, three thousand were baptized the same day (2:41), whereupon they received the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit (2:38), and membership in Christ's church (2:47).

Luke records they were glad that day (2:41). When the Ethiopian treasurer was baptized by a roadside, he too "went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39). Acts mentions at least twelve other references to joy in the church.

Paul referred to the mindset that follows forgiveness and continues through the Christian's life as "peace of God which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

Many people—perhaps you—long for peace of mind in quiet hours. They struggle with a conscience that speaks up in con-



It's in the church membership package

demnation of previous decisions and actions. They long for a clean slate and the knowledge that everything is right between them and their Creator.

To them Jesus says, “Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). It's in the church membership package.

A FREE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The early church “continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42).

Most Americans value education enough to invest considerable segments of time and thousands of dollars pursuing it. A strong case can be made that Bible instruction is the most important part of a well-rounded education. Theodore Roosevelt said, “A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education.”² Paul gave up everything in exchange for knowledge of Christ (Philippians 3:8). The early saints risked imprisonment, endured beatings, and disobeyed their city council to continue to teach and learn (Acts 4:19–20; 5:41–42).

Religious training is often the first reason people give for attending church services. The most popular response to “why do you go to church,” was “for spiritual growth and guidance.” Leading the “Top 13 Reasons that Unchurched People Choose a Church,” were “preaching” and “doctrines.” Fifty-eight percent of youth who remain active in religion do so because they want “the church to guide decisions in everyday life” and fifty percent felt the church “was helping them become a better person.”³

Surprisingly, even many atheists are attending church these days. A study conducted by Rice University found that about one of five scientists who claim to be atheist or agnostic attend.⁴ Why? The most common reason was so their children could learn values and morals.

One does not need to have children or be an atheist to attend. Since God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105), it gives us guidance in decision-making and a strong moral compass to navigate today's complicated sea of change (Matthew 5:3–12, 28–32; Romans 12:2, 17; 13:1–10; Galatians 5:19–23). Who doesn't need inspiration and encouragement (2 Corinthians 2:14; Philippians 4:13), motivation to live an altruistic, respectable life (Matthew 16:24); information to build a strong marriage and parenting skills (Psalm 127:1–3; Ephesians 5:22–33); knowledge to cultivate healthy habits and avoid addictions (1 Corinthians 6:12); and principles for good business practices and a well-rounded, happy life? (Matthew 7:12; 1 Peter 3:10).

The church of Christ takes seriously its divine commission to teach. Including classes, sermons, Vacation Bible Schools, and sermon series, a congregation offers about 220 hours of instruction each year. At a typical college per hour rate,⁵ that is

about \$14,310 of free education every year. Thus, a child receives \$171,720 worth of education in twelve years; \$257,580 by age 18. Adults receive free instruction amounting to \$1,073,250 over a lifetime.

Want a free education? Jesus says, “Come . . . learn of me” (Matthew 11:28–29). It's in the church membership package.

ACCEPTANCE AND COMMUNITY

We are social creatures living in an increasingly impersonal world. Old-fashioned face-to-face interaction is no longer necessary to pump gas, order pizza, deposit into a bank, or a million other common things. Even socializing is done via Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and chatrooms.

Is it any wonder that loneliness prevails? Thirty percent of Americans say that they have had long periods of painful loneliness; seventy percent don't even know their neighbors.

Not surprising, the main thing many look for in a church is fellowship. They are looking in the right place. The early church continued steadfastly in fellowship (Acts 2:42). They were together with one accord (1:14; 2:1, 46); had all things common (2:44); and had good rapport with others (2:47). They were together in the temple and from house to house (2:46). They ate together (2:46); they prayed together (2:42).

The church offers the opportunity to connect with a community that shares a lifestyle and values the goals of pleasing God, enjoying life, helping others, and going to heaven.

Longing for friends and participation in something bigger than yourself? It's in the church membership package.

ACCESS TO THE ETERNAL GOD

They continued in “breaking of bread” and prayers (Acts 2:42).

Imagine an open invitation to come before the president or access to call the governor for a favor at any time. Jesus offers something better in His church: unlimited access to God.

God has a standing appointment with His family on Sundays. His worship is “in the midst of the church” (Hebrews 2:12), when the saints assemble together (Hebrews 10:25), in “spirit and in truth” (John 4:24), decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40). He ordains each member a priest authorized to offer spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5, 9), including their prayers, songs, contribution, love, and praise.

Acceptance in worship and a blank check in prayer? It's in the church membership package.

Jesus is still accepting new members. Come for a trial, no obligation visit this Sunday.

Endnotes:

¹ This article is no defense of religion in general or Christendom at large. Man-made organized religion is a confused, confusing, and damaging entity. This is an endorsement of simple New Testament Christianity—Christ's original church—of which I am a member and constantly advocate as God's solution to a mixed up religious world and searching souls (Matthew 11:28–20; Ephesians 4:1–6).

² <http://americanhistory.about.com/cs/troosevelt/a/quotetroosevelt.htm>.

³ Research conducted by Gallup, Thom Ranier, and Lifeway.

⁴ <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2011/12/atheists-who-go-to-church-doing-it-for-the-children/>. The data is part of the Religion among Academic Scientists study, a 2,198-person survey of faculty at 21 American research universities. The survey was released in December 2011.

⁵ Our local state university charges \$265 per hour of credit. These numbers figure 18 hours for three semesters a year since churches teach year round.

1,000 Miles an Hour

The earth rotates on its axis at approximately 1,000 miles per hour. If that had been 100 miles per hour, our days and nights would be 10 times longer, and our planet would alternately burn and freeze. Under such circumstances vegetation could not live.

If the earth were as small as the moon, the power of gravity would be too weak to retain sufficient atmosphere for man's needs; but if it were as large as Jupiter, Saturn, or Uranus, extreme gravitation would make human movement almost impossible.

If we were as near to the sun as Venus, the heat would be unbearable; if we were as far away as Mars, we would experience snow and ice every night, even in the warmest regions.

If the oceans were half their present dimensions, we would receive only one-fourth the rainfall we do now. If they were one-eighth larger, our annual precipitation would increase four fold, and this earth would become a vast, uninhabitable swamp.

Water solidifies at 32 degrees Fahrenheit above zero. It would be disastrous if the oceans were subject to that law, however, for then the amount of thawing in the Polar Regions would not balance out, and ice would accumulate throughout the centuries. To prevent such a catastrophe, the Lord put salt in the sea to alter its freezing point.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

JOHN 8:32

Faith Facts

Faith, Object of

Faith in God (Mark 11:22)

Faith in Christ (John 14:1)

Faith in the Word (John 17:20)

Faith, Manifestations of

Weak faith (Romans 4:19-20)

Little faith (Matthew 6:30)

Dead faith (James 2:17)

Great faith (Matthew 8:10)

Faith, Accomplishments of

We are justified by faith (Romans 5:1)

We are purified by faith (Acts 15:9)

We are sanctified by faith (Acts 26:18)

We are guarded by faith (1 Peter 1:5)

—Jim Martin

"He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast."

PROVERBS 15:15



A Real Saint

Two brothers had terrorized a small town for decades. They were unfaithful to their wives, abusive to their children, and dishonest in business. The younger brother died unexpectedly. The surviving brother went to the preacher of the local church. "I'd like you to conduct my brother's funeral," he said, "but it's important to me that during the service, you tell everyone my brother was a saint."

"But he was far from that," the minister countered. The wealthy brother pulled out his checkbook. "I'm prepared to give \$100,000 to your church. All I'm asking is that you publicly state that my brother was a saint."

On the day of the funeral, the preacher began his eulogy this way. "Everyone here knows that the deceased was a wicked man, a womanizer, and a drunk. He terrorized his employees and cheated on his taxes." Then he paused. "But as evil and sinful as this man was, compared to his older brother, he was a saint!" —Greg Asimakoupoulos, Naperville, Illinois. *Leadership*, Vol. 16, no. 4.

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine."

PROVERBS 17:22

God's Plan for Saving Man

God's Grace	Ephesians 2:8
Christ's Blood	Romans 5:9
The Holy Spirit's Gospel	Romans 1:16
Sinner's Faith	Acts 16:31
Sinner's Repentance	Luke 13:3
Sinner's Confession	Romans 10:10
Sinner's Baptism	1 Peter 3:21
Christian's Work	James 2:24
Christian's Hope	Romans 8:24
Christian's Endurance	Revelation 2:10

Home PAGE



Best Words

Six hundred students at a university were asked to write the most beautiful word in the English language. Four hundred and twenty-two wrote the word *mother*. One hundred and twelve wrote *home*.



"Honour thy mother."

MARK 10:19

What We Remember

Mike Wallace of *60 Minutes* recently passed away. His son Chris Wallace, *Fox News Sunday* host, was interviewed for an AP story shortly before his father's death. In that interview Chris explained that his father's health had deteriorated.

"He's in a facility in Connecticut," Wallace said. "Physically, he's okay. Mentally, he's not. He still recognizes me and knows who I am, but he's uneven. The interesting thing is, he never mentions '60 Minutes.' It's as if it didn't exist. It's as if that part of his memory is completely gone. The only thing he really talks about is family—me, my kids, my grandkids, his great-grandchildren. There's a lesson there. This is a man who had a fabulous career and for whom work always came first. Now he can't even remember it."

"Wherefore do ye . . . labour for that which satisfieth not?"

ISAIAH 55:2

For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

Highly Favored

Of all the young women in the world at the time, God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus. The angel informed her that she was "highly favoured" of God (Luke 1:28).

It is important for mothers to see that they are highly favored of God just by being allowed to be mothers. God favors all of us, of course: He saves us, uses us—a phenomenal privilege and an awesome responsibility to make ourselves available to receive His favor. But godly mothers must especially be highly favored of God.

History shows almost all the greatest workers for God had godly mothers.

As Noah's wife, let mothers instill in their boys God's principles so they can live righteously when all their companions are evil (Genesis 6:1–6).

As Rachel, let mothers train children to avoid the strong temptations of the teen years (Genesis 39).

As Jochabed, let mothers train children to love and serve God above the world's riches (Exodus 6:20; 2:1–10).

As Hannah, let mothers teach children to pray (1 Samuel 1:11, 19–28).

As the Shunammite woman, let mothers teach their children to be at peace (2 Kings 4:26).

As Elisabeth, let mothers teach children to be righteous before God (Luke 1:6).

As Mary, let mothers teach children to obey God (Luke 2:51; John 2).

As the Canaanite woman, let mothers cry to Jesus that He might help their daughters (Matthew 15:21–28).

As Mary, John Mark's mother, let mothers teach children to value worship assemblies (Acts 12:12; 2 Timothy 4:11).

As Lois and Eunice, let mothers teach the value of unpretended faith (2 Timothy 1:5).

"She that bare thee shall rejoice."

PROVERBS 23:25

The Light of the World

At a church program a little boy was to recite a Scripture he had memorized.

When he got in front of the crowd, the sight of hundreds of eyes peering at him caused him to forget his verse. Every line that he had so carefully rehearsed faded, and he stood there unable to utter a single word.

In the front row, his mother was almost as frantic as the little boy. The mother gestured, moved her lips, trying to form the words for the boy, but it did no good. Finally, the mother, in desperation, whispered the opening phrase of the memorized Scripture: "I am the light of the world."

Immediately the child's face lit up and a smile appeared on it as he said with supreme confidence: "My mother is the light of the world!"

Of course, everybody smiled and some laughed out loud. Then they soberly reflected that the boy, in some ways, was not far from wrong. For the mother is the light of the child's world.

"Beloved in the sight of my mother."

PROVERBS 4:3



Who Are the Happiest People on Earth?

An English newspaper asked its readers this question: "Who are the happiest people on earth?" These were the four prize-winning answers:

1. A craftsman or artist whistling over a job well done.
2. A little child building sand castles.
3. A mother, after a busy day, bathing her baby.
4. A doctor who has finished a difficult and dangerous operation and saved a human life.

No millionaires among these, one notices. No kings or tycoons. Wealth and position, no matter how the world

strives for them, are not the things most people in their wisdom consider the essential quality of happiness.

Happiness today is that elusive quality much searched for and not often enjoyed. However, Solomon said it long ago:

"For a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life. And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God" (Ecclesiastes 3:12-13). —Ken Dye

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Answers to Last Issue: *The Crucifixion of Jesus* 1. F (two) (Luke 23:32); 2. T (23:33); 3. T (23:33); 4. F (for the Father to forgive, 23:34); 5. F (cast lots for them, 23:34); 6. F (soldiers, 23:36); 7. F (three, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, 23:38); 8. F (King of the Jews, 23:38); 9. F (only one, the other to be remembered in the kingdom, 23:39, 42); 10. F (he knew of God, kingdom, innocence of Jesus, 23:40-42); 11. T (23:41); 12. F (sixth hour, 23:44); 13. F (same day, 23:43); 14. F (temple, from top to bottom, Matthew 27:21); 15. F (said He was a righteous man, Luke 23:47); 16. F (Joseph, 23:50); 17. F (23:53); 18. F (Galilee, 23:49, 55); 19. F (women, 23:56); 20. F (rulers derided Him, 23:35).

The Seven Churches of Asia

Directions: Find your answers in Revelation 2-3.

1. This church had left their first love _____.
2. Whose deeds did Jesus "also hate"?
3. What would those who were "faithful unto death" receive? _____
4. Which church was in "poverty" yet was "rich"?
5. Which church dwelt where Satan's seat was?
6. What "faithful martyr" is mentioned by name? _____
7. Who cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel? _____
8. Which church suffered (tolerated) "that woman Jezebel"?
9. "As many as I _____, I _____ and chasten: be zealous therefore, and _____."
10. "Jezebel" seduced Jesus' servants to "commit _____" and to "eat things sacrificed to _____."
11. Which church was "neither hot nor cold"?
12. Which church received the longest "letter" (number of verses)? _____
13. Which church had a name that they lived but were dead?
14. Which church had a few that had not "defiled their garments"?
15. Which church was given an "open door" than no man could shut?
16. The church at Philadelphia was warned to let no man take thy _____.
17. Which church thought they were "rich" but were "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked"?
18. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the _____ saith unto the _____."

—Allen Webster

Don't Overlook the Obvious

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson went on a camping trip. In the middle of the night, Holmes woke Watson and said, "Watson, look up and tell me what you see." Watson said, "I see millions and millions of stars." Holmes asked, "And what does that tell you?" Watson replied, "Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Theologically, it tells me that God is great and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, it tells me that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you Holmes?" Holmes answered simply, "Somebody stole our tent."

We may wonder why our lives are not going as well as we would like. Have we overlooked the obvious? Have we consulted God's book about how to live? Are we following His way? Are we seeking His blessing?

Let's study together.

"I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word."

PSALM 119:16



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- ▶ The Relevance of the Gospel Today —Eric Owens
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- A Baptism in New Testament Times
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How Did You Get That?

A little girl once asked her mother, who had a withered hand, how it came to be deformed.

She replied that it had occurred when she had rescued that little girl from a fire in her crib. "It was for you, my child," she said, "that this poor hand suffered."

To some it might have appeared unsightly, but from that time on to that loving daughter it was a beloved token of her mother's love.

Christ "endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:2), but Christ made it a thing of glory

(1 Corinthians 1:18). Even in heaven the words of praise are, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" (Revelation 5:12).

—Mark Posey, Decatur, Alabama

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

HEBREWS 7:25

MARRIAGE

MARRIAGE

- Divine institution (Genesis 2:21–22; Matthew 19:4–6)
- Between a man and a woman (Matthew 19:4–6)
- Marriage purposes include companionship (Genesis 2:18–25), to populate the earth (Genesis 1:27–28), sexual fulfillment (Genesis 2:24; 1 Corinthians 7:3–5), avoiding fornication (1 Corinthians 7:2), and domestic structure (Titus 2:2–5).
- Makes husband and wife one (Ephesians 5:28–32)
- For life (Matthew 19:6, Romans 7:1–4)
- God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16)
- Allows for divorce only for fornication (Matthew 19:7–9)

HUSBANDS

- Woman created as complement for man (Genesis 2:23)
- Love wife as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25–29)
- Be joyful with wife (Ecclesiastes 9:9; Proverbs 5:18)
- Give honor to wife (1 Peter 3:7)
- Be spiritual leader of wife/household (Ephesians 5:23)
- Provide for family (1 Timothy 5:8)

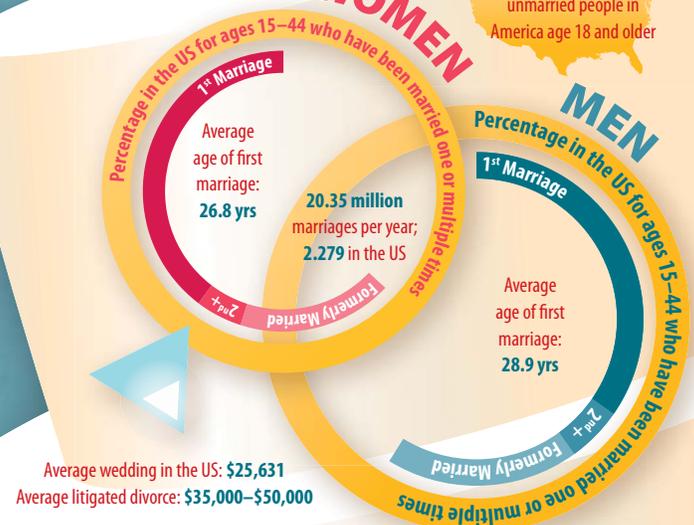
WIVES

- Love husband/children (Titus 2:4–5)
- Submit to husband's authority (1 Peter 3:1; Colossians 3:18; Ephesians 5:22–24)
- Be a companion (Malachi 2:14)
- Be virtuous (Proverbs 12:4)
- Keeper of the home (Titus 2:4–5)
- Dress/act modestly (1 Peter 3:3–4; 1 Timothy 2:9–10)
- Do not be quarrelsome (Proverbs 21:9)



WOMEN

There are **102 million** unmarried people in America age 18 and older



If you have a religious affiliation, you are **14%** less likely to get a divorce

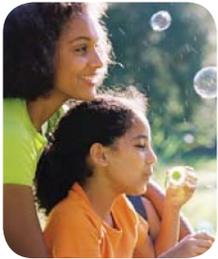
40.8% of births in the US are now to unwed mothers.



After seven years only **21%** percent of unmarried cohabitating couples were still together



How to be Happy



If you ask a **millionaire** to define happiness, he might say that to be happy is to have two million dollars.

If you ask a nine-year-old boy, he might answer happiness is being ten years old. If you ask a candidate, he might say winning an upcoming election. To the athlete, it might be winning the big game.

All of these are fleeting, but God knows how to bring lasting happiness to each of us. Happiness is found in the following:

1. Being corrected by God: “Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty” (Job 5:17).
2. Having children: “Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them” (Psalm 127:5).
3. Working an honest day for an honest day’s pay: “For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee” (Psalm 128:2).
4. Being the children of Almighty God: “Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord” (Psalm 144:15).
5. Happiness is found in obeying the will of the Father: “He that keepeth the law, happy is he” (Proverbs 29:18).
6. Giving to those in need: “He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he” (Proverbs 14:21).
7. Having a tender heart that can be pricked by God’s word: “Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief” (Proverbs 28:14).

Where are you searching for happiness? Try God’s way. —Barry Gilreath



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