

PRAYERS

Butch and Chris (Anita's son and daughter in law) – Chris has one more chemo treatment and the they will schedule surgery.

Connie LaRocque – Recovering from surgery.

Mark (Linda's family) –Dealing with a severe head injury. They are hoping to go to rehab soon.

Church in Pierre – Several members with medical issues

Congregation News

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: When the conscience is asleep, there is no alarm clock.

Those Privileged to Serve

Sunday Morning Service:

2/4/18

Bible Class	Tom Bright
Announcements	Tom Bright
Song Leader	Tom Bright
Opening Prayer	Paul Darling
Lord's Supper	Paul Darling
Scripture Reading	Colby Crawford
Sermon	Colby Crawford

2/11/18

Colby Crawford
Paul Darling
Tom Bright
Tom Bright
Tom Bright
Colby Crawford
Paul Darling
Paul Darling

Bible Classes

Sunday Morning

Adult	Tom Bright
Children	Colby Crawford
Toddlers	Cindy Bright
Babies	Anissa Crawford

Wednesday Evening

Tom Bright
Linda McBrayer

Birthdays & Anniversaries

February 11	Steve Scheff
February 11	Shawn & Valerie Brist

Building Cleanup

McBrayer

Aberdeen church of Christ

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Bulletin Submissions

If you would like anything added to the bulletin such as prayer requests, news, or events, please make submissions by Friday night to: tlbj@sbcglobal.net

Aberdeen church of Christ

February 4, 2018

Conviction Not Compromise

The more I study the history of the churches of Christ in the twentieth century, the more amazed I am at what these men and women of faith accomplished.

At the turn of the last century, our fellowship numbered only about a hundred thousand adherents, largely restricted to a few areas of strength in the South and Midwest. Within a few decades, the churches of Christ would represent a worldwide movement claiming several million members, with well over a million members in the United States. This phenomenal growth came early in the twentieth century. Less increase, proportionally, has occurred over the past fifty years.

Why did the church grow in those early years, and why has the growth been lackluster since mid-century? I would hazard three observations.

First, the churches of Christ in the early 1900s possessed convictions tempered by the fires of conflict. The prior generation witnessed the apostasy of the vast majority of congregations as they accepted instrumental music, women leading in worship, and a looser view of biblical authority. The church grew because the church knew the truth about themselves. They understood what God expects the church to be.

Second, the churches of Christ in the early 1900s were focused on the work of the local congregation. Part of the great apostasy of the 1800s was fueled by the Missionary Society and other unauthorized institutions which encroached on the work of the church. The church grew because the church knew the truth about God's plan for the church to do His work in this world. They understood the difference between the Lord's church and religious institutions which are not the Lord's church.

Third, the churches of Christ in the early 1900s were passionate about reaching the lost. The apostate Disciples of Christ denomination began an approach of "open fellowship" with the unimmersed, beginning in the mid-1800s.

The churches of Christ grew in the early 1900s because the church knew the truth about the way of salvation. They understood the difference

between someone who had been “born again of water and the Spirit” and someone who has not.

In contrast with the dynamic growth of the past, the churches of Christ have stagnated in recent years. I believe there is a direct correlation between our lack of growth and the muddled thinking that now characterizes a large part of our fellowship. We need to return to the profound truths, revealed by God, which show us the plan God has for the church and the pattern we must follow to bring the message of salvation to a lost world.

The Convictions of the Lost

The lost are convicted, too. Don't let anybody say they're not. Some of the strongest-held beliefs, some of the most fully-persuaded minds, and some of the most determined hearts are attached to lost individuals. Even in the Bible, one finds the deepest rooted convictions in the heart of the lost sinner. If one wants to find a people wholly dedicated, he should take a trip into Noah's world (see Gen. 6:5). If one wants to find a people completely set in a given pursuit, he should visit with King Solomon about the sons of men (Ecc. 8:11).

We should abhor rather than admire the lifestyle of the lost. This statement, if it has ever been true, applies to the people who spread themselves around Pilate's judgment seat. Grounded in their hatred and jealousy of Jesus, the chief priests, the elders, and the persuaded multitude had as their singular focus the destruction of Jesus. They wanted Him gone, and any way they could do it they were willing to try. The rulers of the people had tried to ridicule, embarrass, trap, frustrate, tempt and discourage Him, but they had failed. One would think that, after three years of trying, they would have given up on their task. But, they were convicted. The mob who finally "got rid of Jesus" (actually, they fulfilled God's eternal plan for their and our salvation, and they did not foresee the resurrection) was a crowd we could learn a few lessons.

THEY WERE UNITED (Mat. 27:22). Pilate asked them what he should do with Jesus. All of them said, "Let Him be crucified." No dissension is recorded by Matthew. Together, they forced a governor to submit to their wishes. How unfortunate that they were united to do evil. When the righteous are united under the proper standard (Eph. 4:13), "how good and how pleasant it is..." (Psa. 133:1). Think of the untold good Christ's disciples

can do under the banner of brotherly love (Heb. 13:1), outdone only by our love, devotion and obedience to the Lord (Heb. 5:9).

THEY WERE DECISIVE (Mat. 27:21,22). There were no long committee meetings. There were no endless business meetings. They did not vacillate in this moment of decision. Pilate knew who they wanted crucified and who they wanted released. Though iniquitous, their decision was most expedient for their stated goal.

The Lord's church in most places does an adequate job of planning its local work. Alas, in some cases, their best laid plans get lost somewhere between the forming and fulfilling. No congregation wants to rashly enter any endeavor--whether it be picking up support of an extra missionary or the execution of a needed program or plan. Yet, at times, the church can be overcautious and ponderous in discharging their responsibilities. Surely God was thrilled at the decisive way the disciples in the early church mobilized, spread the gospel, and reached the lost. The book of Acts is the model of decisiveness for today's church.

THEY ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY (Mat. 27:25). Pilate wanted to know who was going to take moral responsibility for killing the just Jesus (24). Seemingly without hesitation, "All the people...said, His blood be on us, and on our children." They collectively pointed the finger of guilt at themselves. Later, when Peter's Pentecost preaching pricked their hearts, in a different way they took responsibility for this heinous acts (Acts 2:36-37).

Every person must take responsibility for his actions. Everyone must reap what he, individually, has sown (Gal. 6:7-8). In the congregational setting, the eldership must accept responsibility for what goes on among its members. When congregations individually begin to accept responsibility for themselves, theretofore avoided subjects will again be addressed courageously and frequently by the pulpit, eldership, and classroom.

We do not admire those responsible for slaying the sinless Savior. They were callous-hearted wretches darkened by the night of sin. However, they teach us the power of a united people ready and eager to stand accountable for what they decided to do. Churches will grow who follow God's blueprint for His kingdom with enthusiasm and conviction. Let us maintain our convictions in "well doing" (Gal. 6:9).