



ROBYN GOOL

Insights

Attitude Of The Local Church

There are certain attitudes that the laymen should have about their local church that would help it to be a viable and dynamic entity in society. Attitudes such as purpose, believing in and expecting miracles, in conjunction with making an impact on society, should permeate the hearts of the laity. Another such attitude is "this church is my feeding ground."

Before this conclusion can be made we must ask ourselves the question, "Does this church qualify as feeding ground?" How can we know?

Spiritual and intelligent reasoning informs us that if Jesus declared "...upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18), then our feeding ground *could only* be a church that teaches and preaches what its founder proclaimed. Since Jesus is the Head of the church (Eph. 1:22) and we're His body (the body of Christ), shouldn't the body believe like the Head? If we consider ourselves as part of the family of God, washed in His blood, we would at least have to attend a church that adheres to the basic fundamental teachings of Christ. I don't believe that a person could be in the church *Jesus wants them in*, if the church doesn't preach what the founder did. What did Jesus teach?

As you study the ministry of Jesus and read Hebrews 6:1-2, you find that Jesus taught and endorsed being born again, water baptism, being filled with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, living above sin, the gifts of the Spirit, faith that overcomes, healing, authority over devils, victory over fear, oppression and worry, abundant life, repentance, the resurrection, eternal judgement, laying on of hands, anointing with oil, and more. As you look at the New Testament you can not find one church that didn't embrace and teach these truths. Why? Because that's what the founder (Jesus) taught and established.

I'm not saying that churches that don't hold these teachings are not of God. Some are simply blinded by denominational spirits, held captive by the power of tradition, and brainwashed by the theology and philosophies of seminary. Others are like Apollos in Acts 18:25 "...he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, *knowing only* the baptism of John." They're sincere in their love for God, and are teaching only what they know. However, if they will be teachable like Apollos, God will give them more insight so they might know the way of God more perfectly (Acts 18:26).

God said, "I will give you shepherds that will feed you" (Jer. 3:15). Not entertain you, preach what you want to hear or a social, political gospel. But feed you! It seems to reason ministers *should only* feed what the founder fed.

In conclusion, we *must stop* choosing churches based on the proximity to our home, our denominational preferences, choirs, or that we were raised there, bought a window, pew or grace plot. But rather pray and *let God send us* to our feeding ground. Man should not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Bishops Encourage Activism

AME Zion 103rd Session Of Western N.C. Conference

By Cassandra Wynn
THE CHARLOTTE POST

In the midst of its bicentennial, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church has on the top of its agenda the fight against racism.

"The church must seek to heal the malignant wounds of racism in the world," said Rev. Ruben L. Speaks, presiding prelate of the First Episcopal District, at a press conference at little Rock AME Zion Church last week. Speaks was at the 103rd ses-

sion of the AME Zion Western North Carolina Annual conference.

Founded in 1796, the AME Zion Church began celebrating its bicentennial in 1992. The observance will culminate with a national celebration in 1996.

Encouraging participation in the political process, said Speaks, is an important role of church leaders. "We must teach our people to register and vote. The black church must encourage people to use their vote to transform our



Bishop Marshall Strickland (left) with Speaks at conference.



Bishop Ruben Speaks urged churches to tackle problems for blacks.

PHOTO/PAUL WILLIAMS III

institutions and redeem our society. We must realize the power of the ballot."

Speaks said that the history of the AME Zion Church dictates its political activism. "We have been called the Freedom Church. Frederick Dou-

glass, Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman were all AME Zions. We are founded upon two pillars: Christian evangelism and human liberation."

Speaks urged a "very aggressive" role in the political

arena for the church. "We must make our vote count and vote for candidates who uphold fairness and justice." He said that politicians must be held accountable for their actions. "We must remind candi-

See BISHOPS Page 12A

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON 'Rejoice In The Lord'

Lesson Background

Paul called for an end to hard feelings between two women in the church. Disunity can turn our minds from the positive to the negative, from the helpful to the hurtful, from joy to grieving, from contentment to complaining. So Paul concludes his letter with a recipe for being joyful, positive relationship with ourselves: less stress, strain, and anxiety. All these affect our physical health. This lesson does not feed our spiritual nature only, but also our emotional, social, mental, and physical makeup.

The note of joy runs throughout this letter. When Paul tells us to rejoice, he is talking about our reaction to whatever we encounter. We cannot control the actions of others, but we can control our reactions. To let others control them is to give up our own control of our lives. Paul does not say to rejoice only when things are going well, but to rejoice always. The reason for rejoicing is not that everything is going well, but that we are in the Lord. That means we have a constant companion who loves us and whom we love, and He is the Master of Heaven and earth. If we let earthly circumstances destroy our joy, it is because we are looking at the circumstances rather than at our relationship with the Lord.

We live among people, and we are to live so they will know our moderation. The Greek word means basically that we are fair and reasonable: but fair and reasonable

people are also gentle and kind, and sometimes that is what the Greek word means. Gentleness and kindness enhance good relationships. Who among us likes to be with an overbearing, quarrelsome person? When we want a companion, do we call up someone who is arrogant and insulting?

When people make it hard to be kind, we need to remember the Lord is at hand. Jesus may appear at any time; we want to be pleasing to Him at all times. But He is at hand in another sense too. He is a resident guest within us here and now, in the person of the Holy Spirit. His Spirit is the Spirit of kindness. If our kindness is not enough, we can draw on His.

Prayer is an antibiotic to keep us from going to pieces. Prayer is chatting with God. We can chat in a negative way, filling our talk with complaints, blaming God, making excuses--but that is not the way Paul recommends. Rather, our supplication and requests are to be wrapped in thanksgiving.

We are not thankful because we are sick, or because we lose a job or a home or a loved one. But even in such tragedies there are other things to be thankful for. We are to see them and keep on giving thanks.

Some prayers are too general. If you say, "Bless my family," what do you mean by that? What blessing do you need? God knows, but making specific requests helps you to know and to be thankful when your prayer is answered.

God's peace is the opposite of being torn apart or going to pieces. Peace comes through joy in the Lord, closeness to the Lord, and communication with the Lord. Such peace passeth all understanding. Physicians, psychologists, and philosophers cannot analyze it; but God gives it when our relationship with Him is right.

Quite literally, anxiety troubles the heart. The arteries narrow, the blood pressure goes up, the heart works harder, the possibility of blockage increases. God's peace avoids this stress. God wants us to enjoy living, not just endure it. But this promise is no less precious when we take hearts to mean our emotions. Too often we are upset over trivial things, distracted, torn in our feelings and thinking. Such things are better committed to the Lord in thankful prayer. We do what we can about the distressing things of course; but we do it with trust in the Lord, not with heartbreaking anxiety.

We are to be selective in our thinking. If we want to be joyful, we need to think about good things. Too often we allow hurts, sins, and disappointments to affect the way we think about people and situations. Then our disconsolate thinking interferes with our joy and our relationships with others. Don't gossip; don't slander anyone. One of the marks of maturity is to get more satisfaction in keeping a secret than in telling one. Another mark of maturity is to pass on the good instead of the bad.

Is Your Name Written?

This Is A Paid Advertisement

"I S YOUR NAME WRITTEN THERE?" PART I

If your name is written in the Book of Life, you won't rest until you know it. And you can and will know it on this side of eternity. This thing of you can't know you are saved until you die is a lie out of Hell. Just ask yourself how you could rejoice in the Lord if you didn't know Him. Every believer knows that he or she is saved. They know they have passed from death unto life.

Once you were dead without Christ, who is our life, Christ is my life. Once I did not care for Him, and I could go all day long and not think about Him. But not so now. I love to meditate on Him. I love to be taken up with Him. Are you taken up with Christ? Are you? Don't fool yourself, friends. You are either taken up with Christ or you are taken up with yourself. What do you meditate on as you go about your daily tasks? Are you meditating on the world and all its so-called pleasures?

Before the foundation of the world God chose a certain number (Eph. 1:4) and wrote their names in the Book of Life. Is your name written there? I praise the Lord mine is. If your name is not written there, the wheels of grace will never turn in your direction. If the wheels of grace begin to turn in your direction, all the world, and

Satan and his emissaries will try to stop them, but praise God they cannot. How is it with you, friend? You are going out into eternity, like it or not.

Remember, if your name is not written in the Book of Life there is no hope for you. It would have been better that you had never been born. I did not know that my name was written there until the Lord saved me. When He showed me that He had blessed me from eternity to eternity, I knew my name was written there. Is your name written there? Be honest, my friend, for the time is so short.

I don't have much time left to warn you. Christ is coming soon. Are you ready to meet the Bridegroom? Do you have on the Wedding Garment? If Christ should come today, are you going to be taken or left? Think seriously on these things, for you are headed to Heaven or Hell.

Listen to these sad words, my friends; "AND WHO-SOEVER WAS NOT FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE." Rev. 20:15. Will that be you? If you fail to turn to Christ it will be you. I plead with you to turn to Christ now. The Lord is coming soon. This day will be the SADDEST DAY IN ALL THE WORLD.

By J.M. Little