



# Fixating on What's Important: Going to Church, or Worshipping God

By Bill Fix

Last week as we were leaving to visit a local church while on vacation, I was struck when my son observed people heading to the beach and asked why everyone wasn't going to church. I explained to him that it is a matter of priorities—that we believe it's important to set aside time to worship God on the first day of every week like we see in Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 16:2, and Heb. 10:24-25. Why make that extra effort when on vacation?

Do we assemble out of fear of God's wrath, or do we assemble because we seek to please our Creator and desire the nourishment of God's word? Do we wish to edify each other and crave the encouragement of God's people? Luke tells us the early church was "together" and continued daily "with one accord" (Acts 2:44-46). Where else would those who "hunger and thirst for righteousness" be on the Lord's day (Mt. 5:6)?

Do we desire to "proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" when we partake of the Lord's Supper each Sunday (1 Cor. 11:23-26)? Are we concerned with doing the work of the church, supporting it financially, "each according to his ability" and taking an active role (Acts 11:29)?

If we aren't present, how can we fulfill these responsibilities? Whether we're on vacation or at home on an ordinary week, finding a faithful congregation with which to assemble can encourage the Christians there, keep our priorities in check, and strengthen our faith. The Corinthian church, despite all their problems and divisions, "gave themselves to the Lord" and grew (2 Cor. 8:5). We can certainly attend worship without giving ourselves to the Lord, but is the inverse possible?

## "Our" Liberal Brethren

By Robert F. Turner (Feb. 1969)

Has there ever been a "liberal" who would admit it? The term has such a wide variety of meanings and applications that one can always find some way to avoid its odium, while basking in what is supposed to be its blessings. Our words weave tangled webs.

Theologians make a distinction in 19th Century Liberalism and that of this century. "Neo-orthodoxy" offered a "new" look at God and the Bible, which (from the theologian's point of view) "exploded like a bomb"

theories of the 19th Century. But to those of simple faith in verbally inspired revelation, neo-orthodoxy is just 20th Century Liberalism.

Until recently, the above forms of "liberalism" had not touched brethren of this century. Historically, our only contamination with such was that of "ultra-liberal" brethren (from ca. 1875 to 1906) who were rapidly becoming the Disciples denomination of today (Liberal Christian Church, to some of you). But today some of those preachers who have already accepted sponsoring church arrangements, brotherhood institutionalism, and a social concept of the gospel, are now dabbling in neo-orthodoxy. (The pattern is so like that of the Christian Church digression, it is a "crying shame" so many of our brethren are ignorant of church history, and cannot see the "repeat" unfolding before their eyes). When men begin to argue "no pattern" and "principle eternal" (something unrevealed by precept, approved example or necessary inference—deductive reasoning), they have already opened a serious gap in fundamental concepts of divine revelation. As a rule, our brethren are not readers of books on theology (this is not a criticism) and what little they know about "modernism" or "liberalism" is likely to be some preacher's unsophisticated analysis of 19th Century infidelity. So, when some brother advocates a "brotherhood hospital," it is very probable that he (1) has given little thought to principles of organization involved; (2) thinks only of the surface "good" to be done; (3) if you can get him to discuss the scriptures at all, he mouths the "no pattern" "individual and church are same" or "no need for authority" arguments he has heard others make; and (4) is highly insulted if you call him a "liberal". He thinks you are charging him with denying the virgin birth.

If I were a teacher in a theological seminary, or writing articles for some modern denominational journal, I suppose I would have to use "liberal" with current theological connotation. To such people our "Church of Christ hospital" brother is still an ultra-conservative legalist. But I do not write for such readers.

I want my brethren to have faith in God's revelation on a First Century basis; to believe in the inerrant, all-sufficient, divine message as thoroughly furnishing us with all things that pertain unto life and godliness. I want my brethren to see that a "no pattern" "no authority" concept—though seemingly innocent in current matters—is, historically and in reality, the first step of liberalism. I wouldn't call him "liberal" before a body of seminarians. I'd ask him what he was doing there.