

GROW IN GRACE NEWSLETTER

Volume 44b, No. 40, October 15, 2019 / Southside Baptist Church / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **The Grow in Grace Newsletter is a WEEKLY Bible Study**, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church; and is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our***

LORD and Savior JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever.

TAKING A SERIOUS LOOK AT THE LOCAL CHURCH!

***** DID YOU KNOW?** — *From 6,000 to 10,000 'Christian' congregations in America CLOSE THEIR DOORS, CEASE TO EXIST, DIE ... EVERY YEAR!*

***** DID YOU KNOW?** — About 73% of Americans claim to be Christians... but only about 31% attend worship services... at least ONCE a month!

***** DID YOU KNOW?** — As a nation THE BUILDER GENERATION, (those born before 1946) — fought and WON wars, raised families, built businesses, institutions, and CHURCHES... and they were, and are, LOYAL in good times and bad.

***** BUT DID YOU KNOW?** — THEY are dying out at a rate of 13,000 EVERY WEEK! The LOYAL BUILDER GENERATION will soon be no more!

***** PUT ANOTHER WAY:** IN MOST CHURCHES, the MAJORITY of the LOYAL, faithful members are in their 70's and 80's and 90's! WHEN THEY DIE OUT in a congregation— many churches, (6-10 thousand per year), CLOSE THEIR DOORS!

***** THIS IS REALITY:** All over the vast rural and small town America THOUSANDS of congregations are barely holding on by the weakening efforts of the shrinking Builders... **and this year, another 6-10 thousand congregations will CLOSE THEIR DOORS.... and MULTITUDES of other congregations are close behind them!**

YES, THERE ARE OTHER FACTORS IN THE DECLINE OF CHRISTIANITY IN AMERICA! **BUT IN THIS ARTICLE, we will focus upon a VIVAL DISTINCTION, warranted by the New Testament!**

NAMELY, that there is the TRUE BRIDE OF CHRIST and there is the anti-Christ system's HARLOT!

WAKE UP CALL: WE CANNOT DEVELOP A GODLY, WISE strategy for the Building Up of a local Church unless we UNDERSTAND and settle on WHICH CHURCH we are seeking to build up— The Bride or the Harlot!

WAKE UP CALL:

1. If we are IN THE BRIDE... we are motivated by and we use strategy tools which line up with the HOLY SPIRIT and which nourish the alive in Christ spirit of genuine Christians.

2. If we are IN THE HARLOT... we are motivated by that which appeals to the flesh... and we use THE ARM OF THE FLESH in seeking to build up congregations.

3. YES, THERE ARE MULTITUDES who try to MIX THE TWO! Such a strategy is DOOMED in the long run... for JESUS SAYS... no one can serve two different masters! (Matthew 6:24)

I. THE BRIDE: The true Church of Jesus Christ is comprised of

ALL those personally **“planted”** by God the Father (Matthew 15:13); and **personally given** to God the Son by God the Father! (John 17:2) Ultimately, this true church will be a numberless multitude out of every kindred, tongue, tribe, and people (Revelation 7:9). **MEMBERS of the BRIDE OF CHRIST** experience the life of God in their souls by the miracle of new birth and revival by the Spirit of God.

Those who all their lives had been dead in sin, and living according to the course of this present world, and duped by the devil, and under the holy and just wrath of God (Ephesians 2:1-3) — now find themselves BORN AGAIN, set free from satan; and set free from sin’s guilt, power, and domination by the precious blood of Jesus and by the LIFE-GIVING power of the Holy Spirit who now resides in all true saints of God. (Ephesians 2:4-10) **WHO IS IN THE BRIDE?** The LORD knows those who are HIS... let everyone that names the name of CHRIST, depart from iniquity! (2 Timothy 2:19)

II. THE HARLOT, so called ‘CHURCH’— you will find her to be outwardly impressive but inwardly an evil harlot. She is an adulteress. She loves the world and is loved by the world. Thus, the love of the Father is not in her! (1 John 2:15)

This great harlot and her daughters are in explosive end-time revival!

It is a revival that pleases the flesh. It is a revival that offers the comforts of “religion” while at the same time allowing deceived masses to keep their sin and their ego.

At the harlot (Wide Gate!) church (Matthew 7:13-27) there is no need of denying yourself, taking up your cross daily, and following Jesus.

HOWEVER, JESUS TELLS US that God did not plant her and in due time, she shall be rooted up! (Matthew 15:13)

III. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN— A Club and a Church? Clubs are organizations we join because they meet our needs, goals and desires. Earthly clubs such as the *Lion's Club*, have their place in society.

HOWEVER, the true church of Jesus Christ is no club! She is the creation of God and she is for God. She (And thus, each and every one of her members!) exists to be to the praise of His glory and to be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:29) **She gives herself to** the threefold calling of Worshiping God, of helping other saints mature in Christ, and of evangelizing the lost.

***** IN ANY EXPRESSION OF THE BRIDE OF CHRIST,** the Holy Spirit invigorates and motivates Christians to a continual study of the Word of God, to prayer, to fellowship with other saints, to the Lord's Supper, to sharing with and caring for other believers, and to a lifestyle of proclaiming the gospel to the lost. (Acts 2:36-47; 8:1-4)

MOREOVER, saving grace teaches the Bride to say "**NO!**" to ungodliness and "**YES!**" to godliness! (Titus 2:11-14)

IV. THE HARLOT: Many and VARIED (Matthew 7:13-14) are 'WIDE GATE' Harlot Churches. But also, a member of "the Harlot" may be found in the midst of a true expression of Christ's church.

WHEAT (The Bride) and tares (The Harlot) often grow together! (Matthew 13:24-30)

WARNING: MANY 'TARES' ARE IN THE PULPIT! (Matthew

7:21-23)

IN THE PULPIT or in the PEW, let each one of us ask: **Does the mentality of the Harlot live in me?**

*** **Newsweek Article: Shopping for a church!** “...the customer is king... the most successful churches are those that most resemble the suburban shopping mall... the aim is support not salvation, help rather than holiness...”

*** **Marketing the Church**, by Barna: “It is...critical that we keep in mind a fundamental principle of Christian communication: The audience, **not the message**, is sovereign...”

*** **Ashamed of the Gospel**, by John MacArthur: This is a book in which he exposes the world’s church: “After all, the church’s chief competition is a world filled with secular amusements and a host of worldly goods and services.

Therefore, the marketing experts say we will never win people until we develop effective forms of entertainment to capture the people’s attention and loyalty away from the world’s offerings.” [INDEED, this mentality is critical to the growth of many churches!]

V. WHAT IS OUR ‘LOYALTY’ MOTIVATOR? (This section is from **The Rebirth of the Congregation**, by R.E. Bieber)

“For generations there was a cohesiveness in [many] congregations which had nothing to do with the Christian Gospel... People with no conception or experience of the **Cross of Christ** were loyal to their church because of family loyalty... denominational loyalty... seniority... a beloved pastor... certain doctrines... and/or because of certain programs which the church

offered. **Many churches adopted** the philosophy of 'anything to hold the youth' ..." **R.E. Bieber goes on to correctly remind us that** the New Testament church,

"... Used the **Gospel alone** to arrest the world's attention and bring men to conversion... it also relied upon the **Gospel alone** to hold men and women to their commitment and to build the church."

*** The true church of Jesus Christ is comprised of **a people to whom** the Kingdom of God has already come!

*** The Bride of Christ is **a people over whom** the Spirit of God is already sovereign.

*** The true church is **a people among whom** the Lordship of Christ is already received.

*** Among members of the Bride of Christ, **the real and only cohesive and loyalty factor is Jesus Christ the Lord!**

*** **The Bride** listens to and receives the Word of God.

*** **The Bride** goes forth out into her world as a people sent forth by Jesus Christ.

Members of the Bride of Christ are—

*** **FOLLOWERS** in the steps of Jesus! *** **PUPILS** at the feet of Jesus! *** **SERVANTS** submitting to the commands of Jesus! *** **AMBASSADORS** of Jesus to a lost world! None have perfection; but all are possessed of a genuine, life-changing love for Jesus because He first loved them! (1John 4:10, 19)

VI. BRIDE EXAMPLES! EXAMPLE ONE: Acts 2:36-47; 8:1-4— In

these verse we see that **when the lost are born again by the Spirit of God— No one has to beg, bribe, pamper, threaten, or motivate! Discipleship is on automatic! There is INDWELLING DESIRE and COMPELLING!**

EXAMPLE TWO: Over 450 years ago, a 14 year old lad, Cornelis Aertsz De Man. (because of having witnessed a genuine expression of the Bride of Christ), was moved to search out where such believers met. He found a group, meeting in a nearby home. THE YOUTH PROGRAM of this church was powerful... the same as their adult program— **JESUS!**

Cornelis stated that, *“...Their witness of faith, their serious study of the Word, their joy in life, (Though they were persecuted), and their concern for love and moral integrity all excited him...”*

Before long, by the power of the gospel of Christ, Cornelis was saved; and then disciplined by these ADULT saints. By age 17 he was so dynamic in his love for Jesus that **the Harlot “church” wanted to get him to recant his simple faith in Jesus.**

The Harlot arrested him, tortured him, and at the same time promised Cornelis “a future of honor and position if he would turn....” from Christ. Calmly he replied, **“There is no higher position than to be a child of God and no greater honor than to be a voice for Him!”** Cornelis survived many tortures with a Christ-like spirit, before being burned at the stake at age 21. (This account from, *Faithful Unto Death*, by Myron Augsburger)

CRITICAL NOTE: Another difference between the Bride and the Harlot is this: The Bride never threatens, never seeks to force, never imprisons, hurts, or kills in order to advance the cause of

Christ. THE HARLOT IS BLOODY WITH THE BLOOD OF SAINTS! **THIS REVEALS THAT ISLAM AND MUCH OF WHAT IS CALLED CHRISTIANITY ARE ALL OF THE HARLOT!** (Rev. 17:1-6)

The harlot, will pretend love; but she hates, persecutes, and tortures the Bride. **The Bride** is willing to be tortured and even killed... but she is not willing to inflict such on others. **God may not call you, or I, or our youth to martyrdom.** But such is the case in parts of our world this very day.

We must be developing a spirit like theirs, a spirit like Cornelis! Even in this present hour our confession must be: ***“There is no higher position than to be a child of God and no greater honor than to be a voice for Him!”***

TWO REVIVALS: "Never has it been more clear to me that two revivals are in progress on the earth.

ONE IS [THE BRIDE] the revival of the Spirit of God by which dead men and women are freed from their sins by the blood of the Lamb and raised to a life which is the life of the sons of God, a life which bears God's nature, manifests God's mercy.

**** **THE OTHER REVIVAL [THE HARLOT] is the revival of religious flesh**, a revival which is very appealing and gathers such multitudes and wields such power in this world because it offers all the comfort of religion while allowing you to keep your ego and all rights to yourself.

Which revival am I going to be part of? Am I going to invest my life in some enterprise of [The Harlot's] booming Christian City? Or am I [In the midst of and in fellowship with the Bride] going to lose my life in the pursuit of God's will of mercy?

Am I going to spend my life bringing the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind **to the Master's table [of salvation by grace, through faith, through CHRIST alone]?"** (This portion edited from *Escape from Christendom*, by Robert Burnell)

FINAL QUESTIONS: There are only two churches in my town OR in your town! Let each of us dare to ask:

***** To which Church do I belong?**

***** Which church am I helping to build?**

ABOUNDING Mercy, Grace, Love, and PEACE to all in Christ!
James Bell www.southsidegallatin.org

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SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES:

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care Nursing Home. Meet at the front door at **5:15PM**.

WEDNESDAYS: → **6:30pm— Wednesday CHURCH PRAYER SERVICE**

→ Enter via **IRON STEPS**, side door.

WEDNESDAYS: → **6:30pm— Youth** Activities and Bible Study— enter, side double doors.

WEDNESDAYS: → **6:30pm— Young Family Prayer Time!** THIS IS a time of Bible study and prayer geared toward **families with children in the nursery and pre-K class**. Enter at double doors, under AWNING.

***** LADIES BIBLE STUDY: NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON OCTOBER 29, 2019 @ 11:00am; Continuing in LUKE.** ENTER at

the back of the church building, [*DOUBLE Doors, under AWNING, open at 10:30am... re-locked at 11:10am*]

***** MEN's Fellowship/Bible Study:** EVERY SATURDAY @ **8:00am:** (*STUDY: THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN!*) ENTER AT THE back of Church building... DOUBLE DOORS, under the drive-thru awning. [**DOORS OPEN FOR FELLOWSHIP, Juice, coffee, Hardee's biscuits, & Donuts at 7:30am!**]

SUNDAY SERVICES, OCTOBER 20, 27

9:30am— Sunday School Classes for All Ages

10:45am— Sunday Morning Worship Service

SPECIAL EVENTS ON THE FOLLOWING SUNDAYS:

***** October 20 — LORD'S SUPPER, at the end of the Morning Worship**

HOME GROUPS... some at 5pm

****** October 27 — 6:00pm - 7:00pm, Church-wide EQUIPPING DISCIPLES by developing Christ-honoring Marriages: Paul David Tripp's 'WHAT DID YOU EXPECT? (Redeeming the Realities of Marriage)**

