

The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” – Psalm 119:105

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Addressing the Problem of Unfriendliness

Greg Gwin

It is my recollection that every congregation I have ever been a member of has been – at various times and by various people – described as an “unfriendly” church. This is somewhat odd because each of these churches has seemed friendly to me. It appears that “friendliness” is one of those qualities that is “in the eye of the beholder.”

If you are troubled at what you think is the unfriendly atmosphere of the church, try these simple steps:

1) ***DO NOT rush out of the building as soon as the service ends.*** It is usually true that those who complain about unfriendliness don't give others a good chance to be friendly! They hurry out the door before anyone can speak to them. Try staying until the last group of people leaves the building. If you do this, you will be surprised to learn that some folks stay around and visit for 30 to 45 minutes after every assembly. If you stay and join in on their discussions you will soon discover that they are a very friendly bunch of people!

2) ***Make a point to talk to others.*** We know that some people have a problem with shyness, but if you will make the effort to strike up a conversation it will be rewarded. There are only a few church members in this world who won't speak when spoken to – and those few have lots of other problems, too.

3) ***Initiate opportunities to spend quality time with other Christians.*** Unfortunately, too many people are waiting for others to make the first move – and complaining if they don't. Why wait until others invite you to their home for a meal? Invite them first! Don't feel sorry for yourself because no one has suggested getting together for a visit. Ask them – stop waiting for them to ask you! And, you could plan something even better – a period of Bible study with several fellow Christians. There are lots of possibilities. Just DO it!

Please try these suggestions. When you do, you will find that the church is already much more friendly than you imagined, and you will be helping to make things even better. “*A man that hath friends must show himself friendly*” (Proverbs 18:24).

Just the Simple Gospel

Mike Davis

“What do you have to offer?” is a frequently asked question. It comes from the mouths of those souls looking for religion in their lives, but not necessarily religion void of frivolities. Most who lead with this question wish information regarding youth programs and/or benefits for the aged. Many view the church from an “organizational” standpoint rather than an “organism” of living souls serving God (compare **1 Peter 2:3-10; 1 Cor. 12:12-27**). Therefore, to them, “what do you have to offer?” means “what tangibles for this life do you have?”

Frankly, the church is in the soul saving business *only!* Since it is a kingdom not of this world (**John 18:36**), it has no need to offer things of this world to its inhabitants. While it is true its members live *in* this world, we do not govern our lives as if *of* this world (**1 John 2:15-17**). Our work is to obey Christ (**Matt. 16:24-26**) and worship our Father in heaven (**John 4:23-24**). Such work and faithfulness requires the remainder of our lives on earth (**2 Pet. 1:5-11; Rev. 2:10; 14:13**) but receives the promise of eternal life (ibid. **1 John 2:25**). We are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ (**Rom. 1:16**); and therefore, through study and mediation (**2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Tim. 4:15-16**) we let this word dwell within us richly in all wisdom (**Col. 3:16**).

The business of saving souls is indeed within our responsibility of faithful service to Christ and worship of our Father in heaven. When studied, we find the commandment to “*go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things commanded you*” (**Matt. 28:19-20**) has application toward us as members of the Lord’s church. **2 Corinthians 4:3-7** tells us we must proclaim the gospel to the lost. We most often refer to this work as “evangelism” (cf. **2 Timothy 4:5**), and therefore we go forth declaring Christ crucified (**2 Cor. 2:2**).

In answer to the question, “What do you have to offer?” we answer without hesitancy, “Simply the gospel!” Anything more is too much; anything less cannot save our souls (**Rev. 22:18-19; John 12:48; Gal. 1:6-9**; et al). If you mean, “What do we have to offer in our services?” our answer continues. We sing with the spirit and understanding, and pray the same way (**1 Cor. 14:15**). The singing teaches and admonishes (**Col. 3:16**), while the effectual fervent prayers of righteous men avail much (**James 5:16**). We give as we have been prospered (**1 Cor. 16:1-2**) that the work of preaching the gospel and caring for needy saints might continue (**2 Cor. 9**). We commune with our Lord in remembrance of His death for us (**1 Cor. 11:23-26**). Still, this equates with “simply the gospel,” for we must do all things by His authority (**Col. 3:17**) and not our own.

News and Notes

Members:

* No news to report.

Friends and Family:

* Michael Read, **Cotton and Nancy Read's son, had his follow-up colon surgery** scheduled for June 1 moved to a later time yet to be scheduled.

Absent: David and Linda Bansemer (camping), Katie Greene (NC), Hull family (Kansas City), Johnson family (FL).

New Reports: Arrigo Corraza (Italy), Bob Nichols (Japan).

While it is not frivolous by any means, it is soul saving (**Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18-24**). If such is of interest to you, it is freely given (**Matt. 10:8**). It truly is the best we have to offer you: it is simply the gospel of Jesus Christ.



“The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation. The sound of joyful shouting and salvation is in the tents of the righteous.” – Psalm 118:14