



4050 80th Avenue North, Pinellas Park, Fl

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SKYVIEW BULLETIN

WHICH LOCAL NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH WOULD YOU HAVE JOINED?



Often people who are searching for a congregation with which to worship regularly look for church that is perfect. They want everything to be "just right." They want perfect members, perfect singing, perfect preaching and teaching, perfect elders and deacons. While we should all strive for perfection, we are not going to achieve perfection in this life.

We strive to pattern our work and worship after the examples of the New Testament congregations. But have you stopped to study these congregations that we use as examples? Have you ever asked yourself, "Which one of these churches would I have been a member of?" If we use the same criteria that some

use today, we would probably not be a member of any of them.

Consider the first congregation, the Jerusalem church. It had a husband and wife as members who were liars and were struck dead because they lied. This congregation was also showing partiality to certain widows in their distribution of benevolence. We would probably not want to worship with folks like these.

What about the Corinthian congregation? There were divisions among them, they were tolerating a brother who was guilty of gross immorality, they were taking each other to pagan courts of law to settle their differences, they were abusing the observance of the Lord's Supper as well as a misuse of spiritual gifts, as well as experiencing other challenges. We probably would have visited this church one time, learned of all the internal problems and kept looking.

What about the church in Rome? They had some racial prejudices. They did not want to accept the Gentiles as members of God's family. They were rejecting those who had differences of opinion and actually becoming a stumbling block to those they disagreed with.

We could move to Ephesus and worship with the saints there. Or could we? Even though they had some good qualities, they had left their first love. In John's letter to them he said they had fallen and were in danger of the lampstand (fellowship with Christ) being removed (Revelation 3:5).

What about the brethren in Galatia? Maybe we could worship with them. But, they had turned away from the gospel to a perverted one. This was very quickly after the church had been established. They were becoming enslaved all over to the traditions of Judaism and Paul felt he may have wasted his efforts on them.

If we lived back then and were looking for a perfect congregation, thus far we would not have found it. We would have to keep looking. (back page)

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ELDERS

*Ron Bastien
Don Greenlee
Charles Murray
David Roberts*

DEACONS

*Ron Bentz
Frank Edwards
Jim Ingram
George Loyd
Andy Murray
Dennis Trask
Brad VanHaerents*

PREACHER

Charles Murray

MEN WE SUPPORT

*William Stewart--Kingston, Canada
Bob Owen — Trip to Europe
Mike Mendez —trip to Cuba*

WORSHIP TIMES

SUNDAY

Worship.....9:30 A.M.
Classes.....10:50 A.M.
Worship.....6:00 P.M.

WORSHIP PLACE

4050 80th Ave N
PO Box 3118
Pinellas Park, Fla. 33780

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We might have considered the church at Philippi, but once we visited we would have learned that there must have been some contention among the members because Paul admonished them to “do everything without complaining or arguing,” (Phil. 2:14). There were two women who were members of the congregation who could not get along and Paul urged them to agree with each other.

Disappointed that we had not found the perfect congregation, we would have been forced to continue our search.

We might have considered the congregation of the Colossians. It seems on the surface that everything is perfect. Paul highly commends them in his letter to them. But, wait! There is a problem! They were acting like they still belonged to the world and Paul admonished them not to taste, handle or touch the things of the world.

Disappointed that we have not found the perfect church, we continue our search.

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What about the church in Thessalonica? Paul was very thankful of them and complimentary of their faith. His first letter was filled with nothing but praise. But, they had some problems. He said, “We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies” (2 Thess. 3:11). He said there were some among them that they should not even associate with.

There was a congregation in Pergamum that looked promising. They had remained faithful even in persecution. But, they had embraced false teaching and were told to repent.

The church in Thyatira looks pretty good. Their good deeds, their love and faith, their service and perseverance were commendable traits. But they tolerated Jezebel, a false prophetess and had been led into sexual immorality and eating food sacrifice to idols. We certainly could not be a member of this congregation.

The church in Sardis had a good reputation. It was reported that they were alive, active and busy doing the work of the Lord. But, they were really dead and were told to wake up and strengthen what was left that was about to die. Judgment was coming like a thief upon them if they did not wake up and repent. This is not a congregation we would want to join, is it? We would probably have ignored all the good things about this church and looked only at the bad things.

We would not have even given Laodicea a second thought. They were lukewarm. They had become self confident in their prosperity. They had lost their sense of dependency upon God. They were blind to their true condition; they were wretched, pitiful, poor blind and naked. We certainly could not be happy in a congregation like this.

Of course, we are not living in the 1st Century. We do not have to make a choice of any of these congregations. We are living now. We must choose a congregation that we feel we can work with and be a part of. Just like none of the 1st Century churches were perfect, none are perfect today. Just as these first congregations had all kinds of problems, churches today often have problems. Just as these first congregations had members who were hypocrites, members who were living in sin, and members who were embracing error, we will probably find churches like that today.

There are a number of things we should look for when we are searching for a home congregation. Perfection is not one of those things. Perfect members is not one of those things. Perfect elders or deacons is not one of those things. There are things that we need to consider when we are searching for a place to worship—things that are far more important than some of the things we often look for.

The first thing we need to do is to look at ourselves. We must realize that we are not perfect. Since we are not perfect, we certainly would not fit in with a perfect church if we could find one. If a perfect congregation existed, and it doesn't, but if it did, they would not receive us as a member because we would mar their perfection when we became a member.

In our next bulletin, we will look at some things we need to consider when choosing a congregation.



Adult

Auditorium

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The Life Of Christ

GOD'S

PLAN OF SALVATION

Believe—Heb. 11:6

Repent—Luke 13:3

Confess—Rom. 10:9

Be Baptized—

Mk. 16:16, Acts 2:38,

1 Pet. 3:21