

Back to Bible Basics

Issue 18

BEWARE OF THE SOURCE

Brett Rutherford

I was visiting a congregation a number of years ago and was shocked to hear a "faith only" message presented by a young man presiding over the Lord's Supper. After the services a senior member in the congregation questioned the young man over the content of his Lord's Supper talk. It was evident from their discussion that the boy hadn't realized that he had promoted error in his speech. The young man confessed he found his Lord's Supper talk on a Baptist website.

The young man's mistake is an example of a disturbing trend within the Lord's church. Each week, members of the body of Christ are combing through denominational websites to find answers to doctrinal questions. Many others are trying to find material for sermons and Bible class material on denominational sites. Much of this material may not be scrutinized in the light of the Bible by the web surfer. The result of this haphazard approach to research is the presentation of error from the pulpit. The teacher does not even realize he has taught error to his congregation.

The reasons why Christians are looking to questionable sites to source material for classes and sermons may vary. Some may have lost the concept of the distinct nature of the one true church. They may believe that they are a part of an organization that is no different from the many religious groups founded by men. Some maybe surfing the net looking

for justification for errors they are teaching on marriage, divorce, worship and alcohol etc. Some Christians may simply look to these sites because they feel they do not have time to do their own Bible study. Whatever the reason is for this carelessness we need to check all forms of religious instruction alongside the Scriptures (Acts 17:11).

We don't need to look over materials put together by false teachers. There are many helpful websites produced by members of the church of Christ.

Two useful websites for finding material on Christian evidences, and denominational doctrines are www.apologeticspress.org and www.bible.ca. An excellent site for finding brotherhood books on a wide range of subjects is www.gospeladvocate.com. They also sell Bible class curriculum for all ages. They are happy to ship to Australia.

If you are looking for a sound online Bible correspondence course then you will find one on www.ibtministries.org. I recommend that you encourage your non-Christian acquaintances to do this course. The creators of this site also provide downloadable tracts.

One of the best sources for DVDs on a range of Biblical topics is www.wvbs.org. These Biblically sound DVD lessons can be useful to congregations who do not have a fulltime evangelist. If you are simply interested in tuning in, and listening to a sound gospel sermon then let me recommend that you look up www.gbntv.org.

Of course, even the material created by the brethren who are behind all of these websites needs to be checked to ensure that their teachings are consistent with the New Testament. There is no substitute for personal Bible study (II Timothy 2:15). Remember, the best lessons are presented by a teacher who has done his own research, and composed his own lessons.



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THE VIRTUES OF THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

Ian McPherson

The Corinthians perhaps had more problems than any church recorded in Scripture. The Book of 1 Corinthians records many of their sins. They were factious and divisive (1:10-12), and were taking their brother to court (6:1-8). They were tolerating immorality (5:1-4), their Lord's Supper gatherings were irreverent (11:17-34), and their women were rebellious (11: 1-11; 14:34-35). In spite of all this, the Corinthian church had many virtues that many churches lack today. Here are some of them.

THEY OFFERED TRUE REPENTANCE For a while, the church at Corinth was turning a blind eye to a brother who was committing fornication with his father's wife (1 Corinthians. 5:1-2). However, when they were admonished about sin they offered genuine heart felt godly repentance. (2 Corinthians 7:8-10). In my 40 years of preaching the gospel, I have seen several individuals repent, but **I have never witnessed a church repent of error.** Four of the seven churches of Asia were commanded by the Lord to repent (Revelation 2:5, 16, 3:3, 19), but there is no record in Scripture as to their response. It is notable, that although many churches in the Bible were admonished for sin, Corinth is the only church in Scripture that had their repentance recorded and commended. Imagine how many splits would have been avoided if erring churches were humble enough to admit error and have the courage to repent like Corinth did!

THEY PRACTICED LOVING CHURCH DISCIPLINE The church at Corinth obeyed Paul's command to withdraw fellowship from the immoral man (1 Corinthians 5:3-5). As a result of this the erring brother was restored (2 Corinthians 2:3-8). Withdrawing from the disorderly is not optional; it is a command "in the name of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 5:4, 2 Thessalonians 3:6). If disorderly brethren are allowed to remain in the fellowship of the church, what hope is there for unity and purity to be achieved? Discipline, if done in love is very effective. It either restores the offender, or purges of the church from sin.

IT SOUGHT A SCRIPTURAL SOLUTION TO ITS PROBLEMS. "Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me:" (1 Corinthians 7:1). The church took the time to write and ask Paul, an inspired apostle, for a solution to the problems that faced

them. We are fortunate today to have **all the answers in the fully revealed word of God.** "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:" (2 Peter 1:3). The apostle's word is the only standard for unity (John 17:20, Matthew 18:18). Churches today must follow the example of Corinth and seek apostolic authority for the answer to their questions instead of appealing to creed books, feelings, and doctrines of men.

THEY HAD SOME WHO WERE STILL DEFENDING TRUTH AMIDST ERROR "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there **must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.**" (1 Corinthians 11:18-19). Notice that Paul did not suggest that the faithful brethren at Corinth leave and start up another congregation down the road as many do today. Instead he encouraged them to remain and hold fast to the truth. Christ gave the same sound admonition to the faithful brethren at Thyatira and Sardis (Revelation 2:24-25, 3:4-5).

THEY HAD A POWERFUL OUTREACH INTO A SINFUL COMMUNITY The Corinthian church had baptized people who had been drunkards, adulterers, fornicators, homosexuals, thieves, revilers and extortionists (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). In that immoral city they were surrounded by such people. This is evidence that they took the great Commission seriously and lovingly reaching out to all people.

We must remember that the church at Corinth did not **deliberately** get into the state it was. The problems developed gradually. When their guard was down, Satan made his move. In the matters above however, the church today should copy the Corinthians. May God help us to follow the example of the Corinthian church in these. 

12th Annual Mersey Bluff Church of Christ Far Above Rubies Ladies' Retreat

August 22 – 23, 2014

Speaker:
Mabel McPherson (Devonport)

Theme: "Recognising Responsibilities"

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