

## News & Notes

Sunday, May 17, 2009

**Remember in Prayer:** Arland Anderson; Robbie Alberson; Robert Bennett; Blaire Chapman; Freeman Duncan; Joel Graves; Sherry Fewell; Shannon Hastings; Wayne Hawkins; Billy Hudspoth; Dot Ketchum; John and Deliah Mann; Ryan Miskelly; Diane Mize; Alva Powell; Ann Ray; Brandon Ray; Bob Riles; Toni Smith; Shad Street; Tina Thompson; Greg Thornton; Calvin Uersery; Alvie Williford;

**Sympathy** is extended to the families of Diana Hayes and Judy Mason.

**Pantry item** for the month of May is Purex liquid laundry detergent.

The newest edition of **House to House/Heart to Heart** is in the foyer.

**Ashland Events:** Today: Prayer meeting at 4:00 PM; June 7-10: Vacation Bible School;

**Area Events:** May 16: Ladies day at Southaven;

### Sermon in Preview:

AM: Apostle Profile: Phillip

PM: Apostle Profile: Bartholomew

### For the Record (May 10, 2009):

Attendance: 100    Contribution: \$1492.00    Budget: \$1459.00

### *The Ashland Church of Christ*

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#### Sunday:

Bible Study 9:30 AM  
Worship 10:30 AM  
Worship 5:00 PM

#### Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

#### Shepherds:

Barney King  
Jeff Roberson  
Carrol Street

# ASHLAND

## ANNOUNCER

*"Note Those Who So Walk"*

Philippians 3:17

2Thessalonians 3:14

## Why People Quit Church

Wayne Jackson

Church leaders have long been interested in why so many drift away from faithful service to the Lord. Jesus summarized the matter in his parable of the sower. The causes he listed are: the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of wealth, distracted desires for worldly things, and carnal pleasure (Matthew 13:22; Mark 4:18; Luke 8:14).

This list could be expanded from numerous other texts (e.g., the ingestion of false teaching [cf. Romans 16:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 3:10]), but for the moment this will suffice.

Several months ago, LifeWay Christian Resources, a Baptist-based group, did a survey of 469 adults who formerly were "church" people but had left their respective groups. The results of this study are interesting.

(1) Many of them "quit church" because they "simply got too busy." Too busy to honor their Creator; too busy to serve him who died for them; too busy to go to heaven.

(2) Others faded away, they said, because "family and home responsibilities prevented" their continued connection with church. Is not serving God the most important family and home responsibility? Is putting food in a child's mouth and clothes on his back more crucial than nurturing his soul toward

heaven? The failure to sort out one's prime obligations is one of the most significant gauges of spiritual foolishness.

(3) A considerable number complained that they had become disenchanting with church leaders or members. This is what one might call the PTB syndrome ("passing the buck"). Some do not like the elders' decisions, others find the preaching boring, and there is the complaint that the deacons don't minister to their needs.

There also is the common gripe that they are not being included in the church's activities. Of course, they never volunteer for service and usually complain when asked to do something.

(4) Not a few charge that church members are judgmental and hypocritical, etc. Never mind that these are judging those whom they contend are judgmental. And they never boycott any place on the basis of hypocrisy except the church!

In more than a half-century of service to Christ, I cannot recall having seen a reprobate leave the fellowship of the church and take personal responsibility for his apostasy. He always plays the blame game: "It's not my fault; they did it to me!" Such rationalizations are hypocritical subterfuge on the part of dishonest people who refuse to acknowledge their own problems.

(5) A small number claim they left the church because they lost faith in organized religion. One supposes they prefer disorganized religion. God does not condone confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33), and one is not allowed to improvise his own worship and service system (John 4:24; 17:17). Such autocratic, self-focused individuals have not the slightest understanding of what genuine Christianity is.

Of course, there are cases where people genuinely lose faith. Perhaps they were never grounded or they were disappointed when their expectations of God were more idealistic than informed.

I am familiar with a man who matriculated through two Christian schools and then preached the gospel for a number of years on a foreign mission field. Eventually he "soured," and now he works vociferously to oppose Christianity in every conceivable way he can, denying even that Jesus Christ ever lived. It most likely is the reality that he failed personally and now seeks to rationalize his apostasy by directing his wrath toward the Son of God.

Such loss of faith is never justified. Let the patriarch Job be your teacher! One should join the man who exclaimed, "[H]elp my unbelief" (Mark 9:24), and seek assistance.

(6) Some fall away because of changing circumstances in their lives. A divorce, for example, can devastate a person. He or she may feel an unjustified guilt because the marriage did not hold together. One may be immersed in shame because other families in the church seem stable.

(7) Others may experience a job move that sends them into an isolated area where there are no Christians. If one does not have the stability to survive in a community where there is no church, or if they cannot summon the courage to faithfully serve God alone, attempting to teach others, he or she would be far better off finding a new job that would facilitate Christian faithfulness. No job is worth the loss of one's soul (Matthew 16:26).

The ultimate truth of the matter is this: there are **no valid reasons for forsaking Christ**—only lame excuses! And Jesus made it very plain: excuses will carry no weight in the day of reckoning (see Luke 14:18ff).