

## The Church and The World

### Int.

1. Aim: To show the proper relationship between the church and the world.
2. We must define what we mean by the word "church" and the word "world".
3. Church
  - a. The word church means "called out" - "Assembly" Acts 2:47 "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
  - b. The church was planned from the beginning - Eph. 3:10-11
  - c. It was established in the universal sense - Matt. 16:18
  - d. But there were local congregations
    - i. Rom. 16:16
    - ii. Seven churches of Asia - Rev. 2 & 3 Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea
  - e. The church is composed of those people called forth from the world to serve God.
4. World
  - a. One definition includes all the universe or the earth on which we live
  - b. In 1 John 2:15-17 "Love not the world"
    - i. Not the natural beauty of the earth
    - ii. Refers to sin = evil
    - iii. Sinful people are worldly people
  - c. The world is referring to all the things that are sinful and evil
5. What is the relationship between those who are in the church and those in the world?
6. There are three views that we can have.

## Discussion

### **I. WITHDRAW**

- A. A complete withdrawal from anything to do with those in the world is what many think we should do
1. The Catholics practice this withdrawal from the world
    - a. Monks = means alone - they isolate themselves from all people of the world and get off in a cave or building so they can get just as "holy" as they can.
    - b. Nuns - feminine of monk
    - c. Celibacy is practiced because they thought it would make them more holy.
    - d. Abstinence from certain foods is to try to make the people more holy.
  2. The Essenes were the first people to practice this way of life many years before the Catholics existed.
- B. Sometimes members of the church practice this withdrawal idea
1. Someone is asked to go see a certain person and talk with them about becoming a Christian. They reason with themselves that we better not go because we might be influenced by them to become sinful.
  2. We draw back in our little shell and wait for a real good prospect to come along...one who is real bad, and one who comes and knocks on my door and wants to know what to do to be saved.
  3. This is not reality in life.
  4. Christ did not live this way.
    - a. He lived in this world and did not withdraw back in a cave and hide from the world.

- b. Heb. 5:8-9 "though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. 9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,"
  - c. Heb. 4:15 "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."
  - d. Christ ate with the sinners - Luke 15:2 "And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them.""
  - e. We can love the sinner and hate his sin
  - f. We can be with them without becoming like them.
- C. Some have what we may call "Mealsephoby"
1. If we get around measles enough you are going to get them.
  2. Some reason - If we get around sinners then we'll become a sinner.
  3. We forget that the word of God is more powerful than sin.
  4. We forget that we have more power than those in sin because we have God on our side.
  5. We will not be tempted above that which we are able to bear.
  6. 1 Cor. 10:13 NKJV "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

- D. Christ did not want us to withdraw and get off by ourselves.
1. His prayer was: "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one." John 17:15
    - a. In their close association with the world there was the danger of yielding to its allurements
    - b. They must avoid sinful association and the defilement of worldly influences
    - c. They would be kept from the evil one by faithful adherence to his word, the truth
  2. We can see that this view of trying to live off by our self and not have anything to do with those of the world is not the will of Christ.
- E. But others will go to the other extreme and say we'll...

## **II. CONFORM**

- A. Some people say if we can't get off by our self and be pleasing to God then we'll just join in with the world. If we can't whip them, then we'll join them.
- B. But Paul tells us not to do this:
1. Rom. 12:2 "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."
  2. Conformed Greek: to fashion alike, i.e. conform to the same pattern
    - a. We cannot imitate the ways of the world - that is forbidden
    - b. Christians are living a different kind of life

3. Transformed = change, transfigure, metamorphose
  - a. We have been changed
  - b. It is an inside job - a change of our heart
  - c. The gospel in the heart works the change
  - d. We are the product of our thinking - Prov. 23:7 "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he."
  - e. We must study the Bible and make God's thoughts and ideals our thoughts and ideals

C. Christians cannot be conformed to the World but instead we must...

### **III. CONVERT**

- A. This is the reason God placed us here - to Convert the World
  1. Our real purpose in this world is to convert the evil
  2. The world is waiting for us to change them
  3. The early church converted the world - in fact they turned it upside down -
  4. Acts 17:6 NKJV "But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too."
  
- B. We've got to show the world by our life that being a Christian is the most important thing in the world.
  1. The early church did not conform their faith to fit the world, but they conformed the world to fit their faith.

2. A Jewish Rabbi once said, " I could believe the Messiah has come, if I could only see more clearly the people of the Messiah."
3. The greatest sermon we can preach is by the way we live before the people of the world.
4. Poem - "Sermons we see"
5. Gideon told his followers "Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do:" Judges 7:17 NKJV
6. The man who helped formulate the communist doctrine, Karl Marx, once considered becoming a Christian, but he said, "You'll have to look more redeemed before I believe in your redeemer."

C. The church has a great inferiority complex

1. We are afraid of everybody
2. We are not sure of anything
3. But Christ told us: "and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen." Matt. 28:20 NKJV
4. Phil. 4:13 NKJV "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."
5. Many become confused and say that since we are so small and the world is so big we cannot convert them. Since we cannot convert them all we'll not try to convert any of them.

D. The attitude we should have is one of being militant !

1. Militant means that we are engaged in warfare and are aggressive and fighting.
2. We should reason and think like this:

- a. We are small
- b. The world is lost and we don't want them to be lost
- c. Therefore we will fight for the church and convert all that we can.

3. Mark 16:15-16

- a. Go
- b. Preach the Gospel
- c. Those who accept it will be saved

E. This is the proper relationship that the church has with the world.

## **CONCLUSION**

1. We must live in this world
  - a. We cannot withdraw
  - b. We cannot conform and be sinful
  - c. Therefore we must work to convert the world.
2. Illustration - Boat is in the water but the water is not in the boat.
3. Either we are going to convert the world or the world will convert us.
4. Ephesians 6:10-17

---

Sermon by Arthur Pigman - Sunday Night - March 21, 2010  
Evans Church of Christ  
515 Gibbs Road  
Evans, Ga. 30809  
706-855-1249  
evanscoc@bellsouth.net  
www.evansgachurchofchrist.org