**A Church for People Who Don’t Like Church?**

*by Stan Cox*

A few weeks ago I came across a website for a “Cowboy church” in the Dallas – Fort Worth metroplex which trumpeted that they were “A church for people who don’t like church!” It is an interesting phrase. An internet search shows it to also be a popular one, being adopted by different groups who want to reach out to the lost by inappropriately accommodating their discomfort with the practice of religion.

Note this quote from VERVE, a non-denominational church in Las Vegas, NV:

“But the reality is that there are a lot of people who are looking for God and seeking a spiritual dimension to life, but just don’t want to go to church to find it.

And who can blame them? Most churches seem judgmental and holier than thou. They make you wear your Sunday best, play music from the 1800s, and are too into politics. And they seem to care more about people’s money than people.”

It is not surprising that worldly people might have such a perception about those who are striving to serve God acceptably. In response to such attitudes, Peter wrote, *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed”* (1 Peter 3:15-16).

What is disturbing is that some who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ would **pander** to such attacks upon godliness. So, in defense of “those who do like church”, let me clear up some much too common misconceptions.

1. **It is not “judgmental and holier than thou” to convict the world of sin.** Paul did it every day, and his motivation was in great part because of his understanding that he was *“chief”* among all sinners (cf. 1 Timothy 1:15). Because of the grace extended to him by God he proclaimed, *“I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also”* (Romans 1:14-15).
2. **We don’t have a dress code for those who come to worship.** We would expect anyone who comes to worship God to avoid things profane and immodest, because both are sinful and inappropriate to God. *“By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy”* (Leviticus 10:3). It is unkind to accuse those who desire to show their reverence and respect for the Lord by dressing nicely to be guilty of self-righteousness. Too, if someone feels uncomfortable with what another wears, it may be the problem is with them rather than the one who has dressed in their “Sunday best.”
3. **Music is an expression of worshipful reverence.** The songs are to be sung; and the songs sung are to be *“psalms and hymns and spiritual songs”* (cf. Ephesians 5:19). Those who like to go to church realize the purpose of our singing is not to please ourselves, but to please God. Perhaps those who “don’t like church” should be taught that principle rather than being encouraged to please themselves rather than pleasing the Lord.
4. **Politics have no rightful place in Christian worship.** But, it is right and appropriate to preach against sin! There is nothing political about examining what the Bible teaches about abortion, homosexuality, or the woman’s place in Christian worship. In such cases politics has wandered into the arena of faith rather than the other way around.

So, in answer to the question, “who can blame them?” No one blames the sinner for his misconceptions about God or His church. But, he does need to be taught what God requires of him. In other words, the sinner has to be taught to conform to the Almighty rather than trying to conform the Almighty to the sinner’s appetites and wants. *“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land”* (2 Chronicles 7:14).

**At His Feet**

*by Jeremiah Cox*

Mary is a woman that exemplifies maintaining proper perspective. She is a role model whose actions speak of immense focus, and fidelity. She is seen at the feet of Jesus on three separate occasions, showing her dependence upon her Lord.

**To learn** – *“And [Martha] had a sister called Mary,* ***who also sat at Jesus’ feet*** *and heard His word”* (Luke 10:39). When Jesus entered the house of Martha, Mary did not fret about trivial matters. She took advantage of the rare opportunity to sit at the feet of the Son of God. Jesus said, *“one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her”* (Luke 10:42). We, too, have the opportunity to sit at Jesus feet and learn from Him each and every day by studying His word. Do we choose the good part? Or are we too busy “living life” that we don’t have time to learn how to live it in the way prescribed by God?

**To receive sympathy** – *“Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him,* ***she fell down at His feet****, saying to Him, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died”* (John 11:32). Jesus was not exempt from the emotional toll the death of Lazarus carried. It is famously recorded, *“Jesus wept”* (John 11:35). His raw emotions translate into our understanding of His ultimate High Priesthood. *“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses”* (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus offers consolation via His ability to empathize. When troubled, do we fall at our Master’s feet?

**To render due obeisance** – *“Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and* ***wiped His feet with her hair****. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil”* (John 12:3). This act of worship was so commendable that Jesus said, *“wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her”* (Mark 14:9). Our life is so full of secular activities we tend to forget about Who we are living under. The meaning of life is to live it before God in total piety. Do we carry on about our day without the slightest inclination to live it in such a way that is acceptable before our Holy God? Or do we humble ourselves at His feet as servants?