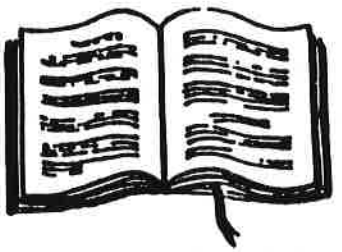
The Christian Courier



Send all correspondence to 9914 Arkansas St. Bellflower, CA 90706

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"THE CHURCH AND WORLDLINESS"

The word "church" is from the Greek word which means "called out". Col. 3:15 "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."

The word "worldliness" is not a Biblical term. The nearest we find to it is in Titus 2:12 "worldly lusts." What some people term worldliness, others do not so designate. It seems that worldliness is another thing that divides the church.

The church must be kept pure. When the purity of the church is corrupted by worldliness, its identity is destroyed. The line of distinction must be kept clear between the church and the world. There are certain principles by which we can determine what is worldly and what is permissible. Church members, those who are christians, must not go back into the world. Romans 12:2 "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." James 1:27 tells us to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

Let's look at some things that come under the term "worldliness". Things forbidden by a "thus saith the Lord" are wrong, such as the things listed in Gal. 5:19-21. Whatever violates the law of the land is wrong, unless there is a conflict with God's law. Romans 13:1-5 reminds us to be subject unto the higher powers and that whosoever resisteth the power, resistesth the ordinance of God and will receive to themselves damnation. 1 Peter 2:13-17 tells us to submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. This would include speeding at 65 when the limit is 55, evading income taxes, whether by getting paid cash and not reporting it or being otherwise dishonest in your report, violating game laws, such as hunting without a valid hunting license or at night wheth a spot light, etc. Whatever is forbidden by law is wrong.

Whatever is dishonest is wrong. II Cor. 8:21 "Providing for honest things not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." Rom. 12:17 "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men." Any deception, whether it be leading someone to believe part of a truth when you know the whole truth, or outright lying, any deception in trading, buying, selling, etc. is worldliness.

Immodesty is worldliness. I Tim. 2:9 "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety..." Have you ever seen a swimming suit, halter top, short skirt or short shorts that are modest? Aren't most designed for so called "sex appeal"? Neverly every commercial we read or see on TV is geared to make one lust.

Things that cause one to be regareded as a sinner, and things that destroy one's identity as a christian are worldliness. A christian cannot frequent places with a worldly reputation without damaging his christian identity. A christian cannot participate with friends in worldly activities without being considered one of them.

Whatever weakens a christian's influence for good, or brings reproach on the church or on self is worldliness. Phil. 2:15 "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world. Matt. 5:13 "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." Are we good for nothing? Is our influence good or bad?

Whatever is doubtful, as a rule is worldliness. Rom. 14:23 "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." People of the world say, "Go ahead. One time won't hurt." Where there is doubt, <u>don't</u>.

Whatever hinders the christian from doing his duty is worldliness. Matt. 6:33 "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." The churistian must be very careful about jobs, trips, vacations, activities, etc., that would take him from worship services or interfere with his service to God. There are many places my family and I would love to see, but there is no loyal church close enough to many. Thus, many places are out of the question for vacations and such like.

Things that are known to be harmful to the body, to the mind, or to the soul, are worldly. 1 Cor. 5:19-20 reminds us that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost and are not our own. I Cor. 10:31 "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Hasn't it been proved over and over that things such as drugs, alcohol, and tobacco are harmful to the themple? We are to avoid these things.

Things that plant evil thoughts in the heart, and have a tendency to tempt, and suggest evil, are worldly. Prov. 4:23 "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issue of life." James 4:8 "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded." II Cor. 7:1 "... let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Dancing, suggestive movies, pictures and books, can be a bad influence on the chrsitian. These all open our minds to the lusts of the flesh.

If and when at any time the church becomes so much like the world that it cannot be distinguised from it, it is worldly. Have we let this happen to the church? Are we continuing to let it happen? Is it not time to take a stand for God against worldliness?

We must, at all times, strive to keep the church pure.

Audley Barnes for the Countryside
Church of Christ - Comanche, OK

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"AS COLD WATERS TO A THIRSTY SOUL, SO IS GOOD NEWS FROM A FAR COUNTRY." Prov. 25:25

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BARON, OKLAHOMA

Greetings to all!

First, I want to apologize for not writing sooner. We really enjoy the paper and all the articles very much. Thanks to the brothers and sisters for all their hard work and effort.

We here at Baron are doing fairly well and have had a lot of sick people but hope everyone is on the mend. We have pot luck dinners every 2nd Sunday of the month and we enjoy getting together and visiting. Our attendance is great on Sunday morning but Sunday nights get somewhat smaller.

We have an announcement to make. Brother Dan Ross of the Selah, WA congregation will be holding our meeting this year starting June 13-20th. We invite all who can, come and be with us for a week of gospel preaching nd christian fellowship. We have R.V. hook-ups, plenty of places to camp and plenty of room in our homes. Meals will be served at the church kitchen and both buildings, the church and kitchen are air conditioned. We will have activities planned during the day for all. Bro. Dan Ross is a wonderful speaker and I'm sure we will all be uplifted by his sermons. We need the prayers of all our brethren.

God bless all with christian love,
James Brown for the Baron congregation
(918) 778-3240

CEDAREDGE, COLORADO

Dear Brothers, Sisters and all:

We at Cedaredge and Delta, CO enjoy the Courier and really miss it when we don't get it every month. We have had lots of snow and rain this winter but he weather is sunshine and nice the past week. Ware are all enjoying the sunshine.

Bro. Skip Berry has been very ill and in the hospital for a few days. He is home now and doing fine. Bro. Brent Berry broke his elbow playing basketball in several places. He is recovering but is in a lot of pain.

Sister Verlie Baldwin had spinal surgery and was in the hospital for 21 days, but is home now recuperating. Bro. Carl Carlson had prostrate surgery and is doing okay at this writing and is home.

As our spring is approaching, we pray that all of our members will be back on their feet and doing great. We are looking forward to our camp eeting June 26 through July 4th or 5th and hope that all of you are making plans to be with us. Everyone is welcome.

We also welcome Max and Patti Flack and 4 year old son Luke. They have been worshipping with us several months. Bro. Max was baptized January 24th - there was much rejoicing in heaven along with us. Remember us in your prayers.

God bless you all,
The Happy Hollow Church

P.S. Bro. Allen Sillman was baptized a few months ago. Also Shaeanne (13) and David (11) Astor.

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BELLFLOWER, CALIFORNIA

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

We are all doing fairly well - at least no major illnesses to report. We have all had our share of sicknesses, but mostly colds and flu.

We are happy to announce that Bro. Brian Ross is now living in Southern California and is now a part of our congregation. We feel very fortunate to have him with us and are sure that everyone at the Baron congregation dearly misses him. Maybe some of you will come out and visit him and be able to worship with us too. Welcome Brian!

We also want to announce that we have asked Bro. Eric Smith of the Sacramento, California congregation to speak at our meeting this year. The dates are from July 4th through July 11th. We are looking forward to our meeting and urge anyone who can to attend our meeting.

The Bellflower congregation