

## EATING AT HOME

"What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? ..." (1 Cor. 11:22).

The church at Corinth was infested with factional strife and division. They had rivaling factions that seemed to be divided along the lines of who had taught and/or baptized them. (1 Cor. 1:10-17; 3:1-4). They even allowed spiritual gifts to become a bone of contention - striving over the relative importance of each gift. (1 Cor. 12:12-31). Even at a time when it seems they would have most likely been united - when gathered for the Lord's Supper - they found a way to further divide. (1 Cor. 11:34).

In each case Paul called for unity, and went on to tell them the solution for each division.

To those who said, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," ..., he points out that such teachers were not great men of wisdom in their **own right**, seeking to win disciples to **their** school of thought, but were simply co-servants of the Christ whose wisdom they taught and in whose name they baptized. (1 Cor. 1:13-4:2)

To those fussing over the relative importance of spiritual gifts, he points out that each gift was important and necessary for that time. But, in their jealousy and strife over the relative importance of the gifts, they had thrown

aside something that would last long after those gifts had ceased and without which the gifts meant nothing - love for one another. Besides that, these gifts would cease as soon as they had served their purpose - once revelation was perfect or complete - love would never cease. Thus, their schism over these gifts was not only sinful, it was foolish, because they were striving over things that would **not long be in the church anyway**.

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### RELIGIOUS DISCUSSION

The following propositions will be discussed in the building of the church of Christ meeting at "E" and Quintard, Anniston, Alabama

January 14, 15, 1985

"It is in harmony with the scriptures for churches of Christ to contribute from their treasuries to benevolent institutions structured like childhaven so that the needs of orphaned children might be adequately met."

Affirm: Roger Jackson

Deny: Edward O. Bragwell, Jr.

January 17, 18, 1985

"The Scriptures teach that the local church, in its work of benevolence, may only provide the needs of the saints."

Affirm: Edward O. Bragwell, Jr.

Deny: Roger Jackson

7:00 each night.

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In the case of the divisions when the church came together for what should have been the Lord's Supper, they had divisions over something that **should not have been in the church in the first place**. They had made the assembly an occasion for a common feast. It may not be clear whether they made a common meal out of the Lord's supper or just had a meal along with the Lord's Supper. But in any case, it was an occasion for division, possibly along economic lines. (vv. 21,22). Those that had were shaming those that had not.

Paul gave a two-fold remedy for this division:

1. **Get a proper respect for the purpose for which they should have "come together as a church" - the eating of Lord's supper.** Their conduct was making this impossible (v.20 ASV). He explains the proper concept of the Lord's supper, its significance and the manner in which they should all eat it together. (vs. 23-33).

2. **Get the common feast out of the church's activity and back to the "at home" realm where it belonged.** If they wanted to "eat and drink", they had houses for that. If they wanted to have a feast or dinner party - they could do that at home. The purposes for which the church comes "together as a church" are far

higher than a common feast to satisfy the fleshly hunger or the mere need for social company. **Notice that Paul made no attempt to get them to merely clean up the abuses of common meals and leave them in the church, but rather completely removed them from the church.** In effect, he cleaned up the abuses of the Lord's Supper and threw out the common meals.

We may not understand all that may have caused the problem - but it seems to me that one would have to have help in misunderstanding the inspired solution to the problem: "What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?...if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home." That would cure that problem at Corinth and it would solve a similar problem today.

There are still divisions because some brethren are determined to "come together as a church" for common meals - sometimes called "**fellowship meals**". They are determined that the church plan, promote and provide the things needed for such meals. There are other brethren who believe that "if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home."

Why not apply Paul's solution to the problem?

We are sometimes asked, "Since the early church often met in private homes that also had a place to prepare and eat common meals, does this not prove that we may have such in our meeting houses?"

I once preached in a meeting in the basement of an American Legion Hall in Perry, Iowa. On Friday night, there was a dance in the room just above us. Now, since I concede that the church may meet in a

building where there is a place to dance, do I have to grant the church the right to include a dance hall in its building? My son preached to a church in New Jersey that met in a building rented from a school that had a piano in the auditorium that belonged to the school. The church had no use for the piano - so they did not use it. Now, was he consistent in meeting in a building that had a piano in it and at the same time teaching that the church had no business with or use for a piano? If they build their own building, should they include a piano, because after all they have to admit that they once worshipped in a building where one was present - in fact, in the same room?

A congregation could meet in the house of one of its members and that member would still not be "at home" in the sense that it is used in verse 34. If that is not so, then the woman in chapter 14:35 could have spoken even "in church" if they were meeting at her house, since she would be - "at home". In 1 Timothy 5:4,16, the benevolence done by the individual Christian "at home" is contrasted with that with which the church is charged. In these cases the contrast is between what was done "as a church" and what was done "at home" - private<sup>v</sup> and individually.

The authority to assemble, teach, preach, etc. authorizes the church to provide the means, facilities, and incidentals to do these things. The church may come by these things in various ways, depending on what may be available and expedient at the

time. They may borrow, buy, or rent a place to meet for regular worship or for gospel meetings. But they can only acquire it to be used for authorized functions.

In the case of meeting in a private home, the church is loaned a place and uses and controls that place for the period loaned. It has no control of it at other times. But, while it is under its control, the church uses it only for those things it is authorized to do. A church might even meet in a banquet hall loaned to it for Sunday services, but it would not be borrowing nor using it as a banquet hall - even though it might be used every other day of the week for banquets by its owner.

In the case of renting a place, the church may rent a part or all of a building for specified days or hours during the week or rent it so as to have control of it perpetually. At the time it is under its control the church uses it only for its work.

If it is more expedient to buy the building and facilities -- most times it is in this country -- the church controls the building all the time. It buys it for the same reason that it would have borrowed or rented one had that been expedient - as a tool to do what it is authorized to do. The church can use it only for the purpose(s) for which it had a right to buy it - just as the church has no business borrowing or renting anything to be used for anything other than what the church is authorized to do. But in the case of bought facilities, the church has control at all

times while it owns them. There is no excuse then for the church to use or allow them to be used for purposes other than for which they had a right to be purchased or things incidental to those purposes.

There is nothing wrong with brethren getting together to eat. There is nothing wrong with brethren getting together to fish, go hunting, play ball or take a joy ride. They can plan and promote such an event, buy (rent or borrow) and use whatever is needed for it. But such functions belong in the "at home" realm and not "as a church". Surely, brethren can see that. Why then not leave such activities "at home" and leave the church to do what it should do as a church - the church would better accomplish its purpose without the hindrance of the divisions caused by those who insist on bringing such private, "at home", activities into the sphere of the churches activity.

Again, "If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment" (1 Cor. 11:34). - Editor.

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## SERVICES

### Sunday:

Bible Study...9:45 A.M.

Worship...10:45 A.M.

Worship...6:00 P.M.

### Wednesday:

Bible Class...10:00 A.M.

Bible Classes...7:30 P.M.

**Please Visit With Us.**

## Washed In Blood

**"To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." - Rev. 1:5b-6**

Many from among the very scum of the earth have been washed in the blood of Christ and given a new lease on life (cf. 1 Cor. 6:11). Many from the best of moral standards, but still sinners and often religiously wrong have been cleansed by the blood. In fact, every Christian has reason to praise "Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood", since we all were defiled by sin in some form or the other. (Rom. 3:21)

To appreciate the value of the blood of Christ one needs to understand the seriousness of sin.

It separates one from God. (Is. 59:1,2). Without God, one has no hope in the world (Eph. 2:12). It will bring God's wrath upon one at the end. (Col. 2:5-7).

God's attitude toward sin can be seen from 2 Peter 2:4-10: "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those

who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed with the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds) -- then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority." Without being cleansed by blood, we would all face certain punishment in the day of judgment!

The blood that cleansed us is the "blood of the New Testament (or covenant)". Each time we observe the Lord's supper we are reminded of this fact. (Matt. 26:28). The first "blood of the covenant" - the old covenant - was animal blood which was a type of the blood of the New Covenant that was to come. Just as the animal blood was used to dedicate the Old Covenant was sprinkled on "the book itself and all the people" by Moses, the blood of Christ dedicates the the New Covenant and God's people under it. The blood sacrifice of Christ began with his death on the cross and was complete when, as High Priest, "with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place (heaven itself) once for all, having obtained eternal redemption for us."(Heb. 9:16-10:5).

Unlike it was under the first covenant, one sacrifice

and one entrance into the Most Holy Place did the job once for all. Instead of remembrance being made every year, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more". (Heb. 10:4,5,17,18). No more yearly sacrifices and yearly entrance into Most Holy Place by the priest. Christ suffered and died "once at the end of the ages" (Heb. 9:26-27). He entered the Most Holy Place (heaven) with blood "once for all" (v. 12), to be there until "He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation." (v. 28).

"Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb. 10:19-22).

When are men cleansed by the blood? When did we have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience by the blood of Christ? Do you suppose it has anything to do with having our "bodies washed with pure water"? Could this be a reference to their baptism? We believe it is. Consider these

passages in which I have underlined the same blessings connected with both Christ's blood and our baptism:

"For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28)

"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

"To him who love us and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. 1:5b).

"Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins" (Acts 22:16).

So, we are initially cleansed of sin by the blood of Christ, when we are baptized for the remission of sins.

Even after baptism, the blood of Christ is still available to those who sin (1 John 1:7) - if they will confess their sins. (v. 9).

Hence, the blood of Jesus Christ is made available to alien sinners and to God's children. In each case, its effect upon the individual's sins is conditioned on the individual's response. If the alien sinner will respond by being baptized the blood will wash away his sins. If God's child, who has sinned (and all at times do), will respond by confessing his sin then he

will be again cleansed by the blood of Christ (cf. Acts 8:22).

I know of no promise of unconditional cleansing by the blood of Christ for anyone - alien or child. Also, I know that if "we go on sinning wilfully" (Heb. 10:26 NASV) that we count "the blood of the covenant ... a common thing" (v. 29) and have nothing to look forward to, but "fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries". (v. 27). So, we had better be careful about telling anyone that he can go on sinning and the blood of Christ will cover him in it.

Truly, there is power in the blood. If we will apply it to our lives by obeying the Lord. Let us determine to do just that. - Editor.

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### The Shady Dozen Of Gossip

- "I heard...."
- "They say...."
- "Everybody says...."
- "Have you heard...?"
- "Did you hear...?"
- "Isn't it awful...?"
- "People say...?"
- "Did you ever...?"
- "Somebody said...."
- "Would you think...?"
- "Don't say I told you..."
- "Oh, I think it is terrible..."

The Outlook

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