



Cape Coral Church of Christ

1010 S.W. 20th Avenue

Cape Coral, Florida 33991

(239) 283-4880



<http://www.thelordsway.com/capecoralfl>

Schedule of Services

Sunday: Bible Study: 9:30 A.M.

Worship: 10:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday: Bible Study: 6:00 P.M.

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Putting Christ into Christmas?

The holiday season is upon us. Streets are decorated with lights. Nativity scenes are found at various locations. Folks are purchasing last minute gifts. No doubt you have heard or perhaps read where someone has stated that Christ needs to be placed back into Christmas. Many hearing statements like this nod or verbally approve. Does Christ need to be put back into Christmas?

One must never lose sight of the fact that December 25 is not the birthday of Jesus. The evidence is beyond dispute. Palestinian shepherds do not keep their flocks in the fields in the harsh winter months (Luke 2:8). All the available evidence would point to some time of the year other than winter. The fact is the Bible is silent in regard to the exact day of the Savior's birth. The Bible does not command us to celebrate His birth as a religious holy day. The Scriptures emphasize His death rather than His birth. It was His death that was at the center of apostolic preaching (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). In this sense Christ is not in Christmas and has never been.

Some folks, recognizing the commercialization that surrounds this holiday and their mistaken belief that December 25th is the actual

birthday of Jesus, have advocated that we need to get Christ back into Christmas. However, it appears to me that a much better idea is to get Christ into the hearts of men. "Until Christ be formed in you" was the challenge that Paul issued to the Galatians. It involved an outward expression of an inward character. When Christ is in our hearts, our actions and language will manifest it. Our lives will be changed, and those around us will know that we have been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).

Do we need Christ in Christmas, or Christ in us? Christ in us will impact a world lost in sin. May each of us allow Jesus Christ to reign in our hearts (Ephesians 3:17) today and everyday.

A New Year and a New Spirit

There is something thrilling about the prospect of a new year. I think that most of us feel a prospect of doing better, not making the same mistakes we made the last year. It is like a clean page, a fresh beginning, where we can make a clean, fresh start.

So much of the Christian life is like this. We have begun with a "new birth." We have with Christ entered into a "new covenant." Our hope is based upon His promise of some day bringing us into the "new heavens and new earth."

While Israel was in captivity, God tried to encourage them through the prophet Ezekiel by saying that the time would come when they would return to Judah and would have a new heart and a new spiritual outlook. He wrote, "I will give a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26).

The King James Version translates Romans 7:6 by saying that since we have been discharged from serving under the Old Law, we should now serve "in newness of spirit." This is probably our greatest need for the new year -- an eagerness to serve the Lord, a new outlook on life, an optimism, a renewed hope.

So many Christians never change. We get into a rut in our living and thinking and we make very few changes. Our attitude is often, "What's the use!"

That can be most dangerous. We are a group of people on this earth that are supposed to be "renewed daily in the spirit" even though our outward person is perishing (See 2 Corinthians 4:16). We are

growing daily in "grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). We are to "forget the things which are behind... and press on" toward the goal of a life dedicated to Christ (Philippians 3:14).

We cannot afford to "get set in our ways," but must always be looking to God's Word for ways that we can keep on improving and growing in Christ. Each new year should be met with some spiritual resolutions. The child of God who truly believes the Father's promise, "I will never fail you nor forsake you," cannot have anything but a "Happy New Year." We must "be of good cheer" for the One who we love and follow "has overcome the world." Yes, have a happy spiritual New Year!

Dangerous Assumptions!

A beautiful white rabbit, used in Willie's nature class, was to be given away to one of the children in a drawing. To take part in the drawing, each child had to bring a note from his or her parents saying they could keep the animal if they won it. Willie's mother was terrified at the thought of a rabbit as a pet. She emphatically said, "No!" -- much to the disappointment of Willie. Willie's father, seeing the deep hurt on Willie's face, intervened. "I don't think there would be such a difference around here if we had one little rabbit." He then turned to Willie's mother, winked, and said, "Besides, what are the chances of Willie's winning the rabbit with twenty-eight other students in the class?"

And so they gave Willie the permission note the next morning. That afternoon Willie rushed through the front door and excitedly announced that he was the big winner. The rabbit was his! "You mean that out of all twenty-eight students in your class, you won the rabbit?" his mother asked trembling. "Well, not exactly," said Willie, "I was the only one with a note!"

Assumptions can often be disastrous, leading to much worse situations than that above. Think of our assumptions that leave so much of the Lord's work undone. A friend or neighbor well known to us is ignored rather than taught the Word. We assumed someone else would do it. A brother or sister in Christ who is well known by us becomes negligent. We say or do nothing in their behalf, assuming someone else will encourage or admonish them, and then they fall away. Visitors are observed at our worship services, but we make no effort to welcome them and invite them back. They never return and we wonder why.

Could it be because we assumed that someone else would make them feel welcome? Contributions fall short, Bible class attendance drops, teaching positions go unfilled, facilities are uncared for, and so on, all because of our assumptions, dangerous assumptions, that someone else will meet the need.

Let us never be guilty of assuming that others will fill the place we ourselves fail to fill. No one can do the work God has marked for **YOU!!**

Let's Be the Church

A confused, chaotic, convulsing world, gasping for life and breath, will not be touched by a tame church, mouthing timeworn cliches and pious platitudes. To affect a dirty world, it will take a clean church; to infect a sad world, it will take a joyous church; to inspire an apathetic world, it will take a convicted church; to challenge a dying world, it will take a live church; to heal a sick world, it will take a healthy church.

Christians should be like postage stamps!

There is a lot to be said for the lowly postage stamp. It is always ready for service anytime of the day or night. It can take a licking and keep on going. It goes where it's told to go without any questions. Plus, it sticks to the job until it is finished.

As you have no doubt guessed, there are several lessons that we can learn from the postage stamp. We need to be ready for service at any time day or night. As Jesus said, "Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks" (Luke 12:36). These men received the reward.

We need to be able to take a licking and keep on going. Remember what the apostles did when they were beaten for preaching Christ: "They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."

We need to go where we are sent without questioning why? "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Plus, we need to stick to the job until it's finished! "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).