

Schedule of Meeting Times:

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM

Speaker, Robert Emerson

Study Sunday 10:00 AM

Worship Sunday 11:00 AM

Worship Sunday 5:00 PM

Singing every 2nd Sunday evening

Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

Preacher / bulletin editor: Kris Vilander

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We would love to
study God's word
with you!



Servants during February:

Songleader: Stanley (3); Larry (10); David (17), Chandler (24), Dwight (3/3),

Reading: Stanley

Announcements: Marty

Communion: Mike, Lakin, Robert, Chandler

Wednesday Lesson: Larry (6), Stanley (13),

Kris (20), Mike (27)

Lawn Mowing (week starting):

On winter vacation...

Singing: TBD (24)

Area Meetings: Eastside (Singing 13-17); Market Street (Singing 22)

Hays Mill church of Christ

21705 Hays Mill Road

Elkmont, AL 35620

The Bible . Examiner

"Examine everything carefully..." -1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

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Why I Left Institutionalism (Part 1)

By Terence Sheridan

This is the first in a two part article, and sets the stage for this brother's life-changing decision; in the next article, we will see the shift in mindset—as well as the scriptures in particular—that led him to that conclusion.

It is common knowledge that many Christians take opposing views about how a church is supposed to carry out its responsibilities. Some assert a church can perform whatever is expected of individual Christians and do so by supporting social organizations outside the local congregation (e.g., church funding of charities, schools, missionary programs, etc.). Others believe that this kind of activity is not authorized by the Bible because churches of Christ have a divine mission and organization which is circumscribed by the scriptures. It was not until recently that I was of the latter persuasion. The following is my

personal testimony of why I changed my mind about the issue.

Preface

On January 17, 1993, I was baptized into Christ. I had no previous affiliation with any religious sect, so the baptism marked my first meaningful exposure to Jesus Christ's church. At the time, I was a 22 year old graduate student at Florida State University. I was interested in meeting other Christians in my age group, so I later joined a congregation on campus with a "ministry" for college students. Over the course of the year, I learned much about "church life" and much about those who profess to follow Christ.

Eventually I completed my master's degree, and in the summer of 1994, took a position as a university librarian in Montgomery, Alabama. One day, I was sitting in my office when an

insurance sales representative entered. This was nothing unusual, because he was in the business of setting up pre-tax insurance plans for the university employees. As we both talked, it was revealed that he was a Christian, just like me. Since I was new to the area, I asked him where I could find a good congregation. He naturally invited me to Wednesday night Bible class. I accepted the invitation and attended services at the Perry Hill Road building for the first time.

The Story

Between the time I graduated from FSU and my arrival in Montgomery, I had already visited several congregations (all of them in my hometown Atlanta). Though I was a recent convert, I quickly realized many places which had the obligatory "Church of Christ" sign in the front lawn were not as close to New Testament Christianity as I thought they might be. On Sunday mornings, I would worship with several hundred people, and listen to speeches reminiscent of Yogi Berra or Dale Carnegie. I could leave church buildings sometimes and not even be greeted by anyone, in spite of the large crowds.


I was disgusted because it seemed Christianity was just a social thing for people. They would come to the building, greet their friends, have their fun, talk a bit about spiritual things, and then go back to their secular lives. Quite a few worship services had some activities that were utterly irrelevant to my needs. I was lonely and hurting. I needed to worship God, hear edifying teaching, and have some meaningful fellowship with Christians. What was I

served? An honor ceremony for college students, a fund-raiser with a slide show, a program where Bibles were handed to the member's kids, etc. I was also taken aback by all the hoopla over hand-picked directors, ministers, and volunteers who did everything through high-brow programs. It seemed the rest of the congregation were merely content to sit back and cheer the "leaders" on with their check-books open.

I heard church members talk about "diversity." Of course, they meant doctrinal diversity. As for real diversity (Col 3:11), they were not much into that. I had seen much more worldly affluence and materialism than I cared to see. In one instance, I remember sitting in a church classroom while two other men talked about their careers and various pursuits. One fellow bragged about his \$90K salary, while the other smiled contentedly. Finally, after wasting most of the hour, they turned to me and talked about religion. They gave me a paternalistic grin as they explained that they were not hung up on issues (like denominational error, women preachers, etc.). Indeed they weren't; their church didn't even seem to be hung up on "core" issues, like showing love for strangers or a having humble, Christ-like attitude. After I moved from Atlanta to Montgomery, I did not want to have anything to do with big churches. I dreaded having to face the same religious schmaltz again. After all, in Montgomery, there seemed to be a "Church of Christ" on every street corner. Who knew what I would find?

When I visited the Perry Hill Road

congregation, however, I found people who were very friendly and committed to spiritual matters. So I became a member. I was somewhat surprised by the kind of treatment I received because I knew the church did not engage in support of colleges, orphan homes, etc. like other churches in town,

and I had been warned about those "mean old antis." How could I reconcile the behavior of the church members with the stereotype? Eventually, it was not long before I had to figure why these Christians, who seemed so loving and sincere, had convictions about something called "institutionalism." 


Use What You Have

By Robert L. (Bob) Craig

We have an outstanding lesson in the parable we read from Matthew 25:14-31. Read it. It might be titled "Use What You Have." I hear so many people, in speaking of serving the Lord, whining because they don't have the ability to do more. In fact, those who whine the most, use their lack of ability for their excuse of doing nothing.

The Lord has never required me to do anything that I was not capable of doing. He never told me personally, anything, just as he has not told anyone else, personally, to do something. But he taught me in the pages of the Book which were given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that if I could preach publicly to do so. He told me in the same Book, if I couldn't do that but I could teach, do that. He told me in the

same Book that I would not be required to do anything I could not do. But, in the same Book he told me that I *would* be accountable for whatever I *could* do. I can't use that which I do not have so I am told to use what I have.

The one talent man of Matthew 25 was condemned, not because he didn't do more, but because he didn't use the little ability he did have. He and I were told, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." I like the old song we so often sing, "Have you lifted a stone from your brother's way, have you walked with a slower tread?" The song is saying, "maybe I can't do much, but am I doing it." Take an honest inventory and see what you find. 

Remember in Prayer

Again, at the time of printing, this has been a week of relative quiet, for which we thank our God! Please continue to pray for those that are

unable to meet with us: Lois Adams, Ruth Black, Carolyn Dennis, Tim and Dot Hice, Polly McNatt, and Hazel Teeples. 