



CONNECTED TO CHRIST: WHY MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

RESPONDING TO OBJECTIONS ABOUT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP



HYPOCRITES

- Yes. Romans 7 teaches this reality about Christians.
- Christians are sinners who are called to holiness.
- What's the chief purpose of the Church?
- Does the outsider know that?
 - What does the outsider know? Who taught them that?

JUDGMENTAL

- Too Strict!
- What is Christianity? Is it a set of rules? Why do outsiders believe this? (note opinio legis and natural man)
- Who is the Judge of the living and the dead? What does His Word do? Does He command us not to judge or to judge with right judgment?
- What should we make sure others know about the Church rather than just the Law that they understand?

CATCH-22

- As Christians sin... “what a bunch of hypocrites” When Christians speak about doing better and living better... “Too judgmental”
- Who is behind this?
- How do we minimize this?
 - Try to walk the talk – what fuels our Christian lives and allows us to lead better ones? What resource do we have to help strengthen our faith in Christ and love for the neighbor?
 - Try to not fall into the temptation of judging everyone all the time, balancing out the Law and the Gospel in our interactions with others. Christian example of repentance and forgiveness.

Who is it that converts people? Is it our arguments?

CHURCH ISN'T LIKE THE CHURCH OF THE BIBLE

- Represents a misreading of the Bible usually
- Acts 2. Devotion to...
 - 1. Doctrine of the Apostles
 - 2. Fellowship (with God, with each other)
 - 3. Breaking of the bread (Lord's Supper)
 - 4. The prayers (Prayer of the Church in worship)

CHURCH OF ACTS

- Used common things to help people
- Common ownership. Members of OSLC own everything at OSLC.
- Helping (READ GALATIANS 6:10) Do good unto all, but especially...
 - First the Household of Faith
 - Then others

CHURCH BURN OUT

- Ex-members of delinquents are common users of this objection
- How does the church operate in day to day affairs?
- What is the primary thing of OSLC?
- Acts 6 as an example of fixing, but also how politics, etc. are just a part of church life because it is earthly in a sense.

OLD AND NEW MEMBERS

- “Many ex-church members who, for whatever reason got fed up or bored with church life probably never really looked at their plain old congregation as the continuation of salvation history in a particular place. Newer members should take care to not make the same mistake. Yes, your pastors and elected lay leaders are sinners. Yes, the Church so very rarely looks like what it is – the children of God, the communion of saints. Because when we go by sight, it just looks like a bunch of everyday sinners. Yes, pleading for money to pay the gas bill is nobody’s favorite thing to do or to listen to. Yes, generous people who give of their time, money, and energy will probably get taken advantage of, as they always have been everywhere you go. But none of these are good reasons to disconnect yourself from church life” (page 110)

GREAT SUMMARY QUOTE:

- “A congregation doing Word and Sacrament ministry may not seem like the most exciting or relevant thing in your town, but when you understand it in the light of God’s Word and see it for what it is, you realize what a blessing membership in such a congregation is for the people of God. Christ is the Head of the Body, and we are individually members of that Body. And Christ’s Body, the Church, remains alive and active in the world as the members receive Christ faithfully and build one another up in love. It might not always look like much, but such ministry is the most important thing in the world.” (page 110)