

THE SOWER
ARTHUR (IL) CHURCH OF CHRIST
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Have you visited our web site lately? (www.Arthurcoc.com)

WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

Unless you have completely isolated yourself from TV, the Internet, newspapers and news magazines, you have surely asked yourself many times, “Where are we headed?” The media makes us painfully aware that we live in troubled, or even “perilous times” (2 Timothy 3:1). Muslim nations, looking upon Israel as “little Satan” and the U.S. as the “great Satan” have expressed desire to wipe both off the map. ISIS is expressing its Islamic hatred of those claiming the Christian faith by subjecting them to beheading, torture, and the burning of their church buildings. In our own country there is a growing threat of terrorism, while cities burn supposedly due to racial tensions. Spiritually and morally, our nation has largely marginalized God. We have put Him out of our schools and public buildings, while we have ignored His laws, relying upon the Supreme Court of the USA to decide in favor of the torturous death of infants in their mothers’ wombs, and redefining marriage to include same-sex marriage.. And that includes Christians. Some openly declare that Christians “must” change their teachings on sexual morality, one even claiming that Christians prioritize what he calls “scattered messages of ancient texts over all that has been learned since—as if time had stood still, as if advances of science and knowledge meant nothing.” Furniture tycoon Mitchell Gold reportedly said, believes Christians must be made “to take homosexuality off the sin list,” adding, Politicians, have made similar assertions. As former Reagan-administration-adviser Pat Buchanan observed, “The LGBT militants are not asking to be left alone. They are demanding that we accept the morality of homosexuality and same sex marriages and manifest that acceptance under pain of law and sanctions, in our daily lives.” Bakers, photographers, floral shops, etc. are already being sued and fined for refusing to join celebrations of same-sex weddings.

All of the above is distressful, but most of all it is most troubling when those who call themselves Christians surrender to the world’s demands,, not only condoning same-sex “marriage,” but even celebrating it. Others simply are standing by, hoping the nightmare we are having will simply vanish. As our national moral conscience weakens, so do “Christians’.” It is as Jesus said, relative to the time of His return, “Because iniquity abounds, the love of many shall wax cold” (Matt. 24:12). Churches water down their teachings to make them more palatable to the sensuous public, but still find church-membership and attendance still declining. Only about 20% of Americans are thought to attend worship services on a regular basis, WHILE 80%find other activities more pleasurable. It is understandable when Bible-believers desert unbelieving churches, but, sadly, they remain “unchurched.” All the while, Islam is growing, and atheism continues to advance in numbers, especially among the young, largely due to

the imposed doctrine of evolution as explanation for creation. Even some ministers, still in pulpits, deny the reality of the God they pretend to serve.

Where are we headed if we continue on the present course? Let God's word' tell us: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psa. 9:17). Only repentance, and a return to the God of our fathers, will prevent the inevitable. Change will not come from the secular society until change first comes from the nominal church. God made a promise to His people, and I believe it still holds true, when He said, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14). We are responsible for where we are headed. Which way are YOU headed? --Ron

"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine: but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

BIBLICAL UNIQUENESS

Any study of man's history will prove that the Bible had (and still has) a unique and profound influence. The Bible gives us a proper perspective in all vital human issues, including marriage, raising children, finances, government, the judicial system, equal rights, aging, poverty, health, work, ecology, education, etc. **The basis for the world's laws and ethics all originate in God's Word.** Even the seven-day week has become the worldwide standard pattern. No other source for this cycle has ever been offered.

Researching the Bible shows that everything good (as stated in 3 John 11) comes from God. **Throughout history, whenever Christianity has been blamed for atrocities, one always finds major deviations from God's Word.** Conversely, whenever the Bible is believed and followed, people live in harmony. Even a skeptic has to stand in awe of the Bible's unique influence and profound insight.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV) All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

--Logansport (IN) Lifelines

TO JOIN A CHURCH

What is required to join a denomination? It is usually required that one agree with the denomination's doctrines as expressed in creeds, rules of faith and practice, confessions, rules of discipline, etc.

In New Testament times, what did it take to join a denomination? The answer that should be obvious is that there were no denominations to join. There was simply the Lord's church (Matthew 16:18). And it was not something one joined in the usual sense of the word. When one believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, repented of his sins, confessed his faith in Christ and submitted to Christ in baptism (burial) in water "for the remission of sins," he was added by the Lord to the church (Acts 2:36-38, 47; 8:26-40). There were no denominational creeds or rules to be learned and submitted to, nor did one have to be voted in. One was simply a Christian, a follower of Christ, and was submissive to Christ and the word of His inspired apostles for all he believed and practiced. Why should it be otherwise today?

The Arthur Church of Christ endeavors to be simply a body of baptized believers, submissive to Christ and the word of His inspired apostles as set forth in the New Testament scriptures. We believe that if we believe and do what New Testament believers believed and did, that we will be what they were—simply Christians.
---Ron

"EXODUS—MESSAGE OF DELIVERANCE", *Part 2* will be today's message as we continue this series. The deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt through Moses has a strong likeness to our deliverance from sin by the grace of God through faith in Christ.

SURGERY THURSDAY: I am scheduled to have a skin-cancer on my right ear removed on the 9th. It will require the removal of the top part of my ear. Plans will then be made for the removal of cataracts.