

women who have been listening to the women's liberation movement more than they have been listening to Jesus.

Christians have also divided by race. The dominant race will abuse or be accused of abusing those who are less in number and of a different color. There is no room for this type of behavior in the church of our Lord. We do not have the Jew and Gentile issue the first century church had, but we still have prejudice. We will not neglect Grecian widows (Acts 6), but we may refuse to associate with members of a different race.

Rather than forming cliques with those who are like us and barriers to those who are different, we need to unite in Christ. In Romans 14 Paul addresses issues that are inconsequential to God. God does not care if we eat meat or abstain from it. He does not count either action as a sin. What is a sin is the way we treat those who engage in a practice that is different from ours.

A weaker brother did not have a conscience that would allow him to eat meat (2). The stronger brother knew meat could be eaten without sinning. He was not supposed to look down on the weaker brother or to compel him to violate his conscious by eating (3a). The weaker brother would be sinning by eating, not because the action was wrong, but because he did it in contrast to what he thought was right (23).

The weaker brother was not supposed to judge the actions of the stronger (3b). His scruples were different. He was not guilty of sin by eating meat. Paul tells us not to judge another's servant (4, 10, 13). We are to be fully persuaded in our own minds (5) and give account of ourselves before God (12).

These instructions regard to things that are clean (14). In areas of sin we must teach, judge, and divide if repentance does not take place. Race, gender, net worth, and age are not sinful; but the way we divide over them is.

Mooreville church of Christ

720 N. Indianapolis Road

Mooreville, IN 46158

May 17, 2020

Sunday:

9:30 a.m. Bible Study

10:30 a.m. Worship

3:00 p.m. Worship

Wednesday:

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

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Announcements

Today and we will meet for worship at 10:30. We will not have afternoon service or Bible classes. Next week (May 24), if all is well, we will increase our service to 1 hour with no P.M. service or Bible study.

On May 31, Lord willing, we will resume full services. We will have 9:30 Bible study, A.M. worship, P.M. worship, and Wednesday night Bible study. Classes for adults will resume where we left off. Other classes will have the new May trimester teachers.

Joe is still having troubles with his eye. He sends his love to all of you.

Alan has had chest pains this week and should have his dialysis process for the future sorted out by the time you read this.

Valerie collapsed and was taken to St. Francis in Greenwood on Tuesday. We pray all will be well with her.

**Share a kind
word with
someone
today.**

Separation of Church and State

Ron Roberts

Our constitution does not allow the government to dictate in areas of religion. Our government can not tell us what to believe or reject in the spiritual realm. This is part of what made the Coronavirus shut-down such a difficult event to navigate. Some felt congregations should continue worshipping in public assemblies because the government cannot interfere with our worship. To shut down was obeying man rather than God in their estimation (Acts 5:29). They felt the governors were overstepping their boundaries and violating the constitution. Others felt all public gatherings needed to cease to halt the pandemic. It was a question of health of the nation, survival of our elderly members, cooperation with the government, reputation in the community, and an emergency situation. These differences of opinion will likely go on for as long as we remember Covid 19.

But this is not the aim of this article. In a recent conversation with another preacher I mentioned "*church politics*". I did not mean the government should separate from the church by this phrase. I was referring to the error found in many congregations where members will not separate themselves from political thinking.

Paul said concerning the church, "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*" (Gal. 3:28). This verse is not to be taken literally. There were Jews, women, slaves, and so on in the church. Paul was teaching that these differences were immaterial. More important than our race or gender is our faith. We are **one** in Christ.

The principle is well understood. We worship God. We follow Jesus. We believe the Bible. We are brethren. We love one another. So why are there divisions among congregations that do not involve doctrinal issues? What causes us to split the church? Is it misplaced loyalty?

Sometimes members divide by family. The Jones family will always stay united even if it requires going against the rest of the church. If dad teaches error, mom gets her feelings hurt, or junior is reprimanded by his Bible class teacher; then the Jones family will unite in opposition to everyone who does not agree with them. They will stay or leave as a unit. They will reject the Bible, the Lord, and the church for family.

Others will unite with one another by political party. There are members who will vote Democrat regardless of their candidate's platform. He can agree with abortion, same sex marriage, and have a history of sexual abuse. It does not matter. He's a Democrat. Every election produces the same type of friction in the church. Please do not interpret this paragraph as an endorsement of Republicans. The point is these distinctions should be subservient to our fellowship in Christ. When I was preaching in the south, one brother cautioned me after I made a favorable reference to Abraham Lincoln. "Some brethren will be upset".

More common divisions take place between the old and the young. The zealous youth insist on bringing in changes, being more energetic, and having more programs. The experienced members have seen problems develop at times when we diverted from the traditional path. I knew one congregation that hired an older preacher to maintain their traditions. When he left a younger preacher was hired to get some new ideas flowing. The preacher who followed him was middle aged. He laughed saying, "*they had learned to compromise*".

Perhaps even more common is the division between men and women. The feminist movement has done much to reject the Biblical teaching of submission to husbands. Men cower before their wives and will represent their views in the business meetings of the church. I am not saying women do not have good ideas or that they should not be represented by their husbands in the meeting. What I am concerned about is the aggressive nature of the man in the meeting. He demands. He insists. When asked about the details of his proposal he sits down quietly. He did not really understand what his wife wanted. He just knuckled under to her wishes and tried to get everyone to do the same. Some women desire to be in the business meeting, to lead in worship services, and to be appointed as elderettes. They are representing the feminist cause instead of the cross of Christ. Men fail to love and lead. This gives feminism a receptive audience in the women of the church. Bible classes are often interrupted to debate submission and the permanence of marriage by