

"My Friend"

Trilacoochee 08/30/20		
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Slide: My Friend

Introductions:

Consider we are worshipping here for the first time.

We know nothing of the Lord's Church.

My friend coming to worship with us.

He knows many of you here.

He has passed by this building for decades.

He is a high school classmate of one of our elders.

Slide: Church Doors

What will he see when he comes through those doors?

No stage with bright lights.

No piano or organ.

No candles or incense.

No religious statues.

No holy water.

Slide: Church Pew

What will we tell my friend when he comes to worship with us?

He lost his wife who died from Alzheimer's a few months ago.

He is currently attending his mother's church in Dade City.

That is all my friend has known in his life: his mother's church.

Slide: Wikipedia (churches of Christ)

He has access to the Internet and can look up churches of Christ.

He has his own Bible.

But like the Ethiopian Eunuch, he needs help in understand the Gospel.

He has many, many qualities of a Christian.

He carried for his ailing wife for seven years.

But he was baptized in a denominational church.

Slide: World Religion Summary

Where to begin?

My friend and I have looked at charts showing the major religions of the world.

Confusing, if you do not have the inspired Word of God in your heart.

My friend does not see the Trilacoochee church of Christ on this chart: it does not jump out at you if you know what I mean.

He attends his mother's church more out of family tradition than anything else.

Before my friend worships with us, we need to know what does the churches of Christ mean to the world? Christianity.com is one secular source I can show my friend.

Slide: Churches of Christ are Autonomous Congregations

(Read off Screen)

(Animation: Ephesians 1:22-23, KJV)

Slide: Churches of Christ are Governed by a Plurality of Elders.

(Read off Screen)

(Animation: Acts 14:23, KJV)

Slide: Churches of Christ Believe in a Process of Salvation.

(Read off Screen)

(Animation: John 14:6 (KJV))

Slide: Churches of Christ Baptize by immersion Only.

(Read off Screen)

(Animation: John 3:5)

Slide: "A cappella" Singing is the Only Music used in Worship.

(Read off Screen)

Ephesians 5:19 says we are to sing "... psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and make melodies in our hearts to the Lord."

Slide: Josephus

Josephus, the first-century historian, writes:

(Read off Screen)

Slide: Trumpet and Incense

I want to emphasize to my friend that in the OT, Psalm 150 encouraged the use of the trumpet, the harp, stringed instruments, organs, and various kinds of cymbals when worshipping God.

But Hebrews 9:23 says the things used in the Temple worship were "patterns of things in the heavens."

They were only shadows.

The things in Christ's church are the substance.

Slide: Protestant Reformation

Why are there so many churches?

I want my friend to know that's because so many people are not following the example of the first century church.

The Protestant Reformation is probably the most famous movement between people fighting on how to worship God in their own way.

In 16th century Europe, this was both a religious and political challenge to the Roman Catholic Church and papal authority.

Slide: Cane Ridge, Kentucky

This is the Cane Ridge Meeting House, erected in 1791, and located in Paris, Kentucky.

From 1801 to 1804, nearly 10,000 people attended a Christian revival here organized by Barton W. Stone.

Slide: Bible and Papers

A second revival started in western Pennsylvania and was headed by Thomas Campbell and his son, Alexander.

These were revivals by those who called themselves the church of Christ.

Slide: Batsell Barrett Baxter

During the 1960s, Batsell Barrett Baxter, former head of the Bible department at David Lipscomb College, had this response:

(Read off Screen)

Slide: River Road church of Christ

I want my fiend to know that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached all over the world.

One Sunday night I attended services at the River road church of Christ in New Port Richey.

I saw a presentation by Ron Clayton, who has been a Christian missionary to India since 1979.

Slide: Baptisms

In the last 40 years:

(Read off Screen)

Slide: Preachers

(Read off Screen)

Slide: Gospel Meetings in India

(Read off Screen)

Slide: Christian Retention Rate in India

(Read off Screen)

Slide: Religious Revival in India

India is much like the United States was 150 years ago.

When our country was in the midst of a great religious revival.

Slide: Congested Street

One of the greatest harvests today is in India—home of the world's largest and fastest-growing Restoration Movement.

It is currently one of the epicenters for the growth of New Testament Christianity.

Slide: Newspaper Photo

My friend saw this newspaper photo in January of this year.

He knows we call ourselves the Trilacoochee church of Christ.

But he must know we have a distinctive plea.

That the Bible is the only source which Christians can unite and worship God.

(Animation: 1 Peter 2:9, KJV)

(Read Off Screen)

Slide: Germany's Autobahn

The chart I showed you in this presentation reminds me of Germany's Autobahn.

No speed limits for some 8 thousand miles of highway.

Even in bad weather motorists still average 80 mph.

Everybody going his own way.

But there is only one way to Heaven.

Slide: Dad's Nature Trail

(Describe Off Screen)

Slide: The Church Revealed in the NT

Of all the churches in the world today, only one is mentioned in the NT. I want to show my friend this chart.

I also want my friend to know how far the world has come from the first-century church.

During the Middle Ages, a series of religious wars were fought for control of Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

Many of these conflicts were among rival Roman Catholic groups.

Often, combatants were promised forgiveness of sins.

Slide: Jim Jones

On November 18, 1978, an American cult leader ordered a mass murder of 918 members of his jungle commune in Guyana.

304 were children.

Jim Jones was God to them.

Slide: Revelation 22:18-19, KJV

All worshippers of God not in accordance with the first-century church have either added or subtracted that which has been given to us in Holy Scripture.

And we have this warning in Revelation chapter 22 beginning with verse 18”

(Read Off Screen)

Slide: We Are a Remnant

So, in conclusion, I want my friend to know that we are a remnant of the first-century church.

Founded on the Day of Pentecost over 2,000 years ago.

Jesus told Peter in Matthew 16:18:

“...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

I want my friend to come worship with us and to know God’s Plan of Salvation.

Kathleen Fink knows God’s Plan of Salvation

She has the hope of eternal life.

Her sins are forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ.
She was baptized.
And she is a new member of the Lord's church.
Cybil Henderson died a few weeks ago.
She was 93-years-young.
She knew God's Plan of Salvation.
Cybil was baptized before some of us here were even born.

(Give Invitation)