

# SLIDELL CHURCH OF CHRIST

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September 6, 2015

## Preacher's Point

By Dan Schillinger



### Healthy Churches Grow

A few years ago in an assembly of preachers, a man who preaches for a fast growing congregation of several thousand was asked to share what the church was doing to promote such growth. Every preacher whipped out his pen ready to take notes of every fantastic program and idea that made this large church tick.

The answer was *very* unexpected. The speaker said, "We have organized no programs, no promotions, no drives, no advertising, no buses." In stunned amazement someone suggested that the preacher surely must do a lot of personal evangelism. Again the group was surprised when he said, "I do very little visiting. My time, at least most of it, is spent in studying for my classes and sermons. In fact, of the 50 persons baptized last year, I only worked with two of them."

By this time you may be wondering what the secret of their success is. Really it is very simple and very biblical. They feel it is wrong to organize programs and then shove and press people into them. Instead they believe in the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:4, 9; 4:10, 11; Revelation 1:6; 5:10), and leave Christians free to develop their own ministries. They work on the principle that each one has a gift from God and that he ought to develop a work around that gift involving those of like interest.

Yes, they do have a lot of work going on, but it is developed in a spontaneous way by the members

### Today's Sermon

a.m. "Misconceptions about Christianity"

Romans 5:8-10

p.m. "The Lamp that Walks and Talks"

Mark 4:21-32

themselves. Most of the growth has come through neighborhood Bible studies where members invite a few people into their homes. They select a book and go through it. Many such groups are now in progress.

This concept gets back to a strong tradition of how church work is done. It gets back to a biblical model and most important it works practically. No one has to wait around for someone to start a project and put a deacon or elder or preacher in charge. We know our gifts (or if we don't we ought to study diligently Romans 12:1-8, and other related New Testament passages). Allow the Lord to use you and the church *will* grow!

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**The Word of God!**

## Welcome Visitors

We are pleased to have the opportunity to welcome you to our service. We think you will find our congregation family to be one that enthusiastically embraces newcomers and warmly welcomes them into our fellowship. We hope you feel right at home as you join us in worship, praise and thanksgiving.

### “REMEMBER IN PRAYER & ENCOURAGE”



With Visits, Calls, & Cards

**Dwight Jones** - healing at home from his prostate removal surgery last Monday.

**Mildred Tymkiw** - suffering unforeseen complications following heart-valve surgery at Ochsner Hospital in Metairie last week: a pacemaker was implanted, such that a hole was inadvertently punctured in cardiac tissue, and she has lost her ability to walk. On Tuesday she is scheduled to enter a two-week treatment program at Elmwood Rehabilitation Center in Harahan.

**Lois Cremeans** (sister of Mark Cremeans, former disaster relief worker here) - recently very sick with a especially serious infection which is often fatal: Necrotizing Myositis, a very fast moving illness that affects the muscles.

**Jerry Kimbrough** (former member here, now at the church of Christ at S. Baton Rouge) - diagnosed with cancer in his eye, and will be undergoing chemotherapy soon.

**Jesse Fowler** - healing from a recent heart attack and subsequent surgical stent implantation.

**Angel Mangus** (of Houston, TX, niece of Carl Mangus) - afflicted with inoperable stage 4 brain cancer.

**Charles Espadron** (Claudia's brother, in Atlanta) - diagnosed with cancer in one lung. Because of his weak heart, doctors see no treatment options.

**Ken Jones** - suffering from his annual September post-traumatic stress syndrome, stemming from his near-fatal shooting and squad-car accident years ago.

**Shirley Ervin** - thanksgiving that she is healing well following recent neck surgery. She is awaiting test results before her doctor OKs her returning to normal activity levels. Pray that she will soon be able to return to normal life.

**Joshua Hankins** (Cheri's grandson, in Arkansas) - healing from an infection and burst eardrum.

**Stephanie Smith** (sister of Kevin Cox) - needs surgery for her right shoulder, but a calcium deficiency won't permit this now.

**Anna Jones** (Mr. Dale's daughter) - needs back surgery that Medicaid won't pay for, and is trying to get into their Pain Management program.

**Jaimie and Jessica** (two of Molina's daughters) - that they would get their spiritual life together.

**Scott Casey** - thanksgiving that recent tests have found no evidence of anticipated internal problems.

**Jeff Vaccaro** - for the healing a recent sun-burned blisters on both legs.

**Elery Martin** (friend of the Caseys, near Montgomery, AL) - five year old girl experiencing seizures, awaiting recent tests results.

**Margaret Schillinger** - for relief from recent flare-ups in her arthritis.

**Zach Steele** - for success and healing through the process of receiving his long-awaited bone marrow transplant.

**Rosa Nuñez** (good friend of the Vargas family) - having serious painful health problems.

**Jessica Fowler** (Jesse and Shirley's granddaughter, a resident of Lockport, LA) - has some vexing problems besetting her.

**Terri Jones** - pray that she'll come to feel better through her negative phases in her Epstein-Barr disorder.

**Dale Epperley** - awaiting a new prosthesis to that will relieve the pain and inflammation in his

leg.

**Gerald Molina** - still seeing doctors for spinal stenosis.

**Jace Roig** (newborn son of Colton Roig) - lost his ability to eat normally and therefore he was put on an intravenous feeding tube at home. He is also still afflicted with an arachnoid cyst in his brain, and cardiac openings that have not yet healed.

**Sharon Honoré** (sister of Anita, and a member at the Crowder Blvd. church) - has advanced breast cancer.

**Sandy Shell** - bereaved of her son, who died two weeks ago at age 42. Sandy herself has cancer, and her husband had a recent heart attack.

**Clara Leonard** - overall pain continues to subside somewhat, though her ankle bothers her now.

**Bobby Leonard** - awaiting test results from his recent appointment with a kidney specialist.

**Chad Michael** - a recent visitor who is undergoing hardships.

**Devon Nelson** (Roig's grandson) - George asks that we pray for him that he will stay focused on soon enlisting in the U.S. Army.

**Pray for all who are travelling.**

**Pray for Latino evangelism in our area.**

**Pray for our elders: Courtney Cheri, Dwight Jones and Gerald Molina.**

**Pray for President Obama and all our elected officials.**

**Pray for our men and women in our armed forces, both here and abroad!**

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***The Epistles: Applying Them Today***  
(continued)

Adapted from Fee & Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)

We have been discussing the subject of how to

apply the New Testament epistles to our lives today. The area of application of any sort of literature to our lives today is called *hermeneutics*. What is the hermeneutics of the New Testament epistles, that is, what do these texts mean to us?

*The Problem of Particulars' Cultural Relativity*

This is the area where most present day differences and difficulties lie. It is the place where the problem of God's *eternal word* having been given in *historical particularity* comes most sharply into focus. The problem has the following steps:

- (1) The Epistles are occasional documents of the First Century, conditioned by the language and culture of the First Century, which spoke to specific situations in the First Century church.
- (2) Many of the specific situations in the Epistles are so completely conditioned by their First Century setting that all recognize that they have little or no personal application as a word for today, except perhaps in the most distant sense of one's deriving some principle from them (e.g., bringing Paul's cloak from Carpus's house in Troas, 2 Timothy 4:13).
- (3) Other texts are also thoroughly conditioned by their First-Century setting, but the word to them may be translated into new, but comparable settings.
- (4) Is it not possible, therefore, that still others of the texts, although they appear to have comparable particulars, are also conditioned by their First Century setting and need to be translated into new settings or simply left in the First Century?

Nearly all Bible believers, at least to a limited degree, do translate Bible texts into new settings. Without articulating it in precisely this way, this is why many in the Twenty-First Century leave "*a little wine for thy stomach's sake*" in the First Century, do not insist on head-coverings or long hair for women today, and do not practice the "*holy kiss*."

Frequently there have been some who have tried to reject the idea of cultural relativity altogether, which has led them more or less to argue for a wholesale adoption of First Century culture as the

divine norm. But such a rejection is usually only moderately successful. They may keep their daughters home, deny them advanced education, and have the father arrange for their marriage, but they usually allow them to learn to read and go out in public without a veil. The point is that it is extremely difficult to be consistent here, precisely because there is no such thing as a God-ordained culture; cultures are in fact different, not only across the centuries, but also in every conceivable way within our own time.

Rather than rejecting the idea of cultural relativity altogether, it is better to recognize that a degree of cultural relativity is a valid procedure as we apply the Epistles today; it is inevitable due to the occasional nature of the Epistles. But to be valid, one's application of the Epistles today must operate within recognizable guidelines. The following guidelines can help us to distinguish between items that are culturally relative, on the one hand, and those that transcend their original setting, on the other hand, and are normative for all Christians of all times:

1. One should first distinguish between the central core of the message of the Bible and what is dependent upon or peripheral to it. This is not to elevate certain parts of the New Testament above other parts. But it is to safeguard the eternal gospel from being hijacked as a vehicle to impose First Century culture or religious custom today, on the one hand, and to keep the gospel itself from changing to reflect every conceivable cultural expression, on the other hand.

Thus the fallenness of all humanity, redemption from that fallenness as God's gracious activity through Christ's death and resurrection, the consummation of that redemptive work by the return of

Christ, etc., are clearly part of that central core. But the holy kiss, women's head coverings, and ministries and gifts of the Holy Spirit seem to be more peripheral.

2. Similarly, one must distinguish between what the New Testament itself sees as inherently moral and what is not. Those items that are inherently moral are therefore absolute and abide for every culture; those that are not inherently moral are therefore cultural expressions and may change from culture to culture.

On the one hand, footwashing, exchanging the holy kiss, eating marketplace idol food, women having a head covering when praying or prophesying, or Paul's personal preference for celibacy are not *inherently* moral matters. They become so only by their use or abuse in given contexts, when such use or abuse involves disobedience or lack of love.

On the other hand, the New Testament does not appear to be uniform on such matters as the political evaluation of Rome (see Romans 13:1-5 and 1 Peter 2:13, 14 over against Revelation chapters 13-18), the retention of one's wealth (Luke 12:33; 18:22 over against 1 Timothy 6:17-19), or eating food offered to idols (1 Corinthians 10:23-29 over against Acts 15:29; Revelation 2:14, 20).

*(to be continued)*

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### **Our Leaders!**

#### **Elders**

Dwight Jones  
Courtney Cheri  
Gerald Molina

#### **Preacher**

Dan Schillinger

#### **Deacons**

Jesse Fowler  
James Richardson  
Hector Urbina

### **Our Services**

**Sunday Morning Bible Class** 9:30 a.m.

**Sunday Morning Worship** 10:30 a.m.

**Sunday Evening Worship** 5:00 p.m.

**Wednesday Evening Bible Class** 7:00 p.m.

**Stitches of Love** Tuesday 9:30 a.m.