

A Barrier to Growth

Peter wrote to Christians living in difficult times, when suffering was their routine lot. They frequently found themselves at odds with government officials and mistreated in the marketplace. The apostle's first epistle outlines useful advice on how to handle the adverse situations. At the heart of Peter's counsel is the valid assumption that the process of living the Christian life will present opportunities for sharing one's faith in Christ. To take advantage of these openings Christians must possess the ability to clearly explain their belief. He wrote:

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed" (1 Pet. 3:15-16).

Convincing evidence must be offered to explain the lifestyle of a committed Christian. The most powerful evidence to be proposed would be the Word of God. It alone would carry the authority to convince and the ability to convert. The greatest testimony against faith is for the world to ask and the Christian to be unable to explain the very Gospel they profess to believe.

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The Divine Basis of Religious Unity

Newspapers and billboards often advertise "Attend the church of your choice." These suggest, and many tell us, that one church is as good as another. To those who are moving into new communities and searching for churches to attend, it may be an impressive building that attracts their attention or a friend might invite them, but most seem to believe that one church is as good as another. If one church is as good as another, then to attend the church of one's choice would be correct, but what saith the Scriptures (Rom. 4:3)?

The Lord said He would build His church (Matt.16:18). Could a man-built church be as good as the church Christ built? Christ is the foundation of His church (I Cor. 3:11). Could any other foundation be as good as this foundation? Christ established His teaching in His church (Matt. 28:18-20). Could the division and confusion of denominationalism, made by the creeds of men, be as good as the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:1-6, Matt. 15:13)? Christ shed His blood to save man and purchase His church (Heb. 2:9, Acts 20:28). Can any man claim that his blood could purchase his church and cleanse as Christ's blood does? Christ proclaims that He is the Head of His church (Eph. 1:22-23, Col. 1:18).

Now, men claim to be the head of their churches, and one even claims to be the pope of his, but who would claim that a human head is as good as the Divine Head, a position only Jesus Christ holds over His church? The Lord commanded His apostles to teach people who obeyed the Gospel by faith, repentance, confession, and baptism, "...to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:20). This included the commands for His worship. The five items He commanded in worship were singing, preaching, giving, partaking of the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day, and praying (Acts 2:42, Acts 20:7).

There are many different kinds of worship in the many man-made churches. Would any be foolish enough to contend that what man has commanded in worship equals what Christ commanded in worship (John 4:24, Matt. 15:9)? No, one church is not as good as another! Let us choose the church of Christ's choice!

- Gary Colley; via the Belvedere Beacon, Belvedere church of Christ, Belvedere, SC.

Leadership

Elders Hayward Blanton, Jerry Casey

Deacons Clint Smith Sr, Clint Smith Jr,
Robby Stocksdale, Joe Sweeney

Pulpit Minister Eric Welch

Associate Minister Irvin F. Williams

Panama Mission

Pablo Sanchez

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Class 10:00 AM
Morning Worship 11:00 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 PM

We Offer Free Personal Bible Studies and Bible Correspondence Courses - Phone (812) 284-3125

Visit Our Website: www.hamburgpikecofc.org

Email: church@hamburgpikecofc.org

Sermon Titles

Sunday Morning:

Sunday Evening: *Devotional*

Those Privileged to Serve

AM Service

Song Leader Michael Hawkins
Opening Prayer Steven Cravens
Scripture Robby Stocksdale
Sermon Eric Welch
Lord's Supper
Message Joe Sweeney
Attendant Rick Martin
Attendant Harold Tincher
Closing Prayer Clint Smith Sr

PM Service

Song Leader Matt Johnson
Bible Reading Nathaniel Welch
Selection 54
Prayer Clint Smith Jr
Sermon Devotional
Closing Prayer Hayward Blanton
If you are unable to serve, please call Art Patrick 502-819-9481 or Harold Tincher 502-409-3511

AM & PM Services

Announcements Leon Stocksdale
Lord's Supper Greg Blanton
Offering Ethan Welch
Usher Ernie Marshall
Count Offering Art Patrick
Assist Count Marc Owens

Lowering the Standard

Eric Welch

If you have ever eaten at Zaxby's restaurant, you might have noticed a sign that reads, "If at first you don't succeed, redefine the meaning of success." This saying expresses exactly the problem of the postmodern culture of our day. Don't change yourself; change the rules. If you cannot measure up, just lower the standard.

Lowering the standard happens in many facets of life. It is happening at an alarming rate in our schools. Instead of encouraging and inspiring children to work hard in school, whether academically or athletically, some schools have lowered the grading scale without increasing the difficulty of the work or giving out participation trophies for everyone. For example, if the grade of 78 goes from a C to a B, what has the child learned except to expect things to be made easy for him. I remember in a Greek class at FHU that a student asked the professor if he could lower the minimum grade of an A from 95 to 90. The professor replied that he could, but the test would have to be even harder than it already was. Believe me, it was hard enough! A student who expects things to be made easier will expect the same in college and in the workplace. Students will only learn how to take the easy path—the path of least resistance. Less work, more benefits. They will go from feeling and wanting the entitlement to demanding it. We are seeing it repeatedly in our universities today. We know that these entitlements will only hurt the student and all of society in the end.

This concept is no less true in the spiritual realm. Many people want to lower the standard of God's word. Satan did it with Adam and Eve. We know how that turned out (Genesis 3). When Uzzah was struck dead after touching the Ark of the Covenant, David became upset. However, David had lowered the standard of what God expected. Rather than having the ark born on the shoulders of the priests with poles (Exodus 25:14), David had his men to use a different way—perhaps an easier or even lazier way. They had placed it on an ox cart. (2 Samuel 6:1-3) and thereby had profaned God's standard of holiness.

Many churches of Christ are lowering God's standards today. In order to allow women to serve in leadership roles in public worship, some churches of Christ lower the standard in which God wants only the men to lead (1 Timothy 2:8-15). In order to allow people to divorce and remarry someone for a reason other than adultery, some churches lower the standard of Jesus teaching on the matter (Matthew 19:9). If a church teaches that we can do less than what God requires to receive salvation, that is, to be immersed in water for the forgiveness of sin (Acts 2:38), we are lowering His standard of salvation and endangering the souls of men.

If something in God's word goes against our thinking, we must not lower God's standard by redefining terms and making them say what God did not intend. We do not lower God's standard, we raise ourselves to His Word. We only lower God's standards at our own peril.

Hamburg Pike Happenings

The Monday Night for the Master group will meet January 18th; the meal theme will be Italian.

Workers are needed to prepare the communion trays for 2016; a signup sheet is on the bulletin board. Please signup if you're interested in this much needed and important work.

Our Fellowship Groups schedule for January:

- The Williams group – Sunday January 17th after the morning worship. There is a signup sheet and please note what you intend to bring.
- The Tincher group – Sunday January 24th after the morning worship.
- The Smith group – Sunday January 31st after the morning worship; meal theme is Mexican.

There will be a Yahoo dinner on January 28th. Please sign up as soon as possible so we can make the reservations.

The 16th Annual Progressive Gospel Meeting January 17th thru January 23rd.

- Sunday January 17th 2:00 pm area wide singing at Fredericksburg
- Monday January 18th 7:00 pm at Palmyra with speaker Randy Weilbaker
- Tuesday January 19th 7:00 pm at Fredericksburg with speaker Lee Collins
- Thursday January 21st 7:00 pm at Corydon with speaker Denny Moon
- Friday January 22nd 7:00 pm at Paoli with speaker Larry Sawyer
- Saturday January 23rd 7:00 pm at Martinsburg with speaker Eric Welch. A pitch-in fellowship dessert is scheduled immediately after the Saturday evening meeting.

The 2016 "Leadership Review and Preview" presentation is planned for Sunday evening January 17th.

There are "Thank You" letters on the bulletin board from the Children's Home of the Americas in Panama and The Potter Children's home in Bowling Green, KY.

[Hamburg Pike church of Christ](#)

[We're on Facebook!](#)