



Lighthouse of Iowa

Keeping in touch with Iowa's Churches of Christ

March 2021

I was once part of an Evangelical church

(And Why I am No Longer)

Jay Graham

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

I grew up in what would be considered an “evangelical” church. My family attended as often as the doors were opened. At age 12, I prayed what they called the “Sinner’s Prayer,” and was convinced I was saved at that point. I was then baptized many months later when they had a number of others ready for baptism.

I was baptized into the evangelical congregation as a “sign of my salvation.” I was very pleased with my spiritual life for several years; however, that would change.

In 1978, I met a nice young lady whom I wanted to get to know better (as a side note, we married one year later, and I have been blessed by her for over three decades). Her parents said that if I wanted to be with her on Sundays, I would need to attend church assemblies, because that was where she would be. I wanted to be with her, so I attended the assemblies of the local church of Christ.

At first, I was more concerned with her than I was with the church. My first impression was, “Don’t you have enough money for a piano or organ?” They answered by saying they sang without musical accompaniment as a matter of conviction. I then asked if the man in front was their preacher, and their answer was that the brothers

of the congregation shared the teaching responsibilities. “Okay,” I thought. Then I turned my attention back to the young lady.

WHAT I BEGAN TO LEARN

As time went on, I began to take notice of the church I was attending, and what they were teaching. I began to be bothered by some of what they taught. I learned they did not consider me to be a Christian, and I was not amused. They told me that the “Sinner’s Prayer” I had prayed was not in the Bible. I told them of course it was, and determined to search the Scriptures for that prayer. I searched and searched, but I could not find it. I finally had to admit it was not there.

I began to realize that I had been deceived. In fact, I began to realize that, truly, I was not a Christian as I had always been told and believed, especially when I considered the examples of those who responded to the gospel in the book of Acts.

Once I accepted that what I had been taught was wrong, the scales began to fall from my eyes. I wanted to be part of the same church that was established by Jesus, as testified by the New Testament Scriptures. One thing after another that I had always been taught, and accordingly believed, fell by the wayside as a false doctrine.

I came to understand that those in Acts responded to the gospel by repenting of their sins, ^[1] by confessing that Jesus was the Christ, ^[2] and by being immersed in water in the name of Jesus for the remission of their sins. ^[3, 4] They then were added to the Lord’s body by the Lord Himself. ^[5] There was no vote for acceptance, or permission asked, as many evangelicals believed.

WHAT I CONCLUDED

About Doctrine

I began to realize the church in which I had been brought up never actually studied or taught New Testament doctrine.

Yes, we were taught the Old Testament stories, the gospels, and the life of Jesus, and we spent an enormous amount of time studying Revelation. But it finally dawned on me that we very seldom studied Acts and the New Testament letters, especially the doctrines they contained. And I wondered why. (I have since concluded they did not teach doctrine, because they did not really believe in doctrine).

I contrasted this with Acts 2:42 ^[6] and 2 John 9, ^[7] as well as the remainder of the New Testament Scriptures in which doctrine was vitally important. Over time, I studied more and more, and came to the conclusion that it was

through the New Testament doctrine (“the foundation of the apostles and prophets”) that Christ actually rules over His church. ^[8] To be fair, this understanding came following years of studying and teaching. I did not come to these conclusions overnight.

About the Church

As time went on, I came to recognize a number of the false ideas in man’s churches that are foreign to the actual text of the New Testament. I began to see how arrogant and even blasphemous it was to refer to mere men as “Reverends.” ^[9] I came to better understand that the true nature of the church was not in physical buildings or temples, but that the true temple of God is made up of His Christians. ^[10] I came to understand there was no clergy/laity distinction in the church. ^[11]

I came to appreciate that the teaching of the individual congregations was to come from the various brothers, and that it is wrong for churches to gather “hirelings” to do the work of the brothers. ^[12] I also learned that it is the Lord’s will that we have elders to shepherd the flock in their care, not professional edifiers (i.e. hired “preachers”/“pastors”). ^[13]

About Salvation

I had always been taught and believed that once a person was “saved” they could never lose their salvation. I came to understand that the New Testament taught differently, as testified by the many exhortations to remain faithful, ^[14] and by Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 9:27. ^[15]

I have since discussed this with my brother who faithfully believes

that doctrine, and it has put him in a perplexing situation. He considers me to be a heretic because I believe one must respond to the offer of God’s grace through faith and obedience, yet he still believes I was “saved” at age 12 by praying that prayer. He has since concluded that I must not have been genuine in my original conversion. But I know I meant it at the time...so then, by his reasoning I cannot lose!

MUCH ADO ABOUT MONEY

As a point of note, one of the things that attracted me to the churches of Christ was their de-emphasis on collecting funds, especially when compared to the methods that man’s churches use.

The churches of Christ do so as described in the New Testament—in a very simple fashion, they give once a week on the Lord’s Day (1 Cor. 16:1-2). They do not give by tithing, ^[16] or by making other promises to men.

In the church in which I grew up, we gave at “Sunday school,” in the Sunday morning meeting, in the Sunday evening meeting, and in the Wednesday evening meeting. When we had what we called a “revival,” we had at least one collection each night. Sometimes they would actually count the funds collected, and ask/demand more! This is not what the church of the New Testament did.

“IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME”

If my passion and zeal is coming through, maybe it is because I came to the Lord’s church from outside.

I grew up in a church that claimed to be, and thought it was, of the Lord. But after a study of the New Testament, I am now convinced it was not. I am reminded of the

words of Jesus in Matthew 15:7-9. Jesus refers to those who worship the Lord, but whose worship is “in vain,” because it is according to their own traditions and teachings rather than according to His. (See also Matthew 7:21-23.)

I am determined to be part of the Lord’s church, the body of Christ, the churches of Christ, the church Christ rules over (Ephesians 1:22-23), the one that follows the New Testament doctrine. I am convinced that evangelical churches are not the church Christ rules over. They are ruled by men, their doctrines and wisdom (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

JESUS WILL JUDGE

Does this mean those who are part of those religions will not be saved in the end? That is the Lord’s concern. Jesus will judge the living and the dead. That is not my place. My place is to obey what I have learned from the Scriptures, **and encourage others to do the same**, since God has said He requires obedience. ^[17]

WHAT SAY YOU?

What is your response to this article? Please don’t be angry, offended, or bitter. Be as the Bereans in Acts 17:10-11. Search the Scriptures, in particular the New Testament Scriptures. Don’t search in man’s wisdom or books. Don’t ask your “preacher” or “pastor.” Certainly, do not depend on what you have always been taught and believed. Search the Scriptures yourself to see “whether these things are so,” ^[18] for only in them can you gain eternal life (2 Tim. 3:14-17).

May the Lord bless you in your search for His truth.



ENDNOTES

[1] Ac. 2:38; 3:19; 17:30
[2] Ac. 8:37
[3] Immersion: Ac. 8:38-39
[4] For the remission of sins: Ac. 2:38; 22:16
[5] Ac. 2:47
[6] "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."

[7] "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son."
[8] Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Jn. 1:1-4; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14
[9] In Scripture, only God is called "reverend" (Ps. 111:9, KJV)
[10] 1 Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:19-22
[11] 2 Pet. 2:5, 9
[12] Rom. 15:14; Jn. 10:12; 2 Tim 4:3-4
[13] Ac. 14:23; 20:17, 28

[14] Rom. 11:22; 2 Pet. 1:10-11; Rev. 2:10
[15] "But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."
[16] 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:7
[17] 2 Thess. 1:8; Heb. 5:9; 1 Pet. 4:17
[18] Ac. 17:11



Chariton

Meeting times: Sundays: 10:00 a.m. (no evening services)

Location: Call for information.

For information call: Albert Schreck (641) 535-2381 or Brian Schreck (641) 203-2137

We have returned to meeting in a home.



March Birthdays

★ Norm Riekens - 25th

March Anniversaries

★ Albert & Jeanette Schreck - 19th

Dean Avenue

Meeting times: Sundays: 9:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m. ♦ Wednesdays: 7:00 p.m.

Location: 2907 Dean Ave., Des Moines, Iowa / P.O. Box 57398, Pleasant Hill, IA 50327

For information call: John McNeece (515) 263-9428

• Quiet month at Dean.



March Birthdays

★ 12 Brita Head
★ 29 Greg Head
★ 30 Roberta Melinsky

March Anniversaries

★ 11 Larry & Jan Sellers

Fairview

Meeting times: Sundays: 10:00 a.m. ♦ Wednesdays: 7:00 p.m.

Location: 1001 S. 22nd St, Clarinda, Iowa 51632

For information call: Richard Negley (712)542-3728 or Marvin Negley (712)542-2792

• **John & Donna Lee** met with us Sunday and John gave us two messages – one during the 10:00 portion of our service and another after our basket dinner.

• Keep In Mind Day Light Savings Time - March 14



March Birthdays

• None this month

March Anniversary

• None this month

Martensdale

Meeting Times: Sundays: 10:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m. ♦ Wednesdays: 7:00 p.m.
Location: 10985 44th Lane, Prole, Iowa (1.5 miles east of Martensdale, IA on Hwy. 92)
Website: Martensdalechurchofchrist.org
For information call: Duane Proudfit (515) 961-4470 or Mike Penick (515) 681-0279

- Quiet month at Martensdale.
- Back to holding Sunday morning services only.



March Birthdays

- ★ 7 - Courtney Teghtmeyer
- ★ 10 - Tom Collier
- ★ 18 - Dave Henderson
- ★ 20 - Rusty Bown
- ★ 23 - Charlie Decker

March Anniversaries

- ★ 14 – Dave & Christy Henderson
- ★ 27 – Dick & Phyllis Bown (1965)

Pleasant Hill

Meeting Times: Sundays: 9:30 a.m. ♦ Wednesdays: 6:30 p.m.
Listen from your car at FM station 100.9
Location: 5091 E. University, Pleasant Hill, Iowa
Website: pleasanthillchurchofchrist.org
Contacts: Mike Warner 515-967-4529 / Marty Williamson 515-556-2394 / Marc Hermon 515- 554-3567

Those on our prayer list:

- **Allison George:** had consultation with a facial reconstruction surgeon in Iowa City. She will have surgery in June or July. They plan to remove plates in Allison's mouth and under her eye; also some cosmetic fixes and possibly remove the muscle that's causing her jaw pain. The purpose for waiting on surgery is to give muscle time to heal if possible and allow her bones to completely heal. Allison also had an appointment with Wolfe Eye Clinic. Doctors stated she is starting to form cataracts. She is really enduring a lot right now. She sees a massage therapist for her back, as well as trying to help gain feeling back in her face. Unfortunately, the arctic cold we had earlier in

February is a constant trial. She could use prayers as well as cards of encouragement!

- **Tom Brady:** Tom suffered a bad fall couple of weeks ago; he was taken by ambulance to the hospital. He was ripped up his arm pretty good and received stitches in his knee. As you can imagine, he's not moving around the greatest. Prayers and encouragement for both Tom and Fred would be appreciated.
- **Mary Gearhart:** Mary's husband Ron was hospitalized for a few days with pneumonia. He's home now, but lift her up in prayers as she continues to be a faithful, loving wife and nurse to Ron.

- **Nora Lee Ingle:** will have laser surgery on her left eye March 24th. This is to correct a "film" on that eye which is causing her vision obstruction. She is asking for prayers please and cards of cheer!
- **Ryane Needham:** her hemoglobin continues to be a concern. She now has had 3 of 5 IV iron treatments. Continue prayers for her "super dynamic heart" condition as well as a healthy and safe delivery for their baby girl, due date is March 21.
- **Randy & Theresa Ingle:** Randy slipped on the ice; thankfully there wasn't any major damage done. Theresa was dealing with a UTI. Let's pray for their full healing. Any notes of encouragement for Randy as he struggles with depression would be greatly appreciated!
- **Randy Spinney:** Randy's brother, Robert, passed away unexpectedly due to a heart attack. Please surround Randy with love and encouragement.
- **Steve Thompson (Pat):** continues therapy 2-3 times a week; he's making progress, but now also dealing with shoulder pain. He had a cortisone injection this past week so hopefully that will kick in soon!
- **Betty Warren:** Her macular degeneration doctor decided to lengthen time between her eye shots; instead of every month, she can now go every 6 weeks. Praise God!
- **Miles & Kelsey Wood family:** Have sold their home and will close on March 18. They have made an offer on a home in Clive; so hopefully will be moving soon!
- **Ayden & Madison Twaddell:** Have also been looking for a home. They have made an offer on a house in Indianola. It looks promising that they will move the last week of March.

Traveling:

- Stephen Thompson (Dee) is on a road trip to Arizona to see the Grand Canyon. Please pray for his safe travels. Jason & Theresa Brady were in Tucson, Arizona for a week. JC & Melanie Castro continue to enjoy their time in Arizona. JC started employment at Ford. Thank you for your continued encouragement and prayers.).



March Birthdays

- ☆ 3 Jen Albright
- ☆ 4 Tim Brady
- ☆ 7 Carly Suhr
- ☆ 10 Susan Conner
- ☆ 10 Chamille Laymon
- ☆ 11 Gordon Laymon
- ☆ 11 Henry Conner
- ☆ 15 Ellie Wood
- ☆ 17 Miles Wood
- ☆ 19 Mike Brady
- ☆ 20 Bud Fillman
- ☆ 23 Lowell Hermon
- ☆ 29 Linda Garland
- ☆ 30 Theresa Brady
- ☆ 31 Allison George

March Anniversaries

- ☆ 9 Gordon & Chamille Laymon
- ☆ 11 Bruce & Suzanne Harvey
- ☆ 24 Betty & Scott Miles

Vandalia

Meeting Times: Sundays: 9:30 a.m.
No Sunday evening or Wednesday evening services until further notice

Location: 2.5 miles east of Runnells, Iowa on F70, then 1 mile north on 131st St.

For information call: Greg Ingle (515) 994-2824 or Charles Ingle (515) 966-2537

Website: <https://vandaliacoc.com>

From Vandalia's website:

<https://vandaliacoc.com>

WE ARE MEETING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Seating

We have spread out the seating in our auditorium, and grouped seats together, to allow families to be grouped together while still providing social distancing.

Lord's Supper

Prior to our worship service the loaf used for the Lord's Supper is broken and each piece is placed into a disposable plastic cup. The fruit of the vine is also poured into plastic disposable cups.

During the Lord's Supper these emblems are passed by men wearing masks to the group. Each member takes a cup, partakes of the emblem, and keeps the

cup at their seat. At the end of the service the member then disposes of their cups.

Bible Study Classes

We are beginning our service with our Bible study classes. The adult class meets in the back of the building, in seats arranged in a big circle. Children's classes meet downstairs in classrooms.

The adult class is available to be streamed online.

STREAM OUR SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE ONLINE USING GOOGLE MEET

Go to meet.google.com, and enter the meeting code. If you need the meeting code, please send us an email at vandaliacoc@gmail.com.



March Anniversaries

- None

March Birthdays

- None

Copies of the *Lighthouse of Iowa* can be found at the following two Church websites:

Vandalia Church of Christ: <https://vandaliacoc.com/lighthouse-of-iowa.html>

Pleasant Hill Church of Christ: <http://www.pleasanthillchurchofchrist.org/library.php>
(select *Iowa Lighthouse* under the Library tab)

Examples of the Doctrines of Men vs. **the Doctrine of Christ**

Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way. — Psalms 119:104

False <i>The ignorant and unstable twist the Scriptures to their own destruction.</i> 2 Peter 3:15-16	Truth <i>He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.</i> John 3:21
Innocent children can be baptized. Matthew 19:14 Psalms 51:5	Condemned sinners are called to be baptized. Matt 9:13 Acts 8:12 Romans 6:1-10 1 Timothy 1:8-11 Acts 2:1-47
Become a Christian by saying the Sinner's prayer. Romans 10:13 Luke 18:13 John 3:16 Romans 3:23	God does not hear the prayers of a sinner. John 9:31 Isaiah 59:1-2 1 John 3:22 1 Peter 3:12 Job 8:20 Pro 15:29
God instituted the Sabbath Day in Genesis. Genesis 2:2	The Sabbath not instituted until Moses. Nehemiah 9:13-14 Exodus 16:23-30 Deuteronomy 5:1-3, 12-15
Baptism is not necessary for salvation. John 3:16 Romans 10:9-10 Ephesians 2:8-9	Baptism is necessary for salvation. Mark 16:15-16 1 Peter 3:18-21 Rom 6:1-10 Col 2:8-14 Acts 2:37-47
Baptize only in the name of Jesus. Acts 19:5 Acts 8:16	Jesus commanded to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 29:19
There are many churches leading to heaven. Luke 9:49-50	There is only one Church with salvation. Ephesians 4:4 & 1:22-23 Colossians 1:18 & 24 1 Cor 1:20 John 10:16
Man is predestined — some to heaven some to hell. Romans 8:29-30 Ephesians 1:5 & 11 Romans 9	God gave Man free will to choose his own destiny. Psalms 119:109 Heb 11:24-25 Matt 19:16:22 2 Peter 3:9 1 Tim 2:3-4
Why does this matter? <i>"Whosoever transgresses, and abides not in the doctrine of Christ, has not God. He that abides in the doctrine of Christ, he has both the Father and the Son." — 2 John 1:9</i>	