

MEN AND THE CHURCH

Acts 17:12, "Many believed...of honorable women...
and of men not a few."

"Four things in any land must dwell,

If it endures and prospers well:

One is manhood true and good;

One is noble womanhood;

One is child life, clean and bright;

And one an altar kept alight."

- I. Many believers in the early Christian churches.
 - II. Always there were women who believed.
 - A. Some honorable, society women
 - B. Many Greeks as well as Jews
 - C. The church owes a debt to faithful women.
 - D. Women owe a debt to the church
 1. Spiritual blessings
 2. Emancipation, rights, respect, elevation
 - III. Notice, however, the place of men in the early church,
 - ... especially laymen.
 - A. The response of men to the gospel message.
 1. Women had no monopoly on Xtn religion.
 2. Probably, then as today, men were outnumbered by women; but they still made up a large part of every congregation. But the laymen were certainly NOT in a conspicuously small majority.
 - B. Why men need the church.
 1. To find Forgiveness of sin
 2. To find fellowship that inspires.
 - a. Fellowship with God.

In a negro sermon on the Creation it is imagined:

"Ang God stepped out on space,
And He looked around, and said:
I'm lonely--
I'll make me a world."

After vividly describing how God created the world,
light, green grass, the lakes and rivers,
fish and fowls and beasts and birds,
The poet continues:

"Then God walked around,
And God looked around
On all that He had made...
And God said: I'm lonely still."

Then God sat down--
On the side of a hill where He could think;
By a deep, wide river He sat down;
With His head in His hands,
God thought and thought,
Till He thought: I'll make me a man!

Up from the bed of the river
God scooped the clay;
And by the bank of the river
He kneeled Him down;
And there the great God Almighty...
~~Like a mammy bending over her baby,~~
Kneeled down in the dust
Toiling over a lump of clay
Till He shaped it in His own image;
Then into it He blew the breath of life,
And man became a living soul.
Amen. Amen."

James Weldon Johnson, 1871-1938

b. Men also needs the church

To find Fellowship with other Christian men.

3. Men needs the church, moreover, to find Food that strengthens the spirit.

see v. 11, they "searched the scriptures"

4. To find a Force that is multiplied in masculine unity.

Often man's genius is wasted in wrong directions.

"Our towers rise; we prosper while we may,

Grown drunken with the wine of loss and gain,

Nor fearful lest we haply rear in vain

A brazen idol upon feet of clay."

C. Why the Church Needs Men

1. To be the Head of a Christian Home and spiritual example & counsellor in the family.

"Give us Men!

Men who, when the tempest gathers,

Grasp the standard of their fathers

in the thickest fight:

Men who strike for home and altar,

True as truth the lorn and lonely,

Tender, as the brave are only;

Men who tread where saints have trod,

Men for Country, Home--and God:

Give us Men! I say again--again--

Give us Men!!"

Edward Henry Bickersteth,

2. To lead other men to Christ & to live for Christ.

"God send us men whose aim 'twill be,

Not to defend some outworn creed,

But to live out the laws of Christ

In every thought and word and deed."

3. To do the work in the church that only men can do

& to encourage and help the ladies & children in their part of the Lord's work.

4. The church needs men To Undergird the Stewardship Program of the church in carrying out the Great Commission.

a. "I love thy Church, O God;
For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend;
To her my cares & toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end."

b. People wonder how the church can sleep soundly amidst the burning problems and issues that face us today. The church has never become aggressive and militant with a positive forward program until the laymen are revived and actively participating in and supporting its ministry.

"O Church of God, awake! Awake!
The waking world is calling Thee.
Lift up thine eyes! Hear Thou once more
The challenge of humanity.
O Christ, we come! our all we bring
To serve Thy world and Thee, our King."
--Frank Mason North, 1850-1935

c. Missionary advance awaits the stewardship of Men.

2. Is this the time, O Church of Christ! to sound Retreat? To arm with weapons cheap and blunt
The men and women who have borne the brunt
of truth's fierce strife, and nobly held their ground?
Is this the time to halt, when all around
Horizons lift, new destinies confront,
Stern duties wait our nation, never wont
To play the laggard, when God's will was found?

No! rather, strengthen stakes and lengthen cords,
Enlarge thy plans and gifts, O thou elect,
And to thy kingdom come for such a time!
The earth with all its fullness is the Lord's.
Great things attempt for Him, great things expect,
Whose love imperial is, whose power sublime.

--Charles Summer Hoyt

5. The church needs men to turn the world upside down
so it will be right side up. (v.6)