

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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The New Creature

By Robert Turner

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor.5:17). Obviously his physical characteristics have not changed, and one does not "partake of the divine nature" in its essence. We suggest a comparison study of verses in the frequently parallel letters of Ephesians and Colossians as a clue to this "new" and different man.

Eph. 4:17-32 defines the changed man. "Walk not as the Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind.." "but ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him.." "that ye put off ... the old man ... and be renewed in the spirit of your mind...etc."

Now, compare this with **Col.3:8-17**, "Put off anger, wrath ... seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after

the image of him that created him..."

I have emphasized words pertaining to the common thought: the new man thinks differently, i.e., he has new and different standards; one change has taken place in his mind.

The heart (mind) is not different through miraculous operation, but by teaching, hearing, learning (**Jn.6:45**). But this "learning" is not simply the accumulation of information ... stored so it may be repeated upon examination. The "spirit of the mind" has been affected or "constrained" by our recognition of Christ's love for us (**2 Cor.5:12**), so that vanity has been replaced by humility and dependence (**Cf. Phil.2:5; 3:15**). Expositors say, "It is necessary, therefore, to take "pneuma" (spirit) here as our spirit ... the higher faculty in man.... that makes him most akin to God." Without debating the intricacies of mind-spirit, the man is "new" because his understanding has

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affected his desires, and the new heart bears fruit for God.

Both passages (Eph. and Col.) tell us that the whole of the "new man" includes his conduct. "Just so the heart is right" is an idle gesture. We can not know one's heart, but "by their fruits" men are known (**Matt.7:20**). Remission of sins, and heaven, are at the point of doing (**Acts 2:38; Rev. 2:10**), and short of this point there is no new creature (**Matt.7:21**).

We Can't Save

Ourselves

By David Riggs

"But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." (**Isa. 64:6**)

Let us suppose that a plane crashes into the water with three men aboard, and there is no boat, ship, or land within hundreds of miles. One of the men is able to swim only a few hundred feet. The second can manage to stay afloat an hour or two. The third is a world champion long-distance swimmer. What is the fate of the three?

It doesn't matter if the third is a great swimmer or not. He is in the same fate as the other two. The first will drown in twenty minutes; the second in an hour or two; and the third in fifteen hours. All three need a savior, for without one, all three will drown.

So it is with all men. Being a good moral person alone amounts to nothing more than filthy rags. We all are sinners, and without a Savior are doomed to destruction.

IS IT A SIN TO MISS JUST ONE SERVICE OF THE CHURCH?

Author Unknown
(Taken from Lincoln Reader)

The above question is often asked by church members. It is one which deserves some very careful consideration by all of us, but especially by those who occasionally absent themselves from the assemblies. The question emanates from a false attitude, the attitude that one is going to try to get by with a minimum of service, rather than a maximum. Certainly, we would not say it is a sin to miss one or many services due to unavoidable hindrances, but

we are not talking about such absences in this article. We have in mind the fellow who misses JUST ONE service because he doesn't care to go; he had rather do something else.

To get to the heart of the question, consider the following: If one doesn't sin when he INDIFFERENTLY misses JUST ONE service, how many does he have to miss before he sins? Two, four, six, or one hundred? At which absence does he become a sinner in need of repentance, and by what authority do you answer? The truth of the matter is that if it is a sin to miss a hundred assemblies, it is a sin to miss JUST ONE service; if not, why not?

Take this imaginary situation for an example: Brother John Doe misses an assembly, but no one takes any notice of it; he misses eight or ten and the church begins to wonder. Finally, he is absent a whole year, and the elders go out to talk to him about his condition. When he asked for the nature of his offense, the reply was that he had forsaken the assembling with the saints. What if he should ask for the specific time at which he became a sinner? What could they say? Could they

rebuke him for missing the first, third, or one hundredth service? And if they should rebuke him for forsaking the assembling for one year, why shouldn't they rebuke him for forsaking it for one week? Why should it be wrong to miss a year, but all right to miss one week?

One can wrestle with this question for days, and he will be forced to the conclusion that missing one service is a sin, if his reasoning is governed by common sense and Scripture. Many have never really seriously considered their duty to attend the assemblies; and hence they feel no guilt to speak of, regardless of how often they are absent.

We should all compare what we do for the Lord with what He has done for us, and hang our heads in shame for our lack of sacrifice for Him. We need to repent while we still have time. One day we shall stand before the Great Judge of all with unbearable disappointment for our LUKEWARM and HALF-HEARTED service.

When that time comes, we will wish we had given heed to such admonitions as those uttered by Paul I the following words: "**Not forsaking the**

assembling of ourselves together" (Hebrews 10:25).

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is a great article that should tug at the hearts of all of us! I am sorry that I do not know the author as the author has hit the bull's eye on the issue of attendance!)

Why Go Back So Soon To Sierra Leone?

By Steve Niemeier

This is a great question that has been asked me many times since the announcement of an upcoming trip starting March 20th of 2011.

As many of you who attend regularly on Sunday evenings know (because you sat through three weeks of the presentations) there were a lot of things that went on during this past trip.

New Christians need encouragement – those members of the congregations started by institutional persuasion are interested in hearing more of the proper organization and work of the church and are repenting as they do learn more. More studies are needed to try and correct the error Joseph is involved in and the list could go on.

There were so many issues (positive and challenging) on this last trip that it would be unfair to the ones going on this trip for one who was a part of this past trip not to be a part of this upcoming trip.

Thanks to those who are interested in this work and have asked this great question. Our efforts in S L have been so blessed by the Lord – maybe that is the biggest of reasons!