

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

October 11, 2009

The source of division

by David King

"For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!" (Gal. 5:13-15).

While perusing the latest issue of *Reader's Digest*, I came across this chuckler:

Louie was shipwrecked and lived alone on a desert island for years until he was finally rescued. Before leaving the island, he gave the rescue party a tour. "I built myself a house. That's it there. Here's the barn, and over here is the church I worshiped in."

"What's that building over there?" one of the rescuers asked.

Louie sneered. "That's the church I used to belong to."

Like most jokes, this one is so funny because it is so painfully true. When a secular magazine can get laughs from Christians fighting among themselves, you know Christianity has a problem.

The problem is not, as atheists assert, the religion itself. Atheist organizations can be just as prone to infighting as churches. The issue is the same one that has plagued mankind since Cain and Abel: hearts dominated by carnal attitudes toward their fellow man.

Paul exposed the source of the problem just a few verses following our opening text. He warned against "the works of the flesh" which include, among other things, "hatred,

contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies [factions, NASV], envy" (Gal. 5:19-21). These passions are universal in the human race, and can assert themselves in any community, religious or otherwise. When Christians bite and devour one another, it is not the fault of their religion; it is precisely because they do not have enough of their religion in themselves. They may be in the church, but they are not yet in Christ.

Christianity that is dominated by a spirit of conflict and factionalism is a cheap imitation of the real thing. Genuine Christianity is practiced by those who "through love serve one another." These are people who have brought their carnal passions under control, and have learned to exercise "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" in their dealings with one another (Gal. 5:22-23). Their unity is not based on absolute conformity in every detail of belief and practice; rather, they have learned to love one another the same way Christ has loved us: as imperfect and flawed, but forgiven.

Division among Christians may be common, but it is not inevitable. When a group of believers can demonstrate the spirit of love and service that Paul describes in this passage, the world around them will take notice. This is the kind of religion that will attract those looking for peace and harmony in their lives.

But that oasis of peace is fragile, oh so fragile! As Louie discovered, Satan will sow seeds of discord everywhere he can — even on a desert island.