

The Church in the world of 'Today'.

Some time ago I attempted to write an article entitled "A Layman Looks at The Church". I say attempted advisedly because the outcome was much like the story of the lady who was out to purchase a toy for one of the children. Among many other toys she was shown a rather queer contraption. When she asked the clerk what that was he said "That, it is an Educational toy. Its like the world no matter how you try to put it together it always comes out wrong!"

However out of my attempts I found out one thing. One cannot write about the church with any objectivity. That for the simple reason that the church as we know it is a vital living entity. It is you and I, groups of people drawn together with a common bond in the fellowship of worship. To attempt to look at the church with the idea of writing about it as it is is like writing a biography of a man who is very

What
Church of the
Living God.

V) much alive and has a great deal of life still ahead of him. True we can look back on the achievement of our church in the years gone by but to predict her future with any accuracy would be like predicting what humanity is going to do tomorrow.

Actually we are the church. A group of people drawn together with a common bond in the fellowship of worship. Over the years the word church has come to designate a building where people come together to worship God. So we say to each other "are you going to church this morning? Will you be at church on Sunday?"

What a difference it might make if in our families we said "we are going to worship service this morning" or if we said to our neighbor, "will you come to worship with us this morning? There is such a difference in words! The thoughtless one might stop and ponder before he exclaimed "Oh I'm not going to worship this morning." Somehow down through the ages since the first church at

3. Corinith We have come to use the word church too casually. Much too casually. All too often when other seemingly more pressing needs must be met one hears the phrase "Oh the church can wait! Can it?" If we are active Christians who believe in worshipping together at the feet of God, can our church wait? After all His merciful goodness to us and to all men are we going to say literally to God "Oh our worship to you can wait!!"

Somewhere along the road of life the truth of God has reached us or we would not be here today. Our desire to share that vision with all men is one of the reasons of the church being. We are the instruments by which God brings His ideas into being. He has no hands but our hands and when we think we are not important to God or our church we do ourselves a grave injustice.

Just as men have visions and tasks so does our church have visions and tasks

W/ but we who make up the church cannot
leave those visions and tasks to be matured
and accomplished by a building. No that
building has to have sincere worshipers who
by their faith and works inspire others
to join the brotherhood and gain by
sharing. So we have a vital church

The church must pray! I can
hear someone exclaim "well whoever
heard of a church praying?" God has. God does.

Of course the building does not pray, but the
worshipers who are the church do. We may
quite often hear the question "how effective
is prayer?" To many individuals whose
prayers never seem to be realized it may
seem to be parrotting the point to say that
prayers have power. Could we look at it this
way. "You are out for a walk and come
across a spring whose small stream
trickles away down the hillside and is lost
to view. You can step on it and almost
stop it with your foot. Trickling across
the blade of a giant turbine it would
hardly leave a mark. Yet add that with

Praying Church

5 stream of water to thousands of other little streams and the giant turbine turns under their combined power and half a continent is lit with electricity and served by power. Trains flash across the countryside and messages are sent round the world in seconds. By itself the little stream had scarce enough power to move a blade of grass. So with the praying church.

The combined prayers of all the churches coming to the Throne of God have more power than the mind of man can measure, we are told to pray unceasingly and for our enemies as well as those whom we love and if our prayers go seemingly unanswered who are we to judge. The man by the spring on the hillside cannot see the generators in the power plant but they are there and they give forth their power.

The Church must be redemptive. It is not enough for the church, for us, to sit back and say "we have done our

The world distrusts the church in part at least because it feels no spiritual power emanating from the church.

The Church as Redeemer
In the language of being

6. share". That is just sheer selfishness!
We as a church must show to others
who are lonely, perplexed and doubtful
of any good in the world, the redemptive
power of brotherly love. The church must
hold out her hand to the stranger within
her gates. The Christian who can see the
vision of what the world might be will
find that as he shares his vision with his
fellow man so does he add to his own
well being and growth. So it is with the
Church. We must share our vision with
others that they through our example may
grow and that we by sharing may
grow in usefulness to the God we serve.

Philip Brooks in one of his sermons said:
"There is no greater happiness in all the world
than for a man to love Christ for the mercy
Christ has shown his soul, and then to open
his whole heart outward and help to save his
brethren's souls with the same salvation in
which he rejoices for himself.

May our church never be so poor as never to
have known that happiness.