

# THE COLDWATER CONTENDER

*"...ye should earnestly contend for the faith..."(Jude 3)*

**May 28, 2017**

## **Coldwater church of Christ**

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Murray, KY 42071

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### **ELDERS**

Richard Price  
Kevin Smith  
Bill Vincent

### **DEACONS**

Johnny Downs  
Josh Fulcher  
Josh Price  
Wesley Tucker

### **PREACHER**

Luke Puckett

### **SUNDAY SERVICE**

Bible Class: 9:30  
AM Worship: 10:15  
PM Worship: 1:00

### **WEDNESDAY**

Bible Class: 7:00pm

### **LADIES CLASS**

Will resume in  
the fall

## **THOSE TO SERVE**

### **Announcements:**

Josh Fulcher

### **Lead Singing:**

Mitchell Smith

### **Opening Prayer:**

Andy Johnson

### **Scripture Reading:**

Bradley Smith

### **Lord's Table**

Richard Jones  
Chris Smith  
Nathia Whitley  
Kevin Smith

### **Closing Prayer:**

Hyland Darnell

### **Greeters (East)**

Josh and Andrea

### **Greeters (West)**

Kyle and Tiffany

## **WELCOME**

Richard Guill

## **A Message To Our Visitors**

It is our privilege to have you visiting with us today. Please know that you are our honored guest. Please let us get to know you, and fill out an attendance card so we can have record of you being here. Please return to be with us again at your earliest opportunity. If you have questions or would like to study the Bible with us, please let us know. Thanks again for visiting with us, and may God continue to bless you according to His divine purpose.

# THE CONFORMED CHURCH OF CHRIST?

*By: Richard Guill*

The church of Christ in any community, if it is faithful to its Head, and is abiding by His word, will "stick out like a sore thumb." It conspicuously does not conform to the mold of the other churches in the community. There is no fellowship with the various churches in either their works or their worship. When the various denominations band together for a particular community project, the church of Christ will likely be the only religious group not involved. When the denominational "pastors" get together and form their "ministerial alliance," the "church of Christ preacher" (their terminology), refuses to join the alliance or to attend their meetings. "What an odd bunch that church of Christ group is!"

Sadly, however, that is no longer true of many who wear the name "church of Christ." These congregations are led by preachers who are self-labeled as "progressive thinkers," "scholars," and as "frontrunners." These congregations have "elders" (really just spineless imitations thereof) who themselves are led, and allow the congregation to be led, by these preachers into fellowship with denominations. These preachers will begin by participating with the denominations in their "special services," and then it will not be long until the denominational "pastor" will be invited to speak to the church as well. Soon there is a "joint service" between the two groups.

In such churches the ordained worship practiced for so many years now becomes a source of embarrassment and efforts begin to "jazz-up" their worship by incorporating things seen in denominations. Out goes the old traditional songs and in comes new "contemporary music," even with instrumental music many times. Preaching and teaching is dull, so we bring in "drama." All of this is very pleasing to the carnal mind and entertaining. Before long each act is being applauded and often singing is accompanied with rhythmic hand-clapping. The "change agents" who are initiating such changes are not satisfied with the church as it has been through the ages. Especially distasteful to them is the "isolationist attitude" and they are determined to change the church of the coming century into one that better "fits in" with the denominations in the community and is "user-friendly" to a generation that has grown tired of the old ways. When you observe what and how these congregations change, you can see that this is an accurate picture of what is happening.

It is not easy for individuals or congregations to be non-conformists. It is much easier to blend in and conform. The world, under Satan's guidance, continues to pressure us to conform, conform, conform. That's why Paul warned the Romans, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2). The church of the Lord is "sanctified" (set apart, separated) from the world and is expected to maintain that separation (Eph. 5:25-26; 2 Cor. 6:14-18).

Israel of old was often afflicted with the same evil attitude. In the days of the Judges she cast her eyes around to the other nations, all of which had kings over them, realized that she was the non-conformist, and began to clamor for a change which would make her like all the rest. "Make us a king to judge us like all the nations" (1 Sam. 8:5). At a later time some "change agents" had already been at work among them and they had departed from the old ways and adopted some more "pleasing" ways. God's prophet was given a message for them from God. Jeremiah called out, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." But they said, "We will not walk therein" (Jer. 6:16).

These preachers and churches today who are conforming to the ways and manners of the denominations around them present quite a paradox. They ridicule the idea of a pattern, reject "pattern theology" and sneer at the references to the "old paths." But, what they fail to realize or admit is that all they are doing is just switching patterns! They are casting away God's pattern for the church and its work and worship, sneering at such a concept, and then follow the pattern of denominational doctrines and practices. Where is the evidence that any of the changes advocated by them did not come from some denomination and has been practiced by them for years?

These "change agents" are simply trying to conform the church into the image of those denominations around them. Churches that do so conform will surely suffer the same fate: "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13).

(Continued on back page 4)

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

- ⇒ Mitchell Smith (29th)
- ⇒ Weston Hobbs (4th)

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## Announcements

- ⇒ **Reading plan:** Job
- ⇒ **Team workgroup:** Team 4 (**Andy Johnson**) meets today
- ⇒ **Team workgroups:** To find out which team you are on, see the bulletin board.
- ⇒ **Area events:** Please see bulletin board for more info. Several meetings, singings, and Bible schools are coming up in our area.
- ⇒ **Personal invitation handouts** are available . Please make sure to take some and handout or leave with a tip, and invite someone to services.
- ⇒ **Monthly Men's Class:** June 6th at 6:30pm
- ⇒ **Homecoming:** With Richard Guill today
- ⇒ **Potluck:** Today after AM service, for homecoming
- ⇒ **Cookout:** Hosted by Team 1 on June 3 at 5:00pm
- ⇒ **VBS:** Saturday, June 10th
- ⇒ **Pantry item** for this week is: Canned chicken
- ⇒ **Sick:** If you know someone who is sick, please get this information to your team leader or Luke.

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## Prayer/Sick List

- ⇒ Mae Downs
- ⇒ Helen Tidwell
- ⇒ Hyland Darnell
- ⇒ Norma Darnell
- ⇒ Richard Jones (Having tests run)
- ⇒ Vicki Wilson (Having tests run)
- ⇒ Ron Hutchison (Having test run)
- ⇒ Tammy Smith
- ⇒ Kim Scott (continuing treatments)
- ⇒ Teri Mercer (At home recovering)
- ⇒ Paul Brandon
- ⇒ Debbie Smith (Kevin's sister-in-law-cancer)
- ⇒ Greg Black (Kathy Black's son)
- ⇒ Billy Irvan
- ⇒ Trudy Smith
- ⇒ Lashell Jones
- ⇒ Continue to remember all those who have lost loved ones this year

## **WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?**

Hear the Word  
*(Rom 10:17)*

Believe the Word  
*(John 8:24)*

Repent  
*(Luke 13:3)*

Confess Christ  
*(Rom 10:10)*  
*(Acts 8:37)*

Be Baptized  
*(Acts 2:38)*  
*(Acts 22:16)*

Remain Faithful  
*(Rev 2:10)*  
*(Acts 8:12-24)*

Heaven can be your home if you obey God!  
*(Heb 5:8-9)*

Please visit our website at [www.coldwatercoc.org](http://www.coldwatercoc.org). You will find bulletins, sermon outlines, and other helpful links and material.



On the other hand, the church of the Lord must be a "conformed church." It is expected to conform to the pattern, image, ideal, and plan of God. If it does not do so, it cannot be God's church and have his approval.

The first congregation of the Lord's church was established in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2). "And they continued steadfastly (they conformed their actions) in the apostle's doctrine and fellow ship, and in breaking bread, and in prayers"(verse 42). That was not the manner in which they had formerly worshipped, nor was it the manner of worship of their Jewish neighbors, friends, and family members. Yet you do not hear them complaining that they were "different."

Soon other congregations were springing up in different localities. As each was established and began its work and worship, it is noteworthy that they followed the same pattern. All those churches conformed to the same image or pattern. When ever there began to be a deviation from that pattern in any congregation, instruction was given them to conform to that original pattern (1 Cor. 1:10).

There were already "change agents" at work in the first century. For hundreds of years the Jewish religion, under God's law, had required circumcision of all its adherents, whether Jews, or Gentiles. However, this new group, "the church of Christ," did not require circumcision of any member and did not observe the law of Moses. Certain "change agents" soon began to try to get the church to "conform" to those old laws and customs. They began to advocate that the Gentiles be required to be circumcised according to the law of Moses to be saved (Acts 15:1). Paul and Barnabas opposed them vigorously and stopped their evil works. They, along with other brethren, declared that the Lord's pattern for the church's faith and practice had not changed and would not change.

Those who would not "conform" to preach and teach only what the apostles had delivered would have the curse of God upon them (Gal. 1:6-9). If any preached a different doctrine that would bring division and offenses, they were to be "marked and avoided" as those who served not God (Rom. 16:17). If any came to town and needed lodging or assistance, but preached a different doctrine, they were not to be greeted, housed, or otherwise encouraged or assisted in their evil work (2 John 9-11).

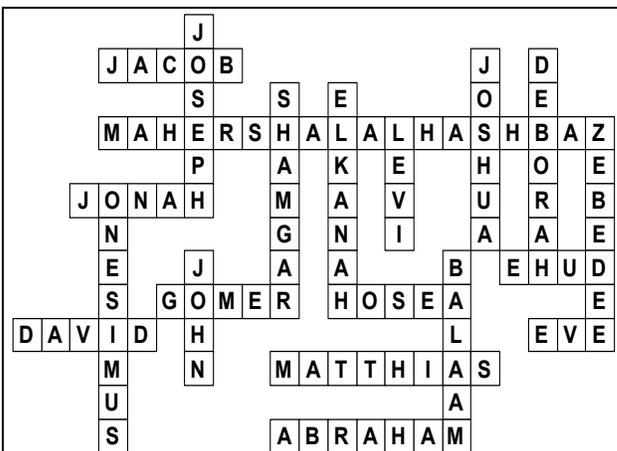
Whenever any attempt was made to change the church in its organization, its worship or its work, it was met with vigorous opposition. Such change was quickly halted and they were urged to "conform" back to the pattern of the other congregations. They were to "all speak the same thing, have no divisions among you, but be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10); now that's conformity!

This kind of conformity to the Divine pattern by each congregation brought the kind of unity which God demanded and approved, and Seek The Old Paths - October 1996 allowed the various congregations to cooperate fully in the great task of evangelizing the world. It did not bother them that they "stood out" from the rest of the community and were hated and persecuted because they would not compromise and "conform." They counted it as some thing to rejoice about when they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ (Acts 5:41).

Much has been written and spoken recently concerning the church and what it will be like in the twenty-first century. Will it still be relevant? Will it continue to exist? Must it change and conform to be more like the churches all around in order to still attract people? Must it conform to the growing trend of dropping its name, broadening its membership requirements, updating and enlivening its worship services, and simply call itself "The Community Church" or "God's Family?"

The church in the twenty-first century must be no different from the church in previous centuries, unless it is in moving closer than ever to the divine pattern, rather than farther away from it. Rather than conforming to the world and its religious diversity, which is to perish in the fires of the last great day, the church of Christ MUST CONTINUE TO CONFORM to the Divine pattern set forth by Christ and his apostles in the New Testament. We must continue to call upon men to conform themselves and their religious beliefs and practices to that Divine pattern, rather than to expect the church to conform to their varied ideas of what the church ought to be like. Remember, Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:4).

Yes, the church must conform; but to which pattern: God's, or that of the world? Choose ye this day whom ye will serve!



**Bible question:** The finding of what, caused King Josiah to tear his clothes?

**Last week's question and answer:** Who stood up against Israel and moved David to take a census of Israel?

Answer: Satan (1Chronicles 21:1)

**Those answering:** Kay Robertson, Linda Jones, Peggy Newsome, Rachel Adams