

LIVING FAITH CHAPEL

Communion of Saints: What It Is Not

Pre-Lesson Exercise

- If I could change one thing about LFC, it would be:

- My single biggest disappointment in going to LFC has been:

- I wish LFC had more

- The area in most need of improvement at LFC is

Introduction

- Recap of Why?
 - Explored 3 roles of church community:
 - Sanctification
 - Salvation
 - Glorification
- Today's Discussion
 - American individualism and the modern American church
 - Compare with a pre-modern German community of saints
 - Christian community not an ideal, but a divine reality

Sheilaism and the McChurch Generation

It is tragic, in these times of great challenge and opportunity, that the ongoing identity crisis within many modern American churches renders them impotent! Many Christians speak glibly about going to church (even though the church is not a place), in consumer-driven, user-friendly language, toward the goals of feeling good and being comfortable (absolutely the wrong objectives).

- Charles Colson

- American Individualism
 - History of American individualism
 - The ultimate consequence of individualism – being your own God
- Individualistic Attitudes in American Christians
 - Many Christians have adopted this “me” mentality and become “consumers”
 - Desires to feel good about self at church
- Affects of Individualistic Attitudes on Churches
 - Some churches have responded to their “consumers”
 - Some results - dilution and perversion of the message
 - Growth for growth’s sake the ultimate goal

Compare with Bonhoeffer’s Community of Saints

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer – German pastor & Bible scholar who wrote *Life Together*
- Insights gained from his particular community – an illegal seminary of 25 young pastors in Hitler Germany in the mid to late 30s
- Bonhoeffer focuses on the same themes and warnings – dangers of human ideals and goals supplanting God’s reality of church community

Christian Community Not An Ideal, But A Divine Reality

Every human wish dream that is injected into the Christian community is a hindrance to genuine community and must be banished if genuine community is to survive.

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

- Serious Christians bring definite ideas of what Christian life should be and try to realize it
- A visionary demands that his vision be realized by God, others, and himself
- God’s grace shatters these visions
- God laid the foundation – we enter not as demanders, but as thankful recipients
- Conclusion: It’s God church, we just live in it