

THE CHRISTIAN STEWARD'S CHURCH

Our Members

Part I

A young pastor was walking in his backyard when his foot struck what appeared to be an old lamp buried in the ground. When he picked it up, an old genie dressed in rags suddenly popped out.

The old genie was annoyed that he had been awakened. "Okay," he said, "tell me your one wish and make it quick. I want to get back into the lamp."

"I've always dreamed of this happening," the pastor said, excitedly. "Stay right here. I'll be back in a minute." Soon he returned with a map of the Middle East, unfolded it, and showed it to the genie.

"My one wish is that peace and harmony will come to this whole area, from Turkey to Egypt, from Israel to Iraq and Iran," the pastor said.

"Are you crazy?" the genie exclaimed. "Give me a break. I'm an old genie, and the Middle East has been in strife and at war for thousands of years. I just can't do it!"

The pastor thought for a while and then said, "Okay, I'll make another request. I wish that my church would be a place where everyone could live in peace, where everyone would give sacrificial offerings over and above the tithe."

The genie pondered the request and then said, "Do you mind if I take another look at the map?"

Yes, it is difficult to have a church where there is complete unity and complete sacrificial giving. It depends on us and our giving ourselves completely to the Lord and His church to make it so. It is difficult, but not impossible.

The problem today is that 40% of our members are standing on the promises and 60% are sitting off the premises.

Three local church pastors were having lunch together. As they discussed their problems, they discovered that they all had the same problem - cockroaches.

The first pastor said, "I sprayed with DDT but it didn't help. They all returned."

The second pastor said, "I called in an exterminator, but it didn't work either. They soon returned."

The Baptist pastor said, "I solved the problem easily. I baptized them, added them to the membership role and they haven't been back since."

This is what membership means to many whose names are on our roll. Today our church needs members who are loyal to Christ and His program of work. Ask yourself – "How can I help?" "What can I do?"

You can begin by being present. Ben Alford says to never underestimate the importance of your attendance. Actually when you are in your place in your church you are ministering in at least seven ways:

*First, you have voted – **by your presence** – for the most important thing in the world. **Second, you have – by your presence** – influenced everyone with whom you come in contact. **Third – by your presence** – you have made a witness. You have said, "This is important to me." **Fourth – by your presence** – you have enabled God to use you, in innumerable ways, to accomplish the divine will. **Fifth, you have – by your presence** – placed yourself in the company of other pilgrims who, like you, are on the journey of life, and by being present to one another, will have the opportunity for enrichment and encouragement. **Sixth – by your presence** – you place yourself in the center of God's people, where the acts of God are remembered and treasured, and where the Spirit of God is both welcomed and affirmed. It is there, waiting upon God – like the Apostles in the upper room – that wonderful things occur and power is discovered. **Finally, by your presence here**, you are involved in the greatest force for good in the entire world. The sun never sets on the army of which you are a part. The work of God's people is really what makes the difference in this world.*

Our church needs members who love one another and are united in their love for our church.

Lord, help me to be an active, living, giving part of Your church – my church.