CHURCHES INTHE SHAPE OF SCRIPTURE



Special Sermon Series at Crosstown

- Jesus instituted the Lord's Super (Matt. 26:26-29; cf. 1 Cor. 11:23-26)
- Another <u>distinction</u> of churches of Christ:

Another Distinction:

The weekly observance of the Lord's Supper has always been a very important part of our doctrinal identity and difference between us and most other church groups

Another distinction:

Most Protestant churches usually partake of the Lord's Supper at less-than-weekly intervals



George Beasley-Murray, revered Baptist scholar:

"My own views as a young pastor speedily led me to the conviction that the primitive New Testament pattern of the weekly observance was there and that there was every reason to follow it." ("A British Baptist Speaks," an interview by John A. Owston in One Body)

Sunday <u>Meetings</u>

- The early NT church met together regularly (Acts 11:26; 14:27; 1 Cor. 5:4; 11:18; 14:23)
- -Assembling together is an ongoing commitment (Heb. 10:24-25)

Sunday Meetings

- The NT points to one particular day for those regular meetings
- -"The first day of the week" (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2)

MOESIA Black Sea DALMATIA Rome ITALY THRACE BITHYNIA MACEDONIA . Philippi PONTUS CAPPADOCIA Thessalonica? Troas ASIA 5.5 SICIL TCIA AURUS MOUNTAINS Colossae ACHAIA Syracuse RHODES CYPRUS Paphos SYRIA CRETE Mediterranean Sea ERICA Cyrene CYRENE 250 500 mi Jerusalem* Alexandria ...

• Sunday Assembly: The History Test

It helps test our interpretation of the beliefs and practices of the early NT church

Justin Martyr, 155 AD

"We are always together with one another. And for all the things with which we are supplied we bless the Maker of all through his Son Jesus Christ and through his Holy Spirit. And on the day called Sunday there is a gathering together in the same place of all who live in a city or a rural district.....We all make our assembly in common on the day of the Sun...."

Didache, 95 AD

"Having confessed your sins so that your sacrifice may be pure, come together each Lord's Day...."

- Sunday Assembly: No replacement
- Sunday Assembly: Meeting to Eat the Lord's Supper
 - -A main purpose of their Sunday meetings was to eat the Lord's Supper
 - -Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; cf. 11:20, 33

Justin Martyr, 155 AD

"And on the day called Sunday there is a gathering together in the same place of all who live in a city or a rural district. The memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits. Then when the reader ceases, the president in a discourse admonishes and urges the imitation of these good things. Next we all rise together and send up prayers."

Justin Martyr cont., 155 AD

"And, as I said before, when we cease from our prayer, bread is presented with wine and water. The president in the same manner sends up prayers and thanksgiving according to his ability, and people sing out their assent saying the "Amen." A distribution and participation of the elements from which thanks have been given is made to each person."

Justin Martyr cont., 155 AD

"And to those who are not present it is sent by the deacons. Those who have means and are willing, each according to his own choice, gives what he wills, and what is collected is deposited with the president.

Didache, 95 AD

"Having confessed your sins so that your sacrifice may be pure, come together each Lord's Day, break bread, and give thanks"

• The Not-So-Surprising Connection:

- The New Testament marriage of the Lord's Day and the Lord's Supper
- -Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19-20, 26-28;
- -John received his revelation from Christ "on the Lord's Day" (Rev. 1:10)

F. LaGard Smith

"How then, by any means, can professing Christians still ask us whether they have to take the Lord's Supper every week, as opposed to monthly or quarterly? When Jesus said, "whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup..." he wasn't telling us to partake of the Super just whenever, as if whenever we feel like it, or whenever we fee like it, or whenever it's convenient"

F. LaGard Smith cont.

"In those inaugural words, Jesus was giving us the meaning of the memorial. It was the Spirit-led, first-century church which demonstrated the mode. By convincing evidence, that mode was weekly. Considering the wonders of its "revelations," who would wish otherwise?" (Radical Restoration: A Call for Pure and Simple Christianity, 2001)

Summarize:

"No Lord's Day without the Lord's Supper, and no Lord's Supper without the Lord's Day"

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