

# Love Letter

*"Jesus Wrote In The Sand"*

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AGAPE  
 CHURCH OF CHRIST



## From The Pen Of A Free Man

"Life Cycles Of A Church"

Bro. G. A. Freeman

The Lord's church often passes through different stages of spiritual development. For example, the church at Thyatira was improving, though plagued with false teaching (Rev. 2:19-20). The church at Sardis was past its prime – it was already dead, spiritually speaking (Rev. 3:1-3). Paul brings out some good points regarding the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:4-7; 11:2; 2 Cor. 8:7), yet they were plagued with church problems due to their carnality (1 Cor. 3:1-3). Paul taught that the ideal path of a church is ever onward and upward (1 Cor. 15:58). A vibrant life cycle in the church comes from the renewal of a firm commitment to the Lord and to the spiritual mission to which we as the church have been called (Eph. 3:9-11).

It has been observed, by those who study organizations, that most of them go through three stages in their life cycle. In this article, let's make application of these observations to the church of our Lord.

1) Risk-Taker Stage – In this stage, church members are willing (by faith) to take risks to advance the cause of Christ, or as Jesus put it, to "launch out into the deep" (Lk. 5:4). They gladly volunteer their involvement in the Lord's work by being active and aggressive in evangelism, knocking on doors, and inviting others to the assembly (1 Thess. 1:8). Launching out in this kind of daring faith means a church has the willingness to face the possibility of failure, problems, rejection, or difficulty in doing the Lord's work.

2) Caretaker Stage – The church at Laodicea thought they had "arrived" because they smugly thought, we "have need of nothing" (Rev. 3:17). Yet the Lord evaluated them accurately by saying, "You are lukewarm" (Rev. 3:16). His sobering warning to "repent" (Rev. 3:19), would apply to all congregations today who are smug and self-satisfied. Lukewarm churches literally make the Lord sick! (Rev. 3:16). The caretaking church loses its vision of ever-expanding growth, thereby missing its sense of mission and spiritual urgency. After a church has spiritually developed, it is so easy to drift into a "comfort zone." This church seeks to "hold its own" but doesn't look for new spiritual challenges within its membership. Members become weary of work and sacrifice (Jn. 4:35; Mt. 16:24). In this stage, religion becomes more of a "convenience" instead of a "conviction."

3) Undertaker Stage – If a church remains in the caretaker stage long enough, it will soon be ready for the undertaker! The Lord, speaking of such a church in Sardis said, "You are dead" (Rev. 3:1). They were existing on their past reputation – "You have the reputation of being alive" (Rev. 3:1). The rut they were in had become "a grave with both ends knocked out." A member of such a church might say, "The church here is at peace." This means that someone needs to come and preach their funeral so they can "rest in peace." There's not enough life to cause a stir about anything, either good or bad. A church in the undertaker stage lives in the past. As a member of a local church, how do we fit into that church's life cycle? Let's be like the churches described in Acts 9:31, "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase."

Till the last amen,  
 Freeman

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### Important Dates

**\*7/31/22 Installation Service & Program For Bro. Freeman**

## Plan Of Salvation

In order to obey the Gospel and become a Christian, a member of the Church of Christ, which is the Kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13) which is the body (Col. 1:18).

God has provided a scheme of redemption. A Plan of Salvation.

All who obey God, through Christ, must:

1. Hear the Gospel.  
Rom. 10:12-17;  
I Cor. 15:1-4
2. Believe in Jesus, as the Christ, the Son of the Living God.  
Jn. 8:24
3. Repent of your Sins.  
Acts 2:38; 17:30,  
Lk. 13:3, 5.
4. Confess Faith In Christ. Rom. 10:9.
5. Be Baptized for the remission of sins.  
Mk. 16:16,  
Acts 2:38; 22:16
6. The Lord will add you to His Body, which is the church.  
Acts 2:47

This is the simple plan of salvation. There are biblical examples of this : Acts 8:26-39.

Dear student of the Bible, follow after the Lord in the same fashion , and you too can be saved.



# AGAPE

Corners (Evangelism  
Ministry)

## The Little Word 'BUT'

There is one little word in the English language that has the power to disannul every acknowledgement of truth and seemingly noble intention – that word is “but.” When someone says, “I know I ought to, but...”, you immediately know what’s about to follow. The use of the word “but” becomes a process of explaining why a particular truth does not apply to them. By their use of the word “but”, they have in effect denied their responsibility.

Have you ever heard folks say, “I know I ought to obey the gospel, but...”? The truth is that while God has provided mankind salvation through Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12), there are conditions listed in the simple gospel of Christ to be obeyed (Rom. 10:17; Mk. 16:16; Acts 17:30; Gal. 3:26-27). Peter said, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth...” (1 Pet. 1:22). The Hebrew writer said of Jesus, “Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, being then made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey him,” (Heb. 5:8-9). If you comply with the conditions of salvation as presented in the New Testament, then God washes away your sins through the blood of Christ (Acts 22:16).

Some will say, “Oh, I know I ought to, but...” The excuses come flowing as rushing waters down a mountainside. That which follows the word “but” runs the gamut from, “I’ve got a hangnail on my pinky” (a very serious illness to some), to once-in-a-lifetime special events. This writer knows of one member who says, “It’s ok to miss worshipping God for special events, as long as I don’t do it all the time”. God’s word, however, says something entirely different (Hebrews 10:24-27).

James says that man is inconsistent and acts contrary to what is natural when he, from the same source, speaks evil and good – “Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?” (Jas. 3:11). It is just as inconsistent to acknowledge God’s truth, and then deny its applicability to self.

# AGAPE Spot Light (Highlighting Our Members)



Our good Brother Chris Walker from Amarillo, TX has been worshipping at the Agape congregation since March of 2018.

The genuine love from the saints made the congregation the perfect place for him and his fine family. The

testimony of the Apostle Paul in Rom. 8:28 inspires Chris in his daily walk, knowing and believ-

ing that "all things" work together for good.

Gifted in athletics, Chris hails from a family who were lovers of music. His mother started a strings program in Midland, TX and along with his brothers, John and Derrick he played in the Orchestra.

Chris has the desire to one day be able to go somewhere and leave his "cellphone" behind -

God bless you Chris, to bring that to fruition one day soon as we shine the spotlight of Agape love upon you.

Till the last amen.

*"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" Phil. 3:7*

# AGAPE Considerations (Activity Ministry)

## Finding Peace In The Storms Of Life



During a terrible storm on the ocean, a small passenger ship rolled precariously in the roaring tempest. The

furniture and anything else that could move was tied down, and the passengers were confined to their bunks for their own safety. Many on board thought the vessel was doomed.

Finally, a passenger who was determined to find out if there was any hope for survival, set out to see the one who was in command.

Clinging to the walls and handrails, he made his way to the wave-lashed deck, up a ladder, and into the wheelhouse. He noticed that the ship was nearing land and was between some jagged rocks. It became apparent that the captain was trying to reach the safety of a calm bay up ahead. Knowing he could not make himself heard above the roar of the wind and waves, the captain just turned wordlessly to the worried passenger and smiled. Reassured, the man returned to the others and said, "Don't be afraid. All is well. I've seen the captain's face, and he smiled!"

When we are battered by the storms of life, we may be tempted to give in to feelings of hopelessness. But if we will look to our sovereign Captain (Heb. 2:10) and commit our way to Him (Psa. 37:5), we will find peace even during great turmoil. We can trust Him to bring us through the storm (Mk. 4:36-41).

# AGAPE Salutations

*We, the Church of Christ, that meets at the Adorn Hall in Fresno, TX are delighted that you have received this particular edition of the "Love Letter"; a weekly publication which highlights important events and featured articles by our Minister and staff.*

*When you have the opportunity we would be elated to welcome you to any and all of our services at the congregation.*

*It is our great joy to proclaim the glad tidings of Christ, His Kingdom and His glorious gospel.*

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