

WEEKLY FELLOWSHIP

January 12, 2014

The Weekly Newsletter of the Church in Irvine

Prayer Items

- ☉ FTTA gospel trips
- ☉ Irvine
- ☉ YP Winter getaway

For additional details regarding the above prayer items, please refer to Detailed Prayer Burdens.

Weekly Truth Pursuit

Life-Study of Colossians, Messages 33 & 34

Bible Reading

	OT Pages	NT Page
Monday	229-230	1000
Tuesday	231-232	1001
Wednesday	233-234	1002
Thursday	235-236	1003
Friday	237-238	1004
Saturday	239-240	1005

Morning Revival

Material Offerings and the Lord's Move Today, Week 2

DETAILED PRAYER BURDENS

International: FTTA trainee gospel trips to Europe (Jan. 16-30)

Approximately 100 FTTA trainees and serving ones will visit 14 countries in Europe during the last two weeks of January.

Please pray:

- ☉ For the safe travel of all the trainees and serving ones throughout their visit.
- ☉ For the health of the trainees and the serving ones.
- ☉ For the blending of the trainees and serving ones with the saints and serving ones in Europe.
- ☉ For the contacting of the readers of the Recovery Version and other ministry literature.
- ☉ For the distribution of the Recovery Version on the campuses and in the visited cities.

Local: Irvine

- ☉ Pray that we would have a new beginning of our church life in this new year, that we would all follow our father Abraham to build an altar and pitch a tent—consecrating ourselves anew to the Lord and reminding ourselves that we are but sojourners on the earth, to live a life of faith in God for our existence, to dwell in a place of constant fellowship with Him, and to produce seeds according to His promise for His good pleasure.

YP Winter Getaway—this weekend

- ☉ Pray for our young people to be cherished and nourished in the word of God for their going on in the new year.

MINISTRY PORTION

DEFRAUDED BY THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE

If we get into the depths of the book of Colossians, we shall see that it deals not with sin or with the law, but with man's culture. Culture is the unconscious living of every human being. This is true both of primitive society and of advanced countries as well. The principle is the same everywhere. People throughout the world are under the influence of their culture. Those in the Far East may find it difficult to speak spontaneously in public meetings because they are unconsciously influenced by oriental culture. According to the book of Colossians, what defrauds us of the enjoyment of Christ and frustrates the church life is our culture.

The book of Colossians speaks to our need today. Mainly we are not troubled by the sinful things, as in 1 Corinthians, nor by the law, as in Galatians. But we are all unconsciously and subconsciously under the influence of culture. When we came into the church life, we brought our culture with us. This culture is now undermining our enjoyment of Christ. Culture is the systematic method we have developed to exist and to maintain our being. The stronger our culture is, the more critical we shall be of others. Based upon the culture we have, we develop our type of asceticism, our own practices to restrict the indulgence of the flesh. Our asceticism is the method we devise to restrain ourselves and to keep from doing sinful things.

CHRIST, OUR LIFE

The book of Colossians reveals that in God's economy Christ is everything. Christ is the portion of the saints, the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of creation, the mystery of God's economy, the firstborn from among the dead, the fullness of God, the mystery of God, the One in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden, and the Body of all the shadows. Eventually, this preeminent, all-inclusive Christ is the unique constituent of the new man. Furthermore, as Paul declares in 3:4, this Christ is our life. The expression "our life" is a strong indication that we are to experience in our daily living the Christ revealed in this book.

For our physical existence, everything depends on our having life. If there is no life in your body, then everything else related to you is terminated. For example, if you have no life, how could you have such things as love or submission? Everything associated with the human living is based on having human life. If the life is terminated, everything else is terminated also. This underscores the importance of Christ being our life. It is vital for us to see that the all-inclusive Christ is our life. According to the revelation of the New Testament, this Christ has been processed to become the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit.

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Upcoming Events

☉ Friday, Feb. 14 - Lord's Day, Feb. 16, International Chinese-speaking Conference, Anaheim, CA

Church-related Websites

General: churchinirvine.org

Blog: members.churchinirvine.org

Calendar: calendar.churchinirvine.org

Offerings: offerings.churchinirvine.org

YP: youngpeople.churchinirvine.org

This Week

12TH ☉ 9:30am–12:00pm Lord's
Lord's Day Table and prophesying
meetings by districts

14TH ☉ 7:30–8:30pm Prayer meet-
Tuesday ings by districts

16TH ☉ 10:00–11:00am Sisters
Thursday prayer meeting at Hall 3

17TH ☉ Evening Small groups in
Friday the homes

19TH ☉ 9:30am–12:00pm Lord's
Lord's Day Table and prophesying
meetings by districts

MINISTRY PORTION (CONT'D)

(continued from page 1)

THE PEACE OF CHRIST AND THE WORD OF CHRIST

In 3:15 and 16 Paul charges us to let the peace of Christ arbitrate in our hearts and to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly. If we allow the peace of Christ to arbitrate in our hearts, this peace will settle all the disputes among us. The saints in Colosse were troubled by different isms, philosophies, and practices. Just as a referee is needed to settle disputes in a game or contest, so the Colossians needed a referee, an arbitrator, to calm down all the differing opinions. It is significant that only in the book of Colossians, a book that deals with culture and its isms and practices, does Paul speak of the inward arbitration of the peace of Christ. This arbitrator calms down all the opinions which have their source in our culture.

When the peace of Christ calms our opinions, the word of Christ, which is to dwell in us richly, replaces them. Instead of our opinions, we then have the word of Christ. The New Testament reveals clearly that the word of Christ is the Spirit. Furthermore, Christ today is the life-giving Spirit. Our Christian life is altogether a matter of Christ as the living Spirit. We do not need isms, philosophies, practices, or observances. We need the experience of Christ as the life-giving Spirit. The brothers need not try to love their wives, nor the sisters to submit to their husbands. Rather, we all should contact Christ and let Him be our love and submission. Christ today as the life-giving Spirit is in our spirit. We need to say, "Lord Jesus, I thank You that You are here. You are in me all the time to be whatever I need." If we would practice this, we need a clear vision that Christ is everything to us. Such a vision will slay our philosophy, asceticism, opinions, and isms. It will even terminate the influence of culture on our experience of Christ. Then, instead of being cultured people, we shall be people occupied with, possessed by, and saturated with Christ.

There is no doubt that our hearts need to be comforted and knit together in love unto all the riches of the full assurance of understand-

ing. But the goal of this comforting of our hearts is that we would have the full knowledge of Christ as the mystery of God. We should not allow the concern with the heart to keep us from the realization that we need Christ, the mystery of God, to be everything to us. Moment by moment, we need to take Him as our life and live by Him.

We have pointed out again and again that after Paul tells us that Christ is our life and the constituent of the new man, he charges us to let the peace of Christ arbitrate in us and to let the word of Christ inhabit us. To have a full understanding of what it means for the peace of Christ to arbitrate in our hearts, we need to know the background against which the book of Colossians was written. At Babel the cultural divisions of mankind came into being. The opinions from our culture are expressed mainly in religious observances and in philosophical ordinances, represented respectively by the Jews and the Greeks. The cultural opinions have divided mankind into many different nations. However, God's eternal purpose is to have a corporate people to be the Body of Christ for His expression. But if mankind remains divided by cultural opinions, how can God's purpose be carried out? It would be impossible. But according to Ephesians 2:15, Christ's death on the cross has abolished all the cultural ordinances and differences and terminated them. Christ's purpose in doing this was to create in Himself one new man and thereby make peace. Hence, the peace made by Christ was produced through the crucifixion of cultural opinions. When the Jews and the Gentiles were created into one new man, peace was made. This very peace, the peace of Christ, is what Paul refers to in Colossians 3:15.

—*Life-Study of Colossians*, Message 33

ANNOUNCEMENTS

☉ YP Winter Getaway Registration Deadline TODAY, January 12th

TODAY is the last day to register for the Winter Getaway which will be from 1/17 - 1/19. We would like to encourage the young people that have not yet registered, any college students or saints that have the burden to come, and any parents and/or family members of the young people to sign up today. This "family time" of ours is really sweet and we don't want anyone, who would like to come, to miss this time.

☉ Hawaii Blending Conference

The saints in Hawaii have invited the churches to blend with them in a conference on Jan. 24-26. The churches in Hawaii endeavor to remain in the up-to-date ministry and in the blending life of the Body of Christ. They look forward to being blended together with saints from many different localities under the speaking of the ministry of the age. For additional information, please contact: office@churchinirvine.org