Repairing the Mind

The apostle Paul delivered an exposition on the process whereby man is justified from sin in Romans 1-11. All of humanity is guilty of sin (Rom. 3:23). Man’s sins are cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ through the grace of God (Rom. 3:24-25). To gain access to this cleansing blood, one must exhibit faith (Rom. 5:1-2). One’s faith is evidenced to God through obedience (Rom. 6:16). The Lord’s requests are that all would be baptized for the remission of their sins and live godly in this present world (Rom. 6:1ff). Paul concludes the matter of salvation by God’s grace with a statement that indicates the Christian’s responsibility. The apostle writes, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:1-2). The purpose of this article is to focus on the phrase “renewing of your mind.”

The word “renewing” seems to imply that there was a time in the past that we were viewed as holy and clean and not in need of any fixing. To “renew” something is to renovate... to restore to an earlier condition, as by repairing or remodeling (AHD 1047). That which is being repaired or remodeled is the “mind.” The mind, before becoming a Christian, is in need of repair.

The mind of the world is earthly (i.e., sensual or carnal). Said disposition considers the world we live in as a prize. This minded person seeks satisfaction in this life. Said person will seek to impress others in this world with their prestige, high position at the work place, the finest homes, and automobiles.
(Jn. 12:43). Their god is their money and whoever has money is respected by them. Success in life is measured by what one has rather than what one has to look forward to; i.e., heaven (cf. Phil. 3:17-20; James 3:13ff).

The mind of the Christian is the mind of Christ (i.e., humble, selfless, respectful and fearful toward the heavenly Father, seeking no selfish glorification from the world, compassionate, and loving) (cf. Phil. 2:1-5).

What will cause me to repair my mind from selfish ambition, self glory, and worldliness in general to a mind that is humble and seeks to glorify the name of Jehovah God? Paul tells us that said repairs will be done through a renewing or transformation process of the mind. When I was a child, I was innocent of sin, yet when sin revived (when I recognized my error), I was found to be guilty of sin (Rom. 7:9). Faith in Jesus and His promise of heaven, all of which is revealed in the gospel message, will motivate me to be transformed from a sinful state of mind to a godly state. Repairing my mind therefore signifies a process of transforming my thinking of ungodly thoughts, goals, and desires to thinking holy thoughts with pure goals.

The renovation of my mind from desiring vainglory, lustfulness, and life interest in the world itself to a disposition of humility, compassion, and trying to make it to heaven will “prove” three things in relation to God. The word “prove” (dokimazo) = “to prove, try, examine, scrutinize” (Moulton 105). Jesus used this word in the same fashion at Luke 14:19 saying, “And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused.” When the world sees my transformation from sinner to saint, I illustrate one who has weighed the cost of being lost through examination of God’s word. What I find is that God desires that I be good and acceptable as is made known through His perfect word. Three things that I prove (see ASV footnote) in relation to the will of God is what good, acceptable, and perfect behavior is. What about you? Have you counted the cost should you be lost? Let us take every opportunity to repair our minds and keep it in good running order.

John C. Robertson
The Church we Read about in the Bible

Introduction:

When one drives around the city we may observe the different types of churches and church services. There are church buildings built with the greatest of architectural foresight where no expense has been spared. Some churches advertise upcoming “Christian concerts.” We may notice church gymnasiums, buses, and playgrounds at some church buildings. Upon entering one of these buildings we may find organs and stages with props for musical, theatrical, and choir performances. Some services use priest and others male and female pastors. We may find a fund raising event at some church buildings. Signs are generally a part of church buildings. Some signs tell of two types of services such as contemporary and traditional. It doesn’t take long to see that as we examine the multitude of denominational bodies in our city that there are great differences. This lesson shall examine what the Bible has to say about the church and see where the above observations fall.

I. Establishing Bible Authority:
   A. Consider Colossians 3:17 in its context.
   B. What does the Bible have to say about the church?

II. Is there One church or a multitude of Churches revealed in the NT?
   A. Man’s reasoning tells us to find the “church of your choice.”
   B. The Bible reveals one church (Eph. 4:1-4).

III. Authorized Church Worship:
   A. Singing (instruments, choirs, solos, concerts...) or singing with the heart?
   B. Lord’s Supper (once per month, quarter, year... evenings only...) or 1st day of each week?
   C. Preaching (story time, drama, women preachers) or men preaching the word of God?
   D. Giving (Wednesday, fund raising events, supporting organizations to do the work of the church) or 1st day of the week only as we have been prospered?
   E. Prayer (dim the lights, hum, let women lead in public prayers) or men praying in the assembly?

IV. Organization of the Church:
   A. Pastor, priests, women elders and deacons?
   B. The Bible reveals elders, deacons, preachers, and members.

V. Name of the Church:
   A. Baptists, Methodists, Catholic, Mormon, Seventh Day Adventists, Presbyterian, Assembly of God, etc.
   B. Bible reveals church of Christ or church of God.

Conclusion:

The church we read of in the Bible has no grand architectural structure, no choirs, organs, gymnasiums, fund raising events, women preachers, and schools to teach children secular education. The church we read of in the Bible was not named Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterian, Mormon, etc. This thing being so, why is it that these exist today? These inventions exist because the church of Christ does not meet man’s personal expectation of what the church should be (cf. Matt. 11:16-19). When people put away self conceived ideas of what the church is and open their Bibles they will worship in such a way that brings glory to God.