



Art by Wayne Combee



Becky Combee Ministries, Inc.

Being The Church

*But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a **greater and more perfect** tabernacle, **not made with hands**, that is to say, not of this building (Hebrews 9:11)*

There is a rhyme which children commonly sing, making motions with their hands.

*Here's the church, and here's the steeple
Open the door and see all the people.*

This rhyme is simple, yet it effectively illustrates what the Bible clearly tells us here in Hebrews chapter nine, that the church of God is not a building, but the people in the building. Individually, we each are the church.

We can see this more completely by examining the previous verses here in Hebrews chapter nine. These verses describe some of the rites and ceremonies and articles used in the Old Testament tabernacle. A contrast is then made between these items and the change Christ made through His death and resurrection.

*"The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all **was not yet** made manifest... (verse 8)*

*Which was **a figure** for the time **then** present... (verse 9)*

Notice the words "yet" and "then". We must grasp these statements in order for the words in verse 11 to fully impact our heart. Verse 10 continues:

*Which stood **only** in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. **But Christ...** (Hebrews 9:10-11)*

The Old Testament tabernacle was an incomplete figure of God's consummate desire. His presence there was available only to the high priest who had to offer sacrifice for the forgiveness of the people. "But Christ" through His death and resurrection changed all of that. We are now "buildings not made with hands" and God's presence lives in us.

*This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will **put my laws into their hearts**, and in their minds will I write them; (Hebrews 10:16)*

Instead of forms and rituals, God has now placed His Word in our hearts. He has written it into our minds. Christ has come and created in us something "greater". GREATER! Verse 11 says "greater and more perfect". That would be you and I! What God has placed within us is greater and more perfect. Didn't Jesus Himself tell us to do "greater works" than He had done? (John 14:12)

Have you really thought about that? We have a responsibility as the church to live out from "the world". We cannot possibly be "greater" or "more perfect" and yet blend in with what secular society is doing. This instruction was specifically given to us in 1 Peter 2:9.

*But ye are a **chosen** generation, a **royal** priesthood, an holy nation, a **peculiar** people...*

Now I do want to point out that the word "greater" does not imply Christians are above anyone else. The Bible speaks against this in Colossians 3:11. *"But Christ is all, and in all."* Jesus died for everyone. (John 3:16) He didn't pick and choose. Instead, it is a description of our lifestyle and behavior as Christians, as the church. Both the word "greater" and "perfect" in the Greek speak as to age and maturity.

There is a commercial currently playing in which a scientist is talking to a wedge of cheddar cheese to see how "mature" it is. The wedge of cheese at first makes several crass comments and the scientist then checks the cheese off on his list as being "not ready" yet. A little while later he is again speaking to the wedge of cheese and the cheese is talking entirely differently. Now, this example seems silly, but again sometimes the smallest ideas are the best illustrations.

We, the church, are to set ourselves apart; we are to grow up in God. People who meet me should know that I am a Christian, that I live my life by Christ's example and the principles given to me in the Word of God. Visitors to our church buildings, no matter what denomination they may be, should know we are different, we live differently, we react differently, from what is around us.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. (1 John 2:15-17)

Our lives as church members should draw others to Christ. People should come to the service on Sunday knowing that inside the walls of the building they will find the presence of God, the love of God, and the answers they need. They come because we, individually, are different. Conversely, our churches, though they need to be relevant, should not become so like the world. There needs to be a definite distinction.

*...that ye should **shew forth the praises** of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9b)*

My life's example isn't about the talents I have, the things I own, or the places I've been. Corporately, our church services are not about the songs we sing or the use of visual media during the sermon. People shouldn't come because they heard we sing popular tunes or use lots of videos, or in reverse because we don't. They

should come because they can see we, the people of God, are different, our lives reflections of the love of God.

This is my ultimate goal. I want my life to display only the praises of what God has done for me.

Suzanne Williams

The Church's One Foundation

By Samuel J. Stone

The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord,
She is His new creation
By water and the Word.
From heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her
And for her life He died.

This marvelous hymn was written in 1866 because of a great controversy in the Church of England. Bishop John Colenso, embracing the work of German high critics, questioned the writings of Moses and liberally applied the Pauline revelation of Romans. The debate caused by this respected missionary shook the foundation of the Anglican Church and escalated until Bishop Colenso was removed from office. He was later reinstated by a London court of law. Samuel Stone, the curate at Windsor in England, penned the words to this hymn to defend evangelical truth. It became the processional when bishops from around the world gathered for a theological conference which is now known as the Lambeth Conference.

The inspiration of this hymn is obvious. The words sing off the page in bold declaration of biblical truth. They embrace Jesus, God's sacrificial lamb, and lay the foundation of man's new life in Him. The proclamation of the Apostle Paul dramatically agrees *"For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."* (1 Cor. 3:11 NKJV) The hymnist reminds this historically fractured church of her unity. With amazing inspiration, he declares "ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE birth, ONE holy name, ONE holy food and ONE hope." He anchors the church saying, "Yet she on earth hath union with God the three in one." Then triumphantly he bears her upward as God's holy bride with the words, "And the great church victorious Shall be the church at rest." Amen!

Becky