



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## Church Recreation

- by Keith Camp

Recently I received an invitation to a facility that provided "ping pong, walking track, concerts, basketball, weights, pool table, board games, banquets, refreshments, etc." No, the invitation did not come from the local YMCA. It came from a local church.

Increasingly churches have begun to take on the atmosphere of social clubs; some do rival local health spas. Yet, I do NOT read in the Bible where "the churches of Christ" (Romans 16: 16), in their life and death struggle to preach the gospel to a lost world, ever made such social/recreational provisions for that world (or themselves). According to the New Testament (NT) the ONLY work God ordained the local church to do consists of: preaching the gospel (1 Thessalonians 1:8), assembling for worship and edification (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-25), and meeting the physical needs of destitute Christians (Acts 4:34-35; 6:1ff). The work of the local church was spiritual, NOT recreational.

And it certainly was not for lack of public interest that kept churches in the Bible out of athletics and entertainment. The world into which the gospel was first preached LOVED the sports arena. Their children played five different games of ball and the Roman emperors were masters at building public baths, theaters, stadiums and using them to 'politic' the people. The world back then had their superstar athletes, actors and actresses too. In fact, it is safe to say that America's enjoyment and pursuit of recreation/entertainment is equal to the people of NT times.

But again, the NT is SILENT about local churches making ANY provision for the fulfillment of such interests. And get this! The hope of the gospel was still "proclaimed in all creation under heaven" (Colossians 1:23). Churches in the NT understood that the world needed the gospel and its eternal benefits, not temporary distractions.

We still believe the gospel is God's power to motivate all men to faith, obedience and salvation (Romans 1:16).



## "I Am A Gambler"

by Jack Frost Jr.

Yes, I am a gambler. Oh not the kind that frequents places behind "closed doors" in some secluded spot or in the back room of some night club or den of iniquity. I'm not that kind of gambler. Neither do I play ponies or bet on sporting events. *Such gambling as this is peanuts compared to the gambling I do.* Even "Bet-A-Million Bashby" is a piker compared to me.

You see, *I gamble with my soul at stake.* I am betting that I can live a life of "do nothing" indifference, a life of neglect of those things of God, and still be saved.

*I'm gambling with the souls of my children at the stakes.* I am betting their souls that I can let them miss Bible Study and most of the worship services. . . that I will not influence them toward righteousness, toward becoming active members of the Lord's church, and that they will have wisdom enough to their own lives unto the Lord.

I'm betting that I can have a nonchalant attitude toward the lost about me and still please God.

I'm betting I can remain indifferent to the teaching of Christian generosity, and that I can fail to give as I've prospered and that Christ will bless me eternally.

Yes, I'm a gambler . . . the most reckless type. I am gambling against the impossible odds with my soul and the souls of my children at stake, for you see I AM A LUKEWARM CHRISTIAN.

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." (Revelation 3:15-17,19)

## NOAH, Heir of the Righteousness

"Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." Genesis 6:5-7

In this passage we have the record of God's condemnation of the ancient world. Wickedness had spread throughout the whole world and the state of man was so bad that God was sorry for having even made him. That is a sad statement.

But there was one man, only one and his name was Noah. He had found grace/favor in the eyes of the Lord. Genesis 6:8  
What was it about this man?

First, after receiving the overwhelming task of building a large sea worthy vessel (the ark) "...Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did." Genesis 6:22 Noah did what God commanded him to do. Genesis 7:5 Unlike the rest of the world, he was listening to the Lord and doing what He was instructed to do. This is a timeless truth that will never go away. Hearing the Lord's commands and doing them. (See James 2:22-25)

Second, Noah had faith. Hebrews 11:6 says, "without faith it is impossible to please God." And, Hebrews 11:7 says, "By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith."

Hebrews 11:7 Because He believed God he obeyed God. His obedience to God has made him heir of the righteousness and worthy of our imitation.

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