

# **Deteriorating Moats in the Churches of Christ**

## **By Matthew Morine**

Warren Buffet is famous for talking about “moats” in business. In his investing he looks for “economic castles that are protected by unbreachable moats.” Businesses are serious about creating economic advantages to maintain a high level of profit. In the business world, there are always competing companies wanting to compress one's profit margins and swoop in to take another company's business away. Buffet prefers businesses that have wide moats with alligators in the water. Through the years, the churches of Christ had a stronger moat system in the local congregations. The trenches were manned by committed Christians evangelizing, a world in which doctrinal truth was a significant, and clear message for restoration and unity was preached. These once powerful moats are deteriorating around us. So how can we re-dig the ditches?

**Shovel Again the Doctrinal Distinctives.** Contrary to some who suggest within the churches of Christ, the solution to a postmodern world is not to succumb to “all truth is relative.” Over and over again, an element has held up that the distinctive doctrines of the church do not matter. The truths that cause the churches of Christ to be unique have been mocked and made fun of. The superiority complex of some people has created a generation of individuals that seem to act above the smallminded conservatives. But what we have been seeing is people coming that are connecting to pursue first-century worship. Sympathizers are enjoying the focus on the fruit of our lips because the rock band vibe does not work for them. The people are coming to see the wisdom of speaking to one another in songs and hymns. It breaks people’s hearts to see the judgmental spirit that some discontents have demonstrated in the church. Instead of appreciating the simple practices of the church, these individuals have denounced Biblical practices that thousands of Christians across the centuries have enjoyed.

The spirit of pride is dangerous. Pride blinds people to blessings. There are fantastic distinctive elements in the church. The churches of Christ have always stood for unity in a divided world. Our congregations have practiced sacrificial love through the centuries. We have upheld baptism, the Lord’s Supper while the religious world struggled to fit this in for an entertainment-saturated society. No matter what some discontents within the church believe, people still love our distinctive doctrines.

**Shovel Again Sacrificial Love.** The average church of Christ is 55 members. Our smallness is a considerable advantage in the department of love. The average

congregation will know one another and care deeply for one another. Being part of a 2000 member congregation might have some better technology and a nicer building, but we can provide real, genuine love to people. The deeper we dig the bonds of love, the stronger our moat will be. John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another." There is a physiological principle that people are more caring for those that they know over those they only hear about. The world might be drawn to smoke and guitars on Sunday morning, but that is settling for a substitute. People would rather be known and loved in our churches.

**Shovel Again Mentoring Relationships.** Mentoring is evangelism. You are showing another person that correct path in life. Mentoring is evangelism because you are providing the keys to Christlike living. Mentoring is evangelism because you need to nurture the next generation. Our churches must be in the people building industry. A smoke machine will never overtake an older man teaching a younger man to balance work and family. No video production will suppress and older lady teaching a new mom about caring for her family. The moats that we create are in people's hearts because we pour ourselves out for them. All of these actions generate loyalty and connection. Think about it? Would you rather have a father figure or a pencil on the special father's day worship theme? We need more Moses's so that we can have more Joshuas. We need more Pauls so we can have more Timothys. 2 Timothy 2:2 "and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also."

So [the] times [of] the old conversations about us losing our young people gets old. We can lament this or we can start digging the moats again. There is plenty that we can do that will [be] stronger against the forces of Satan. We need to start digging [today](#).