

## Structure or Stricture? Arthur Barry

**Structure:** *a: Something (as a building) that is constructed b: Something arranged in a definite pattern of organization*

**Stricture:** *A restraint, limit, or restriction.*

Here are two words that look almost identical, and can seem to be very close in meaning, or very far apart, depending on one's attitude. One of the arguments we hear when we are sharing our faith sounds like this, "I don't need organized religion. I just worship God in my own way." What does that mean?

"Organized religion" is a term by which people refer to church. The idea is that if there is such a thing as "organized religion" then there must be a "non-organized" religion. If we accept that proposition, then it must be OK to belong to non-organized religion. So, you and I may see the church as providing valuable structure (organization) to our lives, but another person may see it as enforcing unnecessary strictures (limits) on his or her life. In other words, how can Jesus promise to set us free if He demands that we belong to His church?

*And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:18.*

To me Jesus is talking about a valuable structure, but to many people He is talking about a restrictive meddlesome group of people.

Psychologists tell us that structure is necessary, and by that they mean that we need to have boundaries or limits. This idea of establishing boundaries in behavior definitely applies to children. Not all children feel like going to school, but we actually have laws that say they must go. A regular daily schedule, established times for eating, going to bed, etc., makes a child feel secure. How about adults? Well, most of us prefer to live in houses than to roam the streets, and when we "go to bed", we like to have a bed to get into instead of just lying down anywhere on the floor. When we drive, we usually prefer to stay within the confines of the road rather than to just let the car go where it wants to. We choose law and order and structure for the most part because if society and our lives were not controlled, there would be chaos. Unfortunately, when it comes to religion, particularly Christianity, many people adopt a different approach.

Freedom in Christ is freedom from sin and death (Romans 8:2). However, many prefer to be free *to* sin rather than be free *from* sin.

One of the cultural clashes that is going on in this country right now is the debate over whether society is better off with more government or less government. Some believe that freedom is eroded by more government whereas others believe that freedom is protected by more government. It is sad that most people tend to spend lots of time thinking about how to live their physical lives yet seem to arrive at a belief system that impacts their spiritual lives without giving it much thought.

What do you think? Is church structure or stricture – or both?



That meets at 701 South Wilbur, Sayre, PA 18840

(570) 886-1838

Arthur Barry, Evangelist- (607) 280-1732

Paul Cowles, Evangelist- (607) 592-8091

August 15, 2021

### WELCOME!

Sunday

Bible Class- 9:30 a.m.

Worship- 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday

Bible Study-6:30 p.m.

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**All the churches of Christ greet you.**

Romans 16:16

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**Today's Sermon: Living the Dream**

Arthur will be preaching today.

**Scripture Reading: Revelation 14:1-5**

Sermons are recorded and are available for listening on the church website.

Bulletins are archived on the website.

**[valleycitieschurchofchrist.org](http://valleycitieschurchofchrist.org)**

Find us on Facebook:

**[www.facebook.com/valleycitiescoc](https://www.facebook.com/valleycitiescoc)**

**Headphones are available for the hearing impaired.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS / UPCOMING EVENTS...

- ❖ **Sunday Morning Bible Class:** Paul will be continuing his lessons on the Psalms and stopping to sing a song from our songbook when appropriate.
- ❖ **Wednesday Evening Bible Class:** August 18<sup>th</sup>, at the building, 6:30pm- Arthur will be continuing his lessons on the book of Matthew. Come at 6 and bring something to eat with us before the lesson if you like.
- ❖ **Next Potluck and Bring-a-Friend Sunday (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday) :** September 19<sup>th</sup>.
- ❖ **Second Annual National Door-knocking Day** for Heart to Heart, Home to Home. October 2<sup>nd</sup>.



- **Minutes from last week's men's meeting and a financial report are available in the front of the auditorium.**
- **The next 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Regional Singing will be on Sunday, August 29<sup>th</sup>. We at Valley Cities will be hosting it.**
- **A donation will be made to Hospice by Valley Cities church in memory of Dawn's sister Alice.**
- **Items needed in the kitchen that you have the opportunity to donate are bottles of water, any size, paper bowls, napkins, sugar, ground coffee (regular and/or decaf) and creamer. Just drop off in kitchen. Thanks!**
- **Barrys are having a wing ding at their house on Saturday, September 11<sup>th</sup>. Starting at 3pm, dishes to pass gratefully accepted, but not necessary. Please bring lawn chairs if you have them.**
- **FELLOWSHIP POTLUCK DINNER TODAY!**

## PRAYERS

- **Dan Myers**, Paulette's friend, needs prayer for multiple health problems.
- Remember **Zachary Cowles** as he has been deployed with the army for the next two years.
- Pray for **Jackie**. She is dealing with edema of the legs and feet, making it hard for her to walk. Daughter Vickie is visiting from OK, and they are also seeking a second opinion from a kidney specialist. Pray for Darlene as she cares for her.
- **Pat Gutherie** from Kittanning has lung cancer.
- **Gail Westerhold** had kidney surgery on Wednesday to remove more cancer. She is dealing with a lot of pain but is otherwise recovering well.
- **Jerry** has been suffering weak spells and lack of energy.
- Pray for **Linnett Short**, who has stage 3 lung cancer.
- **Arthur's younger sister, Sue**, has stage 4 breast cancer and **his brother Chris** in England has Alzheimer's Disease.
- **Amy Connor's friend Denise Whitfield** has colon cancer and Amy believes she has had surgery.
- Pray for **Steve** to fully recover from his recent surgery which involved several setbacks and painful recovery.
- **Pray for our church group to correctly handle meeting together for worship in light of Covid contagion.**
- **Pray that we can start our ladies Bible class once more...with enthusiasm!**

If you have any PRAYERS or NEWS that you would like included in the bulletin, please contact Sandy at [barncat7237@gmail.com](mailto:barncat7237@gmail.com) or text or call (607) 261-0911.