**Cheers or Church**

 Do you remember the 80s television show “Cheers”? I could never recommend anyone watch a show that glorifies drinking alcohol as it did. And yet, have you ever wondered what made such a show so popular? Can you imagine the summary of the show as its producers were trying to get it off the ground? “We want to do a show that is just about a group of drinkers who have nothing in common except they work at or frequent the same Boston bar.”

 Perhaps the theme song provides some insight into what made this show popular and what makes trips to the bar so popular for many people even today.

 “Making your way in the world today takes everything you’ve got. Taking a break from all your worries sure would help a lot. Wouldn’t you like to get away? Some times you want to go where everybody knows your name and their always glad you came. You wanna be where you can see our troubles are all the same. You wanna go where everybody knows your name…You want to go where people know, people are all the same. You want to go where everybody knows your name.”

 This is exactly what people want. They want to go some place where they fit, where people recognize and appreciate them. They want to go where they can bear their souls and find out that others are facing the same problems. They want to go where everyone recognizes they are all in the same boat. Therefore, they won’t be judged or criticized for having to work on problems or deal with fears. They want to go where they can talk and receive support.

 Isn’t it sad that people think they can find this in the local bar instead of in the local congregation? Look again at the words of that song. Isn’t that a good description of what a church should look like?

 The local congregation ought to be a place that can be seen as a refuge from troubles of life in the world. It ought to be a place where members are recognized and appreciated. It ought to be a place where we recognize that we are not the only ones who face troubles. It ought to be a place without rank and judgment, but with unity and support.

 Consider passages like **Romans 12:3-21;** **I Corinthians 12:12-26** and **James 2:1-9**. Each of these demonstrates the relationships we are to have in the local congregation. Relationships of love, support, encouragement, and help with impartiality. This is part of the reason for the establishment of the church instead of just Christianity as individuals.

 However, Satan has come up with his pseudo-church. He has convinced people that the only way to get this kind of relationship is to head to the local bar. We need to be busy letting people know they do not need to settle for Satan’s secondhand offerings down at “Cheers.” They can find all the greatness that God has to offer in His church and in this church.

**—Edwin L. Crozier**