

Introduction:

1. A little boy and his father walked into a doctor's office and sat down. When the doctor interviewed them he turned to the father and asked what was the boy's trouble, assuming that the father had brought the boy for treatment. "O, he's all right, doctor," answered the man. "It's me that needs some attention." He then described his symptoms, after which the doctor examined the man, made a diagnosis and administered treatment which brought healing. The sick father, not the well boy, needed attention

2. Jesus, in the event recorded in our Scripture, expanded on the principle of this experience to drive home the purposes of his work. Referring to wrongdoers, or sinners, as those who are sick, he said "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to u



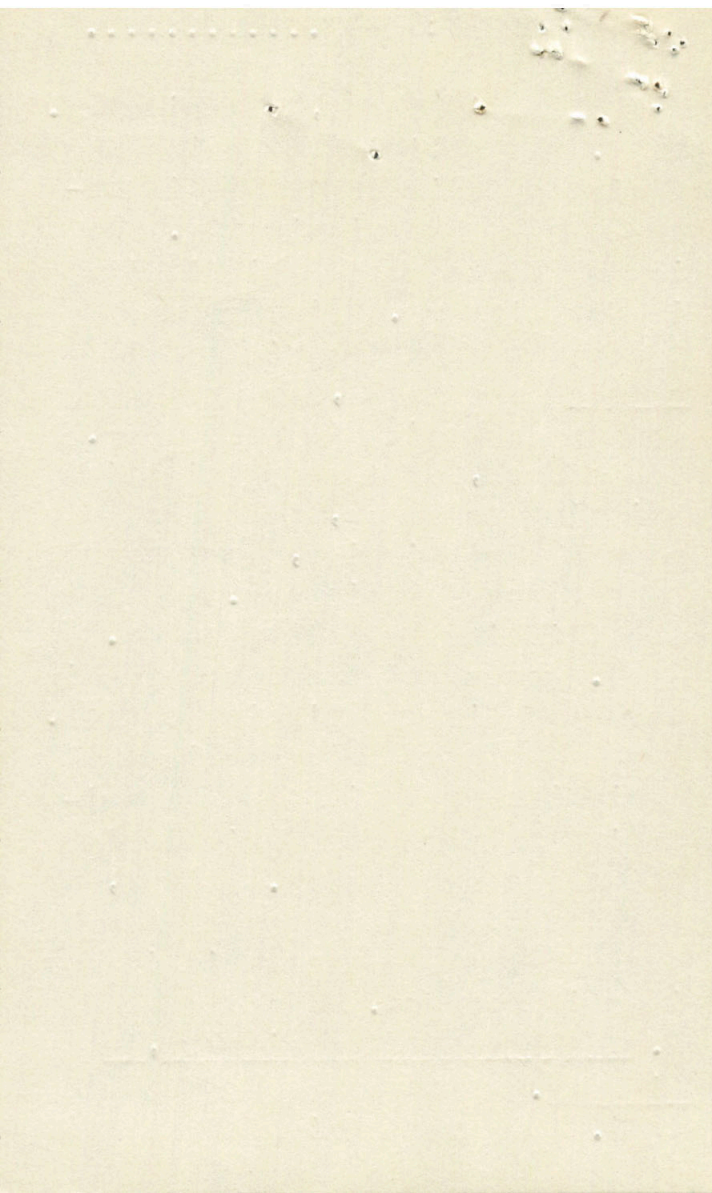
call, the righteous, but sinners."

3. The religion based on Christ and his teachings is usually called Christianity. It is our theme that Christianity is for sinners. Sinners are those who know the right but choose the wrong, or who choose not to do God's will for them. The church, as the organization existing to share, teach and expand Christianity, must ~~also~~ be a place for sinners. Such is the thinking we follow today.

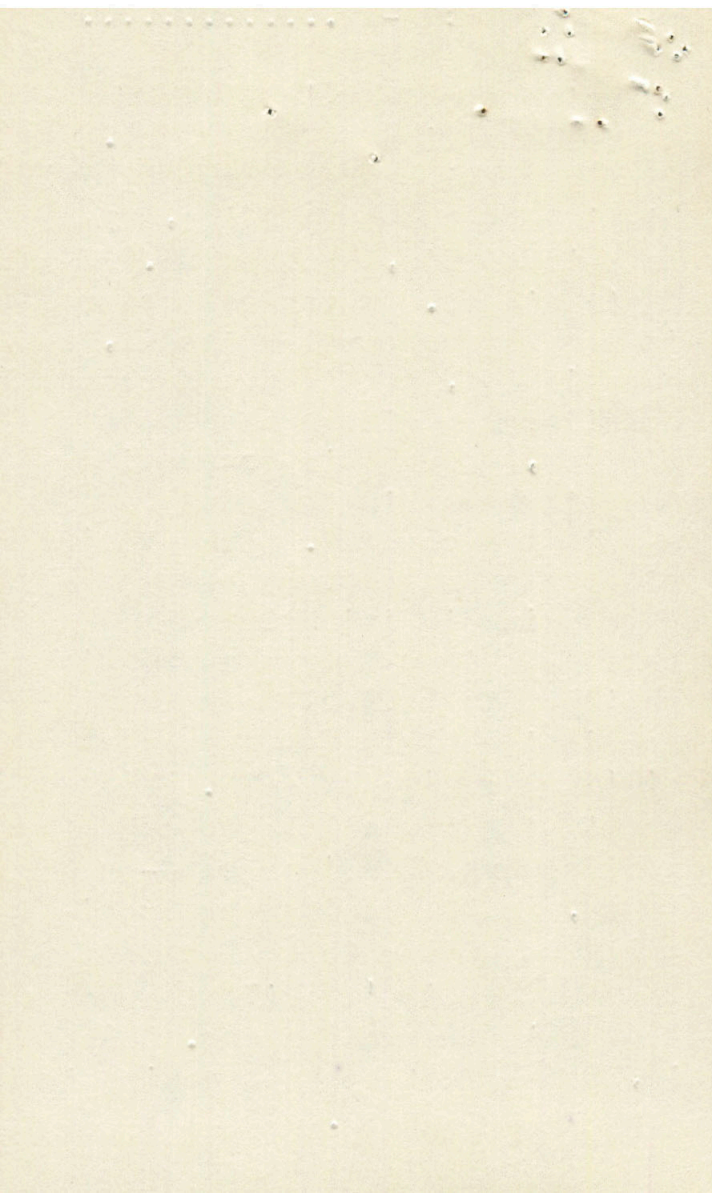
4. Jesus and those around Him were the first Christian church. The example of this earliest Christian group is the authoritative pattern for Christianity and the church today. (First, we need to look at Jesus and the early church to ascertain if our idea is correct.

I. Jesus attracted sinners, in His day.

1. The event which caused Him



to voice our ~~today's~~ ^{of today} theme was a demonstration of this fact. As He was walking along He saw Levi sitting at the tax office, and He said to him, "Follow me." And Levi did so. A tax collector is usually on a salary today, not a comission, and is not necessarily considered a sinner because of his job, though his occupation doesn't make him the most popular man in the country. In Jesus' time a tax collector was usually a grasping individual who had betrayed his countrymen and his religion to collect taxes on a commission basis for the hated military empire of Rome. His commission was all he could collect over Rome's agreed-on quota, and he could use practically any means to collect so long as he didn't "kill the goose that laid the golden egg." That is, taxes must be kept coming in from year to year. The tax

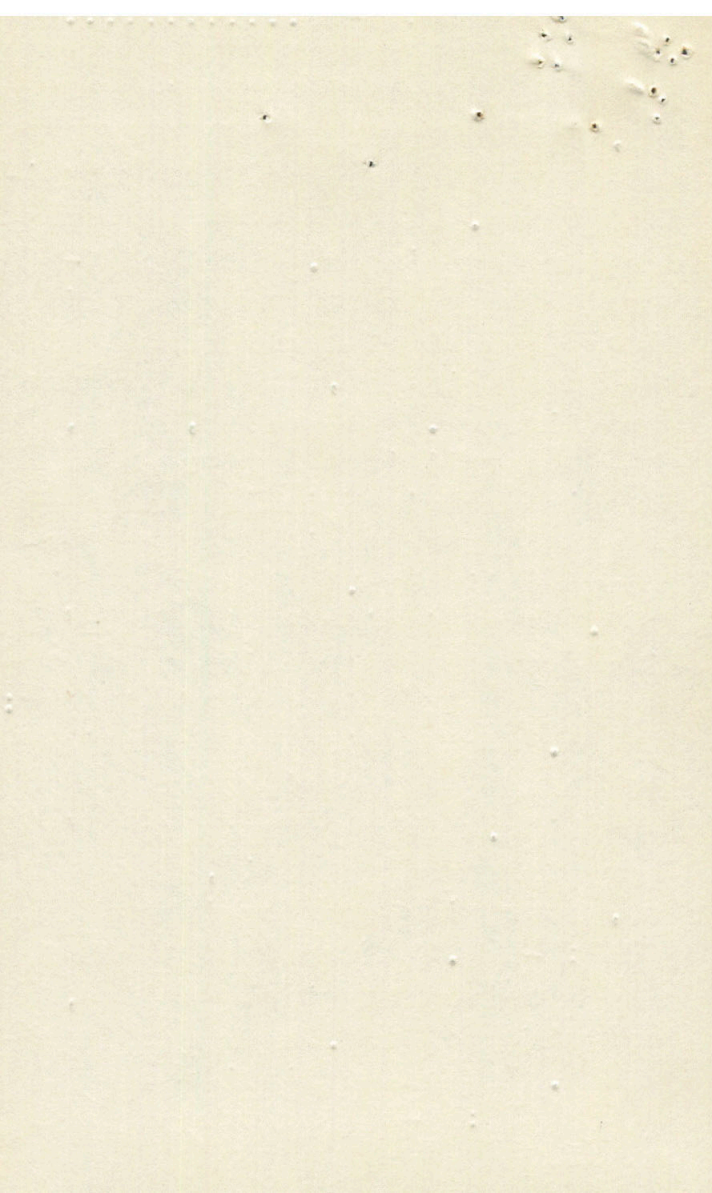


collector usually was a sinful man, for he commonly used any method he could to collect exorbitant taxes. He was hated and was considered a sinner. The Scripture tells us that Jesus and his disciples sat at table and ate with such sinners, and others who were sinners. No wonder, then, that the religious leaders who saw him exclaimed indignantly "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

2. Other incidents in Jesus' life show the attraction that He was for the sinners of his day:

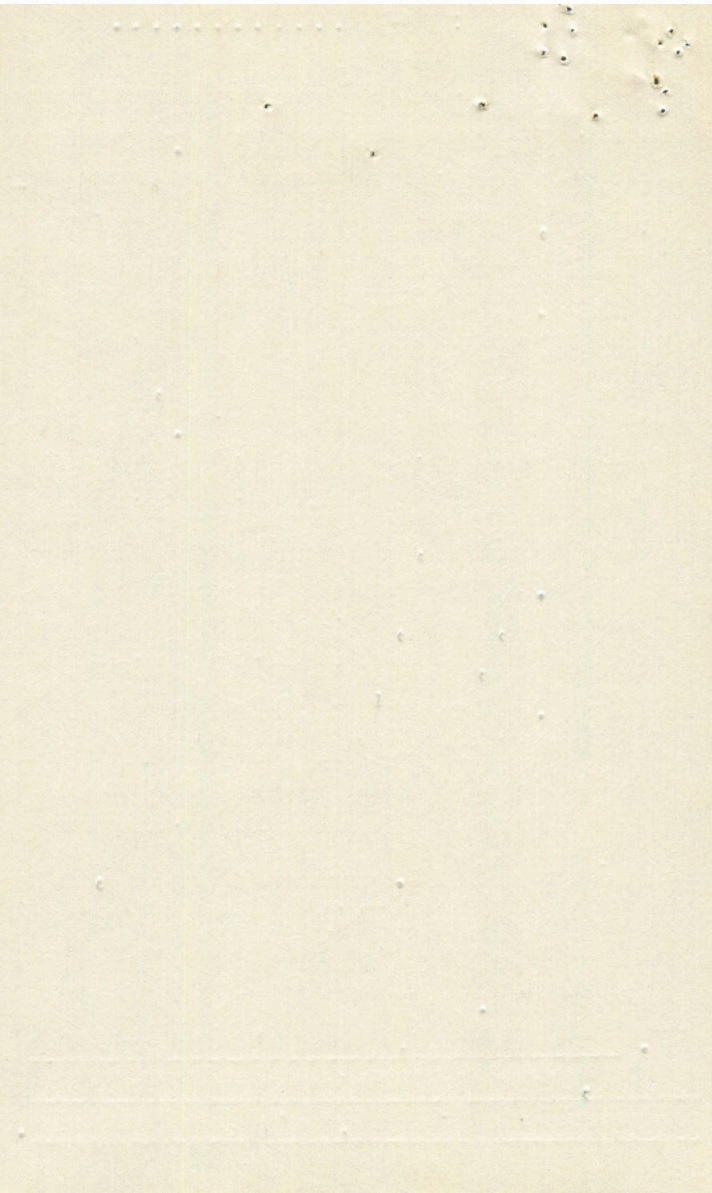
a. At one time a paralytic came to Jesus asking for healing. Jesus recognized his greater need and said, "My Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mk 2:3-12). After that the man also received physical healing, according to Mark.

b. In another incident (Mark 10:17-22) a young man came to



Jesus asking "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus reminded him of the ten commandments, but the young man said "All these I have kept from my youth." Jesus then told him to sell what he had and give the proceeds to the poor, and then to come follow him. The youth was rich and did not feel he could part with his possessions, so he left sorrowfully. The youth was not a bad man, but, like all of us at times do, put material things first. Jesus' challenge may have stirred his thinking so that at a later date he changed his standards and put first things first. At the least, we know that in this case Jesus attracted a sinner and worked with him.

II. The church, Jesus' agency for today, should strive to attract and attend the sinner, sick and needy.

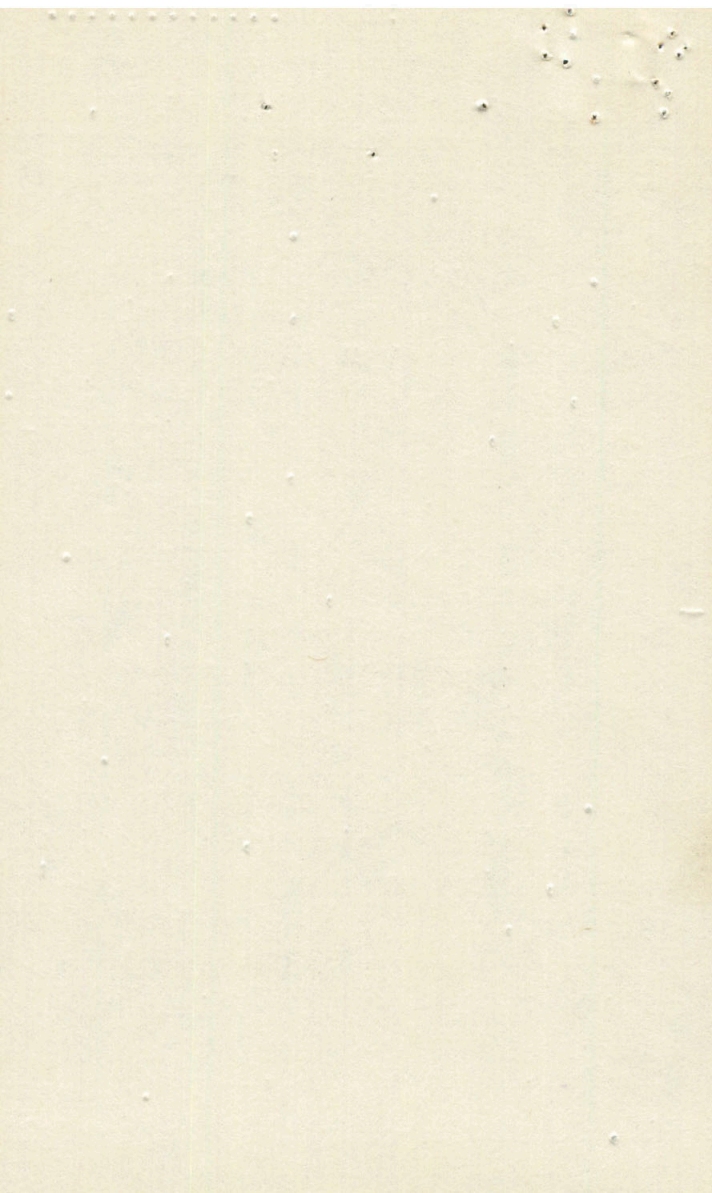


1. Some think of the church as a "communion of the saints," a place of the godly, a community of the saved. It should always bear these meanings.

2. But even the "saved," the "saints," the "godly," are sinners, for at times even they choose wrong, although knowing the right. Sometimes, because of their reputation for goodness, they try to cover up their wrongs, and when found out are called hypocrits.

3 On the other hand, the sinner frankly chooses the wrong, and usually shows little interest in choosing the right unless it appeals to his self interest.

4. How can the church help the occasional sinner, the saintly person, live even nearer Christ's standard, and at the same time appeal to and help the frank and habitual sinner? Certainly the church should be attractive to and strive to help sinners. Jesus did. Can the church be successful?

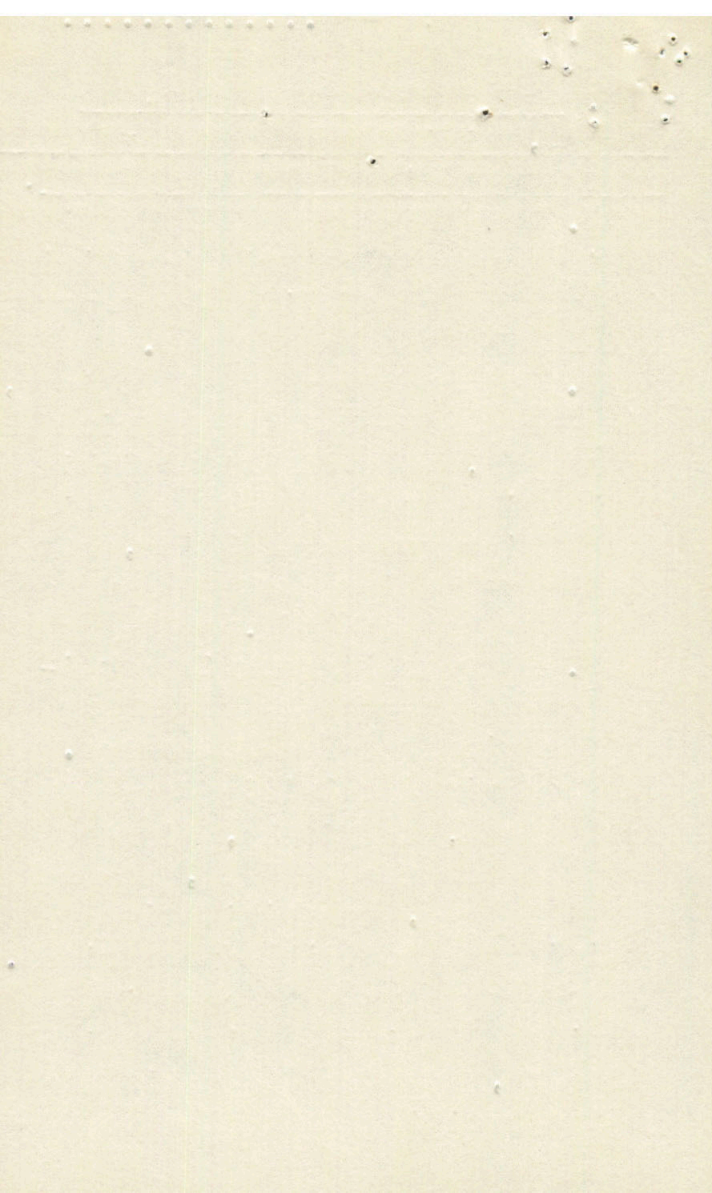


III. The church today can, for Christ, minister to and save many of the world's needy and sinful.

1. For those who daily strive to improve their christian living in every area of life the church should and can be of help.

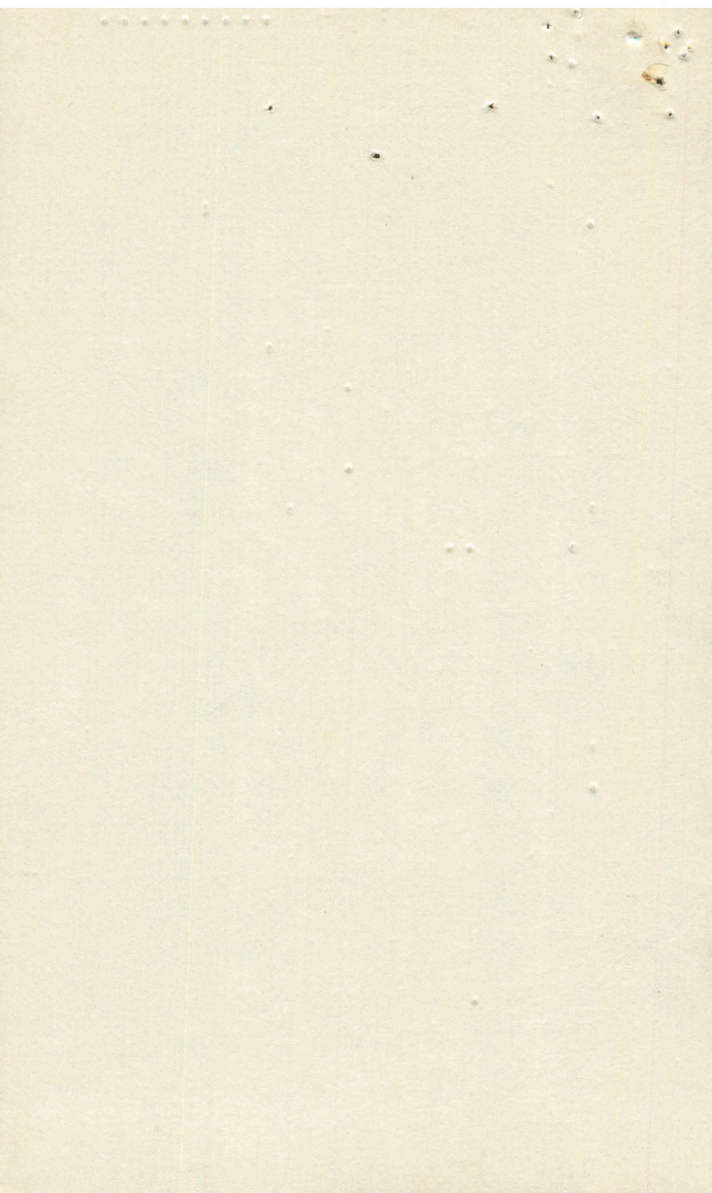
2. Its messages and teachings, like that of Jesus to the rich young man, should stir thinking by keeping you aware of the sins into which you are falling, but at the same time should show you a better way of life.

3. Through its service activities the church reaches many of the sinners of all classes. Such service activities are orphanages, hospitals, direct help to the needy (CROP), homes for the aged, rehabilitation activities (Goodwill Industries). The church shows a concern in helping alleviate man's physical ailments, and perhaps as it does so the recipient may also be



receptive to its message of Christ and his love for that person.

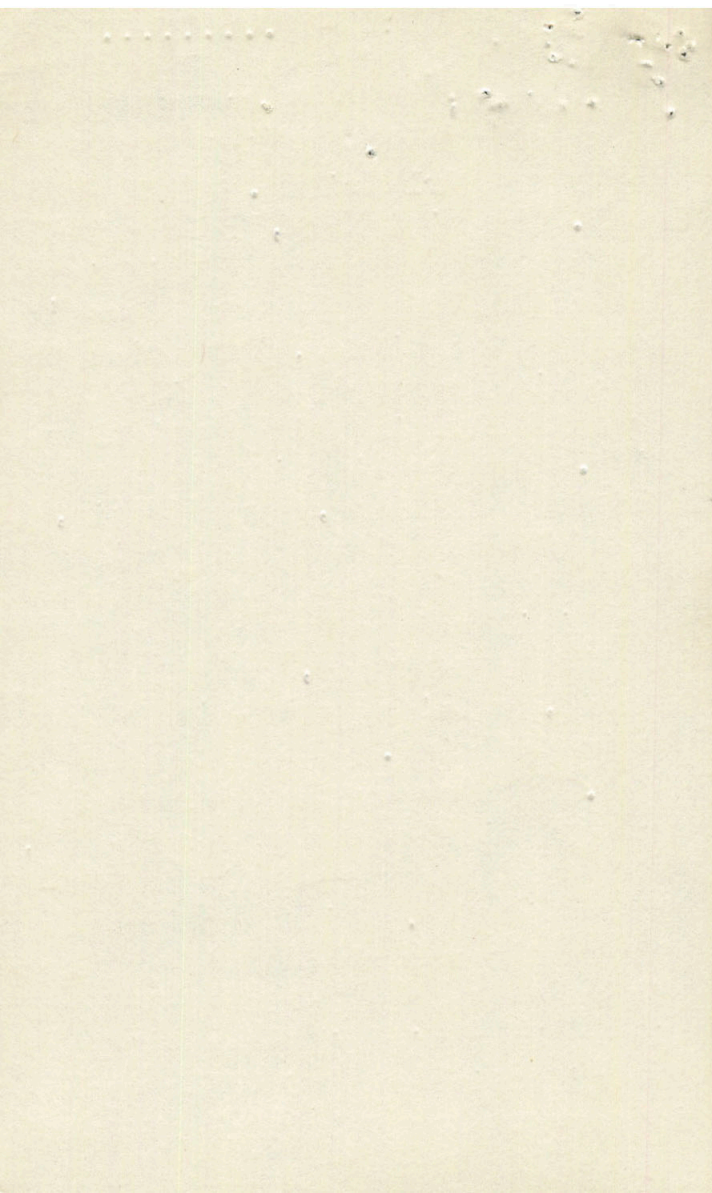
4. For those who don't need the welfare services of the church there are the fellowship activities to be shared by rich, poor and in-between alike. Many of these fellowship groups take on service projects. There is the WSCS, Methodist Men, Youth Fellowships, etc.. Many a fellow has first come in contact with the church through accepting an invitation to eat sausage and flapjacks, or some other hearty meal, with the fellows at Men's Club. Many a woman through the WSCS first realizes how much more attractive and fun is the fellowship of those who center their social activities in Christ and the Church. Many a youth finds his life attitudes changed by influences which are exerted on him through the youth programs of



the church; and was first attracted to that youth activity by a boy or girl friend.

5. The ministers, teachers and other consecrated Christian leadership of the church do not condemn the sinner, but tries to make him feel welcome while frankly shunning his particular vice. The realization that here are understanding, sympathetic, helpful and friendly folks is a wonderfully strong attraction to the disillusioned person ^{as compared with} the loud and jazzy, grasping sordid, outside world with which he is familiar.

6. The deeper the degree of wrong attitudes the person holds, the more engrossed he is in sinful attitudes. With such a person the warmth of the welcome given by the people of the church will make a big difference in the effectiveness of the church in serving the spiritual needs of



that man.

Conclusion:

1. We need to remember that Jesus said, in the words of our text, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

2. The church needs to feel as Jesus did, recognizing that, though all are sinners, there is a world of good ~~among~~ it may do among the more sinful classes of mankind.

3. Christianity, or the church, is for sinners.

4.

"He is a sinner," you are pleased to say.

Then love him for the sake of Christ, I pray.

If on His gracious words you place your trust,--

"I came to call the sinners, not the just,"--

Second His call; which if you will not do,

You'll be the greater sinner of the two.

--John Byrom 1692-1763.

Raelio Kuro, Shendai,
5/19/60