

# View

## Top 10 Ways to Tell if You Were Raised on the Pew

I found the following in an old copy of the View; it's not meant to make fun of anyone, but it does make a point about the cliches' and jargon we tend to embrace.

1. You know the 1st, 2nd, and 4th verses of nearly every song in the book.
2. You think it might be unscriptural to drain the baptistry.
3. You were 18 years old before you knew that "guideguardanddirectus" was not one word.
4. You've ever wondered what would happen if the preacher did not have a "ready recollection of the things that he studied."
5. You can't lead the prayer at the Lord's Supper table without stating that "separate and apart from the Lord's Supper we will now give as we have been prospered." (If you're on the East side of the Mississippi that could be remembered as "aside and apart from...")
6. You always wondered who Ebon Pinion was.
7. You have never been to a revival, but have attended lots of "Gospel Meetings."
8. You plan to be back at the church building "at the next appointed time."
9. You don't think of people as going home, but to their "places of abode" and you think of the sick as being on "beds of affliction" and those out of town on "roads of travel."
10. You've never seen anyone go to a Mourner's Bench, but have seen lots of people "go forward"; you've never "joined a church," but have "placed membership"; you stay out of "sanctuaries," but spend a lot of time in auditoriums.

### The church of Christ

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#### Services

Sunday Morning Assembly  
9:30 AM

Sunday Evening: 5:00 PM  
Wednesday Bible Study  
7:30 PM

Classes for all ages.  
Private classes arranged  
at your convenience.  
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## Clichés and Jargon

If you've been attending churches of Christ for as long as you remember, these statements ring all too true. Clearly, we have developed our own language and jargon, and we know it.

A few comments: Is it unscriptural to skip verses in a song or "drain the baptistry"? Of course not. Singing less than all the verses is strictly a matter of judgment. But sometimes the verses skipped and the ones left in are curious. For example, a song that is almost a verbatim quote of a passage should be sung in its entirety, it seems. And if the story of the song suffers by skipping verses, perhaps we shouldn't do it. Otherwise, it's the leader's choice.

Regarding draining the baptistry: this may sound cynical, but I'm aware of churches that seem to care very little about actually teaching the lost so they could use the baptistry. So, they might as well drain it. There, I said it.

"Ready recollection" is an interesting statement that I've heard men utter in public prayers from my youth. It has become more noticeable to me since I started preaching because it is sometimes being said about me before I get up to preach. I'll just go on record right here and say that any prayer offered for me before I get up to speak is welcome and appreciated. I need all the help I can get and if the request comes in the form of a cliché spoken from a sincere heart, so be it. There are times when I'm preaching when I desperately hope for a "ready recollection"!

Of course, that leads us to a subject that crops up in the humorous sidebar article – the use of clichés or statements that have been repeated over and over by those leading prayer or heading the Lord's table. I've heard a few sermons that criticize such clichés and even preached one myself one time. A friend of mine in Huntington Beach taught me a lesson though. After I preached the sermon on clichés in prayers, I was standing in the back minding my own business, waiting to be dismissed. The

friend was making some announcements and finished up by saying, "Since David preached this fine sermon on public prayer and what we shouldn't say, we'll let him illustrate how it's to be done – David, would lead our closing prayer please?" Surprised, I mustered all the strength I could find to keep from uttering even one phrase that sounded the least bit like a cliché. It was all I could do to keep from saying, "bring us back at the next appointed time."

Lesson learned. Clichés are OK if they come from a good heart. We fall back on them sometimes when we are nervous or when the words just don't flow like we wish they would. They are not, necessarily, what Jesus was talking about when He commanded us to avoid "vain repetition" (Mt. 6:7-8). The repetition Jesus was talking about was a kind of formula prayer, with the aim that if you said the magic words, your prayer would be heard and answered. It was *vain* repetition that Jesus criticized, not just repetition.

Finally, there is reference to the hymn, "Night with Ebon Pinion" and the question about what "ebon pinion" actually means. As I recall, it means something like "black blackness" or "dark darkness"; maybe "blackety black" or "darkety dark" (ebon = "ebony"; get it?). Anyway, it emphasizes the particular darkness that shrouded the night of Jesus' arrest. Most children – if not adults – in churches of Christ sing songs that have terms that are like "ebon pinion" to them. Who hasn't thought, "bringing in the cheese" (instead of bringing in the sheaves) and wondered how on earth we are to raise our Ebenezers?

Parents should take note, perhaps, and spend a little time explaining some of our more common hymns to their children so they don't spend as much time in...well, "ebon pinion" as some of us have.