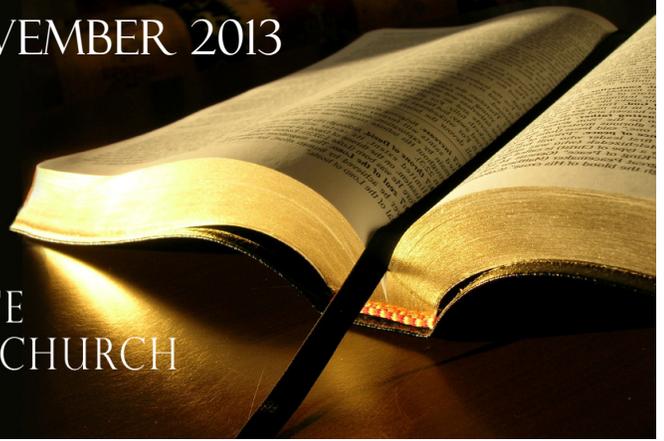


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# THE HERALD

OF THE ORRVILLE GRACE  
BRETHREN CHURCH



## 10 REASONS WHY ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE CHURCH IS UNPOPULAR

By Luke Gilkerson

A Barna Group telephone survey of Christians across the United States reveals some interesting facts about the state of accountability in the church: only 5% of people say their church does anything to hold them accountable for integrating biblical beliefs and principles into their lives.

For those who are held accountable by their church community in some way, the most common approach to accountability is through a small group. But even so, among those who attend a small group, only 7% say accountability is one of the functions of their group. So why the distaste for accountability in the church? There could be, of course, many reasons why formal accountability is uncommon. But as I survey the landscape, these are the reasons I see.

### 1. People hate conflict.

The Barna Group states church leaders don't often engage in accountability (either through following up on member's tasks, home visits, or church discipline) because they don't want to be

confrontational. The same is true among church members. Few people want to call out others on their sin. Pastor Ike adds:

*However, consider this: Jesus said, "If your brother sins, rebuke him..." (Luke 17:3). This is a command. Moreover, what does "pastor" mean? It means "shepherd, overseer." Watching over the flock is a pastor's responsibility (Acts 20:28-30; Hebrews 13:17).*

### 2. Christians do not understand that sanctification is a community project.

Many texts in the Bible assume or state outright that one of the ways we grow as Christians is through gospel-centered conversation with one another. The New Testament places great importance on motivating one another to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24-25), bearing each other's burdens (Galatians 6:1-2), and instructing one another (Romans 15:14). Many Christians are never taught that sanctification is a community project.

### 3. People like their privacy.

Accountability is about confessing sin to one another, but few today like the idea of divulging their temptations, sins, and the state of their heart. This is far too personal for some. Pastor Ike adds:

*Yet in a court of law, we are sworn to tell the truth under penalty of law and tell what we know even if it is self-incriminating. Does a hu-*

*man court of law hold more authority than God? Does civil or criminal law hold more authority than the word of God?*

#### **4. Christians are not taught (seriously) about biblical accountability.**

James 5:16 is not a suggestion but a command. “Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.” Moreover, this is a command tied to our health as Christians. In this text, James mentions cases where personal sin leads to a serious physical or emotional illness; calling for the elders of the church to administer healing. Before we get to that point, however, we should be in the practice of the regular “preventative medicine” of confessing our sins to each other and praying for each other.

#### **5. Christians falsely believe accountability is only for behavior modification.**

Some reject the idea of accountability because they believe it is all about fear or shame-based change. Accountability for them is about staying away from certain taboo sins so they can avoid an awkward conversation in the future. But the Bible says there’s a kind of conversation we can have that actually addresses the heart - not just outward behavior (Hebrews 3:13).

#### **6. Some Christians have experienced unhelpful accountability.**

For some Christians, their accountability partners and groups simply did not “work” for them. They experienced no change. But what if we used this exercise for anything in which we engage: listening to sermons, praying together, taking communion, engaging in service projects? We don’t give up on any of these things because at times they don’t seem to “work.” Rather, each time we strive to do them better, with a true heart, and with careful thought.

#### **7. Christians falsely believe accountability in the church is only a crutch for when things get really bad.**

Often, we seek out accountability when things have come to a head in our lives; when we are facing a grave consequence. But the various “one anothers” of the New Testament are not just for those facing specific consequences for their sin; but for all Christians at all times.

#### **8. Christians are not disciplined.**

Accountability makes most sense in a context of discipleship: being personally mentored, guided, and directed by spiritually mature individuals; and in the context of a community of disciples (Titus 2 for example). In a church culture that makes true disciples, accountability is the most natural thing in the world.

#### **9. Christians lack quality friendships.**

Accountability is also most natural in a gospel-centered friendship. We need the kind of friends mentioned in Proverbs: men and women who stick with us through thick and thin; who aren’t afraid to confront us, and who compel us to do what is right. Accountability is not only giving an account of my sin to another, but receiving an account of God’s grace in return from a Christian friend.

#### **10. Christians have not tasted gospel-centered accountability in the church.**

The gospel of Jesus Christ is what guides and protects good accountability. Informed by the gospel, a good accountability partner will not be condemning, but gracious. Informed by the gospel, a good accountability partner will treat sin seriously because Christ took it seriously. A good accountability partner will use eternal promises of the gospel to motivate us to a higher standard. As Christians, we need to be taught how to do this well. Pastor Ike adds:

*Who is discipling you? Who are you discipling?*

# Wayumi Missions Retreat

February 28-March 1

held at New Tribes Mission in Jersey Shore, PA

**Trip organized by Josh Miller  
and Pastor Chris Knight**

Wayumi is a program that is run and operated by New Tribes Mission personnel for the purpose of exposing people of all ages to the work of reaching tribal people that have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. This weekend retreat experience is designed to give you a bird's eye view of the unreached people of the world. You will hear about what God is doing today to minister to unreached people groups through His Church; what missionaries experience as they teach unreached people groups; the major challenges of cross-cultural ministry – culture and language and all of the ministries involved in taking the Gospel to isolated people groups.

I personally had the chance to spend a week at the New Tribes campus and participate in the Wayumi program. I thoroughly enjoyed my time there. The staff members are all extremely helpful and informative; the classes are infused with stories from the mission field and you get a chance to experience what it would be like trying to communicate with a tribal person for the first time knowing none of their language.

- Josh Miller

If you are interested in attending the retreat please talk to Josh Miller

**Retreat is for  
ALL ages**

Children under the age of 13 must come with their parents

**\$69 per person**

(cost includes lodging and 6 meals)  
plus travel fee for those coming from Ohio

# Funnies

## Theology - Kid Style #2

Dear God ... In bible times, did they really talk that fancy? - Jennifer

◆◆

Dear God ... How come you did all those miracles in the old days and don't do any now? - Billy

◆◆

Dear God ... Please send Dennis Clark to a different summer camp this year. - Peter

◆◆

Dear God ... Maybe Cain and Abel would not kill each other so much if they each had their own rooms. It works out OK with me and my brother. - Larry

◆◆

Dear God ... I keep waiting for spring, but it never did come yet. What's up? Don't forget. - Mark

◆◆

Dear God ... If you watch in Church on Sunday, I will show you my new shoes.- Barbara

◆◆

Dear God ... I am doing the best I can. Really. - Frank

◆◆

Dear God ... My brother told me about how you are born, but it just doesn't sound right. What do you say? - Marsha

◆◆

Dear God ... Is Reverend Coe a friend of yours or do you just know him through the business?

- Donny

◆◆

Dear God ... I do not think anybody could be a better God than you. Well, I just want you to know that. I am not just saying that because you are already God. - Charles

◆◆

Dear God ... It is great the way you always get the stars in the right place. Why can't you do that with the moon? - Jeff

# Pastor's Appreciation Notes from OGBC Kids

## Pastor Ike

Pastor Ike, Thank you for being my pastor. - Hunter

Pastor Ike, I like your sermons. Thank you for visiting my mom at the hospital. I like to stay for lunch and I wish I could more. Thank you for being my pastor.  
- Daniel

Pastor Ike, Thank you for teaching me about God and helping me to learn about the Lord. - Jeremiah

Pastor Ike, Thank you so much for being our pastor. I like the way you preach. I love you. - Ashley

Pastor Ike, You are so kind and nice and very good to me. Thank you for being my pastor. I like your prayers. I hope you like my pictures. Thank you for being my pastor. - Belle

Pastor Ike, Thanks for teaching us about the Word of God and Jesus Christ. - Leia

Pastor Ike, I like your prayers and preaching. You are cool. You came to my house one day. You spend time with Kayli at my house. Please pray for Kayli, she is sick and has to be at the hospital. - Luke

Pastor Ike, God Loves You. - Capri

Pastor Ike, Thank you for being my pastor. Thank you for teaching me the Bible. - Kendra

Pastor Ike, Thanks for being my pastor. - Kira

Pastor Ike, Thank you for being a good pastor and for teaching the Bible to me. - Aubry

Pastor Ike, Thank you for teaching me about Jesus and helping me. - Ben David

Pastor Ike, Thank you for teaching us about Jesus, you tell so many good stories about Jesus. Thank you so much!  
- Unsigned

## Pastor Del

Pastor Del, Thank you for leading the songs. Thank you for teaching me the Bible. - Kendra

Pastor Del, Thank you for being kind and nice. I like you a lot. You are generous. I like the way you do the music. I like your wife, she brings Smarties to church. Thank you for being my pastor. - Belle

Pastor Del, I like the way you sing. I love you!  
- Ashley

Pastor Del, Thank you for teaching me the Bible.  
- Aubry

Pastor Del, I like when you sing. I would want to know if you pick the songs? Thank you for being a good pastor. Please tell Grace thank you for the Smarties for me. - Daniel

Pastor Del, God loves you. - Capri

Pastor Del, Thanks for being my Pastor!! - Hunter

Pastor Del, I like your songs. Thank you for having me over to your house. You are nice. I like your cats. Thank you for letting me play with the cats sometimes. I like to toss wood in the chute. - Luke

Pastor Del, Thanks for being an awesome Pastor!!!  
- Autumn

Pastor Del, Thanks for being my Pastor!! - Kira