

“Church of Hearts: Can You Feel the Love?”

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□ Two Theories

- The Church as a Field
- The Church as a Force

□ One Teaching

- Matthew 13:1-3
- Matthew 13:24-30
- Matthew 13:36-43
 - It is not the mission of the Church to weed the field—it is the mission of the Church to love the field.
 - Matthew 13:47-50
- Ellen White: “[Christ] has not committed to us the work of judging character and motive. He knows our nature too well to entrust this work to us. Should we try to uproot from the church those whom we suppose to be spurious [fake] Christians, we should be sure to make mistakes. Often we regard as hopeless subjects the very ones whom Christ is drawing to Himself.” (*Christ’s Object Lessons* 71-72)
- “Were we to deal with these souls according to our imperfect judgment, it would perhaps extinguish their last hope. Many who think themselves Christians will at last be found wanting. Many will be in heaven who their neighbors supposed would never enter there. Man judges from appearance, but God judges the heart.” (72)
- Jerry Cook: “The minimal guarantee we must make to people is that they will be loved—always, under every circumstance, with no exception. The second guarantee is that they will be totally accepted, without reservation. The third thing we must guarantee is that no matter how miserably they fail or how blatantly they sin, unreserved forgiveness is theirs for the asking with no bitter taste left in anybody’s mouth. . . . A church that can make that commitment to every person is a church that’s learning to love and a church that will be a force for God.” (*Love, Acceptance, and Forgiveness* 11, 13)
- Clare De Graaf’s *The 10-Second Rule*— “Just do the next thing you’re reasonably certain Jesus wants you to do—and do it within the next ten seconds.”

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□ A Pledge

I make this commitment to you, _____. I will love you—always, under every circumstance, with no exception. I will accept you—totally and without reservation. And no matter how miserably you fail or how blatantly you sin, I offer unreserved forgiveness to you for the asking. I choose to love you as Jesus loves me.
