



THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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The church of Christ is not a denomination founded by man nor a part of any religious organization founded by man. It originated in Heaven in the mind of God and was set up on earth in the city of Jerusalem on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Lord (Ephesians 3:8-11; Acts 2). Instead of working with denominations, members of the church of Christ plead that all believers in Jesus Christ heed His prayer for unity and become one in His blood-bought body, the church (John 17:20-21; Ephesians 4:4-6; Acts 20:28).

The foundation of the church of Christ is Jesus Christ Himself (1 Corinthians 3:11). A building is only as strong as its foundation. The same is true of a church. If a church is built upon a man or a human creed, it will fall. Only Jesus Christ has a right to build a church for He alone is "the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matthew 16:13-19).

The belief or creed of the church of Christ is based upon the great truth that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Just before Jesus returned to Heaven, He commanded His apostles to "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19-20). Apostles and evangelists of the first century, under the direction of the Holy Ghost, wrote the teachings of Jesus. This we have in the New Testament. We have no other law, guide, or standard of authority. This is truly a creed that needs no revision. It is perfectly suited to the changing conditions of man in all countries, cultures, and climates of the world in all the centuries until Jesus comes again! (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

The designations used by the church of Christ are only those which are found in the New Testament for the church and its members. In Acts 11:26 we read that the

"disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Members of the church honor Christ by wearing this divinely given name. In Romans 16:16 we read: "The churches of Christ salute you." Christ said, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). The name "church of Christ" simply means that the church belongs to Christ for He is its purchaser and builder. Salvation is found only in the name of Christ (Acts 4:11,12).

The worship of the church of Christ is plainly given in the New Testament. Jesus said: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). The day Christians worship is Sunday, the first day of the week, the "Lord's Day" (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Revelation 1:10). The acts of worship which are specified by God are: singing, preaching, praying, giving, and the Lord's Supper (Colossians 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Acts 20:7; 2 Timothy 4:2; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

The music of the church of Christ is singing. This is the only kind of music which is authorized by God in His word for the worship of His church (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19). Singing is commanded of all Christians, not just a favored few. Choirs, quartets, solos, and choral groups are not mentioned in the New Testament. Therefore there is no authority for such! Instruments of music such as pianos, organs, drums, guitars, etc. are not mentioned in the New Testament either. To use such is to go beyond what God has written. It is sinful! (2 John 9-11; Revelation 22:18,19).

The finances of the church of Christ are free-will offerings of the members as God has prospered them. They are given upon the first day of the week when the Christians meet to worship (1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:7). They are to be used for the work of the church in preaching the gospel of Christ and helping the needy (Mark 16:15; 2 Timothy 2:2; Galatians 6:10). Other means of raising money for the work of the church such as garage sales, auctions, suppers, festivals, taxes, and tithes are not commanded in the New Testament. Therefore, they are done without the authority of Christ (2 John 9-11).

The organization of the church of Christ follows the simple pattern given in the New Testament. Jesus Christ is the only Head of the church (Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18). The headquarters of the church of Christ is in Heaven where the Head, Jesus Christ, is (Acts 1:9-11; 2:30-33). Christians in each community meet together to worship and serve God (Acts 20:6,7; 1 Corinthians 1:1,2). Each one of these congregations is a "church of Christ" and as a whole are "churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16). Each local church of Christ is self-governing under Jesus Christ, the Head. They are led by men known variously as "elders" (Acts 14:23), "bishops" (Philippians 1:1), or "pastors" (Ephesians 4:11). These different designations all

refer to the same office (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5,7; 1 Peter 5:1-4). These leaders must have all the qualifications given by God before they can serve in the eldership (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Deacons are servants of the church (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-13) who also must be qualified before they can serve. Evangelists are preachers of the gospel (2 Timothy 4:1-5). They may serve local churches under their elders or carry the gospel into new areas (1 Timothy 1:3; Acts 8:5-40; 21:8,9).

The membership of the church of Christ is made up of all those who hear the gospel of Christ, believe in Jesus Christ, God's Son, repent of all their past sins, confess that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God, and are baptized (buried) in water for the remission of sins (Romans 10:17; John 8:24; Acts 17:30, 31; Acts 8:37; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:4). Members who remain faithful unto death will receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10; Galatians 6:7-9).

The Bible speaks of but one church, the church of Christ (Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:18). Christ has promised to save His church at the Last Day (Ephesians 5:23). No salvation is promised to those out of Christ but instead they "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Why not become a member of the church of Christ today so that you may have eternal life?