

THE LORD'S CHURCH IS DIFFERENT

Via "the "TRUTH IN LOVE" Publication

Do you ever ask, "In what direction must I go to find eternal bliss?" Since eternity is forever, it is the most important thing in the world for us ...to do the will of God. These thoughts are intended to point you to the Bible. Where we are told what we must do to inherit eternal life.

Twenty-first century technology is noted for its change. Each day, it seems, we have new and better ways of communication, production, transportation, etc. But in this changing world, we still find that life, even at its best, is full of trouble. And, a basic fact still faces us; *"it is appointed to man once to die; then the judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27).

It is our purpose and plea to urge all men to go back to the Bible. We seek to speak where the Bible speaks and to remain silent where the Bible is silent (1 Peter 4:11). The time that you use in reading these thoughts could conceivably enhance your hope of eternity in heaven.

You can be just a Christian without being a part of any denomination. In these days of many sects and conflicting teachings is it not marvelous that one can be a Christian, a member of the Lord's church, therefore saved from his past; yet not a member of any party or sect? There can be no doubt that all Christians of the first century were members of the Lord's church (Acts 2:47). Yet, they were members of no denomination for none existed. Peter, Paul and all Christians belonged to the church; yet they belonged to no denomination. Question: "Why should any person claiming to be a Christian belong to a denomination today?"

The Lord's Church Is Udenominational

People have become so accustomed to thinking of the church in terms of denominationalism that, in the minds of some, it is almost impossible to disassociate the church of the Lord from denominationalism. Yet, when we read of the Lord's church in the New Testament, very few, if any, think it is a denomination. I use the word denomination in the sense in which it is used in religion to refer to a sect or party.

The world has a right and certainly a need to know wherein the Lord's church is different.

Neither Catholic nor Protestant

Churches of Christ have a distinctive plea. The plea is: be neither Catholic nor Protestant but a simple Christian. First century disciples were neither Catholic nor Protestants for none existed and did not until hundreds of years later. A person can be an American without joining any political party (Democrat, Republican, etc.). Even so, one can be a Christian without joining any sect. In our day many think of the word "church" as synonymous with the word "denomination." It is extremely difficult to get people to see that they can be Christians without being a part of any sect. In our country alone there are over 300 sects; but the church of Christ is not a sect. Paul, though a member of the Lord's church, denied that it was a sect (Acts 24:5, 13-14).

The Lord's Church Superior to Denominations

The church for which our Lord gave His blood is far superior to any and/or all denominations. All denominations have been started by human rather than by Divine authority.

It is a fact, both from the Bible and history, that the church of Christ was established and existed in the world for several centuries before Catholicism or Protestantism were known, and before the followers of Christ divided into various denominations (Acts 2:22-47; Rom. 16:16).

Preaching the same gospel and urging obedience to the same conditions of salvation will reproduce the church of Christ in any given community today. The seed of the kingdom is the Word of God (Luke 8:11). The good soil is the "honest and good heart" (Luke 8:15). When the Word of God was planted in the first century, it produced Christians (Acts 11:26; 26:28), and churches of Christ (Rom. 16:16). Since seed always produce after its kind (Genesis 1:11-12; Galatians 6:7-8), it will produce in this century what it produced in the first century. If not, why not?

There Is One Church

First, may we show you that there was one and ONLY one church in the first century? The New Testament, of course, will be the standard to which we must turn for our evidence.

The word "church" comes from the Greek word "ekklesia" and simply means the "called out." The church of the New Testament was composed of people – people who were called out of darkness, by the gospel, into the light of the Son of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Colossians 1:13). Such a group of "called out" people in any community was called the "church" in that community. Therefore we read of "the church, which was in Jerusalem" (Acts 11:22). We also read of the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:2), and the church at Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 1:1).

The congregations were spoken of as "churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16), "the churches of Judea" (Galatians 1:22), "The churches of Macedonia" (2 Corinthians 8:1), and "the churches of Galatia" (Galatians 1:2). The plural form "churches" is never used except in reference to a number of local congregations in some section of the country.

When Paul wrote to the church at Rome, he said, "The churches of Christ salute you" (Romans 16:16). In the area from which Paul was writing there were a number of congregations sending their greetings to the church in Rome. Hence, Paul said, "The churches of Christ salute you." It is a certain fact that if a number of congregations were called "Churches of Christ," each individual congregation would be "a" church of Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 1:2, Paul addresses, "the church of God which is at Corinth." He wrote to Timothy in reference to "the church of the living God" (1 Timothy 3:15).

These similar phrases are not proper names, but descriptive expressions, which show how the church is related to Christ and His Father.

Is One Church As Good As Another?

Perhaps no statement has been made more often by religious people than “one church is as good as another.” However, this is not true, for the Bible teaches that there is but one church. It is recorded, “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling” (Ephesians 4:4). This passage clearly states that “there is one body.”

In our day there are hundreds of conflicting religious bodies. It goes without saying that ONE body cannot mean hundreds of bodies.

What does the Bible mean by “one body”? In Ephesians 1:22-23 we read, “And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body.” Note, “...the church which is His body.” So the church is “the body,” and there is only ONE body.

Not only does Paul tell us that the church is the one body and that the body is the church (Colossians 1:18), he further declares, “But now are they many members, yet but one body” (1 Corinthians 12:20). Since there is but one body, then there is but one church of the New Testament.

Furthermore, when Jesus promised to build the church He said, “...upon this rock I will build my church” (Matthews 16:18). He promised to build only one – His church, and not churches! We know the Lord built only one because that is all He promised to build. Then if He built but one, somebody else must have built all the others. Who will say that a church some man built is as good as the one that the Lord built? That is what a person would be forced to say if he contends that one church is as good as another.

In Colossians 1:18 it is declared, “*And He is the head of the body, the church.*” Note it does not say: “He is the head of the bodies, the churches.” There are the same numbers of churches as there are bodies, and the same number of bodies as there is heads. How many heads? He is the head! That means just one head, doesn’t it? So there is one head, one body, and one church. And, since Jesus is the head of only one, somebody else must be the head of all others. Do you believe that a church of which some man is the head is as good as the church of which Jesus is the head?

Further, we read, “*Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it*” (Ephesians 5:25). The words, “the church” means but one. The pronoun “it” can refer to but one. So Christ loved one church; He died for one church; He built one church – the church we read about in the New Testament.

Salvation Is Within The Church

It is an admitted fact that salvation can be had outside manmade churches, but salvation is not offered apart from the Lord’s church. The fact that it is generally admitted by those who advocate denominationalism that a person can be saved outside the membership of their church proves the uselessness of such churches!

The Bible teaches that the true church is the family of God, the body of Christ, the kingdom of God (1 Timothy 3:15; Colossians 1:18; Colossians 1:13). No person could expect to be saved outside the family of God, the body of Christ, for Paul declared: “*But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him*” (1 Corinthians 12:18). And, the Lord sees to it that all the saved are in the church (Acts 2:47).

Through the cross, Christ reconciled men unto God “in one body” (Ephesians 2:13-16), and that “one body” is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; 1 Corinthians 12:20). To contend that the Lord’s church is not essential, since it was purchased with the blood of Christ, is to take the position that the blood of Christ is non-essential! If one can be saved outside of Christ’s church, then one is forced to the position that Christ’s death was useless. Any doctrine, which minimizes and belittles the death of Christ, is false doctrine. Therefore, the doctrine that salvation can be enjoyed outside of the Lord’s church is false doctrine.

Popular statements relative to the church are: “We want people to be saved, and then let them join the church of their choice” -or- “One church is as good as another; the church does not save you.” When a person makes those kind of statements he thinks of the church simply in terms of denominationalism and, therefore, in terms of the doctrine and commandments of men. If one has reference to being saved outside of any and/or all denominational churches that of course, is a different matter. It is true that one not only does not need to be in a denomination; in fact, he should stay out of all denominations. A very good question is: “Can a person be saved in a denomination?” There is no doubt that a person can be saved outside of all of the Catholic and Protestant denominations, but the important question is: “Can a person be saved IN A DENOMINATION?” One cannot be saved outside of the Lord’s church (Acts 2:47), therefore, to be in the Lord’s church is essential to salvation; but one never reads of anybody during the first century being in any denomination. In fact, Paul denied that the Lord’s church was a sect, and denied that anyone could prove that it was (Acts 24:5, 13-14).

We must go deeper than emotional appeal if we would penetrate to the full significance of the question, “Can people be saved outside of the Lord’s Church?”

Let’s consider the question from another angle, (1) If a person can be saved outside the Lord’s church as well as in it, that is equivalent to saying that he can be saved without the blood of Christ; for the Lord gave His blood to purchase the church and therefore only in the church does the blood save (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25). When one contends that he can be saved outside of the Lord’s church, he is saying that he has absolutely no need for the blood of Christ. (2) The Bible teaches that the church and the kingdom are the same institution (the disciples were to partake of the Lord’s Supper in His kingdom in Luke 22:18-19), but we learn that they did this in the church (1 Corinthians 11:2; 11:18-34); therefore, the church and the kingdom are one and the same institution! If a person could be saved outside of the church, that would mean he could be saved outside of the kingdom of God; that is he would be saved without submitting to God. But since there are but two kingdoms on earth –i.e., the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, it follows that if a man can be saved outside of the church, he can be saved in the kingdom of Satan, and that would deny plain Bible teaching. (3) The New Testament teaches that the church of Christ is the family of God (1 Timothy 3:15). If a man can be saved outside the family (or church) of God that would be equivalent to saying that one can be saved in the devil’s family. There are only two families on earth. Question: Where is salvation? Is it in the Lord’s family (the church) or in the devil’s family?” Another question: “Does God have any children outside of His family? Can a man be saved while yet in the family of Satan?” Every honest person must deal with these questions when they are reaching a conclusion as to the necessity of membership in the Lord’s church.

Does The Church Save You?

The statement has been made many times that “the church does not save you.” Of course, we know that the church is not the savior. Jesus is the Savior (Matthew 1:21); but Jesus saves the church (Ephesians 5:23), and the saved are in the church (Acts 2:47). You can see that the statement “the church is not necessary to salvation,” when applied to the Lord’s church, is false.

We read, “*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and He is the savior of the body*” (Ephesians 5:23). If you will read the verses that follow in this chapter of Scripture, you will readily see the term “body” refers to the church. So Christ is the Savior of the church. This statement could not be true if men are saved out of the church, and before they enter the church. If such were true, then Christ would be the Savior of men out of the church, and therefore, while in the world, but not the Savior of men in the church. Yet, Paul says that Christ is the Savior of the church.

If the Lord saves people out of the church, every person who goes into the church would be saved before he enters. We know that this is definitely not true, for Ephesians 5:23 shows us that the Lord saves those who enter the church – not those on the outside! While the church is not the savior, it is the saved! Men must be in the church in order to be saved (Acts 2:47; Ephesians 5:23). Their membership in the Lord’s church is an absolute necessity in order to be saved.

The Lord’s Church Is Different

In Terms Of Entrance

Surely no one would doubt the right of Christ to make the terms of admission into the church, since the church belongs to Him and all authority is given to Him. Hence, our interest should be; what does He require? He is the door, and we must enter in harmony with His will.

Faith Is Required

Jesus said, “*If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*” (John 8:24). He also said, “*He that believeth not shall be damned*” (Mark 16:16). We must believe, for “*without faith it is impossible to please him*” (Hebrews 11:6). Faith is the first step toward righteousness (Romans 10:10), and, necessarily, the first step toward the church.

Repentance Is Commanded

Christ requires that we must “*repent*” or “*all likewise perish*” (Luke 13:3). Repentance is a change of will (Matthews 21:28-31) and leads to life (Acts 11:18). God “*now commands all men everywhere to repent*” (Acts 17:30).

Confession of Christ Is Necessary

Christ made the good confession before Pilate (1 Timothy 6:13). Peter made the good confession, which is, “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Mark 16:16). This caused Christ to pronounce a blessing upon him (Matthew 16:17). Christ has promised that “*Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven*” (Matthew 10:32). Confession with the mouth leads to salvation (Romans 10:32) and must, therefore, precede the saved state.

Baptism Is Necessary In Order To Be Saved

No one can be saved from his past sins until he has been baptized according to our Lord's statement in Mark 16:16. These were among our Lord's last instruction to His apostles before leaving the earth. Our Lord said, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."* Faith and baptism, in this passage, are joined by the coordinating conjunction and coordinate conjunctions join or unite elements of equal rank. Faith and baptism are thus joined in this sentence to obtain the same results –salvation. He that believeth (No. 1) and is baptized (No. 2) shall be saved (No. 3).

Paul taught that baptism is essential to salvation in Romans 6:3-4, *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."*

Note that the statement made by Paul is to the effect that men are baptized into Jesus Christ and that they also are baptized into His death.

If men can be saved without baptism, they can be saved out of Christ, because in this passage Paul declares that men are baptized into Christ. Can men be saved out of Christ? If men cannot be saved out of Christ, then they cannot be saved without baptism, because Paul says baptism puts people into Christ. Not only so, but we note that it was in the death of Christ that His blood was shed. We must, therefore, contact that blood in order to receive the benefits of His blood. Since the blood was shed in His death, we must reach the death of Christ in order to share its benefits. In Romans 6:3, it is affirmed that *"we are baptized into His death."* We reach the death of Jesus Christ when we are baptized, not before we are baptized; and thus reach His blood and the benefits of His blood at that point. Since we are baptized into the death of Christ, and thus into the blood of Christ, then baptism is essential to the forgiveness of sins which is made possible by the blood of the Son of God.

Also, this passage shows that we walk in the newness of life, or that the new life comes after baptism. Observe please, in Romans 6:4, *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."* Here is a burial and a resurrection. Paul tells us that, as Christ was raised from the dead, so we are raised to walk in newness of life.

The newness of life comes after baptism!

It is further seen that water baptism is essential to the salvation of the alien sinner from Galatians 3:26-27, *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."* Note that Paul points out two things:

- (1) We are children of God by faith
- (2) We are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Let us carefully study what Paul said. Paul, did you say, "We are children of God by faith" and stop with that? No. Did you say, "We are children of God by faith only"? No. Well, did you say, "We are children out of God by faith out of Christ?" No! What then, did you say?" "Ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

Friends, one must be in Christ Jesus in order to be saved. It is significant that the very next verse informs us how to get into Christ: *“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”* You will never learn how to get into Christ in any other way. You must be in Christ to be a child of God by faith. You can get into Christ ONLY by being baptized into Christ!

Please consider honestly the necessity of baptism from these standpoints.

1. Baptism stands between the sinner and the salvation of his soul (Mark 16:16).
2. Baptism stands between the sinner and remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
3. Baptism stands between the sinner and becoming a child of God (Galatians 3:26-27).
4. Baptism stands between the sinner and having his sins washed away (Acts 22:16).
5. Baptism stands between the sinner and getting into Christ (Romans 6:3).

Baptism Is A Burial

The word baptize comes from the Greek word “baptizo” and literally means “to dip, to immerse, to plunge.” Immersion was practiced by the church in apostolic times. Paul tells us that there is “one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5), and he informs us in Colossians 2:12 and Romans 6:4 that baptism is a “burial.” This was water baptism, for Christ promised that He would be with them as long as time continues in the practicing of the baptism that He commanded (Matthews 28:19-20). The only baptism the apostles and other Christians of the first century ever administered was water baptism (Acts 10:47-48; Acts 8:35-40).

The New Testament very clearly declares that baptism is a burial. History and statements from uninspired men (some of whom were founders of sects which practice sprinkling and pouring) with one voice admit that the New Testament teaches that baptism is a burial. These statements concur with the New Testament statements:

“And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, That the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:38-39).

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” Romans 6:3-4).

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5).

Numerous quotes from various church leaders (Wesley, Calvin, Luther, etc.) can be given of those who taught “baptism is nothing else than the word of God with immersion in water” (Luther, Christian Baptist volume).

The Worship of the Church Of Christ Is Different

We cannot have just anything in our worship and still please God. The component parts of worship are stated by Christ in John 4:24. They involve:

1. Worshiping the right object—God.
2. Worshiping with the right attitude—in Spirit.

3. And, worshiping according to the will of the Lord—in truth (John 17:17). We are instructed how to worship after the church was established on the day of Pentecost.

The early church taught in worship (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7).

Prayer is another item of worship in the Lord's church (Acts 2:42). Christians are to "continue in prayer" (Colossians 4:2) and to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). Prayer is to be addressed to God, not Mary or some saint: and prayers are to be prayed in the name of Christ (Eph. 5:20).

The congregations in the days of the apostles gave their contribution as the Lord had prospered them, on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). This was a free-will offering. Though many Christians gave more than 10%, yet the tithe is not bound upon the church of the New Testament. The New Testament church is not bound by the Old Testament law of tithing (Hebrews 7:12).

The Lord's church does not resort to raffling contest, social and other such methods of raising money for the church. Such was not done by the congregations under the direction of inspired men of the first century, and those who do such things today are not identical to congregations of the first century.

The church of the first century sang songs, hymns and spiritual songs as an act of worship (Ephesians 5:19; Col. 3:16). We read in Hebrews 2:12, "*Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.*" Nowhere are Christians authorized "in the midst of the church will I sing and play praise unto thee."

The early Christians were limited in their making of music to vocal music—that is, to singing. They did not use organs, pianos, banjos, guitars or other mechanical instruments in their praise to God. They sang—they did not play. Any church today that employs such mechanical instruments in its worship is not identical to the New Testament church.

The early church also partook of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Let us observe:

Jesus commanded His disciples to partake of the supper (Matthew 26:26-28; Luke 22:19). Paul mentioned the same thing in 1 Corinthians 11:24-25. It is therefore clearly revealed that the Lord commanded His people to eat of His supper. The disciples ate the Lord's supper when they assembled (1 Corinthians 11:20). Christians came together for the purpose of eating the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:33). Acts 20:7 clearly states, "*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them...*" No one can scripturally partake of the Lord's Supper on any day other than the first day of the week.

The early church partook of the Lord's Supper on a weekly basis upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Since every week has a first day in it, this means that they ate the Lord's Supper every first day of the week. This makes the Lord's Supper a weekly observance. I ask you, my readers, the following questions:

1. Do you partake of the Lord's Supper?
2. At what time do you partake?

3. How often do you partake?
4. Upon what Scripture do you base your practice?

The Church Of Christ Has a Different Creed

The church of Christ has no human creed. We are bound by no uninspired men's statements, or system of statements, as our rule in religion. Church manuals, Confessions of Faith, Disciplines, Articles of Religion, and all creed formulated by men are rejected. The Word of God alone—we accept as our standard.

The Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Peter 1:21; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). It contains all necessary information for our salvation and is perfect (2 Peter 1:3; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Why would any one desire any other standard in religion?

It is the aim of the church of Christ to speak "*as the oracles of God*" (1 Peter 4:11).

The Church Of Christ Is Scriptural In Organization

The church of Christ is scriptural in organization. Following the New Testament pattern each congregation is autonomous. There is no council, association, conference, synod or any other unscriptural body to dictate to the congregations.

Jesus Christ is the only head of His church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18). He has all authority in heaven and on earth. Popes and all clerical hierarchy, which presume to head the church on earth, fall under condemnation (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 5:23; Acts 3:23).

In each congregation when men can meet the qualifications from among the members elders are to be appointed. These men are charged with the oversight of the flock (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

The jurisdiction of elders does not extend beyond their home congregation. Modern ecclesiastical machinery finds no support in the New Testament. It rests upon the doctrine and precepts of men, and all such religion is vain (Matthew 15:7-9).

Claiming To Be a Church Of Christ Is Not Enough

When they follow the Bible, churches of Christ are the same all over the world. However, when you find a congregation claiming to be a church of Christ but using instrumental music in their worship, it is not to the teachings of the New Testament. John affirms that those who go beyond the doctrine of Christ have not God (2 John 9-11). He also affirms that those who bid "God speed" to those thus transgressing are also "partakers" of their "evil deeds."

The goal of every true congregation of Christ is to follow the New Testament completely in name, unity, practice, membership, worship, organization, and mission. Following the New Testament pattern completely is that which makes the church of Christ different. Members of the Church of Christ make no claim of being right, except as they follow the Bible!

A Final Plea

The aim of true churches of Christ throughout the world is to restore Christianity as it was in the first century A. D. Our distinctive plea is for Christianity in its primitive purity--free from human names, creeds, and traditions.

During the days of the apostles, the Lord's church existed as one united body, following the Divine pattern as revealed by the apostles (Matthew 28:20; Acts 4:32). The "seed" or Word of God (Luke 8:11) was scattered far and wide, and wherever honest hearts received the Word the fruit was the same—just Christians. There was no such thing as "different kinds" of Christians for denominations were unknown.

In a divided religious world the plea of true churches of Christ everywhere is for a complete restoration of the Lord's church. We plea for people to go back over all the dark ages of corruption, to discard man-made names, creeds, doctrines, and commandments of men in the plan of salvation and worship, and barriers of every kind which divide men, and restore the Lord's church as it was in the beginning. This is the only way that true religious unity can be obtained!

If you are desirous of finding the church that Jesus built (Matthew 16:18), how would you identify it? Here are some distinctive features: It claims Jesus Christ as its only head (Ephesians 1:22-23); it wears His name and repudiates human names (1 Corinthians 1:10-13; Romans 16:16; Acts 11:26; 1 Pet. 4:16). It is governed by New Testament teaching and has no man-made creed or discipline (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Peter 4:11; Heb. 9:15-17). The Lord adds people to His church (Acts 2:47) as they are saved by obeying the gospel (2 Thess. 1:7-9). Obedience to the gospel consists in believing (Mark 16:16), repenting (Acts 3:19), confessing Christ as the Son of God (Acts 8:37), and being immersed for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

The worship of the church consists of singing (Colossians 3:16-17), prayers (Acts 2:42), teaching (Acts 2:42), the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7), and giving (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

The work of the church consist in helping the needy (James 1:27), self-edification by the Word (Ephesians 4:12), and preaching the gospel to all the world (Mark 16:15-16). Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for it (Ephesians 5:25).

We plead with all to follow the Scriptures—to accept the evidence which proves that the God of the Bible exists, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that truth is both absolute and attainable, that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and the Bible is an objective body of truth. Therefore, we accept and urge all people to accept the Bible as our only rule of faith and practice (1 Peter 4:11; Phil 4:16).

We plead for the restoration of New Testament Christianity, and every honest and accountable person can be a part of this great Bible plan (1 Thessalonians 5:21). The Bible makes Christians only, therefore, the only Christians.

The mission of the church in the twenty-first century is the same as it was in the first century—to take His saving gospel to a lost and dying world that they may obey the gospel, and thus the Lord will add them to the church, wherein is salvation (Acts 2:38-41, 47; Ephesians 5:23).

The material contained in this writing was written by Garland Elkins (of Memphis, TN). He is an evangelist of almost 60 years, author, and dean of Memphis School of Preaching.

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The aim of true churches of Christ throughout the world is to restore Christianity as it was in the first century A. D. Our distinctive plea is for Christianity in its primitive purity—free from human names, creeds, and traditions.



"Christ is the Light of the world, a beacon of Light"

My Website, www.geocities.com/dubbyt is link to: www.hartsellechurch.org, which is the Hartselle Church of Christ, Hartselle, AL, a link to, www.austinvillecoc.org which is the Website of Austinville Church of Christ, Decatur, AL, and a link to www.northcobbchurch.org, which is the Church of Christ at North Cobb, Kennesaw, GA. Please visit those Websites also—you will be blessed.