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2003

# Fulton County Gospel News

*Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World*

“... Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

Volume 37

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

December 2003

No. 12

## “CHURCHES OF CHRIST BELIEVE THEY ARE THE ONLY CHURCH WITH A SCRIPTURAL NAME”

### Criticisms About the Church of Christ

#### Part Three

By Ted J. Clarke

#### REVIEW

Two previous lessons discussed criticisms about members of churches of Christ wanting to argue about religion and whether or not only members of Christ's church will be saved. You may have these lessons by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to the address in the box on page two.

Our desire is to be sensitive enough to investigate every sincere criticism leveled against the church, but we also intend to defend what we can show the Scriptures to teach on these matters. We can only ask that you investigate the Bible verses we present with an honest and open heart.

### IS “CHURCH OF CHRIST” A SCRIPTURAL NAME FOR THE CHURCH?

Who can doubt that it is? *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”* (Matthew 16:18). Jesus said, *“I will build my church,”* for it belongs to Him. He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Thus it is Christ's church, He paid the price, it is His possession! The church universal is the “church of Christ.” Individual congregations that fit the

pattern of the church in the New Testament (NT) are “churches of Christ.” When the apostle Paul was concluding his letter to the Lord's church in Rome, he said, *“The churches of Christ salute you”* (Romans 16:16). If a number of churches are “churches of Christ,” then a single church can be a church of Christ. Certainly, no one with any knowledge of and respect for the Scriptures will deny that “church of Christ” is indeed a valid Scriptural name for the church, whether the church universal or a local church.

### IS “CHURCH OF CHRIST” THE ONLY SCRIPTURAL NAME FOR THE CHURCH?

No, for there are other designations given to it in the Bible. Many times the church is identified by just that designation, “the church” (Acts 2:47; 5:11; 8:1 et al.). Of course, the understanding of what that simple phrase meant in NT times and to present day readers of the Bible is governed by its first use in Matthew 16:18. The word translated “church” in our English Bibles is from the Greek word *ekklesia* and refers to a group or assembly of people “called out” or “called together” for a specific purpose. The word *ekklesia* was used of the assembled mob of idol

worshippers who sought to persecute Christians in Ephesus (Acts 19:32, 39, 41). It is translated “assembly” in the King James Version.

However, because the word church (*ekklesia*) refers to a group called out or assembled it was used to refer to Christians, who were called out from the world and into the body of Christ, His church (Romans 1:6-7; Ephesians 1:21-23; 4:4-6). Thus, when the word “church” is used in the NT it always (except for Acts 7:38 in the KJV) referred to the church Jesus promised to build in Matthew 16:18. Remember that there were no denominations in the early years of the church, so to identify a group as “the church” would signify the NT church of Christ. With the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of denominational churches today such simple designations as “the church” can be deceiving, unless we know to what one refers.

The Bible speaks of *“the church of God”* in Acts 20:28, KJV; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:13; 1 Timothy 3:5). God the Father is the Author of the gospel plan of salvation that includes the church (Ephesians 3:10-11; 5:23). Additionally, **Christ is God** in the flesh and He paid the purchase price for the church (John 1:1-3, 14, 18; Acts 20:28). So the church can rightfully be called the “church of God,” whether referring to the Father or the Son.

There are a number of other designations given to the church. It is identified as the kingdom and the body (Matthew 16:18-19; Colossians 1:13, 18); the family of God

**FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS**  
 USPS Publication #211780

... is a Periodical publication issued monthly by the Church of Christ at Third and Bethel (P.O. Box 251), Mammoth Spring, AR 72554-0251. **POSTMASTER: Please mail all changes of address to the above address.**

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**FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS**  
 P.O. Box 251  
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TED J. CLARKE .....EDITOR  
 Phone .....(870) 625-3217  
 Fax .....(870) 625-3137  
 E-Mail .....cocfgn@ozarks.com

*Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"* (1 Corinthians 1:10-13). In these words the apostle Paul clearly condemns denominationalism and the practice of calling ourselves by the names of men. Martin Luther, John Wesley, nor any other man was crucified for us. Neither should we be baptized in the name of any man – **so why identify oneself religiously after the name of some man or woman?**

A right name does not mean necessarily the right church, but a wrong name is surely not the right church. If John Doe's wife's name is Jane Doe and she comes up missing, he will not begin looking for her by identifying her as Mary Doe or Jane Jones. There also may be 500 women with the name Jane Doe and John will have to resort to other marks of identification to find the only one that belongs to him. Likewise, when it comes to identifying the Lord's church there may be many different so-called churches that wear the right name, but they do not bear the other essential features of the bride of Christ, His church.

Only those congregations that belong to Christ, having been added to Him in His body, the church, have a right to identify themselves as being Christ's church or any other scriptural designation (Acts 2:47, KJV; 5:14; 11:24). Only those people who are in the body and obediently follow the Head of the body, Christ, can properly claim to be a part of the church He built and of which He is Savior (Ephesians 1:21-23; 3:21; 4:4-6; 5:23, 25). There is meaning to a name. Does the religious name you wear glorify God or Christ and the church that should wear their names? [To be continued]

*continued from page 1*

(Ephesians 3:15); house of God (1 Timothy 3:15); and bride of Christ (Romans 7:4; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 21:9), just to name a few. However, one thing you will notice is that no name or designation gives glory to any man or to a particular doctrine such as most denominational names do.

**WHY WEAR AN UNSCRIPTURAL DENOMINATIONAL NAME?**

I know this will hit hard and some people will write and say, "Take my name off your mailing list. I don't want to receive your paper any more." All I ask is for you to speak where the Bible speaks; to call Bible things by Bible names and to do Bible things in Bible ways; to have a "thus saith the Lord" for what you teach and practice.

What Bible verse authorizes anyone to wear a religious name like Lutherans or Wesleyans, which are the names of men? "*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our*

Furthermore, the designations of Baptist singles out the doctrine of baptism; Seventh-Day Adventists emphasizes the Old Testament sabbath and Christ's second coming; Presbyterian keys on a form of church government; Pentecostal exalts the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit; Methodist refers to those devoted to the methods of John Wesley for promoting spirituality; Roman Catholics follow different teachings than Greek Catholics; and on and on we could go. There is no scriptural justification for people identifying themselves by emphasis on particular doctrines for names of the church. Where is the glory to God or Christ in such practices? Let's call Bible things by Bible names!

**MORE THAN A SCRIPTURAL NAME IS NEEDED**

Truly, to be a NT church of the Lord a religious group must do more than have a Scriptural name. However, such a group **will** wear a biblical name if they intend to identify themselves as the church of the NT.

**WITHDRAWAL OF FELLOWSHIP**  
**Corrective Discipline in the New Testament**

(Part Three)  
 By Ted J. Clarke

**REVIEW**

We have already discussed some introductory matters regarding this important topic and asked and answered the question, "What was God's practice in the past?" This article deals with New Testament teaching of withdrawing fellowship from the disorderly.

## COMMANDS TO WITHDRAW FELLOWSHIP

In Second Thessalonians 3:6 Paul wrote, “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.” This is a **command** “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”! Why do we not emphasize this as clearly and forcefully as we do “repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:38; cf. 10:48)? Jesus asked, “Why do ye call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). Is He Lord over baptism, but not Lord regarding withdrawal of fellowship? The apostle Paul taught He was Lord over both. We are not afraid to insist on baptism for salvation, why are we afraid to insist on withdrawing from the disorderly? Shame on us who do not do so.

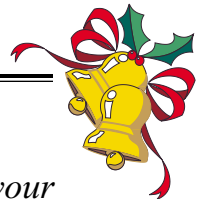
In First Corinthians 5:1-13 the apostle Paul dealt with an immoral man who was part of the Corinthian church. Read this account and note the bold print we have highlighted that indicates what Paul told the church to do. “1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, **that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.** 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 **In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.** 6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7 **Purge out therefore the old**

*leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 9 I wrote unto you in an epistle **not to company with fornicators:** 10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. 11 But now I have written unto you **not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.** 12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. **Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.**” The apostle Paul was emphatic that this man was to be put out of fellowship with the other members of the church! Furthermore, Paul listed several other kinds of brethren with whom we can have no fellowship. In the Thessalonian passage above he expanded that to include “every brother [or sister] that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.” The*

“tradition” that Paul spoke of is not manmade teaching but what was “handed down” to them by the inspired teachers of the New Testament (NT) faith. In a previous section of this letter Paul had said, “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle” (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

Another command to refuse fellowship is seen in Second John 9-11. “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, **receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:** For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” To offer company to or to render aid or comfort to a false teacher is a serious offense and brings one under the same condemnation that is due the false teacher. In another place Paul said, “Now I beseech you, brethren, **mark them** which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and **avoid them.** For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Romans 16:17-18).

*continued on page 4*



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### CONCLUSION

There are other passages that teach these same principles, but these should suffice to make clear the obligation of elders, preachers, and members of the Lord's church to obey these commands. **If we do not obey them, in the eyes of the Lord we become such as need to have fellowship withdrawn from us!** "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and **have no company with him, that he may be ashamed**" (2 Thessalonians 3:14).

How can elders, preachers and members in general of the Lord's church refuse to follow these commands? Will we not be judged harshly for stubborn refusal to obey the Lord in this matter? If not, why not? [To be continued]

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### GOD'S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP - COLOSSIANS 3:17

- LORD'S SUPPER** - The New Testament and early church history record that Christians met on the first day of every week (Sunday) to worship God and remember Christ (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-34; 16: 1-2).
- PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6-7; I Thessalonians 5:17-18).
- SINGING** - God's word authorizes only vocal music and specifically singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). The New Testament shows no use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God by the church Christ established. Church history notes no such use for nearly 700 years after the New Testament was completed. It is an innovation of men, not of God.
- GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; I Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
- PREACHING OF THE WORD** - The gospel of Christ, not men's doctrines nor entertainment, saves and strengthens us (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Romans 10:17; I Corinthians 1:18-23).

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