

What Is The Church of Christ?



by Seth E. Osaе-Larbi

NOT A DENOMINATION

The general misconception of many that the Church of Christ is a denomination is deeply to be deplored. Denomination suggests a fraction or part of the whole. The Lord's Church and denominations are absolutely incompatible to each other.

Protestant denominations saw their beginning when Luther, in an open rebellion to Roman Catholicism, wrote his famous Ninety-five Theses, a bill of charge against the Catholic Church, and nailed it to the doors of the Schlosskirche of Wittenburg on October 13, 1517. His charges were mainly against the doctrines of the primacy of the Pope, indulgences and purgatory. From that beginning came the Luthern church, later to be followed in 1536 by John Calvin and the Presbyterian church in Switzerland and many others until today.

THE CALLED OUT OR BLOOD-BOUGHT

The word "church" means the "called out." All who have been called out of the world of sin constitute the church. It would mean those who have

believed Jesus and are thus sanctified by his precious blood. Of these brethren, Paul says, "The church of the Lord which He hath purchased with His own blood." (Acts 20.28). It is the end product of the gospel grown in the hearts of men. (Luke 8.11; 1 Peter 1.25).

ONE BODY

The Church of Christ is the one body of Christ ("There is one body," Ephesians 4.4, "...for His body's sake, which is the church," Colossians 1.24). So you see, there is one body and the body is the church. So how many churches are there? Think it over!!

ORIGIN

The church of Christ is a divine institution because it belongs to Christ. The Lord Himself made the promise to build it. God's prophet Isaiah had foretold in prophecy about its establishment in Isaiah 2.2-4. In Matthew 16.18, Jesus said to Peter, "... Upon this rock, I will build my church." It was really established on the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection from the dead when 3,000 souls believed the gospel preached by Peter and were baptized into Christ that same day. (Acts 2.41-47).

DESIGNATIONS

Since God does not bring about confusion, He gave designations by which the church might be known. The following are but a few of them:

Christ called it:

"My church" (Matthew 16.18)

"The Kingdom of God" (John 3.5; Luke 22.16)

The Apostles called it:

“The Church” (Colossians 1.18; Ephesians 1.22)

“The Church of God” (1 Corinthians 1.2)

“Church of Christ” (singular: “Church of Christ”
Romans 16.16)

“House of God” (1 Timothy 3.15)

“Household of faith” (Galatians 6.10)

“The Kingdom of God’s dear Son” (Colossians
1.13)

“A Kingdom which cannot be shaken” (Hebrews
12.28)

ORGANIZATION: CONGREGATIONAL

Organization in the Lord’s church is as carefully set out as the organization of any sound institution would be. That goes a long way to eliminate all unqualified men ruling the flock. The local congregation is organically independent of every other local congregation. It is self-governing under Christ, the heavenly bishop. (1 Peter 5.4; 2.25).

To follow, are earthly bishops, same as elders, pastors, presbyters, who feed, tend, oversee, and rule the flock. (Acts 20.17, 28; 1 Peter 5.2-4; 1 Timothy 3.1-7; Hebrews 13.17). With deacons to serve (1 Timothy 3.8-13), and with members who minister in word and deed. (1 Corinthians 12.24-27).

Since the above only is what the scriptures authorize, it is my solemn plea to the masses to reject outright all other offices created by men, and accept the New Testament way. For, after all, the New Testament alone serves as the right standard by which Christians must live in life and service to God.

WORSHIP

Today, this is another area of confusion in the religious realm. Almost all are divided in the way to worship God. They have gathered up to themselves many different and distinct forms of worship. Worship must be in spirit and in truth, says Christ. (John 4.24). In the New Testament Church, we notice, true worship consists of the following:

Communion (Acts 20.7; 1 Corinthians 10.16; 11.23-30)

Preaching (Acts 2.42; 20:7)

Giving (1 Corinthians 16.1-2; 2 Corinthians 9.6-7)

Praying (Acts 2.42; 1 Thessalonians 5.17)

Singing (Ephesians 5.19; Colossians 3.16)

WORK

The Lord Himself stated the work of the church is to go into all the world to the rescue of lost souls. That is to:

Preach the gospel — (Mark 16.15-16; 2 Corinthians 11.8)

Edify itself — (Ephesians 4.11-16; Galatians 6.1-2)

Provide for its poor — (Galatians 6.9-10; 1 Timothy 5.16)

MEMBERSHIP

In Ghana today, the tendency is for one to join the church of his choice. "I was born into it." "I was born a Methodist." "I was born and bred as a Presbyterian," some retort. They seem to feel that since their parents belonged to a certain de-

nominal group, they are by virtue of birth, members of the same denomination even before they are baptized into it. Would such doctrine or faith not surely reflect in many ways upon the integrity of the word of God?

In this tract, I plead with readers to draw their attention to the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus concerning entrance into the Kingdom of heaven. (John 3.1-5). Our Lord's emphasis was on the fact that birth by flesh is not the entry requirement into the Kingdom, but rather birth by the Spirit and water as one easily makes out from the passage. Thus, it becomes far from saying, "I was born into it."

Until now, the Bible convicts all men of sin, and the wages thereof being a second death. (Romans 3.23; 6.23; Revelation 21.8). Yet, God has promised to save only those who obey the Gospel of Christ. (Romans 1.16; Hebrews 5.8-9). The gospel has these facts to be believed: the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ in man's place. When one from the heart obeys the gospel, he enters the Lord's body, and hence becomes a member of the Lord's church — 1 Corinthians 12.13; Colossians 1.24. Concerning the gospel, God commands us to:

Hear — Romans 10.17

Believe — Acts 18.8

Repent — Acts 2.38; 17.30-31

Confess — Acts 8.37; Romans 10.10

Baptize (immersion) — Romans 6.3-4;
Colossians 2.12; Acts 22.16

*The Church's one foundation,
Is Jesus Christ her Lord
She is His new Creation
By water and the word
From heaven He came and sought her
To be His Holy bride
With His own blood He bought her
And for her life He died.*

Seth E. Osae-Larbi
P.O. Box KN 914
Kaneshie-Accra, GHANA



Enroll In A FREE Bible Course By Mail

Write: WORLD BIBLE SCHOOL (GTI)

P. O. Box 2169

Cedar Park, TX 78630, U.S.A.

Church of Christ

P.O. Box 6017, Accra, Ghana, West Africa

Church of Christ

P.O. Box 176, San Fernando, Trinidad, West Indies

Church of Christ

P. O. Box 614, Aba, Abia State, Nigeria, West Africa

Church of Christ

P.O. Box 57, Kakinada A.P., Pin. 533 001, South India

Church of Christ

Pasir Panjang, P. O. Box 74, Singapore, 9111

*Published by Gospel Tracts International
A Ministry of Baldwin Church of Christ, U.S.A.*