



THE SEVIERVILLE SOWER

Sowing the seed (Luke 8:11) into the hearts of mankind.

Sevierville Church of Christ | 208 Hicks Drive | Sevierville, TN 37862 | (865) 453-8009 | seviervillecoc.org

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Are You in the One True Church?

Jason Patrick Hilburn

Just because someone calls himself a Christian, does not mean he is truly following Christ (1 John 1:6; 2:4). And, just because a church claims to be a Biblical church, does not mean it is truly following Christ. In fact, they may have never even done what God commanded to be added to Christ's church in the first place (Acts 2:36-41, 47).

Christ promised to build only one church, and it belongs to Him: "...I will build my church..." (Matt. 16:18). There were already divisions and false religious groups being created by alleged followers of Christ (such as the Nicolaitans) before the Bible was completed. These divisive groups were consistently condemned by God (Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; Rev. 2:2, 6, 15). Is it possible that you could be in a religious group that is different from the one church Jesus built?

- Regarding the church of which you are a member:
- Was it founded by Jesus Christ? (Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28)
- Was it founded during the days of the Roman kings? (A.D. 33; Daniel 2:44)
- Was it founded in Jerusalem? (Isa. 2:1-3; Luke 24:49; Acts 2:5)
- Does it use a Scriptural name for the church? (Matt. 16:18; Rom. 16:16; Col. 3:17; 1 Peter 4:11)
- Does it use a Scriptural name for the members? (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:11, 16)
- Does it teach people to love God foremost and to love neighbors as ourselves, doing good to all men? (Matt. 22:36-40; Gal. 6:10)
- Is it organized the way the Biblical church was organized?
- 1) Christ is the Head of the body (Col. 1:18) 2) A plurality of qualified male elders overseeing only one local, autonomous congregation (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5-11; 1 Peter 5:1-4) 3) Male deacons/servants serving under the eldership (1 Tim. 3:1-13) 4) Male evangelists preaching and teaching (1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:11-15; 2 Tim. 4:2-5)
- Does it teach the same plan of salvation Peter taught on the day Christ's church was established? (Requiring *repentance* and *immersion* of the penitent *believer* in water to be forgiven/saved) (Acts 2:36-40; cf. 8:35-39; 22:16; Matt. 10:32; 1 Peter 3:20-21)
- Does it worship the same way the Biblical church did?
- 1) *Praying* to God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ (John 16:23)
- 2) *Preaching the Truth* (2 Tim. 4:2)
- 3) *Singing* without musical instruments added (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)
- 4) *Giving* as prospered on the first day or every week (1 Cor. 16:2)
- 5) Taking the *Lord's Supper* on the first day of every week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20; 16:2)
- Does it teach the truth that people are no longer under the Law of Moses, but under the Law of Christ? (Rom. 7:4-7;

1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 5:3-4; 6:2; Col. 2:14-17; 3:17)

- Does it promote religious divisions or oppose them? (John 17:21-23; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; Eph. 5:11)
- Does it adhere to sound doctrine? (Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 2:15-18; 2 John 9-11)
- Does it adhere to the "seven ones" of unity, including the fact that there is only *one body*, only *one faith*, and only *one baptism*? ("the washing of water" for sanctification and spiritual cleansing, Eph. 4:3-6; 5:26)
- Does it "speak as the Bible speaks" in all matters, glorifying God through Christ? (1 Peter 4:11; cf. 2 Tim. 1:13)
- Does it use the Holy Bible as its sole authority for all things? (Col. 3:17; 2 Tim. 3:16,17)

If two men on a deserted island, who knew nothing about religion, were given Bibles and they read and obeyed the Bible only, would they claim to be in the same church as you? They would not be in any denomination, but simply in Christ's church He promised to build. Should we not be like them? If we simply follow the Bible without man-made doctrines and names, we will be like them, and we can all be united as Christians without denominational divisions! This is clearly God's will, and it is very much possible if we love God enough to put His will first (Matt. 7:21-23; John 17:21-23; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; Phil. 3:16; 1 John 5:3).

The Bible teaches that Christ's kingdom/church established in the first century A.D. would never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44; Matt. 16:18-19, 28). It began on Pentecost after the ascension of Christ, and it still exists today. Christ commands men to seek the kingdom first (Matt. 6:33), and the true Biblical church can be found by comparing churches today with the church of the Bible. To say that the Scriptural requirements above do not matter, is to say that the Scriptures themselves do not matter!

Some say every "church-going" believer today is in a denomination (a man-made religious group), and nobody can be in that one true, pre-denominational church, but if nobody could be in that church, nobody could be saved! The Bible says that Christ is the Savior of that one Biblical body, and only that body (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23). Religious divisions called "denominations" are not authorized by God; rather they are condemned by God, just as the Nicolaitans were (1 Cor. 1:10-13; Rom. 16:17; Rev. 2). Denominations are smaller than the universal church and larger than the local congregation, and there is no such entity authorized in the New Testament.

Friends, we encourage you to investigate the church of which you are a member and see if it meets the Scriptural requirements mentioned above to be the true church "of" Christ, which simply means the church that belongs to Christ. The "church" of Christ is just another way to describe the "body" of Christ, the "house" of Christ, the "flock" of Christ, etc. We also encourage you to visit and investigate the church of Christ in your area, using the Holy Scriptures as your only guide! (Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:21).

"The churches of Christ salute you" (Rom. 16:16).

Prayer Requests & Announcements

John Carr will be receiving radiation treatment for his thyroid cancer when new equipment at the Thompson Cancer Survival Center in Sevierville is ready for service.

Linda Shidell's friend, Arlene Sweet, was recently diagnosed with breast cancer. She will be starting chemo which will be followed by radiation treatment.

Dawn Sutton is doing well in her recovery from cancer surgery. All the removed lymph nodes tested negative for cancer. She will be seeing her doctor regarding treatment.

Lyn Morris continues to deal with episodes of low blood sugar and fatigue. She wants the church to know that she misses everyone.

Sue Roberts' husband, Bobby, remains in rehab and is gaining strength every day. Sue had an MRI on Thursday and will be getting results tomorrow. She requests prayers for an effective treatment for the pinched nerve in her back. She cannot walk much because the pain is so severe. Her daughter pushes her in a wheelchair to visit Bobby or go to the doctor's office.

Lenwood Johnson's sister, Becky Day, will be seeing her oncologist on May 3 to discuss treatment options for her breast cancer.

Please pray for Chris Bender who had a biopsy recently and saw a surgeon to have tumors removed. Pre-cancerous growth was found and treatment will be needed.

Continue to pray for the Christians in Ukraine.

Continue to Remember...

Chris Bender, John and Helen Carr, Connie Duncan, Dennis and Marty Danilchuk, Lindsey Johnson, Shirley McKnight, Sue Moore, Lyn Morris and her brother Joe Cochran, Paul and Ellen Ostrander, Joanne Roark, Shirley Yeager, Natasha Costello, Penny Douglas (John and Helen Carr's niece), Becky Duncan (Joe and Connie's daughter-in-law), Belinda Lang (Kevin's aunt), Adam Lane (son-in-law of Vickie Price), Harlie McClung (John and Helen Carr's 12 year-old great-granddaughter), Anita Ogle (Sherry Simms' friend), Casie Rains (friend of the Hansens), Paul Rolen (Mary Kate's brother), Betty & Frankie Simms (Scott Simms' parents), Wayne Tart (Tammie Fish's brother).

Fellowship lunch: Today

Ladies' class meal: May 5, 5:30

Fellowship night: May 20, 6:30

Monthly afternoon song service: May 29

Evangelism Materials

Extra supplies for our evangelism work are freely available in the supply room to our members. Instructional books, DVDs, and Bible study materials are available. We also have a variety of cards for our Compassion Card work.

Weekly Assemblies

Sunday: Bible Study 9 a.m.
Worship 10 a.m.
Worship 1 p.m.
Wednesday: Bible Class 7 p.m.
Thursday: Ladies' Class 6:30 p.m.

Does the Name Matter?

Ben Bailey

Someone recently told me they thought it didn't matter what a church called itself as long as they worshipped correctly. Is this true according to the Bible? Could a church call itself any name and be acceptable to God as long as they worship correctly? Let's consider for a moment why it does matter what the church called itself. In fact, just like worshipping God correctly is essential, going by what the rest of the Bible says about the church is also essential. Notice why this is true.

The name of the church is important because the Bible tells us not to "add to" or "take away from" God's Word (Rev. 22:18-19). If the name of a church is not found in the Bible, we would be adding to God's Word. If the name is found in the Bible and we choose to call it by something not found in the Bible, we would be taking away from it.

The name of the church is important because the Bible specifically tells us not to go beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4:6). If the name of the church is not found in Scripture we are going "beyond what is written."

The name of the church is important because we are to do everything by the authority of Christ, who is the Head of the church (Col. 3:17; Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:22-23). Whatever God, Christ or the Holy Spirit referred to the church as, that is what we should refer to it as.

The name of the church is important because the name we call the church should only bring honor and glory to God, Christ and the Holy Spirit, not men (1 Cor. 10:31). If the church is called the church of Mark or Mark's church, who is that bringing honor to?

The name of the church is important because Jesus died for and shed His blood for His church (Acts 20:28). The act of Jesus dying on the cross purchased the church. Since it was his blood that paid the price for the church, it should wear His name (Matt. 16:18).

The name of the church is important because the name shows ownership and the Lord as the builder and founder of the church is the only one who has the right to be owner of the church (Matt. 16:13-18).

The name of the church is important because the church is the Bride of Christ and as His bride it should wear His name (Eph. 5:22-31).

The name of the church is important because we are only to speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11). Here are the names the Bible refers to the church as: Jesus said, "*I will build my church*" (Matt. 16:13-18). Thus, it is the church of Jesus or the church of Christ.

It is referred to as the church of the Lord (Acts 20:28).

It is referred to as the church of God (1 Cor. 1:1-2; Gal. 1:13).

It is referred to as the church of the Living God (1 Tim. 3:15).

It is referred to as the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16; Gal. 1:22).

It is referred to as the church of the firstborn, which is another name for Jesus (Heb. 12:23; Col. 1:15-19; Rom. 8:29).

The name of the church is important because calling the church by men's names or denominational names is specifically and explicitly condemned in Scripture (1 Cor. 1:10-13).

Friend, a careful study of the Scripture helps us to see that what we call the church really does matter. We need to call the church by names that are in Scripture and that bring honor and glory to God, not men. May God help us to glorify the church Jesus died for in everything we say and do!

Elders

Randy Hansen, Robert Moore, Kevin Ruiz, and Jerry Sutton

Deacon

Lenwood Johnson (finance)

Preacher

Kevin Ruiz