

In the verse before this Paul had extolled the great power of God that was exercised in the resurrection of Christ. Since Jesus is the one head of the church, it is reasonable that he is head of only one body. Indeed it would be a freak and monstrosity for one head to be attached to a plurality of bodies and men today pay money to see such in carnivals and side-shows. The ideas of men make of Jesus a freak, but this is not the way we find it in the Bible. The (singular) church is the (singular) body and Paul shows that there is only ONE body (Eph. 4:4).

The church is the bride of Christ and the bride honors her husband by wearing his name. One way by which the church may be known is by the name it wears and any group professing to be the church Jesus built, but not wearing his name, is not the bride of Christ and has no right to wear such a name. Speaking of different congregations of the one church Paul wrote, "The churches of Christ salute you" (Rom. 16:16). If there were several congregations called "churches of Christ," one of them would be called a church of Christ."

Jesus did not build a denomination. The church of Christ is not a denomination and it is not to be so associated. We are not attempting to reform, but to restore what is found written in the New Testament. We must go to the New Testament, examine it, do what people did in order to become Christians, and worship, work and live as it authorizes, Christ alone is our authority and the New Testament is our only rule of faith and practice (Matt. 28:18; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

We are not divided in religion over what the Bible says, it is over things not found in the Bible that divides. If we are all content to always abide in the doctrine of our Savior (2

John 9) there will be no division and fellowship prevails when everyone of us walks by the same rule (Phil. 3:16) and that rule is the light of God's word (1 John 1:7) without addition or subtraction. (Rev. 22: 18,19).

Members of the church of Christ meet on the first day of every week (Acts 20:7) in sacred memory of the death of Christ, till he returns (1 Cor. 11:23-25). This is the observance of the Lord's supper (Luke 22:29) and consists of every Christian taking the bread, symbolic of his body and drinking of the fruit of the vine, symbolic of his shed blood. We give of our means as the Lord has prospered and sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs and we honor God by the teaching of His word (Acts 2:42; Eph. 5:19).

We would love to have you come and bring a Bible and measure our teaching and practice by the scriptures. We hope you continue to listen to these broadcasts and at any time you have questions about what we say, feel free to write or call us. May God bless you in the knowledge of His will.

Presented By the

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SUNDAY

Bible Study 9:30 A.M.
Assemblies 10:30 A.M. and 6 P.M.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study 7:30 P.M.

The Church of Christ is Not a Human Denomination

It is possible that you have had some misconception about the church of Christ, Truth welcomes investigation; therefore, we ask you open-mindedly to consider some matters with us today on our study together.

By way of clarification, we are not Campbellites. It is frequently said that Alexander Campbell established the church of Christ. Therefore, some call us "Campbellites." Those who think this way may be honestly mistaken, but Alexander Campbell did not establish the church of Christ. In fact, if we, as members of the church of Christ, thought for one moment that Campbell did found the church of which we are members we would not wish to have anything more to do with it than with any other man-made church,

Alexander Campbell himself denied that he was the founder of the church of Christ, In a letter written to the editors of the Commercial Bulletin, published in New Orleans, he addressed the following note: "I have always repudiated all human heads and human names for the people of the Lord, and shall feel very thankful if you will correct the erroneous impression which your article may have made in thus representing me as the founder of a religious denomination."

This man, who lived in the 19th century, was only doing what every gospel preacher is trying to do today and that is to urge people to return to the New Testament as our only standard of religious authority. We are pleading that all lay aside creed books, manuals, disciplines, and articles of faith; that all discard human names, human worship,

human organizations and human teachings and practices. We admonish all to return to the simple pattern of doctrine, work, worship and organization outlined in the New Testament. This was the work of Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, Barton Stone and others prominent in the restoration movement of over a hundred years ago in this country.

No one of them thought of adding another church to the multitude of those already in existence -- it was their sole object to return to simple New Testament Christianity by speaking-where the Scriptures speak and remaining silent where the Scriptures are silent; doing Bible things in Bible ways and calling Bible things by Bible names and doing those things authorized plainly by the Scriptures.

They were not Campbellites, Scottites or Stoneites -- were simply Christians, having done exactly what people did in the first century to become exactly what people became then. When today, one returns to the New Testament as his authority in religion and obeys its teaching and worships the way it prescribes and live as it directs, he will be a child of God, a member of the body of Christ (the church of Christ) and never be part of any denomination. The church of which we read in the Bible is not a denomination. No denomination in existence today can claim any resemblance to the church we find in the Bible.

The gospel is the seed which is planted into the hearts of men and women. Jesus said in Lk. 8:13 that the "seed is the word of God," When that seed is planted (preached) and received (heard with understanding) it will produce Christians today just as it did in the first century. It makes no difference who does the planting. Suppose a bird, say a woodpecker, while flying over a plowed field drops an acorn

and it sprouts. Who would say that it was a "woodpecker tree?" it is still an oak tree because seed will only produce after its kind (Gen. 1:12). The point is that no matter if Campbell did drop the seed of the kingdom, it still produces Christians, not Campbellites. Those who refer to us today as "Campbellites" do so, either because they are misinformed or because they are uninformed.

The church of Christ had its origin on the day of Pentecost, AD 33. This day was the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The origin of the church of Christ is truly found when we turn to the 2nd Chapter of the Book of Acts. On that day, men and women were commanded to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38).

The divine record then tells us in verse 41, "they then that gladly received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about 3000 souls." This is how people became members of the church. Having become members of the church, we are then told what they did next. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2: 42). Members of the church of Christ are endeavoring to submit to that simple pattern of work, worship and organization.

But where was the church of Christ during the dark ages? Jesus said that His church was to be everlasting. Did He not say, "The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it?" (Matt. 16:18). Yes, this is true, but even though it is impossible to place our finger upon church of Christ assemblies in each century, are we to suppose that the church did not exist?

Historical evidence during the dark ages is unreliable and unnecessary. A train is entering

a tunnel. We see the train distinctly and we mark its characteristics. It enters the tunnel and goes out of sight. Are we to conclude that it does not exist? Suddenly we see a train come out of the tunnel. How do we know it is the same train? It has the same characteristics. It is the same color, has the same engine, same number of cars and is exactly like the one that went in.

Now, that seems very simple, but so is it with the Lord's church. We do not have to trace an unbroken chain of history back through the dark ages to connect with the New Testament church. Such cannot be done by any religious group today with accuracy. It is not necessary to have a vine that stretches from Georgia to Tennessee to grow Georgia watermelons. All you need is seed that will produce Georgia watermelons. So it is with the church. The seed that produced it in the 1st century produces it today wherever and whenever it is planted.

No man founded the church of Christ. It was founded by Jesus Christ. He said to Peter in Matt 16:18, "And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." It was Jesus who promised to build his church and if he did not do so, then he failed to keep his promise. Jesus did build the church--he purchased it with his own shed blood (Acts 20:28). After he ascended to heaven, he became the head of the church. Paul wrote in Eph. 1:22, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."