

## WHY I AM A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH/BODY OF CHRIST!

Intro:

- A. A Crime has been committed and the description is as follows:
  1. He is a male
  2. Sort of cubby
  3. He was wearing a white shirt and dark trousers
  4. I think he had a tie on - if it was it was blue
  5. He was white
    - a. Now how many men would fit into that description.
    - b. But, not all men fitting that description committed the crime. How would you be able to tell for certain!
    - c. You would look for more information and look at certain identification marks that would distinguish the criminal from the rest of the field.
  6. So Meet Albert:
    - a. He is 5 feet 1 inches tall.
    - b. He is wearing a white shirt with three green buttons .
    - c. He is bald.
    - d. He has a Blue tie tucked into his shirt - way to short.
    - e. But, he is wearing a name tag on his right - His name is Albert.
  7. In Identifying why I am a member of the church of Christ - I want you to understand that there are a lot of churches in the world today - some 3500 - all of which claim to have it right - but I am not interested in a claim - I am only interested in the truth!
    - a. There is only one church in the N.T. and I want to be a part of it - nothing more nothing less.
    - b. Thus, there must be identification marks which makes it peculiar in nature from all the rest.
- B. I use this illustration as a beginning point in answering the question that is so often ask - Why Are You A Member of the church/body of Christ? I can tell you that in 5 quick marks of Identification the answer should be very clear.
  1. It Is Anti-Denominational -
  2. The Standard It Uses –
  3. The Message It Preaches –
  4. The Worship Is Scriptural –
  5. The Work Is Authorized -
- C. Now it would help if we simply just started with a definition of what we are talking about:
  1. “THE CHURCH OF CHRIST”
    - a. THE - Definite Article / Singularity as in **Matt 16:18; Acts 2:47; Eph 4:4**
      - (1) Matthew 16:18 (NKJV) ---- 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
      - (2) Acts 2:47 (NKJV) ---- 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.
      - (3) Ephesians 4:4 (NKJV) ---- 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;
    - b. CHURCH - Ecclesia / Called Out as in **Matt 16:18; Acts 19:32; Rom 16:16**
      - (1) Matthew 16:18 (NKJV) ---- 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
      - (2) Acts 19:32 (NKJV) ---- 32 Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together.
      - (3) Romans 16:16 (NKJV) ---- 16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.

- c. Of - Possessive / Belonging To as in **Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 1:1**
  - (1) Romans 16:16 (NKJV) ---- 16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.
  - (2) 1 Corinthians 1:1 (NKJV) ---- 1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,
- d. CHRIST - Messiah / Savior / Lord / Jesus as in **1 Cor 3:23; Gal 5:24**
  - (1) 1 Corinthians 3:23 (NKJV) ---- 23 And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.
  - (2) Galatians 5:24 (NKJV) ---- 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
- e. So when I speak of the church of Christ - I am not speaking of a man made denomination. It's origin is in the Word of God.

## II. To further understand - we must understand that church is only used in two senses:

- A. Church in the Universal Sense - this includes "ALL Christians Everywhere"
  - 1. This is what Christ meant when He said - "I will build MY CHURCH" **Matt. 16:18**
    - a. And what the Apostle Paul meant when he wrote - "there is ONE BODY" **Eph. 4:4** and "He is also head of the BODY, the CHURCH" **Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23**
      - (1) Colossians 1:18 (NKJV) ---- 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.
      - (2) Ephesians 1:22-23 (NKJV) ---- 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.
  - 2. To further understand we see various Descriptions of "The Church" In The Universal Sense:
    - a. "the church" - **Acts 8:3** ---- "3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison." — Jesus is the one who calls - Relationship is the called out
    - b. "the church of God" - **Acts 20:28** - 28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. - Jesus paid the price - Relationship Purchased of God
    - c. "the body of Christ" - **1 Cor 12:27** -27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. - Headship - Relationship - Members
    - d. "the kingdom of God" - **Rom 14:17** - 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. - Kingship - Citizens
    - e. "the family of God" - **1 Tim 3:15** -15 but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. - Son - we are Children
    - f. "the temple of God" - **1 Cor 3:16** -16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? - High Priest - We are to Serve and Worship
    - g. "the church of the firstborn" - Heir - we are fellow heirs
- B. Secondly the term Church is used in a Local Sense. These are Christians in a Specific Area
  - 1. Who agree to join together in fellowship (**Acts 9:26**).
    - a. Who worship in a common assembly – (**1 Cor. 11:18**)
    - b. Who work out of a common treasury – (**1 Cor.16:1-3**)
    - c. Who submit to a common oversight - of men qualified to be elders and deacons – (**Acts 14:23; 20:28**)
  - 2. We see this throughout the New Testament
    - a. "the church of God which is at Corinth" (**1 Cor. 1:2**)
    - b. "the church of the Thessalonians in God" (**1 Thess. 1:1**).

- c. “the churches of Galatia” (**1 Cor. 16:1**).
  - d. “the churches of the saints” (**1 Cor. 14:33**).
  - e. “the churches of Christ” (**Rom. 16:16**).
  - f. “the churches” (**Acts 8:3; 15:41**, etc., etc.).
- C. Simply put when I am asked Why I am a member of the church of Christ - it is because I belong to the body (universal) and am a part of the Winterpark (local) church.
- D. This is the only way “Church” is used in the New Testament of the Body of Christ - a denomination does not fit either description.
- 1. A denomination is too small to be the UNIVERSAL church (comprising of all the Saved)
  - 2. And too large to be the local (individuals banded together in an area)
- E. So the first main reason I am a member of the church of Christ is because it meets the identification of the NT church of being ANTI-DENOMINATIONAL

### III. It Is Anti-Denominational

- A. The Church Is The Saved – **Acts 2:47; Ephe 5:23**
- B. Jesus Prayed For Unity – **John 17:20-23**
- C. Paul Pleaded For Unity – **1 Cor. 1:10**
- D. The Church of Christ Submits To Christ – **Ephe 5:23,24; 4:1-6; 1 Cor 4:17**
  - 1. Now look at this simple explanation:
    - a. A Corn stalk - gives forth Corn
    - b. An Apple Tree Gives forth Apples
    - c. And An Acorn Tree gives forth Acorns (Principle set forth in Creation - **Genesis 1:**
  - 2. In the same sense then:
    - a. The Mennonite Confession of faith - makes Mennonites
    - b. The Methodist Disciple book - makes Methodists
    - c. And the Nazarene Manual - makes Nazarene’s
    - d. BUT - the BIBLE ONLY MAKES CHRISTIANS!
- E. So next we see what makes denominations is the standard that is used.

### IV. The church of Christ Standard is different from others.

- A. Human Denominations Do Not Use “JUST” The Bible – (Confessions, Disciplines, Rules of Faith, Party Statements, etc.)
- B. The Lord’s Church Uses ONLY The Bible As Its Guide In Faith, Teaching, Work, Worship & Organization. (**2 Tim 3:16,17; 1 Pet 4:16; Col 3:17**)
  - 1. No Head but Christ
  - 2. No organization larger than the local congregation
  - 3. No faith except that which is found in the N.T.
- C. Which brings us to the next point - and that is the message that it preaches!

### V. Since the Bible is the ONLY BOOK USED - the Message it Preaches comes from it Alone

- A. What A Person Must Do In Order To Be Saved In The Words of Inspired Men – (**1 Peter 4:11**)
  - 1. The Alien Sinner - (**John 8:24; Romans 10:9,10; Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30; Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38; 10:47; 22:16; Ro 6:3-6; 1 Pet 3:21**)
  - 2. The Christian – (**Col. 1:23; Rev 2:10; Acts 8:18-24; 1 John 1:9**)
- B. The Need To Live In Love & Purity – (**Mark 12:29-31; Col. 3:1-14; 2 Cor 6:14-7:1; Ephe 5:1-18; 1 Pet 1:13-18**)
- C. The Need For Positive Divine Authority For Everything Believed, Taught & Practiced - (**Mat 21:25; 1 Pet 4:11; Col. 3:17**)

- D. The Plea For Unity Upon What The Bible Says – **(1 Cor 1:10; John 17:20-22; Ephe 4:1-6)**
- E. Thus in every place that the church of Christ meets around the world one thing can be assured that if they are alone following the Word of God - their worship will be the same

## VI. The Worship Is Scriptural

- A. The New Testament Reveals Five Acts of Worship
  - 1. Studying God's Word - **(Acts 20:7; Col 4:16)**
  - 2. Singing – **(Eph 5:19; Col. 3:16)**
  - 3. Praying – **(Acts 4:23-31; Eph 6:18)**
  - 4. Giving – **(1 Cor 16:1,2)**
  - 5. Observing The Lord's Supper– **(Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 11:23-26)**
- B. And the Work that the church does is Authorized
  - 1. The N.T. reveals three works of the church
    - a. Evangelism **(Acts 13:1-3)**
    - b. Edification **(Eph 4:11-16)**
    - c. Benevolence **(Rom 15:25-26)**

## VII. In Conclusion:

- A. So Why Am I A Member of the church of Christ - It meets the marks of the New Testament church
  - 1. It Is Anti-Denominational -
  - 2. The Standard It Uses –
  - 3. The Message It Preaches –
  - 4. The Worship Is Scriptural –
  - 5. The Work Is Authorized -
- B. How about the church that you are a part of - does it pass the test of God's revealed Word.
- C. Nothing suffers from investigation - except error and that why I invite you to examine the church that belongs to Jesus Christ.