

The “Christians Meet Here” Church

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- Is the name “church of Christ” scriptural?
- Is it mandated?
- There are three religious organizations that use the name “Christians Meet Here.”
 - Community Bible Churches
 - House Church Movement
 - Some churches of Christ

The Church Is An Essential New Testament Doctrine

- Jesus promised to build it.
 - Matt. 16:18-19 - “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. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”
 - Acts 20:28 - “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.”

The Church Is An Essential New Testament Doctrine

- The church is indispensable.
 - Acts 2:47 - “And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”
 - 1Cor. 12:13 - “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”
 - Eph. 2:16 - “and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross”
 - 1Tim. 3:15 - “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.”

The Church Is An Essential New Testament Doctrine

- One cannot be a faithful Christian without the church.
 - The command to give - 1Cor. 16:1-2
 - The command to sing - Eph. 5:19
 - The command to assemble - Heb. 10:25
 - The command to commune - 1Cor. 11:17-34
- These commandments are for all professed Christians physically capable of assembling.

Names Of Churches

- “The church,” “the churches of Christ,” “church of the Lord,” and “church of God”
 - Col. 1:18 - “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.”
 - Acts 20:28 - “To shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”
 - 1Cor. 1:2 - “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.”
 - Rom. 16:16 - “The churches of Christ greet you.”

Names Of Churches

- Christ is the Head - Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23
- Christ is the Builder - Matt. 16:18
- Christ is the foundation - Eph. 2:19-20; 1Cor. 3:11
- Christ's blood bought - Acts 20:28
- Christ is Savior of the Church - Eph. 5:23
- Christ's doctrine rules it - 2John 9-11

Names Of Churches

- The Church is the Bride of Christ - Rom. 7:4
- The Body of Christ - Col. 1:18, 24
- All Blessings are in Christ - Eph. 1:3
- We are baptized into Christ - Gal. 3:26-27; 1Cor. 12:12-13
- We preach Christ only - Acts 8:4-5, 12; 1Cor. 2:2
- Salvation is only in Christ - Acts 4:12; John 14:6

Names Of Churches

- Therefore, it should be no surprise that we read of “churches of Christ” in the scriptures.
- It takes more than just the right name to be the Lord’s church.
- But, yielding to human reasoning divides brethren.
 - 1Cor. 1:10 - “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

The “Christians Meet Here” Movement

- In some cases, it represents a contemporary unity in diversity movement.
- “We must do away with our distinctive pleas, nature, and ‘church of Christ’ designation.”
(“We Need a New Hermeneutic” Abilene Christian University, 1988 Lecture)

The “Christians Meet Here” Movement

- Others, when asked if they believe “church of Christ” is unscriptural, they usually reply, “no, but people think of ‘church of Christ’ as another denomination.”
 - Should we cease having a meeting place because church buildings are abused?
 - Should we abandon water baptism because of Catholic and denominational teaching relative to baptism or because someone might think that by “baptism” we mean Holy Spirit baptism?

The “Christians Meet Here” Movement

- “Christians meet here” is becoming increasingly identified with the Community Church Movement.
- It conceals rather than reveals the distinct nature of the Lord’s church and often is a means of advertising an increasingly ecumenical approach to doctrine.

The “Christians Meet Here” Movement

- Where is such an expression, “Christians meet here” found in the scriptures?
- It is explained: “Since there is no official name for the church, any descriptive term will suffice.”
- Why not use a designation found in the scriptures?

The “Christians Meet Here” Movement

- Whatever the designation for the local church, there will be abuse.
- One evangelist answered, “In our community, church of Christ is associated with a bad smell. We would rather teach the gospel and convert them to the Lord without having to answer all the controversy attached to that name.”

The “Christians Meet Here” Movement

- Some professed members of the Lord’s church are iconoclastic in other areas, trying to be different for its own sake, or are trying to make some sort of statement about well established congregations.
- It is an unworthy motive to make a decision that makes it difficult for a local church to be distinct in the community among the denominations of men, it can manifest an un-Christ-like spirit, and it tastes of disingenuousness.

The “Christians Meet Here” Movement

- It also is beginning to be a common name in the house church movement, made up of professed members of the Lord’s Church who chafe at the structure of a well-established, scripturally organized, sound congregation. They often are led by a man who has difficulty being subject to elders and have a very high potential for digression.

The “Christians Meet Here” Movement

- It does not contribute to the will of the Lord for unity among disciples.
 - John 17:20-21 - “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”

Is It Wrong To Designate the Local Church As “Christians Meet Here”?

- It's not necessary to even have a sign; but if we do, we must be as careful with what it says about us as we are about what we do when we assemble.
- This matter also involves why we make the choice of name. If it is based on:
 - A desire to be different for its own sake,
 - A desire to make an iconoclastic statement about other congregations,
 - A desire to avoid embarrassment over the name “church of Christ” because it has a “bad smell” in the community,
 - A hope that visitors will not know that this is a church of Christ long enough to get them hooked.
- Then yes, it is wrong. A right thing done in the wrong manner or with the wrong spirit is a sin.

The “Christians Meet Here” Movement

- Throughout history when men came together to forsake denominationalism, they chose the name church of Christ in recognition of this.
- Two centuries ago there were movements to identify local churches by the Christians who attend in a given location. Those who wanted to be identified as Christians eventually came to be called the Christian Church. Those who wanted to be identified as disciples came to be called the Disciples of Christ. Those who understand that they belong to the Lord are identified as churches of Christ.

The “Christians Meet Here” Movement

- If we are going to do Bible things in Bible ways and call it by Bible names here at Trilacoochee, then we will accept that in the first century, inspired Bible writers identified the assemblies of Christians as churches and called the churches by the name of Deity. We will do the same thing today.