

The “Christians Meet Here” Church

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Is the name “church of Christ” scriptural? Is it mandated?
- B. Three religious organizations that use the name “Christians Meet Here”
 - 1. Community Bible Churches
 - 2. House Church Movement
 - 3. Some churches of Christ

I. THE CHURCH IS AN ESSENTIAL NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE

- A. Jesus promised to build it - Matt. 16:18-19
 - 1. Note the importance of the church in Jesus' promise - Acts 20:28
- B. The church is indispensable - Acts 2:47; 1Cor. 12:13; Eph. 2:16; 1Tim. 3:15
- C. One cannot be a faithful Christian without the church.
 - 1. The command to give - 1Cor. 16:1-2
 - 2. The command to sing - Eph. 5:19
 - 3. The command to assemble - Heb. 10:25
 - 4. The command to commune - 1Cor. 11:17-34
- D. These commandments are for all Christians physically capable of assembling.

II. NAMES OF CHURCHES

- A. “The church,” “the churches of Christ,” “church of the Lord,” & “church of God”
 - 1. Col. 1:18; Acts 20:28; 1Cor. 1:2; Rom. 16:16
- B. Regarding “church of Christ” - Rom. 16:16
 - 1. Christ is the Head - Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23
 - 2. Christ is the Builder - Matt. 16:18
 - 3. Christ is the foundation - Eph. 2:19-20; 1Cor. 3:11
 - 4. Christ's blood bought - Acts 20:28
 - 5. Christ is Savior of the Church - Eph. 5:23
 - 6. Christ's doctrine rules it - 2John 9-11
 - 7. The Church is the Bride of Christ - Rom. 7:4
 - 8. The Body of Christ - Col. 1:18, 24
 - 9. All Blessings are in Christ - Eph. 1:3
 - 10. We are baptized into Christ - Gal. 3:26-27; 1Cor. 12:12-13
 - 11. We must preach Christ only - Acts 8:4-5, 12; 1Cor. 2:2
 - 12. Salvation is only in Christ - Acts 4:12; John 14:6
- C. Therefore, it should be no surprise that we read of “churches of Christ” in the scriptures.
 - 1. It takes more than just the right "name" to be the Lord's church.
 - 2. However, the right designation is required. Folks can be united around Jesus' name and glory; however, yielding to human reasoning divides.
 - 1. 1Cor. 1:10

III. THE “CHRISTIANS MEET HERE” MOVEMENT

- A. In some cases, it represents a contemporary unity in diversity movement. The Lord's church is now becoming more involved in this movement. “We must do away with our distinctive pleas, nature, and 'church of Christ' designation,” we are now hearing. (“We Need a New Hermeneutic” Abilene Christian University, 1988 Lecture)
- B. More are now advocating “Christians meet here” as the designation outside the buildings. When asked if they believe “church of Christ” is unscriptural, they usually reply, “no, but people think of ‘church of Christ’ as another denomination.”
- C. Should we cease having a meeting place altogether because church buildings are abused? Should we abandon water baptism due to Catholic and denominational error relative to baptism or because someone might think that by “baptism” we mean Holy Spirit baptism?
- D. “Christians meet here” is becoming more identified with the Community Church Movement. Besides, where is such an expression, “Christians meet here” found in the scriptures? “Since there is no official name for the church, any descriptive term will suffice,” it is explained. Why not stay with a designation found in the scriptures?
 - 1. 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.
 - 2. Where is such an expression, “Christians meet here” found in the scriptures?
 - 3. It is explained: “Since there is no official name for the church, any descriptive term will suffice.”
 - 4. Why not use a designation found in the scriptures?
- E. 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 of the controversy attached to that name.”
- F. This movement among professed members of the Lord’s church is often iconoclastic in other areas, trying to be different for its own sake, or 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, manifests an un-Christ-like spirit, and tastes of disingenuousness.
- G. In addition, “Christians Meet Here” is the name adopted by an increasing number of Community Bible Churches for the purpose of advertising their ecumenical approach to doctrine.
- H. 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.

- I. It does not contribute to the will of the Lord for unity among disciples.
 - 1. John 17:20-21

Conclusion:

- A. Is it wrong to designate the local church as “Christians Meet Here”?
 - 1. Depends on the motivation of the heart and the defense of the practice from the Bible.
 - 2. It is 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.
- B. This matter also involves why we make the choice of name. If it is based on:
 - 1. A desire to be different for its own sake,
 - 2. A desire to make an iconoclastic statement about other congregations,
 - 3. A desire to avoid embarrassment over the name “church of Christ” because it has a “bad smell” in the community,
 - 4. A hope that visitors will not know that this is a church of Christ long enough to get them hooked.
- C. Then yes, it is wrong. A right thing done in the wrong manner or with the wrong spirit is a sin.
- D. Throughout history when men came together to forsake denominationalism, they chose the name church of Christ in recognition of this.
- E. 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.
- F. 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.