



**WHERE IS THE TRUE CHURCH?**

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*What about this whole church question—as it concerns you? Where is the original true Church which Jesus Christ founded—the one the living Jesus Christ still heads today? See page 3.*

## **JUST WHAT IS THE CHURCH?**

*Jesus Christ said: “I will build my Church.” What IS that Church—human organization, or spiritual organism? Of whom composed? How does one become a member? Does it have a divine Commission?—and if so, WHAT?—and HOW carried out? By organization, or by individuals acting independently? See page 7.*

## **WHY THE CHURCH?**

*The real purpose and function of the Church has not been understood. This article brings the eye-opening TRUTH. See page 11.*

by  
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# WHERE IS THE TRUE CHURCH?

**W**HAT about this whole church question—as it concerns *YOU*? WHERE IS the original *true* Church which Jesus Christ founded—the one the *living* Jesus Christ **STILL HEADS** today? That is the question that haunted me, back in 1926 and early 1927.

I had been reared, like many of our readers, in one of the respected and older Protestant denominations. From infancy I was taken to Sunday School and church. I was told that I was “saved” because I had a “birth-right membership” in the church. I didn’t know much about what my church believed—but I don’t remember worrying about that.

But by age 18 I lost interest, and seldom attended after that. On leaving school I entered the advertising profession. I was ambitious. I craved STATUS. So I worked hard, studied continually to improve my abilities, drove myself relentlessly toward that goal of STATUS!

Then, after nationwide occurrences totally beyond my control had twice taken businesses I had started, I was *angered* into an intensive study of the Bible for the first time in my life. So far as the Bible was concerned, I had always said, “I just can’t UNDERSTAND the Bible.”

Strange—I had always *craved* understanding—but about other things. The Bible seemed to me a dry, dull, dead Book that **NOBODY** could understand. I assumed, of course, that the churches had received all their beliefs, teachings and customs from the Bible—but then; I just had no interest in religion.

But finally, early fall of 1926, I was challenged! I was *doubly* challenged! My wife had taken up with “*religious fanaticism*”—that is, it seemed fanaticism to *me*! She claimed she found it **IN THE BIBLE**—but I knew good and well that was

impossible, because it was a belief and practice utterly **CONTRARY** to the churches.

“All these churches can’t be wrong,” I said. “They get their teaching from the Bible, and this fanaticism of yours is *contrary* to what they teach.”

“Well, maybe they teach *contrary* to the Bible, then,” my wife insisted, “because I got **THIS** out of the **BIBLE!**”

Argument was no use. She said if I’d show her where the Bible taught differently, she’d give it up, but not otherwise.

At the same time a sister-in-law challenged me in regard to the theory of evolution. I had never happened to study evolution in school or college. She said I was just plain **IGNORANT** if I didn’t believe in evolution! This stung my pride! Me **IGNORANT**? What an **INSULT**!

“All right,” I answered, “I’ll study into the evolutionary theory thoroughly, and if you’re wrong, as I know you are, I’ll **PROVE IT** to you, and make you *eat those words!*”

**Proving God Exists.** I had always believed in **GOD**—though I knew little about Him, and just was not concerned about “religion.” Of course I had never researched the question deeply and thoroughly, to **PROVE** whether God exists, or whether evolution is true. Few ever have. I just took God for granted, and *supposed* evolution was a false theory. Nearly all who believe either in God or evolution have *assumed* their belief **WITHOUT PROOF!**

But no longer for **ME!** Now I had to **KNOW!**

It became an almost night-and-day study of the Bible, and of in-depth research in books on evolution, geology, paleontology, biology, physics. I did research into radioactivity. That proved there had been no past

eternity of matter, but **CREATION!** I studied the creation account in Genesis. It was a six months’ intensive research, often studying until 1 or 2 a.m. But in the end I **PROVED** the existence of **GOD** and the infallible inspiration of the Bible; I *disproved* the evolutionarily theory and *did* make the sister-in-law “eat those words!”

But in the argument with my wife, **I LOST!** She was right. I was wrong. It was by far the bitterest pill to swallow that had ever confronted me.

You see, it meant not only confessing I was wrong. That is hard enough for the carnal mind. But I had now learned **HOW** wrong I was, not only what I had believed through assumption, but what I had done and what I *was*. I had thought I was *pretty good!* Human nature always thinks that. I had learned it is just plain **BAD** and **EVIL**.

I thought immediately, “If I accept Bible teaching, and begin to **LIVE** by it—if I give in to accept Christ, become converted, live a Christian life, what will all my former business associates and friends say?”

In my mind, it meant **GIVING THEM ALL UP**—for good!

It meant conversion! And that is something I don’t believe happens *really*, and *fully*, without an inner struggle. It certainly didn’t in my case. It meant **GIVING UP!** It meant giving up everything my heart had been set on—my life goal. It meant forsaking my way of life—a total about-face! Actually it meant giving up my **IDOL**, though I didn’t see it that way, then. It meant **UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER** to God. It meant giving up **MY LIFE**, actually, and **GIVING IT TO GOD!**

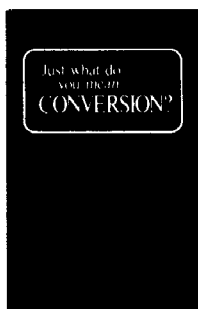
In the end, I did it!

But now I faced a **NEW CHALLENGE!** In this intensive study, I had found that “all these churches” **CAN**

# REAL CONVERSION

(You can't  
win the prize  
unless you  
start the race)

The apostle Paul likened the Christian life to a race which must be run for the "prize" of eternal life. A person does not even begin his "Race," however, until he has undergone a *genuine* conversion. The New Testament concept of conversion involves much more than a mere intellectual or ritualistic acceptance of a set of beliefs. True conversion can be defined in two parts. The first involves a definite event which occurs when God fulfills His promise to place the Holy Spirit within a person after certain conditions are met. The second part is a process which continues throughout the Christian's life. If you'd like to know more about the Bible's teaching on conversion, request the free booklet *Just What Do You Mean—CONVERSION?* Write to the address of our office nearest you.



BE WRONG! I found that, so far as I knew of what the church I was reared in believed, it was diametrically contrary to the Bible.

**Where is the True Church?** Now the question came, WHERE is the *TRUE* Church—the one Jesus Christ founded—the one He HEADS today—the one that carries out His MISSION—the one He said He would never leave or forsake?

I had been shockingly disillusioned! It had been virtually a traumatic six months.

When I read Romans 6:23, I stared at that verse in my Bible in shocked, incredulous disbelief! It said, "For the wages of sin is DEATH; but the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." I had always believed the wages we earn for SIN was *just the opposite of* DEATH. I had been taught that what we get paid for SIN was ETERNAL life—in hell fire! This verse says eternal life is something we can only receive AS A GIFT from GOD.

But NO! Surely no! We already *have* eternal life—so I supposed—we 'are immortal souls! I learned that many theologians INTERPRET that verse—that is, they PUT A DIFFERENT MEANING INTO IT. They *change* the meaning of the words to make them conform to their belief instead of letting God's Word *change their belief* to conform with God's Truth. They manufacture a new definition of the word "*death*." They define "*death*" to mean "separation from God." I looked at this verse again. On the one hand, for sin, we get *death*. On the other hand, the *opposite* of that penalty is ETERNAL LIFE. Now, it certainly was clear, if ETERNAL LIFE is the very *opposite* of DEATH, then DEATH cannot mean eternal life!

I was shocked to find that in many—if not most—teachings of Jesus Christ and the New Testament, the churches now teach the very opposite, and follow opposite customs and practices! I was confused! My head was swimming!

But there it was, in plain language. I read that SOULS can die! "The soul that sinneth, it shall die! (Ezek. 18:4, 20). It was important enough to be stated twice. Then my startled eyes read, in Revelation 16:3: "And every living *soul* DIED in the sea." That said SOULS can DIE. Then I saw

where Jesus said souls can be DESTROYED! "... But rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna" (Matt. 10:28).

It began to look like the churches *were* wrong, after all! But did not Jesus Christ found His CHURCH? He surely did, and I found where He said the gates of the grave would never prevail against it—IT COULD NOT BE DESTROYED! I found where Jesus Christ said He would never leave nor forsake it—where He would always be "in the midst" of it. I found where He was the living HEAD of it! Jesus Christ was resurrected from the grave. HE IS STILL *ALIVE!*

So *WHERE* was the Church *He* was guiding, directing, and using?

I was perplexed. But I kept searching. I continued studying.

I found where Jesus Christ came to DO THE WORK OF GOD. He came to bring mankind the GOSPEL, from GOD. Yet He said that *of Himself*—as a human—by His own human power, He could do nothing—he was utterly *powerless*, of Himself, for this divine spiritual MISSION. The Father that dwelt within Him—by the power of His Holy Spirit—did the work. So it was really GOD doing it, by His Holy Spirit, using the individual human mind and body of Jesus as His instrument. GOD started His WORK of revealing HIS MESSAGE and building His Church through the individual human BODY of Jesus Christ.

I saw where God's true CHURCH is called "THE BODY OF CHRIST" (I Cor. 12:27, 13; Rom. 12:5). How could the CHURCH be the BODY OF CHRIST? I searched. I studied. God's Word made the truth PLAIN. God *started* His Gospel WORK—proclaiming the Gospel (Good News) of HIS KINGDOM through the individual human BODY of Jesus. But after His resurrection, Jesus sent the same HOLY SPIRIT on the day of Pentecost, 31 A.D., and thereafter, to enter into the COLLECTIVE BODY of those constituting GOD'S CHURCH.

The CHURCH, then, is the COLLECTIVE BODY Christ uses as HIS INSTRUMENT, empowered by God's Spirit, to carry on GOD'S WORK. Jesus Christ heads and directs it from heaven!

How does one become a member of this ONE BODY? By receiving God's

Holy Spirit. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized [immersed] into ONE BODY" (I Cor. 12:13). The word baptize means immerse—to plunge into. It is God's Holy Spirit which PUTS ONE INTO the only true Church!

But are there MANY CHURCHES? No, everywhere the New Testament speaks of the ONE Body—ONE CHURCH. "For the BODY is not one member, but many . . . But now they are many members, yet but ONE BODY" (I Cor. 12:14, 20).

Christ is NOT divided (I Cor. 1:13). There is ONE true Church. All in it "speak the same thing" (I Cor. 12:13). The word baptize means immerse.

**The Divine Mission.** But WHAT is the divine MISSION of that Church? What is its PURPOSE? The answer is to do the WORK OF GOD, which Jesus started, and now continues through His Church. And what did Jesus start DOING?

Mark tells us. "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1). Then, beginning verse 2, Mark records how John the Baptist prepared the way before Him. Coming, then, directly to the BEGINNING of the WORK Christ did, Mark says: "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee . . ."—DOING WHAT?—" . . . preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: REPENT ye, and BELIEVE the gospel" (Mark 1:14-15).

Two things Jesus commanded His hearers to do: 1) REPENT, and 2) BELIEVE. But believe WHAT? Believe His GOSPEL! You have to believe that Gospel—that Good News of the KINGDOM OF GOD, to be saved! JESUS SAID SO!

The KINGDOM OF GOD is the GOVERNMENT of God. It is also the divine FAMILY of God, into which we may be born. It is the UNIVERSE-RULING family! You repent of—WHAT? Your rebellion against that GOVERNMENT of God. God governs by His LAW, summed up by the Ten Commandments. Some will say, we must repent of SIN! Yes, SURELY! For sin IS the transgression of the LAW (I John 3:4). Repentance means unconditional SURRENDER to the GOVERNMENT of God—to yield to let God RULE your life, according to His

laws—it means to live by EVERY WORD IN THE BIBLE (Matt. 4:4).

What is the divine MISSION of God's true CHURCH? It is to carry on THE WORK Jesus started. Jesus commissioned His Church: "Go ye into all the world, and PREACH THE GOSPEL to every creature." Not just any gospel. Not a gospel merely about the Person of Christ—but His Gospel of the Kingdom of God—the Gospel He said we have to BELIEVE in order to be converted and saved!

Again, Matthew records His Great Commission: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in [into] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]: teaching them to observe all things I have COMMANDED you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:19-20). In proclaiming His GOSPEL, Jesus specifically said, "Teach them to OBEY GOD'S COMMANDMENTS"!

Jesus gave a prophecy for our time—just before the END of this world. His disciples came to Him privately. They asked, "What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the age?" (Matt. 24:3.) Jesus warned against false ministers, saying that Jesus is Christ—yet DECEIVING THE MANY. And answering their question as to what sign would show when He is to come, He said: "And this gospel of the KINGDOM [the same Gospel He taught the original apostles] shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations: AND THEN shall the END come" (Matt. 24:14).

That Gospel was not preached after 70 A.D. to all the world. In every generation it has been preached—to a FEW, but not to ALL THE WORLD—on ALL CONTINENTS!

Wherever God's true Church is—the ONE Church that is CHRIST'S—it will be preaching THAT GOSPEL to the whole world—over all continents—today. For we are near the END! That is the Gospel of the living Christ! It is the announcement of the GOOD NEWS of the coming KINGDOM OF GOD to RULE THE WORLD! It is the Gospel of the divine GOVERNMENT. It teaches people to REPENT of rebellion against GOD's government—transgression of GOD'S LAWS. It teaches salvation through

the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—the remission of sins through Jesus' shed blood and reconciliation to God by Christ's DEATH; and salvation through His LIFE.

It has NO PART in this world's governments—its members are AMBASSADORS, as in a strange land, of THE KINGDOM OF GOD, soon to destroy and replace all human governments of the nations today.

**The True Name.** Jesus prayed for His Church: ". . . Holy Father, keep through *thine own name* those whom thou hast given me, that they may be ONE, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them *in thy name* . . . And now come I to thee . . . I have given them thy

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD-

### What is it?

**Kingdom n.** A politically organized community or major territorial unit having a monarchical form of government headed by a king or queen.

The phrase "kingdom of God," which appears frequently in the Bible, is often heard in religious circles. It is generally assumed to be a reference to heaven or to a condition of mind held by believers. Almost no one would apply the standard dictionary definition of "kingdom"—a type of government over a specific territory. Yet that is precisely how the term is most often used in the Bible. The real meaning of the term "kingdom of God" is far more interesting and exciting than the traditional vague concepts. The booklet *Just What Do You Mean . . . Kingdom of God?* clearly explains what the Kingdom of God is and why it's important to you. For a free copy write to the address of our office nearest you.

Word; and the world hath hated them, because *they are not OF the world*, even as I am not OF the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. *They are not OF the world*, even as I am not OF the world. Sanctify them through THY TRUTH: THY WORD is TRUTH" (John 17:11-17).

Jesus said His true Church was to be KEPT *in the name* of the Father—GOD. *Twelve times* in the New Testament, the NAME of this one true Church is The CHURCH OF GOD! It is GOD's Church, and Jesus Christ is its guiding, sustaining, directing HEAD!

In five passages where the true NAME of the Church appears, the entire Body of Christ—the Church as a whole—is indicated. Thus when speaking of the entire Church, including all its individual members on earth, the name is "The CHURCH OF GOD." Here are these five passages:

1) Acts 20:28. The admonition to the elders is to "feed THE CHURCH OF GOD."

2) I Corinthians 10:32. "Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to THE CHURCH OF GOD."

3) I Corinthians 11:22. "... or despise ye THE CHURCH OF GOD, and shame them that have not?"

4) I Corinthians 15:9. Paul wrote: "For ... I persecuted THE CHURCH OF GOD."

5) Galatians 1:13. This verse repeats the one last given—"I persecuted THE CHURCH OF GOD."

Where one specific local congregation is mentioned, the true Church is called "The Church of God," often in connection with the *place* or location. Here are four more passages:

6) I Corinthians 1:2: "THE CHURCH OF GOD which is at Corinth."

7) II Corinthians 1:1. "THE CHURCH OF GOD which is at Corinth."

8) I Timothy 3:5. In speaking of a local elder in a local congregation, Paul wrote Timothy: "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of THE CHURCH OF GOD?"

9) I Timothy 3:15. "... Behave thyself in the house of God, which is THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD." Here it is The Church of the *Living* God.

In speaking of the local congregation collectively, not as one general Body, but as the total of all local congregations, the Bible name is "The CHURCHES OF GOD." Here are the final three verses of the twelve which name the Church:

10) I Corinthians 11:16. "... We have no such custom, neither THE CHURCHES OF GOD."

11) I Thessalonians 2:14. "For ye, brethren, became followers of THE CHURCHES OF GOD which in Judea are in Christ Jesus."

12) II Thessalonians 1:4. "So that we ourselves glory in you in THE CHURCHES OF GOD."

In some New Testament instances, a descriptive adjective is added to the name, as the Church of God at Corinth, or the Churches of God in Judea. And today, it is the Worldwide Church of God.

In this world, churches are named after MEN, or after the SYSTEM men have devised, or the kind of church government MEN have thought out, CONTRARY to God's Word, or after a significant doctrine they emphasize, or what men hope to make it—all-encompassing, universal or catholic. But wherever that ONE true Church is, it will be named THE CHURCH OF GOD.

But that is not all. Many have appropriated God's name, but are not proclaiming the KINGDOM OF GOD, as the GOVERNMENT of God, which we must OBEY—teaching obedience to God's Law (Ten Commandments)—teaching REPENTANCE of rebellion and transgressing God's Holy Law—teaching that we may be now BEGOTTEN into the KINGDOM (Family) of God, and may, by the resurrection, be BORN into the GOD FAMILY! That true Church is preaching the imminency of the coming of CHRIST as KING of kings and LORD of lords, to RULE all nations for a thousand years on earth. Not up in heaven, but ON THIS EARTH (Rev. 5:10).

There is only ONE such Church!

It is doing the WORK OF GOD. It is, as Jesus said it would be, a "little flock," persecuted, despised by the world.

**Personal Counsel.** God's Church does have dedicated, consecrated, converted, fully instructed and trained, ordained MINISTERS in all parts of the world—available to call

on you, visit you in your home, answer your questions, explain the Bible to you—*IF YOU REQUEST IT!* But none of them will *EVER* call on you, unless YOU of your own free will request it! Paul had visited the elders (ministers) at Ephesus from house to house—BUT, regarding the general public, Jesus said, "GO NOT from house to house" (Luke 10:7).

Neither Jesus, nor Peter, nor Paul, nor any of the original true apostles ever approached people and personally URGED conversion on them. God has made every human a FREE MORAL AGENT. God compels each to MAKE HIS OWN DECISION, and the true GOD will never force you to be converted.

But if you, of your own volition, want to know MORE about the very Church which Jesus Christ founded, and heads today—if you'd like to ask questions about it, why not write your request for a personal visit? We will have one of God's own ministers call on you. And let me suggest that you JOT DOWN on paper the QUESTIONS you are going to want to ask. I've learned, personally, by more than 46 years' experience, that you'll forget them unless you do.

Hundreds and hundreds—yes, thousands upon thousands—are being converted—their lives CHANGED—by this WORK OF GOD, through *The WORLD TOMORROW* broadcast worldwide, through the ministry of the Worldwide Church of God, through the Ambassador College Correspondence Course, and other vital free literature we send upon request. Some, not realizing one of God's own called consecrated ministers could call and explain, and answer questions, have JOINED one of the churches of this world. You cannot JOIN the true Church of God—the Almighty GOD *puts you in*. But if you have questions about fellowship, doctrines or practice—or ANY questions about the Church or the Bible, or the Christian LIFE, write me. I cannot call and visit with you personally any more (as I used to do and wish I still could), but God has now given me many truly called and chosen men who CAN.

Weigh carefully the FACTS, according to your own BIBLE. Then make your decision and take what steps GOD shows you. □

# JUST WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

**Jesus Christ said: "I will build my Church." What IS that Church—human organization, or spiritual organism? Of whom composed? How does one become a member? Does it have a divine Commission?—and if so, WHAT?—and HOW carried out? By organization, or by individuals acting independently?**

**M**ANY ARE CONFUSED about the nature of the Church founded by Jesus Christ. How shall we know? WHO or WHAT is the AUTHORITY to give us the right answer?

It was Jesus Christ who said, "I will build my Church." He is the "WORD" of God (John 1:1-3) in person—the Spokesman. The Bible is the Word of God in writing—the Maker's Instruction Book for mankind. The Bible, therefore, is the Authority.

**HOW One Becomes a Member.** The first place the word "church" is used following the inception of that Church (Pentecost, 31 A.D.) is Acts 2:47: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." This immediately gives insight into the means by which one enters the Church as a member. *God adds each one.* It is God who *puts each one into* the Church as a member.

Again, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (I Cor. 12:13). The word "baptized" means immersed—put into. So, again, it is GOD who *puts one into* His Church. And HOW? By His Spirit! When God bestows within one His Holy Spirit, that puts the believer into the Church.

So note it well! One cannot enter the true Church by putting himself in—by "joining." One may join a social club, a sports team, or a secular group—but NOT the Church of God. Incidentally, is it not significant that so many of this world's "churches" have become, virtually, just social clubs?

Notice, too, the Church is here referred to as "one body." In several passages the Church is referred to as "the body of Christ." I Corinthians 12:12 says: "For as the body is one, and hath many members. . . ."

How is the Church "the Body of Christ"? Few understand.

Here is the explanation.

**Jesus Started the Work of God.** God sent Jesus into the world to start the Work of God. When Jesus was twelve years old, His parents, returning to Nazareth from attending the Passover at Jerusalem, discovered the child was not among the company. Returning to Jerusalem, "they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." And when His parents saw Him, "they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? . . . And he said unto them . . . wist ye not that *I must be about my Father's business?*" (Luke 2:40-49.)

What was His father's business—what is the Work of God?

God sent His Son Jesus into the world in the human flesh as a Messenger with a Message. He was the Messenger of the Covenant—the New Covenant, as foretold in Malachi 3:1.

And what was that Message? John the Baptist was to prepare the way before Him (Mal. 3:1). Also His Message was a NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT of *advance* GOOD NEWS ("gospel" means good news) of the future.

So we read: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare the way before thee. . . . Now, after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of THE KINGDOM OF GOD" (Mark 1:1, 2, 14).

How did Jesus start the Work of God?

- 1) By proclaiming the Good News of the coming KINGDOM OF GOD.
- 2) By calling and teaching His disciples the same Message.

Notice: "Then Jesus called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils [demons], and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach *the kingdom of God* . . ." (Luke 9:1-2).

**The Divine Commission.** What is the PURPOSE of the Church—its divine Commission? To proclaim this Gospel as a witness to the world. In other words, *to carry on* the WORK OF GOD, which Jesus, in person, started.

After His resurrection, He gave His disciples this Commission: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). The Commission to the Church, then, is to *carry on* the Father's business—to proclaim the Message of the New Covenant that God sent into the world by His Son and Messenger, Jesus.

Jesus gave His life for us, but He ROSE from the dead, and right now TODAY He is the *living* Jesus Christ. And His Commission for our day is: "And this gospel of the kingdom

shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end [of this age] come" (Matt. 24:14).

**How the "Body of Christ".** The twelve disciples became the twelve original apostles. But *HOW* did they, with the other disciples, become "the BODY of Christ"?

While Jesus was starting the Work of God, He said, "I can of mine own self do nothing," and again, "The Son can do nothing of himself," and again, "... but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

It was the power of God's Holy Spirit, dwelling in His individual human body, doing THE WORK OF GOD.

Without this same Spirit dwelling in them, His disciples would be utterly impotent. The very night before His crucifixion He said to them: "As the branch [of a grapevine] cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches... without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:4, 5). It is sap flowing from the vine into the branch that produces grapes. It is the Spirit of God and of the living Christ, flowing into the collective Body that is the Church that produces results.

After His resurrection, just before ascending to God's throne in heaven, Jesus commanded these apostles: "... that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father..."—that is, for the Holy Spirit, the same power that did the Work of God in Jesus' human body.

On the day of Pentecost, 31 A.D., this POWER of God did come and enter into the COLLECTIVE BODY—the Church—that now was to carry on the Work of God.

**The Head of God's Church.** When Jesus ascended to the throne of God (the Father of the divine creating-ruling-governing Family) in heaven, He became the Head of the Church. Notice Eph. 1:22, 23: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body."

The CHURCH is composed of those who are the begotten CHILDREN OF GOD—of the FATHER of the divine

Family. One *becomes* a begotten SON of God upon receiving within him the Holy Spirit of God.

This Spirit comes from the very Person of God—it is, first of all, the impregnating LIFE of God—divine, eternal, ever-living LIFE. As the physical sperm cell from the body of a human father begets a human embryo that develops into a fetus and later is born a human child, so the Spirit of God begets us into a state by which we are called, even now in this life, sons of God (I John 3:2).

**Of What Composed.** And thus it is that the CHURCH is composed of those who are the children of God. That is why the CHURCH is the Church of GOD, even as the Old Testament Church was called "the congregation of Israel"—the human children of Israel.

That is why, also, one CANNOT PUT HIMSELF into the Church by "deciding to JOIN." When he becomes a son of GOD, by having and being led by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:14), then God has PUT HIM INTO the Church by begetting him as a son of God.

"Joining" a group that calls itself a church—having one's name on the membership roll of some group calling itself a church—does not make one in true fact a member of THE Church Jesus founded. Here is positive proof: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:9).

I have shown that it is the living Christ who puts members into His Church—and it is done BY the Holy Spirit. Notice, now, the conditions for receiving God's Spirit—Acts 2:38: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." This is speaking of being baptized in water—after which they shall receive the Holy Spirit, which, in turn, baptizes—puts them into—the Church.

Those who *were* so baptized on that day of Pentecost did receive God's Holy Spirit, and DID thereupon become the Church, and TO THEM, God "added to the church daily" (Acts 2:47).

**The FOUNDATION of the Church.** Notice, now, the FOUNDATION upon which the Church is built. To the converts at Ephesus, who had been Gentiles, Paul was inspired to write: "Now therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens [of a GOVERNMENT] with the saints, and of the household [FAMILY] of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:19-20).

Thus you see how the one and only true CHURCH is NOT an ORGANIZATION OF MEN, but a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM. Yet that fact does not preclude organization.

**Is the Church Organized?** But did Christ, the HEAD of the Church, ORGANIZE that Church? Does it have a definite form of organization?

Indeed He did—and indeed it has!

First of all, the true Church of God is a spiritual organism. It is NOT a human organization. This spiritual organism is the "Body of Christ" existing for the PURPOSE of carrying on THE WORK OF GOD.

The resurrected, eternally living Jesus Christ is the HEAD of the Church. The very fact the Church has a Head implies organization. The living Christ directs, leads, inspires, and blesses the Church in doing God's Work.

But it is a BIG, WORLDWIDE WORK. If every individual in it goes out alone, independently, trying to carry out the entire divine Commission in whatever way he sees fit, we shall have confusion, a house divided against itself.

**Even Nature Is Organized.** God is CREATOR. Everything God has created in nature is ORGANIZED. Take a sturdy, beautiful oak tree. It has a root system in the ground. It has a main trunk. It has major branches joining to that trunk, smaller branches joined to them, still smaller branches joined to each minor branch, and finally the twigs joined to the smallest branches. But they are all joined together as a system.

Jesus used the example of the vine. He is the Vine... we the branches. Unless we are joined systematically to the Vine, we can produce NOTHING. In a grape vine, there is ORDER—SYSTEM—organization.



The whole WORK OF GOD functions toward the restoration of what has been taken away from the earth—the GOVERNMENT OF GOD. The Kingdom of God IS that government. That government is an ORGANIZED government.

God's form of government is government from the top down. God the Father is the extreme top. Under Him is the living Christ, administering God's Government *as God directs*.

**Government in the Church.** And Jesus has set ORGANIZATION—government—order—in the Church, under Him. God compares this organized Body of Christ to a BUILDING:

"Now therefore ye . . . are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building *fitly framed together* groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:19-22).

The living Christ, Head of the Church, has PUT the various administrators, officers, and members into the Church AS HE HIMSELF CHOSE. Not as a man chooses for himself.

**Administrators AS GOD CHOSE.** "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers"—WHY? For what PURPOSE? "For the perfecting of the saints, *for the WORK of the ministry*, for the edifying of the BODY OF CHRIST: *till* we all come in the UNITY of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ . . . speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the WHOLE BODY FITLY JOINED TOGETHER AND COMPACTED by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of EVERY PART [each individual member], maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:11-16).

Christ has, indeed, ORGANIZED HIS CHURCH, SO FITLY joined together as a physical building put together with the precision of every part of the most expert craftsmen.

He chose the chief administrators, UNDER HIM. God's government is government FROM THE TOP DOWN.

All do not have the same office. And God has given various members in His Church special TALENTS, as gifts by and through His Spirit, and aptitudes, each for his part *as CHRIST has chosen*, in the ORGANIZED EFFORT of carrying on Christ's WORK.

God gives these special talents, aptitudes for certain phases of administration in His Work, as HE wills, but also according to each one's natural aptitudes.

Notice the parables of the pounds and of the talents.

First, the parable of the talents. "For the kingdom of heaven [Matthew uses the term Kingdom of heaven, while Mark, Luke and John all use the term Kingdom of God. They are the same. Not a kingdom IN heaven, but "OF"—denoting ownership] is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability" (Matt. 25:14-15).

Notice, there was something *given* to each. The parable pictures Jesus, of course, going to heaven to be coronated as King of kings and Lord of lords, after which He will return to RULE the earth, administering the Government of God over all nations. His own servants are His converted children of God—His Body, the Church. What He is giving them is spiritual gifts to equip each for his individual part in GOD'S WORK.

But notice, please, He gave these additional spiritual goods, gifts, or tools, "*to every man according to his several ability*"—that is, according to his natural physical aptitudes or abilities. On His return as World Ruler, He called each servant to accounting as to HOW WELL each had done with what Christ had given him to do with.

By comparison of this parable with that of the pounds in Luke 19:11-27, you will see that God judges us according to how well we do in proportion to what we have to do with. These servants were to "occupy" or carry on the Work till He returns.

**Special Spiritual Gifts.** Now notice more about the spiritual GIFTS God gives those in His Body, doing His WORK, in I Corinthians 12:

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant."

Yet most people are in total ignorance of these gifts and their meaning and uses. Continue:

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all" (verses 4-6). It is the same God WORKING in the "Body of Christ"—the Church. HE does the Work of God, by the one Spirit of God, IN the collective Body called out of the world as His instrument doing His Work.

Notice carefully, in this Work of God, which He WORKS in us by His Spirit, there are different gifts, BECAUSE there are various and *different* administrations, in administering God's Work—different offices—different kinds of jobs. There are various and different OPERATIONS in carrying on the Work. These require various and different aptitudes and abilities in various and

## WHERE WILL YOU BE IN THE NEXT LIFE?

Yes, there is life after death. But it's not at all like the "heaven" and "hell" concepts commonly believed. If you'd like to have a better understanding of what the Bible says about the next life, why not request two free booklets *What Will You Be Doing in the Next Life?* and *Just What Do You Mean . . . Salvation?* To obtain your copies, write to our office nearest to you. (See back page for addresses.)

different members in the Body. **GOD Chooses Each Member's Job.** We do not all do the same job!

These special spiritual gifts are given "to profit withal." That is, to profit THE WORK—not the individual. These gifts are aptitudes, or spiritual "tools" to use in doing the Work—not ornaments to embellish the person, as some have seemed to think—bragging about the least of the gifts.

God Himself decides which gifts to give each member: "But all these [gifts] worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as HE will" (verse 11).

Continue: "For the body [of Christ—the Church] is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?" (Verses 14-15.)

If one young man has been given special aptitude for a certain more or less routine office job that is actually a big help in the whole organized Work, he is doing HIS PART in the Work. But is each one free to decide whether he will be the apostle, or the pastor, or a teacher, or a routine office worker making it possible for *them* to do *their* jobs?

Here is your answer: "But now hath GOD set the members every one of them in the body, *as it hath pleased HIM*" (verse 18).

But what if one is placed, by those God has set over him, in an office that this individual considers very unimportant, not honorable enough to suit his vanity?

Here's the answer: "Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem [to us] to be more feeble, *are necessary*; and those members of the body, *which we think* to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness . . . but GOD hath tempered the body together . . . THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO SCHISM [division] IN THE BODY. . . . Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And GOD hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of languages. Are all apostles? are all

prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? . . . but covet earnestly the best gifts . . ." (verses 22-31).

We might mention at this point that in local churches during the first century, local elders were ordained. It is evident that some of these were ministers—that is, preachers—and some evidently were not preachers, but merely leaders or teachers.

**New Testament Officials in Order of Rank.** In the New Testament there are three terms used for preachers or ministers—elders, bishops, overseers. All three mean the same. Yet some elders were apostles or evangelists, but most elders were NOT apostles or evangelists.

Putting all New Testament passages together, the ADMINISTRATIVE offices, in order of rank and authority under Christ, were: 1st, apostles; 2nd, evangelists (in the New Testament, prophets did not have administrative offices, but, prior to completion of writing the New Testament, prophets received direct communication or instruction from God, which they in turn communicated to apostles. Today God's instruction to the Church is complete, in the written Scriptures); pastors; preaching elders; and local non-preaching elders and teachers. There also were deacons and deaconesses, appointed to take care of physical duties.

Now I have shown that the true Church of God is NOT a human organization or corporation, but a spiritual organism, composed of all who have and are being led by the Holy Spirit of God abiding in them. Yet the Church is ORGANIZED.

**Is It Wrong to Incorporate?** What about incorporating according to the civil laws of man? The answer is: God instructs His Church to be subject to the powers of man's government over him.

When—in our time—the Work of God was small there was no need of being incorporated. This Work was NOT incorporated *until it became necessary* in order to deal with the world in carrying out the Commission to go to the world with Christ's Gospel. The Work has grown worldwide and very large, and human governmental laws would not allow it to function without incorporating.

But is the corporation the Church?

**IT IS NOT!** The Church existed as a spiritual organism, organized as CHRIST organized it (NOT organized on any human plan), and it carried on the SAME Work of God, with the SAME divinely directed organization BEFORE it incorporated as it does today. It is organized according to GOD's pattern, not man's legal corporate pattern.

Now some questions naturally emerge.

Can one who does not know of the true organized Body doing God's Work, and therefore is outside of it, be a member of the true Church which Christ built? The answer is yes—for it is possible for one to have truly repented, believed, and received God's Spirit—and be following that Spirit as far as he sees and understands—who does not know of the organized Work Christ is using today. But surely God's Spirit in him would lead one, in due time, into his part in the organized Body the living Christ is directing.

Is it possible that one who has joined a sect, church, or denomination NOT doing God's Work, might be truly converted, and led by God's Spirit in him? The answer is YES—I have known of a few. But in every case, either they came INTO the organized spiritual organism Christ is using in the real Work of God—or, when their eyes were opened to further light and truth, they rejected it and LOST the Spirit of God. And this was amply demonstrated by the fruits.

If other questions present themselves to readers, *we shall be glad to answer privately* if you will write them.

Through His Holy Spirit God gives His children "light"—TRUTH—to *walk in the light*, "lest darkness come upon you."

I have not been called to sit in judgment of others, but to follow Christ as He leads and directs, and witness to the true light. Hundreds of millions have now HEARD, SEEN, or READ. Jesus said that His sheep do hear and RECOGNIZE His voice and His truth, and that *they will follow Him!*

Every year, now, added thousands *are* hearing, RECOGNIZING His truth, and following Him where He is working! □

# WHY The CHURCH?

**The real purpose and function of the Church has not been understood.  
This article brings the eye-opening TRUTH.**

When Jesus Christ returns to earth in supernatural splendor, power and glory, He is coming to His TEMPLE. But *where* is that temple—when will it be built?

Many students of the Bible have wondered—speculated. Will the Israelis after all destroy the Dome of the Rock—the Moslem temple standing today on the site of both Solomon's temple and the temple to which Jesus came at His first appearing?

Malachi's prophecy says:

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek [Christ], shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant . . ." (Malachi 3:1).

It was John the Baptist who prepared the way—but that was before Jesus' FIRST coming. When we read on through verses 2 to 6 it becomes altogether evident this prophecy in Malachi is talking about Christ's *second* coming, in power and glory, to RULE.

WHO, then, as a human messenger (one bearing a message) was to prepare the way before His SECOND coming? And *what of the temple* to which He is to come?

**Zerubbabel a type.** Look briefly at the prophecy of Haggai. It concerns the contingent of Jews who returned to Jerusalem 70 years after the destruction of Solomon's temple to build the second temple on the same site.

The prophecy concerns Zerubbabel, governor of the contingent and builder of this second temple. This was the same temple to which Jesus did come—except the Roman King Herod had somewhat enlarged, restored and embellished it.

But Zerubbabel was merely a TYPE. The prophecy, as we see plainly beginning verse 6, chapter 2, is millennial.

"For thus saith the Eternal of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire [RSV has, 'so that the treasures of all nations shall come'] of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts . . . The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former."

It is speaking of the end-time—at the second coming of Christ.

Now what does it mean, the glory of this latter house (or *latter-day* house) shall be greater than that of the former—that is, greater in splendor than Solomon's temple, which had the most glorious splendor of any building on earth? Certainly the second temple, built by Zerubbabel, even though larger, could not *compare* in splendor to Solomon's.

But God was speaking of the temple *to which Christ shall come*, at His glorious second coming as King of kings and Lord of lords!

Jesus Christ came the first time still in the days of old-covenant Israel—a carnal-minded and rebellious people. It was a material temple, even as He came to a physical, carnal people.

But He is coming the second time in supreme power and glory. He will come this time to a GLORIOUS TEMPLE—a SPIRITUAL, not a material temple!

**A glorified temple.** Of God's Church He says in the second chapter of Ephesians, "Now therefore ye are . . . of the household [family] of God [the CHURCH]; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom *all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple* in the Lord." (emphasis mine, Ephesians 2:19-22).

The glorified Christ is coming to the glorified temple—with a glory far greater than Solomon's temple!

Note it. Christ is *not* coming to a material building, but to His Church, then to be GLORIFIED with Him.

Notice further, in Ephesians, chapter 4: "From whom the whole body [body of Christ—the Church] *fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth . . .*" (verse 16).

Now let's UNDERSTAND.

Old Testament Israel, both church and state, lived in the days of the first Adam. They had the one human spirit—they were carnal minded, hostile against God, not subject to the law of God. But God gave them His laws (spiritual, as well as sacrificial, ceremonial and statutory). It proved that without the *second* Spirit—the Holy Spirit of God—people would not turn to the right way of life, *even though God revealed to them the knowledge*, not only of Himself, but of His GOVERNMENT!

But the New Testament Church of God started out with God's Holy Spirit added to the human spirit, even from its inception.

The Old Testament sacrificial laws and ceremonial rituals were a mere *temporary substitute* for Christ and the Holy Spirit. When the reality came the substitute was ended, but the basic SPIRITUAL LAW—the law of LOVE codified in the Ten Commandments—continued. But the CHURCH was required, having the Holy Spirit, to obey them not merely according to the strictness of the letter, but according to the spirit—or principal or obvious intent of the law (II Corinthians 3:6).

**Purpose and function of Church.** Now we come to the purpose and function of the Church of God.

Immediately after the foundation of the Church, the apostles Peter and John performed a sensational healing

of a well-known cripple—after which Peter preached to the crowd attracted (Acts 3:1-26). But immediately the priests, captains of the temple and Sadducees threw the apostles into prison overnight (Acts 4:1-3). And the next morning the apostles were brought before the high priest and his family, besides other rulers and dignitaries. They were severely THREATENED and sternly commanded to cease preaching in the name of Christ.

These apostles were human. This experience was unnerving! They went immediately to a company of CHURCH MEMBERS for encouragement, prayer and morale strengthening (Acts 4:23).

These loyal Church brethren “lifted up their voice to God . . .” (Acts 4:24) in united prayer, petitioning God for inspiration and divine power that the apostles might continue boldly proclaiming the message.

Notice here an important function of the Church. The Church lay members did not go forth with the message—they *backed up*, unitedly, the apostles who were charged with THE GREAT COMMISSION. Notice:

“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together . . .” (Acts 4:31).

But these Church brethren were able to stand solidly and loyally back of the apostle, because they “were of one heart and of one soul [mind]” (verse 32).

Later, when the savage persecution had set in, the apostle James was martyred. King Herod also had Peter cast into prison, with the intent probably of killing him also (Acts 12:1-4).

“But” (verse 5) “prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.”

The result? God sent an angel to loose the chains that bound Peter, and to lead him secretly out of the prison. Peter fled on to Caesarea.

**The prevailing error.** At this point it is well to clarify further the most common and universal erroneous belief. It is the assumption that 1) God is desperately waging a contest against Satan, attempting to get every living human “saved” now! This assumption must concede that Satan is winning that contest over-

whelmingly! But there is no SUCH CONTEST. Satan has power to do ONLY what God ALLOWS!

2) The corollary to this assumption is an even more tragic belief that has acquired universal acceptance. And that is the fallacy that everyone *not* now saved is lost—condemned to an eternal hell fire, which, incidentally, is also a myth. The vast majority are neither saved nor lost. Just not yet JUDGED!

It was our first human progenitor that made the CHOICE. God accepted his decision and pronounced sentence on Adam’s world for 6,000 years—except for those God called for some special performance. The 6,000-year sentence is about to expire, and a happy, joyful world of PEACE, with eternal life available to all, is now just around the corner.

Jesus Christ emphatically verified this sentence God pronounced on the world. He said plainly, “NO MAN CAN come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him . . .” (John 6:44). And none can come to God, except through Him!

So let us clarify once for all time that the purpose of the Church is definitely NOT to preach or persuade the whole world into a spiritual salvation, NOW—before Christ’s second coming!

Some have construed the GREAT COMMISSION as being to the Church as a whole—to evangelize and “save” the world—NOW. A large system of missionaries from traditional Christianity has resulted.

Examine now, the three places where THE GREAT COMMISSION is explained.

Examine the report of THE GREAT COMMISSION recorded in Matthew 28:

“Now the eleven disciples [Judas already had left them] went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them . . .” To WHOM? Not the Church as a whole. Only to the disciples who were to become the original APOSTLES! “. . . All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. GO therefore and make disciples [learners—those taught] of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the

Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Matthew 28:16-20, RSV).

‘One sent forth.’ Notice carefully. This GREAT COMMISSION to be SENT FORTH with Christ’s Gospel message was given only to those who were apostles, and the word *apostle* means “one sent forth” with the message.

The King James translation of the above has been MISinterpreted by some to imply that ALL the people in every nation were to be converted *then*. The RSV translation, above quoted, makes it clear. Make disciples, students, learners to HEAR the message—*within* all nations.

The AV (King James version) has: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them . . .” The sense is, teach *within* all nations, NOT teaching every individual. And “baptizing them” can refer ONLY to those God specially *called*, since Christ said plainly, “NO MAN CAN come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him.”

Now examine Mark’s account of THE GREAT COMMISSION. Most translations from the original Greek text into English OMIT verses 9 to 20, saying these verses were NOT INSPIRED, and were added at a later date by uninspired editors. Even so, the RSV does quote these verses in finer type, as follows:

“And he said to them [the 11 apostles], Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation.” That is, announce the GOOD NEWS of the coming Kingdom of God.

Continue: “He who believes and is baptized will be saved . . .” But Jesus plainly said NO MAN could come to Christ—believe—except those specially called by the Father!

Notice now the King James translation: “Afterward he [Jesus] appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat . . . And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . .” (Mark 16:14-16). Of course NONE could believe and be baptized EXCEPT those God the Father specially called. So there is NOWHERE ANY CONTRADICTION. The GREAT COMMISSION was given to the

APOSTLES—those “sent forth” with the message—NOT the lay members of the Church.

**Called to a special service.** What then? Did not the lay members have any part in proclaiming the Gospel? Definitely they did, as we have seen. Their part was to *back up* the apostles—stand behind them with their prayers, encouragement, tithes and offerings.

They are PART OF A WELL-ORGANIZED TEAM, as we shall show in more detail.

And there is NO EVIDENCE in either Matthew’s account or Mark’s, that any were to be baptized *except* those God the Father had called to a special service. NOTHING contradicts the fact that God had withdrawn His Holy Spirit from ALL, *except* those specially called.

Now notice the account in Matthew 24. This is in the form of a prophecy, for our present living generation:

The AV has, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end [of this age] come” (Matthew 24:14).

The RSV is the same in meaning: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

**Church an organized body.** Is the Church of God merely a scattered, isolated number of professing Christians, each going his own way to get out the Gospel or, as many believe, to GET his personal salvation and eternal life?

Jesus Christ specially called His disciples, trained them to become His apostles. To THEM—the apostles, the ones “sent forth” with His Gospel message—He gave THE GREAT COMMISSION—not to the laity of the Church as a whole.

But WHAT OF GOD’S CHURCH? HOW ORGANIZED? It is a spiritual organism—but also it is WELL ORGANIZED, as we shall now see.

The Church is the begotten family or household of God (Ephesians 2:19). “And are built upon the FOUNDATION of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20).

It is, continues verse 21, like a “building fitly framed together

[which] groweth unto an holy TEMPLE in the Lord.”

It is the TEMPLE to which Christ shall come at His second coming in GLORY! It is that body of Christ that is the affianced BRIDE of Christ, to be married to Him (as the old covenant was a marriage) when He returns.

In Ephesians, “. . . Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it . . . That he might present it to himself a GLORIOUS CHURCH . . .” (Ephesians 5:25-27) in the resurrection!

Of that same marriage, “. . . Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the MARRIAGE of the Lamb [Christ] is come, and his wife [the resurrected glorified Church] hath made herself ready” (Revelation 19:6-7).

It is not only a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM—it is a well-organized ORGANIZATION. Notice I Corinthians 12:

“. . . Brethren, I would not have you ignorant” (I Corinthians 12:1). “But now are they many members, YET BUT ONE BODY” (verse 20).

But it is a well-ORGANIZED body “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are *differences of administrations*, but it is the same Lord. And there are DIVERSITIES OF OPERATIONS, but it is the same God which worketh all in all . . . But all these worketh that one and selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally *as he will*. For as the body is ONE . . .” (united, organized into cooperative teamwork—not scattered individuals, each claiming to serve God *in his own way*).

Repeating, “For as the body is ONE, and hath many members, and all the members of that ONE BODY, being many, are ONE BODY: so also is Christ. For by ONE SPIRIT are we all baptized into one body . . .” (verses 4 to 13).

Continuing in verse 25, “That there should be no schism [division] in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another” (that is, outgoing concern and love).

Continuing in verse 28, “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”

Now back to Ephesians. What about the member who GOES OUT OF THE CHURCH to have his *own* relationship with Christ, to GET his own salvation? He is OUTSIDE the body of Christ!

Notice, again, the “household of God”—the CHURCH—is built upon a FOUNDATION. Would one build a BUILDING on a foundation of shifting sand?

God’s Church is “built upon the FOUNDATION of the apostles [New Testament], and prophets [Old Testament, whose prophecies are for US TODAY—I Corinthians 10:11], Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:19-20).

HOW WELL ORGANIZED?

“In whom all the building [the Church] fitly framed together groweth unto an holy TEMPLE in the Lord” (verse 21).

Again, “From whom the whole body *fitly joined together* and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of *every* part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:16).

Yes, Christ ORGANIZED His Church.

“And his gifts were, that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers” (Ephesians 4:11, RSV). “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till *we all come in the unity of the faith*, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12-13).

What about a single member—a “joint” or “part”—going off by himself or following a MAN instead of the CHURCH OF GOD that is in direct continuous succession from the apostolic Church founded by Christ A.D. 31? He is like a joint or piece of wood or stone, entirely outside of, and therefore NO PART OF the BODY OF CHRIST that shall MARRY Christ!

We have seen that Christ gave the lay body of the Church the SPECIAL MISSION to *back up* his apostles in their GOING FORTH with the Gospel to the world—with their prayers, encouragement, tithes and offerings.

But this GIVING of their prayers,

encouragement and financial support was GOD'S ASSIGNMENT—as *the very means* of developing in *them* God's holy, righteous character—that they, with the apostles and evangelists, may qualify to RULE with and under Christ in God's Kingdom. This *very means* of character development within the laity is THE WAY OF *GIVING*—not Satan's way of *GETTING*.

God's way—the way of His law—is *GIVING* of outflowing LOVE. It is the *GIVING* way. The person who tries to be an individual *separate* Christian, to GET his own salvation, is going at it the *GETTING* way—*Satan's way*.

Notice again WHY God set apostles, evangelists, pastors and other elders in His Church NOT ONLY for the Work of the ministry, being SENT FORTH into all the world announcing Christ's message of HOPE. Read it again: It was "*For the perfecting of the saints . . . for the edifying [enlightening, instructing] of the body of Christ: TILL we all come in the UNITY of the faith, and of the KNOWLEDGE of the Son of God, unto a perfect man . . .*"

But cannot a single separate individual EDIFY HIMSELF, *outside* of the Church? Not likely—and THAT IS NOT GOD'S WAY.

How does God infuse HIS TRUTH into the Church? NOT through each individual separately—but through the apostles and other ministers under them.

In the time of the first apostles—first century—the Bible was not yet completely written. God used a very few prophets, through whom He communicated. The prophets gave the message to an apostle. Today the Bible is complete. God has used no prophets in the Church in our time.

However, the laity of the Church received their teaching and instruction from *the apostles*. The original 12 had been taught by Christ in person—and so also had Paul. Jesus Christ was the *personal* Word of God. The Bible is the *written* Word of God. It's all the precise same TRUTH and TEACHING, whether from Jesus in person, when on earth, or from the written Word of God. God's apostle for our day was taught by the written Word of God—the SAME IDENTICAL TEACHING!

But what of the separated *individ-*

*ual* believer, who tries to GET his salvation all by himself or by following some MAN or any of hundreds of professing Christian denominations of our day? He is CUT OFF from that TRUE teaching, which Christ reveals to and through His apostle!

What if one in the Church *disagrees* on some point of doctrine? Then he is out of harmony with God's Church. And GOD HAS ONLY THE *ONE* CHURCH.

And all in the Church are commanded to speak the same thing—and it *must* be what CHRIST, either in person or by written Word, has taught His apostle.

To the Church at Corinth, the apostle Paul wrote: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all *speak the same thing*" (I Corinthians 1:10). Some of them wanted to follow Peter, some wanted to follow Apollos, some Paul. But PAUL was their apostle, and Christ taught them by PAUL.

The separated individual believer will follow *his own* idea of God's truth. THAT IS NOT GOD'S WAY.

God in His almighty wisdom, has raised up the CHURCH, as HIS MEANS of teaching all the SAME TRUTH—all speaking the SAME THING! Not each individual *his own thing*!

God raised up the CHURCH, *not only* that its apostles and evangelists go into all the world announcing the GOOD NEWS of the coming Kingdom of God, but also *the very means* for the general body of lay members to develop God's own holy righteous CHARACTER—by means of *GIVING*—giving their continuous prayers for the apostle, *giving* their encouragement, tithes and offerings.

WHAT then, of the person who follows after a man outside the Church or tries to GET his salvation simply by *GETTING* and not *GIVING* that which members are to give to the Church's Work?

Consider Jesus' parable of the pounds in Luke 19. The pound is the British unit of money. Jesus illustrated Himself giving each member, on conversion, one pound—representing the Holy Spirit given at conversion. But the Christian MUST GROW in grace and Christ's knowledge. As he does, by *GIVING* in the Church, he receives an increasing amount of God's Spirit. The isolated,

separated member will probably LOSE OUT (see Luke 19:20-24).

**Why the Church?** Finally, WHY the Church? WHY did not Christ just "save" separated individuals? What is the REAL PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH?

Like most everything in the Bible, the purpose and function of the Church has been grossly misunderstood. The entire world has been deceived by Satan (Revelation 12:9).

Jesus had not come on a soul-saving crusade. The most wide-spread false assumption of all is that Christ is contesting against Satan to "get everybody saved NOW!" And with it, the supposition that all not saved are "LOST"—condemned! They are neither. They are not yet JUDGED!

But in Adam, by his decision, all humanity has been *sentenced* to 6,000 years of being completely cut off from God! That is, all except the comparative very few specifically called for a special mission.

Jesus Christ, I repeat, emphatically verified this 6,000-year sentence (John 6:44). No scripture can or does contradict that plain statement of Jesus.

Jesus called, chose, and for 3½ years trained His apostles to become, with Him and the prophets, the FOUNDATION on which the Church was built. Also He set the example, those 3½ years, for His apostles, in proclaiming (announcing) the coming KINGDOM OF GOD. Then Christ died for the sins of humanity and was resurrected and ascended to God's throne in heaven.

On the day of Pentecost A.D. 31 He sent the Holy Spirit in a great manifestation, both visible and audible, to found His Church.

On that day of Pentecost, it was Peter, chief apostle, who proclaimed the Gospel message—and God ADDED 3,000 baptized that same day.

A day or so later—very possibly the very next day—Peter and John healed the cripple and Peter preached the Gospel. God ADDED another 2,000 to the Church.

It is significant, and generally unrealized, that neither Jesus nor the apostles embarked on any soul-saving crusade, which is a modern Protestant practice. The apostles, as Jesus had done, proclaimed the Gos-

pel—the GOOD NEWS of a coming BETTER WORLD. It was not an emotional pleading, “Won’t you give your heart to the Lord?”

True, because unbelieving Jews did not accept Jesus as their promised Messiah, the apostles, at first, put special emphasis on the fact they were eyewitnesses to Jesus’ Messiahship and resurrection. They had been with Him 3½ years before He was crucified, and 40 days after He rose from the dead.

But they did proclaim the same message Jesus had taught them—the coming Kingdom of God. It was not a begging for souls. “. . . The Lord added to the Church such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47).

When the apostles met with fierce persecution, imprisonment and threat, the laity of the Church ENCOURAGED them, prayed heart-rendingly for them, supported them financially.

So, let the truth be clarified once and for all, the PURPOSE of the Church was NOT to “get the world saved NOW!”

God’s PURPOSE in raising up His Church, in a world otherwise CUT OFF from God, was dual:

1) To provide a united body of Spirit-led believers to back up the apostles (and evangelists) who had been specially trained to GO FORTH into all the world with Christ’s Gospel message. ALL this, as *their part* in THE GREAT COMMISSION. Theirs was a WORK OF GIVING, giving of their prayers, their encouragement and financial support of the ORGANIZED Gospel WORK. And this is GOD’S means of, and the training ground for:

2) The overcoming of Satan, and the constant development of that holy, righteous CHARACTER—thus qualifying them to sit with Christ on the throne of earthwide GOVERNMENT.

GOD’S WAY of developing His holy character was THE GIVING WAY. GOD’S way of life is the GIVING WAY of outgoing LOVE. Satan’s way is INCOMING self-advantage—hostility to God’s way and to His Church.

Those who allow an attitude of hostility and rebellion against God’s Church—and God’s GOVERNMENT within His Church—to cause them to leave, and go it alone or follow a

MAN, are seeking merely TO GET salvation FOR THE SELF! That is NOT God’s WAY!

**The GLORY on beyond.** Happily, the 6,000-year sentence on Adam’s world—being *cut off* from God, is due to END in our present living generation. This world now—still Satan’s world except for God’s CHURCH—is fast plunging into the supreme CRISIS of world tribulation. But it is said to be “darkest just before dawn!”

Then, SUDDENLY, when least expected by the cut-off world, Jesus Christ will come in supreme supernatural POWER AND GLORY! Yes, “at such an hour as ye think not,” said Jesus.

His CHURCH will have been made ready!

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them that are asleep [dead]. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thessalonians 4:15-17). He is coming to RULE ALL THE EARTH!

Then shall be fulfilled Revelation 19:6-7, the mighty voice of the archangel shouting, “ALLELUIA! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice.” The Church, resurrected IN GLORY, shall reign with Christ a thousand years!

Satan will be banished. God will call ALL LIVING to His salvation. After the millennium shall come the GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT (Revelation 20:11-12) when all who had been cut off from God for 6,000 years shall be resurrected MORTAL—and all called to God’s salvation and eternal life!

Then, the glorious eternity beyond—all saints then immortal, *inheriting* the transcendent human potential—RENEWING THE FACE OF ALL DECAYING PLANETS, FINISHING THE GLORIOUS BEAUTIFUL CREATION THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE ENDLESS UNIVERSE—in happiness, joy and GLORY!

## IF YOU’D LIKE TO KNOW MORE

Many hundreds have written asking if we have representatives in their local areas to counsel with them personally and to answer their questions.

The answer is yes, we do.

The Worldwide Church of God stations personal representatives (most are ordained ministers) in the United States and British Commonwealth and many other areas of the world. These local ministers will visit you, if invited, directly in your own home.

So if you have spiritual matters to discuss or questions to ask about biblical topics such as repentance, baptism, etc., please feel free to write to us and request a private appointment. Worldwide mailing addresses and phone numbers are as follows:

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