

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Near the borders of Caesarea Philippi Jesus said unto Peter, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matt. 16:17-18.) In this announcement Jesus promised to build his church upon the confession which Peter made; that is, that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. His church was not built upon Peter as the Roman Catholic Church teaches. Without even going to the Greek, it can be seen from a faithful English translation that the church was built upon the acknowledgment which Peter made; otherwise, Jesus would have said: “You are Peter and upon you I will build my church.” The foundation upon which Jesus built his church is a fundamental truth which, if a man denies, he shall be denied by the Lord before the Father in heaven (Matt. 10:32-33).

Though I have often preached on Jesus as our great example or Jesus the master teacher, let us keep foremost in our minds that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. His “Sonship” is emphasized through his personal ministry by the miracles that he performed. John wrote, “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20:30-31.) The crowning proof of his Sonship was his resurrection. Paul said to the saints at Rome, “Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” (Rom. 1:3-4.) The Father in heaven on two occasions expressed his approval of his Son, Jesus Christ—at his baptism and then at his transfiguration (Matt. 3:13-17; 17:1-5). This truth sent Jesus to the cross (Matt. 26:63-64). This truth one must confess before he is baptized into Christ (Acts 8:37).

Jesus promised to build his church: “I will build my church.” Jesus called it “my church.” “My” is a first person, singular, possessive pronoun. Thus, Jesus was doing the speaking, first person; he was the only one doing the speaking, singular; and the object of which he spoke belonged to him, possessive. When Christ said, “my church,” we can correctly refer to it as Christ’s church or the church of Christ. To refer to “the coat of Vick” is the same as to

say “Vick’s coat.” Both expressions show ownership. As to which expression one would prefer to use, it is purely a matter of judgment. For euphony’s sake and to avoid mispronunciation the expression “the church of Christ” is more easily said than “Christ’s church.”

The church belongs to Christ. He built it as promised (Matt. 16:18). He shed his blood for it, gave his life for it (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25). He is the head of it (Eph. 5:23). So, why would anyone else append his name to it? Or why would others want to stick some other man’s name to it? Why should any other designation not found in the New Testament be used? We should be pleased to designate the church just as Jesus did. It is his church, Christ’s church, or the church of Christ.

Now there are some who bristle at one’s calling the church “the church of Christ.” Why? Some say it is not a name. If the church is the fullness of Christ, and to be in Christ is to be in his church (Eph. 1:22-23; Gal. 3:27; I Cor. 12:13), then why would it be unscriptural, or even anti-scriptural, to refer to it as the church of Christ? Since the church is the body of Christ (Col 1:18), and we have no hesitancy to refer to it as the body of Christ, upon what basis is it wrong to refer to the body of Christ as “the church of Christ”? Are not things that are equal to the same thing, equal to each other? But someone says, “Yes, but “church of Christ” is NOT a name.” I ask, “Have you ever looked up the word “name” in a dictionary? The first definition under “name” is “a word or phrase by which a person, thing or class of things is known, called or spoken to or of; an appellation; a title.” (Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary, p. 1193.)

Some have made statements to the effect that if we use the designation “church of Christ” to the exclusion of all other appellations found in the New Testament, then we are using the term in a sectarian way. It seems to me that this is a straw man. Who among us has used “church of Christ” to the exclusion of all other scriptural designations? If one uses “church of Christ” more than the expression “kingdom of heaven,” is he more sectarian than one who uses “kingdom of heaven” more than “church of Christ”? There are greater things to be critical of than how many times one uses “church of Christ.”

Sometimes I hear or read of the expression “a non-instrumental church of Christ.” Such is superfluous. If it is a group of baptized believers over whom Christ reigns as head and hi whom the Holy Spirit dwells, then it is a church which does not use mechanical instruments of music in worship. The expression “Instrumental

Church of Christ” is not a church which belongs to Christ, because it is practicing that which is unauthorized, i.e., the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship.

Some shrink from capitalizing the “c” in Church of Christ. Why? If one begins a sentence with “Church of Christ” will he capitalize it then? “Names of particular associations and proper names resulting from membership in these associations are capitalized.” (Walsh, Plain English Handbook, p. 87.) Some might say, “Well, that’s the language of Ashdod.” Perhaps; but as Alexander Campbell said when the same charge was made of him, “When communicating with those who do not understand the language of Canaan, we must accommodate our style to their education.” On this point G. C. Brewer wrote:

Some unthinking brethren seem to hold that to spell church with a small “c” avoids making a title or proper name of the phrase ‘church of Christ.’ This is laughable. When the sense is plainly a designation—a telling of “what” church is intended—then the phrase is used as a proper name, and thus the scriptures are violated, and to use a small initial letter in a proper name is to violate the rules of grammar. So, brother, you are both unscriptural and ungrammatical. Can our good brother see the point?... (The Autobiography of G. C. Brewer, p. 138.)

Several years ago I was told that the tag I had on the front of my car was not right. A good friend and brother had a car tag made for me which read, “Shelbyville Road Church of Christ.” I asked my critic what was wrong with the tag. He said that it should have read, “the church of Christ at Shelbyville Road.” However, the only difference I see is that the suggested change was longer. Both designate the church of a certain location. Do you suppose the critic ever referred to the church at Jerusalem as “the Jerusalem church”? Pray tell, what is the difference? Such criticism is straining out the gnat and swallowing the camel. We need to pray as did Paul, i.e., that we be delivered from unreasonable men.

Ben F. Vick, Jr. from *The Informer*

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”
Ephesians 5:23

BIRTHDAYS

Ralph and Helen Franklin, 10-01; Jeremy Keifer, 10-01.

ILL

Sunday: Chris Edwards. David Cole is undergoing chemo-therapy in Tennessee. Elizabeth Ray has been hospitalized at St. Joseph's in Kansas City, MO. Ron Wood is in the ICU at the Mayo Clinic in Florida.

Those battling cancer: Jamal Abyad, Diane Cannon, Ledgia Campbell and Ron Wood. Please remember these, as well as: Janice Carter, Lynda Cole, Meredith Greer, Millie Robertson, Allen Scott, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

HOME BOUND

Bob Adams is in Room D-4 of the Johnson County Nursing Center in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

RESTORATION

Jeremy Keifer was restored to Christ on Thursday, September 28 during our Gospel Meeting. We are thankful for his courage and honesty and pray for his continued faithfulness to Christ.

OUT OF TOWN

Debra Gragg is on vacation in New England. The James' were at Branson last weekend. The Nemechek's were in Abilene, KS visiting relatives until Tuesday evening. Julia Thrasher is in Marietta, OK visiting with her mother this week. Tom Tucker is in New Jersey visiting relatives for a couple of months.

MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING

The regularly scheduled Men's Business Meeting will be held next Sunday, October 8, following our AM worship.

ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 55; Sunday PM, 41; Monday PM, 44; Tuesday PM, 40; Wednesday PM, 47; Thursday PM, 43.

Those To Serve

October 1, 2006

BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Nemechek

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS..... George Thomas
SONG LEADER..... Joel Nelson
OPENING PRAYER Myron Nebergall
PRESIDE..... Jeff Nemechek
ASSIST..... John James
ASSIST..... David Parish
CLOSING PRAYER..... John Cody Carter

EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER Charles Tullis
CLOSING PRAYER..... John Carter
LORD'S SUPPER..... Jeff Nemechek

WEDNESDAY 4th

SONG LEADER..... Ted Thrasher
INVITATION George Thomas

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Morning Worship 10:30 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Ladies Bible Study 10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher

Phone: (913) 764-2325

E-mail: olathecoc@sbcglobal.net

CHURCH OF CHRIST

515 WEST PARK

P.O. BOX 482

OLATHE, KANSAS 66051

www.kc-cofc.org/olathe.htm

www.oabs.org/olathe.asp