BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: ***What makes Churches of Christ different from other churches?***

You may have noticed driving around there are several church buildings with signs reading "Church of Christ." This is the name given by the Lord for His churches (Rom 16:16). Not every church calling itself the "Church of Christ" is identical to other congregations going by the same name. We will talk about the differences next week. But this week we will focus on the similarities.

# SIMILARITIES

In this area of the country, most congregations calling themselves "churches of Christ" share the following beliefs:

## Each congregation believes in baptism "for the remission of sins."

The Bible teaches that sinners are saved by the blood of Christ (Mt 26:28). But the Bible also teaches that the blood of Christ saves the sinner at the point of baptism. Baptism is the point in time when the blood is applied.

Acts 2:38

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; …

## Each congregation believes instrumental music is forbidden.

In some places this is not true, but in this part of the country, most congregations calling themselves "churches of Christ" reject instrumental music.

The reason for this is simple.

* We believe everything done must be authorized in scripture (Col 3:17).
* We believe it is thru the scriptures and only thru the scriptures that God reveals to us how He wishes to be worshiped (2 Tim 3:16-17).
* We also believe that when men invent their own forms of worship, that worship is being changed, not to please God, but to appeal to men.

Worship is not man-centered. Worship is supposed to be God-centered. This means worship should focus on what please God. The only way to know what pleases Him is to read the instruction manual which He Himself wrote – the Bible.

Ephesians 5:19

19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

The NT scriptures are silent about worshiping God with instrumental music. Therefore, to use instruments would be doing something unauthorized. Worshiping in unauthorized ways makes worship "vain" (Mt 15:9).

## Each congregation believes in having weekly communion.

This is the pattern given in the NT scriptures:

Acts 20:7

7 Now on the first day of the week, … the disciples came together to break bread, …

Many denominational churches have communion only once a month. Sometimes they have communion only once a year. But the Bible teaches weekly communion. According to the pattern revealed in Acts 20:7, the church is suppose to assemble on the first day of every week and break the bread. Churches of Christ do this.

## Each congregation believes salvation is only in the Lord's church.

The common idea is that men and women can be saved in any good Bible-believing church. But that just isn't true.

First, if a church is truly a good Bible-believing church, it would be only the Church of Christ because that's the name the Lord Himself gave to His church in the Bible. And if a church is Bible-believing, it will go by the name "church of Christ" (Rom 16:16).

Second, the Lord has only one church. Denominational churches are not the one church mentioned in the Bible.

Ephesians 1:22-23

22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to **the church**,

23 which is **His body**, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Listen carefully. Eph 1:22-23 teaches that the church is the body of Christ. I will now turn the pages of my Bible to chapter 4 of the very same book:

Ephesians 4:4

4 **There is one body and one Spirit**, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;

Did you hear that? There is only one body. If I put this information together, I learn:

* The church is the body of Christ
* And there is only one body.
* Therefore, there is only one church acceptable to God.
* That one church is the Church of Christ (Rom 16:16).

In this one church and only in this one church is there salvation:

Ephesians 5:23

23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and **He is the Savior of the body**.

All the congregations of the Church of Christ in this area agree on these points. If you want to be saved, you must be baptized into Christ "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38) and the Lord Himself will add you to His one body – the church – when you are baptized (Acts 2:41, 47).

Next week we will discuss the differences that exist between various congregations of the Church of Christ.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Well … thanks for listening to our message this week. To speak with someone from the congregation simply you may call **405-567-0575** or you may leave your name and number at the sound of the tone and one of our brethren will be glad to call you back. We also invite you to visit our web site [**www.WillOfTheLord.com**](http://www.WillOfTheLord.com)**.**  There you may download the notes and the message you just listened to.

Call again next week when we consider a new subject on ***Bible Talk***.