

## Which Church?

We are living in a time when there seems to be an abundance of churches everywhere. Some are large and some are small. Some are fancy and some are plain. Some are in the city and some are in the country. One church says one thing, while another says something entirely different. Because of this, many people have become confused and are now asking, "How do I know which church is the right church?" Allow me to share with you some practical suggestions on how to determine which church is the right church. To do this, we need an understanding of what a church is.

To many, the church is a building. Actually, the church is not a building, but rather it is an assembly of people. The building is where the church meets. In the Bible the word church is "ekklesia" and it means an assembly - more specifically a called out assembly. It is used in the New Testament as a called out assembly of Christian believers. The word "ekklesia" has been translated "church" in our Bible. Christian believers are those who have repented of their sin, and by faith alone in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, received Him into their hearts as Personal Saviour.

Many religious organizations call themselves a church, but they are not. Even though they may be an assembly of people, they are not the true church because they do not believe the Bible. A true church will believe and preach the following:

\*The Bible is God's Word, having been verbally and plenary inspired by God, and that the sixty-six individual books comprise one Book and is God's inerrant, *complete revelation* to man for all ages. The Bible is the believer's all sufficient rule for faith and practice (II Ti. 3:16-17).

\*That there is but one God who is The Creator (Ge. 1:1), Preserver (Neh. 9:6), and Ruler of the universe (I Ch. 29:11-12). He is infinite in wisdom (Ps. 147:5), holy (Isa. 6:3), perfect in love (I Jn. 3:1), measureless in power (Mt. 19:26). This same God is manifested in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Mt. 3:16-17).

\*That Jesus Christ is the eternal and only begotten Son of God, conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, and that He is true God and true man and is the only and sufficient mediator between God and man (Mt. 1:20; Luke 1:35; Jn. 1:1,2,14; 12:45; I Ti. 2:5). The church will believe and teach Christ's death, burial and bodily resurrection and that He now sits at the right hand of the Father (He. 10:12).

\*Man is in a state of total depravity and can do nothing to save himself from the eternal damnation that awaits him in hell. The only hope for man is found in the salvation of Christ, a free gift offered to all who receive Christ as Lord and Saviour (Jn. 3:16,36; Eph. 2:8-9; Ro. 1:16-17).

\*That because man is in a state of total depravity as a result of initial sin, salvation is an absolute necessity. The salvation that God now offers to man is an act of grace on His part, and that we receive this gift by faith, not of works. Those who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour are born again of the Holy Spirit, thereby becoming children of God. Once we are saved we are saved for all eternity. We cannot lose our salvation (Eph. 2:8-9; Jn. 3:3,7,16; 1:12; 10:27-29; Eph. 1:13-14). Repentance is an absolute condition to salvation (Luke 13:2-5). The importance of the shed blood of Christ for remission of our sins cannot be emphasized enough. To minimize the blood of Christ, or to change it to anything else is heresy.

\*That the Church is made up of all those who have received Jesus Christ as Saviour, that is, those who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit of God and have by that same Spirit been baptized into the body of Christ at the moment of salvation (I Pe. 1:3; 22-25; I Co. 12:13). The local church is established to glorify God (Ro. 15:6,9), edify itself (Eph. 4:11-16), purify itself (Eph. 5:26-27), educate its members (Eph. 4:11-12), evangelize the world (Mt. 28:19) and to act as a restraining and enlightening force in the world (Mt. 5:13-16). God never

intended for His Church to become a political and/or social organization, nor did He establish denominations. Scripture only and always teach the autonomy (independent, self-governing) of the local, New Testament assembly (church). Internal business affairs of each assembly will vary, and be accomplished in the manner deemed appropriate as they feel led of the Holy Spirit. The personalities of the members of the local assembly will differ, and members should seek the wisdom of God in learning how to work among themselves.

\*The local New Testament assembly that desires to remain true to the Word of God will not only stand firm on the Authorized Version of 1611 (KJV), it will expound (teach) the Word of God correctly, and will also expose movements, organizations, and individuals who have false teachings. It will also maintain a separation from those who are a part of, or in sympathy with the apostate National Council of Churches, World Council of Churches, Roman Catholic Church, and the charismatic movement.

How can a person know which church is the right church?

**Before** joining with any local assembly, seek God's leading through prayer. Find out what that local assembly believes, teaches, **and practices** - use the information in this pamphlet as a guide to help in knowing what to look for and the questions to ask.

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