

# THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

## *THE CHURCH OF CHRIST*

You may have wondered what kind of church the Church of Christ is. What is the purpose of its existence? What are its doctrine and practice? Why does it teach certain things peculiar; to the denominational churches? The purpose of this tract is to briefly and clearly answer these and other questions.

## *ONE CHURCH*

It is needful to explain first that the Church of Christ is not just another denomination but it is the church spoken of in the Bible.

Oh, but you say, "Doesn't the Bible speak of different churches?"

No, it does not. It only mentions one church. Paul said: *Ephesians 4:4* There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

But could Paul be mistaken?

No, Paul said, *I Corinthians 14:37* If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. God guided Paul to write that statement and all others also.

*II Timothy 3:16* All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Well, is it recorded anywhere else in the New Testament that there is only one body? Yes, in several places.

*Romans 12:4-5*; For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: *5* So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

*I Corinthians 12:12-13*; 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. *13* For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

*I Corinthians 12:20* But now are they many members, yet but one body.

*Ephesians 2:16* And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: Other scriptures could be given except for lack of space. But here is a question.

Is the Body the Church?

Yes, the bible proves conclusively that it is.

*Colossians 1:18* And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

*Ephesians 1:22-23*; And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, *23* Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

*Colossians 1:24* Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

Now, anyone with an open mind can readily see that the Body is the Church; therefore, there is only one church. Then out of the hundreds of different churches in America we must find which one is the church that God ordained.

First, though we want to consider its importance.

Its Importance Someone says, "What is there to the church anyway?" Others say, "There's nothing to the church." Surely the angels in heaven weep as they see the Church of Christ ridiculed and spoken against.

But why is the church so important?

We give you only a few reasons why it is important:

(1) It is the "habitation of God through the Spirit"

*Ephesians 2:19-22*; Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; *20* And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; *21* In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: *22* In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. To the church in Corinth,

Paul said, *II Corinthians 6:16* And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Surely you will respect the dwelling place of the Spirit of God!

(2) We consider it important because of its great price.

*Acts 20:28* Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

*Ephesians 5:25* Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; Oh, glorious institution the church is! Purchased by the precious blood of the blessed Son of God. If you say, "There is nothing to the church," then you just the same as say that the blood of Christ is of no value. Surely you will not be guilty of such blasphemy.

(3) The church of Christ is important because of its glorious destiny. Oh, will it be very popular here? No, it will probably never be popular here but will be continually spoken against.

*Acts 28:22* But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

Then how does it have a glorious destiny?

Its destiny is heaven, the aeternal, blissful abode where there are no tears, sorrow, pain or death. Churches established by man will be destroyed

*Matthew 15:13* But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. But the church of Jesus Christ will be saved, for Christ is the saviour of the Body.

*Ephesians 5:23* 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.

What a wonderful promise! Surely you will want to be a member of his church.

### ***Its Origin.***

Every Bible student realizes that the church existed in the days of the apostles. There are several such passages as: "Great fear came upon all the church"; "there was a great persecution against the church at Jerusalem," and "then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria."

And these churches were in existence as early as A.D. 35.

But when did the church originate?

In A.D. 32 Christ said, "I will build my church"; so, no doubt, it was established between 32 and 35 A.D. But we can easily find the exact date of its establishment. Isaiah prophesied that the church would be established "in Jerusalem" in the "last days" (*Isiah 2:1-3*).

Then any honest student of the Bible will agree that the church was established in 33 A.D. on the day of Pentecost, a Jewish feast day, because on that day Peter said: *Acts 2:16-17*; But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; *17* And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

The establishment of the church is recorded in *Acts 2*, and the chapter closes with: *Acts 2:47* Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

No one can successfully deny that the church was established in Jerusalem, in 33 A.D. But what significance does the establishment of the church have here?

Simply this, Friend, when was the church established that you are a member of? Oh you say, "1517," or "1592," or "1606," etc. Then you can readily see that you are not a member of the New Testament church because it was established in 33 A.D.

And we might ask, "Friend, where was your church established?" You say, "In Germany," "In Rome," or "In America," etc. Then that means that you are not a member of Christ's church because it originated in Jerusalem.

Who established the church which you are a member of? Was it Luther? Knox? Smythe? Calvin? Or any other man? If so, you are not a member of the New Testament church because Christ established it. *Matthew 16:18* 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.

Won't you humbly submit yourself to God's word and be a member of His church? It was prepared by John the Baptist

*Matthew 3:1-3*; In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, *2* And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. *3* For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. established by Christ upon the confession of his being the Son of God:

*Matthew 16:18* 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. founded by Christ *I Corinthians 3:11* For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. chartered by the apostles and prophets

*Ephesians 2:20-22*; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; *21* In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: *22* In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. and promised salvation

*Ephesians 5:23* 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. Oh glorious church it is! Its Name If we can find its name, it will help us much in distinguishing today which church is the New Testament church.

*The congregations were called,*

1. The churches of Christ: *Romans 16:16* Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.
2. The Church of God: *Acts 20:28* Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.
3. The church of the first born: *Hebrews 12:23* To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,
4. The church of God: *I Corinthians 1:2* Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

The members of this church were simply called "Christians".

*Acts 11:26* And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Agrippa said: *Acts 26:28* Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

*I Peter 4:16* Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

The prominent names that we see over the doors of church buildings today are unknown in the Bible. There wearing of human, uninspired names, religiously, is prohibited by God. The early Christians were having contentions because some wanted to follow men, as thousands do today. But Paul said unto them. *I Corinthians 1:12-13*; Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. *13*

Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? Martin Luther left these unheeded words, " I pray you leave my name alone, and do not call yourselves Lutherans but Christians. Who is Luther? My doctrine is not mine. I was not crucified for anyone. Paul would not that anyone should call themselves of Paul, nor Peter, but of Christ. How, then, does it fit me, a miserable bag of dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of God? Cease to cling to these party names and distinctions. Away with them and call ourselves Christians, after him from whom our doctrine comes!"

Wesley said, "Would to God that all sectarian names were forgotten and that we, as humble loving disciples, might sit down at the Master's feet. read his holy word, imbibe his spirit and transcribe his life into our own."

The religious world is clinging to party names and is divided into hundreds of sects that follow men.

The Father no doubt grieves.

Oh, but someone says, "There's nothing in a name anyway."

Then why not permit your wife to wear the name of another man?

But what does that have to do with the Church? The church is the bride of Christ: *Romans 7:4* Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

*II Corinthians 11:2* For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

*Ephesians 5:25* Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Certainly it should wear his name instead of the name of some man! And if there is nothing in a name, why object if your children begin to call themselves after the name of Joe Stalin or some other man?

But what has that to do with the church? The church is his house or family:

*I Timothy 3:15* But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

*Ephesians 3:14-15*; For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *15* Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

But, you say, "Isn't one name as good as another?"

Certainly not. God has given him a name to be exalted:

*Philippians 2:9* Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

*Colossians 3:17* And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

*Acts 4:12* Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Won't you cease clinging to sectarian, unscriptural names and be a member of the church the Lord established? Sectarian names cause division, but the name of Christ brings unity.

### ***Its Organization***

The head of the church of Christ is Jesus Christ.

*Colossians 1:18* And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

*Ephesians 1:22-23*; And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, *23* Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

The church has no earthly head as denominations do. Each local congregation of the church is a separate organization within itself, having a plurality of elders and deacons.

*Titus 1:5* For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

*Acts 14:23* And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

*Acts 20:28* Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. The elders or pastors and the deacons had to fulfill certain qualification before they could be appointed to that office; (*1 Tim 3: Tit 1:*)

There was no congregation of the church of Christ with just one pastor or elder but always the church had a plural number of pastors.

Neither was there a chief elder or a cardinal, etc. but the elders had oversight only of the congregation of which they were members. These pastors had no right to make laws but they simply enforced the gospel of Christ.

Under the oversight of the elders were teachers:

*II Timothy 2:2* And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. and evangelists:

*II Timothy 4:5* But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

The training of evangelists and the promulgation of the gospel was all done through the church. The evangelists did not locate with an established church for a life time and do all the teaching for the church as does the modern "minister" but he went from place to place strengthening and establishing the Cause of Christ.

The modern churches of today have drifted far from the simple organization that Christ commanded. They have their missionary societies, Sunday Schools, Bible Colleges, etc., when all of the work of the gospel should be carried on through the church and the home, the institutions that our Father has ordained.

Friend, is your church organized scripturally?

Does it have Christ as its only Head and Lawgiver, with each local congregation functioning with a plurality of elders and deacons?

If not, why not be a member of the blessed, blood-bought church of Jesus Christ.

### ***It's Worship***

If a church is a New Testament church, it must worship God in a scriptural way.

The purpose of the worship is to please God, not man.

To please Him we must worship in Spirit and in Truth. Jesus said:

*John 4:23-24:* But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. If our worship and doctrine are according to man's teaching instead of God's, then we worship in vain.

*Matt 15:9;* But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Then what is the scriptural worship that God has commanded?

Christ directed his disciples to have five items of worship in the church services.

The worship consists of the following:

(1) Prayer *Acts 2:42* And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

(2) Singing. There are two types of music: vocal and mechanical. God has commanded vocal music.

*Eph 5:19*; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

*Colossians 3:16* Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

*I Corinthians 14:15* What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

To add mechanical instruments of music to the worship would be adding strange fire *Lev 10:1-3*; To the worship and would not be worshipping in "Spirit and in Truth" but "in vain."

*Matthew 15:9* But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

*Revelation 22:18-19*; For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: *19* And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

(3) The Lord's Supper *Acts 20:7* And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. The importance of the Lord's supper is shown in *I Corinthians 11:25-30*; After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. *26* For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. *27* Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. *28* But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. *29* For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. *30* For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

The disciples should assemble every first day of the week to bread bread. Under the Old Law, God commanded, "Keep the Sabbath" (*Ex 31:14*) God meant every sabbath. Of course the observing of the sabbath was abolished by the Father

*Colossians 2:14-16*; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; *15* And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. *16* Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

*Galatians 4:10-11*; Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. *11* I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. but now Christians should meet every first day of the week

*Acts 20:7*; And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

*Hebrews 10:25* Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. to remember the death and suffering of our Savior by breaking bread. Does your church break bread every first day of the week? If not, it does not worship "in spirit and in truth."

(4) Giving *I Corinthians 16:1-2*; Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

*II Corinthians 9:7* Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. The Church of Christ will not take up collection at every meeting of the church, but only on the first day of the week. Neither will they have pie-suppers, bingo, dances, etc., to raise money from outsiders but will give liberally as members of the blessed kingdom, the Church of Christ.

(5) Teaching the gospel The New Testament church in its assembling, taught the gospel of Christ. The assembled together into one place.

*Acts 15:30* So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:

*Hebrews 10:25* Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

*I Corinthians 14:23* If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

*I Corinthians 11:20* When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. They spoke one at a time always,

*I Corinthians 14:31* For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. In all assemblies called by the church for the purpose of teaching the word of God, the women are commanded not to teach.

*I Corinthians 14:34-35*; Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

*I Timothy 2:11-12*; Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

*I Timothy 2:12* But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

The congregation. Meeting decently and in order

*I Corinthians 14:40* Let all things be done decently and in order. spoke one at a time, and only men spoke in the assembly. There is no authority for the church teaching the Bible in classes and neither is there any authority for women speaking in any assembly called by the church; that was called for the purpose of teaching the word, whether it be in a class of men, a class of children, or a class of women. Friend, does the church of which you are a member worship in "spirit and in truth?" If not, it worships "in vain." Think seriously! be a member of Christ's church. It's Plea Briefly stated, the plea of the Church

of Christ is to restore the unity of all believers in Christ upon the apostolic doctrine and worship. Christ prayed,

*John 17:11* And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

*John 17:20-21*; Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; *21* That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. It is our desire to fulfill this blessed sincere prayer. The Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Paul commanded unity.

*I Corinthians 1:10* Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

What can we have unity upon? What creed can we all accept?

*I Peter 4:11* If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Human creeds cause division and will not save us so therefore we must accept the one gospel of our Lord

*Galatians 1:8-9*; But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. *9* As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

*II John 1:9-11*; Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. *10* If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: *11* For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. *12*; which will never have to be changed but will abide the same forever

*I Peter 1:25* But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Therefore we boldly oppose human creeds, confessions of faith, disciplines, etc.

Until we burn all uninspired creeds, we will never have unity.

Are you willing to leave the creeds of man and simply worship God as the Bible directs?

### ***It's Mission***

"Do I have to be a member of your church to be saved?" you say to the denominational preacher. He says, "Certainly Not. You can be saved without being a member of my church." Then what is the mission of his church? If it is not essential for salvation, as he readily admits, then why not do away with it and draw that much closer to that unity for which Christ prayed?

But you ask, "Do I have to be a member of the church of Christ to be saved?"

Yes, friend, the Bible teaches that you do. If you are saved you are a member of His church for *Acts 2:47* Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. You must be a member of his church because he purchased it with his precious blood.

*Acts 20:28* Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. We are reconciled unto God

*Ephesians 2:16* And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

### ***The world will be destroyed***

*I John 2:17* And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. but the kingdom, the church, will be presented to God for salvation

*I Corinthians 15:24* Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

*Ephesians 5:23* 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. Therefore if you are not a member of his church, you can not expect to be saved. The mission of the church is to make known the "manifold wisdom of God.

*Ephesians 3:10* To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, by being the pillar and ground of the truth.

*I Timothy 3:15* But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

### ***The truth will save***

*John 8:32* And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

*Romans 1:16* For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. therefore, the mission of the church of Christ is to save souls by teaching them the "unsearchable riches of Christ".

### ***The church has another mission also.***

That mission is to help the poor and needy in this life.

*James 1:27* Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. It is not the mission of the church to be a house of business, neither a house of entertainment but to be the pillar and support of the truth and to help the needy, both physically and spiritually.

It's Induction, If you have thought seriously about judgment and eternity to come, you are probably now wondering how you; can be a member of the church of Christ. You do not "join the Church." Neither are you voted into it.

But God has given us a simple plan of salvation.

The simple divine plan consists of:

#### **(1) Faith**

*Hebrews 11:6* But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

*John 8:24* I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

**(2) Repentance**

*Luke 13:3* I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. *Acts 17:30* And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

**(3) Confession**

*Matthew 10:32* Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

*Romans 10:9* That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

**(4) Baptism**

*Acts 10:48* And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

*Acts 2:38* Then Peter said unto them, 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 Ghost.

*Acts 22:16* And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

*I Peter 3:21* The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Baptism is immersion in water – *Acts 8:30-40*; And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? *31* And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. *32* The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: *33* In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. *34* And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? *35* Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. *36* And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? *37* And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. *38* And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. *39* And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. *40* But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea. For the remission of sins, preceded by faith, repentance and confession, puts us into the body of Jesus Christ

*I Corinthians 12:13* For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

*Galatians 3:27* For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

*Romans 6:3-4*; Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Friend, after considering the great value of the church of Christ, won't you humble yourself, reverence God and give him "glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end?"

*Ephesians 3:21* Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

To decide to be a member of His church is the greatest decision you could possibly make. Heaven awaits if you obey God!