

member of the church is responsible for fulfilling this duty (Ephesians 4:16).

Obtaining Salvation

Truly, the New Testament is not silent on the matter of salvation, that's what the bible is all about. Today, many say different things about how to be saved. However, there is only one pattern given by the authority, Christ Jesus. Let's be careful to observe the entire pattern and not just some of it. Jesus said we must **believe on Him**: John 3:16. Salvation is not possible without belief in Jesus. But we are not saved by faith alone (James 2:24), there are things that Jesus commands us to do when we believe Him. We must **repent of our sins**: Acts 3:19. Sins will not be forgiven if one continues in sin, repentance means that we walk away from our previous life of sin in order to serve the living God (Romans 6:2). The pattern does not end there, for we still need to **confess our Lord**: Romans 10:9. Confess means to acknowledge by mouth that Jesus is our Savior; this too has been commanded for our salvation. Lastly, we can find the commandment for **baptism** in Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Colossians 2:11-13; Romans 6:4. To leave out this commandment, like some do today, would be to not obtain salvation from the Lord, because this is what He has commanded in the pattern of sound words.

The Name of the Church

This is of interest to many: what should the New Testament church be called? With a church that is led entirely by the commandments of God, it would be unnatural to give it a man-made name, especially when Christ already named His church in the New Testament text. There are two names given to the church in the Bible. One name is "*church of God*" (Acts 20:28), and the other is "*church of Christ*" (Romans 16:16). Do these names differ? They do not; these names speak of the same person. Consider closer Acts 20:28, where it says "*the*

church of God which He purchased with His own blood." Who is God specifically in this context? It is not God the Father, nor the Holy Spirit, but it is He who "*purchased*" the church "*with His own blood.*" It is Christ. Therefore, the New Testament church was named "*church of Christ*" from its beginning. A fitting name for the church that is owned and built by Christ, and the salvation of the church comes from no other but Christ (Acts 4:12).

Where is it Today?

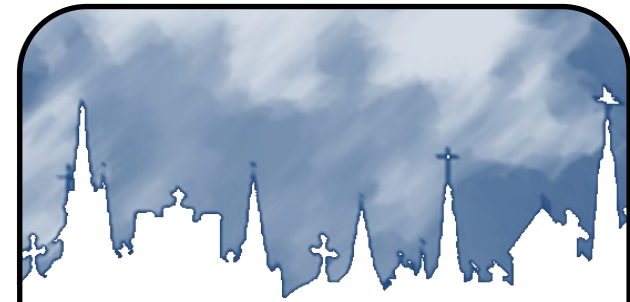
Just because a church has a sign that says "church of Christ" does not mean they are following the entire pattern. I am familiar with many who call themselves members of the church of Christ but are practicing man-made traditions in the worship, work, and organization of the church. Therefore, the New Testament church cannot be identified alone by its title, but just as any product of a pattern can be identified by its original pattern, so the New Testament church can be discovered and identified, even today, when compared to its pattern: the word of God.

If you desire to know more about the New Testament church, fashioned from the pattern in the scriptures, please don't hesitate to use the contact information below. Eternal life is on the line, and we do not want to gamble with our souls. May we all seek out the truth of this chief matter. "*Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.*" -2 John 1:9

Friend, I thought you'd benefit from this. Contact me if you have any questions.

Name: _____

Phone: _____



The New Testament Church

What is it ?
Where is it Today ?

Today, churches of all kinds can be found throughout the many cities of America. Why can't any given person take their pick of the nearest church? One important reason is that not all churches can be identified as the New Testament church. By "New Testament church," I mean a church that is doing all things in accordance with the commandments given by God to the church in the New Testament text. While today, the assumption is that there are many churches and many ways to get to heaven, this is a foreign idea to the bible. Scriptures like Ephesians 4:4-6, that speak of the "one faith" (v.5), and the "one body" (v.4), make it evident that we need to look closer into this matter. What is this "one body" that God speaks of? Earlier in Ephesians, the apostle Paul explained that the body is the church (1:22-23). So then, if the "one body" means the "one church," then this is in harmony with the words of Jesus in Matthew 16:18, when He said "I will build my church," the word "church" being singular. Therefore Jesus only built one; who built the others I'm not entirely sure. The church that Jesus built, was not one of brick and mortar; but of people across the world (John 4:21-24) who assemble in their local areas to fulfill the commandments of Christ found in the New Testament. If every assembly across the globe is doing what is found commanded in the scriptures, then they would all be consistent in appearance.

The New Testament Church has a Pattern

If a dress is fashioned according to a dress pattern, then the end product should look exactly like the original pattern. The same is the case for all things that follow a pattern. The church is no different, for it also has a pattern. It is not a pattern of drawings, but a "pattern of sound words" (2 Timothy 1:13). This pattern of words is found throughout the pages of the New Testament. We can read in the bible that Jesus purchased and built the church (Acts 20:28; Matthew 16:18), which makes Jesus its owner. We can also find in Ephesians 5:23, that Jesus is

the "head of the church." Thus all things done by the church must be authorized by its head. The church's headquarters are located at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2). Today, many of the most popular religious organizations have earthly headquarters where a hierarchy of men preside over the churches that are organized under their authority. However, the church has no other authority but Christ, nor can we find a pattern for earthly headquarters, for the church receives all instruction from the Lord through the pattern of sound words in the New Testament. Understanding now the authority Christ has over His church, what has He instructed it to look like? Let's consider a few things:

The Worship of the Church

What is the Pattern of worship given in the New Testament by the Head of the church? Jesus has given commandment for His church to partake of the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19-20), in remembrance of His sacrifice on the cross through which the Christian has forgiveness of sins. When did the New Testament church partake of the Lord's Supper? It is shown, in Acts 20:7, that the church came together on Sundays to "break bread." It is not up to man to decide whether the Lord's Supper is served annually, or on special holidays, because the head of the church has instituted the Lord's Supper to be taken in remembrance of Him on Sundays, that is, every Sunday. No other authorized way has been given.

Prayer is another way the church worships God. The church is to offer prayers together as the New Testament church also did: Acts 12:5, "Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church." The church is also to learn and study together through bible classes and sermons (1 Timothy 4:13; 1 Peter 4:11; Acts 20:7) led by faithful men of the congregation (1 Timothy 2:11-12). This is the pattern Christ gave us.

Another commandment, given by the authority of Christ, is for the whole church to sing spiritual songs, one to another (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians

3:16). This commandment is for the purpose of teaching and edifying one another through the effectiveness of song. Instruments of music are a tradition of men, not found in the pattern of Christ. The Lord's command was simple: "making melody in your heart." The heart, a God-made instrument, is to be the accompaniment in song worship; we are not given commandment for a man-made instrumental accompaniment.

One can also find the New Testament church giving back to the Lord a portion of what they have prospered (1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7). Like every act of collective worship, this is commanded to be done on the first day of every week. When one gives back to the Lord, the funds now belong to Christ, and He has, therefore, commanded the church exactly what can be done with the funds. Today, one can see contribution used for many reasons: social church affairs, entertainment, and benevolence without restrictions. However, the pattern of the New Testament church teaches us that the collection of funds is used "for the saints" (1 Corinthians 16:1). Seeing that Christ had one purpose in mind for the collection plate, the true church today follows after that same pattern. With the funds, the Lord provides for His own: those in Christ who have need (Acts 11:28-30), and those who labor for the gospel (1 Cor. 9:3-14).

The Mission of the Church

The purpose of the church is not to be a social institution providing meals, recreation, and entertainment. Such practices are foreign to the New Testament pattern. Nor is the church a business, school, fundraiser, or anything else that fulfills carnal interests. The true mission of the church is to save souls from hell (Romans 6:23). This purpose is fulfilled by the teaching of the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20). Secondly, the mission of the church is the edification of Christians. To edify means to build up, strengthen, or encourage. Ministers are to give their all to edify the church (Ephesians 4:11-15), but every