

## The Church of HIS Choice

We often hear someone say, “Attend the church of your choice.” It is good to have the freedom to choose rather than being forced or limited to attending what someone else decides is best for you. But let us use this freedom wisely and choose what God would have us do.

Today there are so many churches to choose from, we must be careful to choose the one Christ promised to build while He was here on earth and gave His life for. We can read of the beginning of this church in the 2nd chapter of Acts. It didn't just happen, but was planned by God from the beginning and has its roots deep in Old Testament prophecy. (Isaiah 2.2-3; Daniel 2.44; Jeremiah 23.5; Zechariah 6.12-15.)

The word “church” comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*, used in the New Testament to denote a group that acknowledged Jesus Christ as its Supreme Ruler. Jesus used the words church and Kingdom interchangeably in Matthew 16.18-19, so we know they are one and the same. As members of a Kingdom we must have a King, who is Jesus Christ. Likewise, as members of the church, or body, Christ is the Head. (Eph. 1.22-23; 4.12; 5.23; Col. 1.18, 24.)

As followers of Christ arose in other cities the plural “churches” came into use, each separate congregation being referred to as a church, although collectively, they made up the “body” of Christ.

Today, many tend to consider the Church of Christ as just another denomination. But the Bible is not only non-denominational, it teaches against the division or separation of the church. (1 Corinthians 1.10.) Christ said, “I will build My church.” (Matthew 16.18.) Luke wrote: “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” (Acts 2.47.)

The Restoration Movement, in the early 19th Century, attempted to persuade all denominational churches to break with all man-made creeds and disciplines, and to restore 1st Century practices and be known simply as “Christians.” Many think the Church of Christ was formed at that time by men like Thomas and Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone. But according to Dr. Robinson of Overdale College in Birmingham, England, in the year 1668 during the reign of Charles II, there were eight Churches of Christ in the Furness district of Lancashire in Northwest England. One of these congregations kept a record book and called themselves by the name Church of Christ, practiced baptism by immersion, celebrated the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day, and had Elders and Deacons. He also has a record of a Church of Christ in Dungannon, Ireland in 1804, and a Church of Christ in the Fife District of Scotland in 1735 with a preacher named John Davis.

Very good evidence of an early church is found in a book by Hans Godwin Grimm entitled: *Tradition and History of the Early Churches of Christ in Central Europe*. On

page 5 he writes: "[There] has always been a real Church of Christ in this world since Pentecost and this means: a church believing in Faith, Repentance, Confession and immersion for the remission of sins--a church which worshipped at least the first day of the week with hymns, prayers, the Lord's Supper, Bible study and contributions for the saints--a church which worked under the oversight of Elders, Deacons, and Evangelists." He goes on to trace the church back through his own family for about 750 years to where the first of his family, Gregory Grimm was baptized by immersion for the remission of sins by a grandfather, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit in the year 1118.

In the words of H.H. Dunn, an early preacher of the Gospel, " Yes, brethren, the church is here, has been since Pentecost, and will be here when He comes again. She is just as pure and fair and lovely as she was when He first loved her and bought her with His own precious blood and will remain so until He comes to take her home."

Only recently in an isolated region of Africa, a group of Christians who knew nothing of denominational doctrines or teachings were found using only that which is taught in the Bible, and were calling themselves the Church of Christ.

So now we ask that you seek out and attend the church of His choice. The one He died to establish.