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Churches of Christ Salute You with a Herald of Truth

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The Herald of Truth

NETWORK



STATIONS



"The New Testament Church"

C.E. McGaughey

July 13, 1952

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What could be more worthwhile than to spend some time studying about the church concerning which we read in the New Testament? The very fact that we read about it in the Bible makes it worthy of our consideration. With all kinds of churches in the world, it is refreshing to know that we can turn the pages of inspiration and read of the beginning of the New Testament church on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ and also find its history during the first century as it was recorded by the Holy Spirit. In an age when many have forgotten the simplicity and beauty of Christianity, at the time of its origin, there is a great need of having our minds refreshed by viewing it when it was untarnished and uncorrupted by departures that have crept in through the centuries.

In making our observations concerning the New Testament church let us note first of all that IT WAS BUILT BY CHRIST. No mere man had the honor of being its founder. Christ alone had that distinction. He said in Matt. 16:18, "I will build my church." As great as were Peter, Paul, James, and John they did not build the New Testament church. Of course no man or woman since then could have established it for it was founded before their time. There have been great, outstanding religious leaders since the New Testament was written, who have been instrumental in starting new denominations; however, all of these lived too late to have established the New Testament church.

When the Lord said, "Upon this rock I will build my church," what did He mean? Reading the whole passage, it is not difficult to see. He had just been confessed as the Christ, the Son of the Living God. "Upon this rock," this great truth that He was the Christ, He intended to build His church. He was not ready for that truth to be preached yet, as is evidenced in verse 20 of that same chapter, for He charged the disciples "that they should tell no man that he was the Christ." This was not to be done until He was raised from the dead, according to Matt. 17:9. On the first Pentecost after His resurrection, for the first time this truth, the great rock upon which the church was to be built, was first preached. Peter, in Acts 2:36, said, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." We are not surprised to find that this was the day the church started. It could not have begun prior to this occasion, for the very truth upon which it was to be built could not be preached.

It is to be regretted that a great number of sincere people have been led to believe that the church was founded

upon Simon Peter. Such an assumption is without evidence to warrant such a conclusion. It is true that Peter's name in the Greek was Petros, meaning rock, but our Lord did not use this word; He said, "upon this rock (petra) I will build my church." The word used by the Lord was not Peter's name but another word. One was masculine gender and the other feminine. Certainly He could not have been talking about Peter. The church of the New Testament was not built upon any man, but on the truth that Jesus is the Son of God.

At this point, I would like to mention four things about the New Testament church with which we all agree. First IT WAS THE TRUE CHURCH. Surely no one will deny that. Peter and Paul, James and John, all were members of the right church. They rejoiced in knowing that they had membership in an institution which had come from God and that existed with His blessings resting upon it.

Second, THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH WAS ONE. Christ did not promise to build a great system of denominationalism, but He declared that He would build His church. So, in that day, the followers of Christ were one, and all members of the same church. Paul declared, "There is one body," Eph. 4:4, and speaking of the church, said, "which is his body," Eph. 1:23.

A third observation concerning that church with which all of us agree is that ALL SAVED PEOPLE WERE IN IT. The church had been bought with a price, a dear price, too, "with precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ," I Pet. 1:18. In Eph. 5:23, Paul said, "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the Saviour of the body."

The fourth observation relative to that church worthy of our sincere consideration is that CHRIST NEVER INTENDED FOR ANYONE ELSE TO START ANOTHER CHURCH. His was to be good enough for all people until the end of time.

Thus we all agree that the New Testament church was the right church, that it was the one church, that all saved people were in it and that the Lord never intended for anyone else to start another. This being true, there is only one thing for us to do. We should be anxious to learn all we can about that New Testament church. Our heart's desire should be to learn every characteristic of that church, to perceive how men became members of it then, and see if it is possible for men to become members of it today.

Let us now turn our attention to some of the characteristics of that church. WHAT WERE MEMBERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH CALLED? Acts 11:26 declares that "the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch," and Peter said, "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name," I Pet. 4:16. They were just Christians, not some particular kind of Christ-

ians, but Christians only.

WHAT WAS ITS GUIDE IN ALL RELIGIOUS MATTERS? It took the word of God as its guide. Paul said to Timothy that the Scriptures were sufficient for every need, II Tim. 3:16-17. Peter said, "If any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God," I Pet. 4:11. Thus to no creeds, confessions of faith or manuals written by men, did it subscribe. It was governed by the word of God alone.

WHAT WAS THE CHURCH CALLED IN THOSE DAYS? Jesus said, "I will build my church." Paul described it as "the church of the Lord," Acts 20:28, "the church of God," I Cor. 1:1-2, and "the churches of Christ," Rom. 16:16. It had no denominational name. It was the church belonging to Christ.

Another interesting thing about the New Testament church is THE PROMINENCE IT GAVE THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK. As every Bible student knows, Pentecost, the day of the origin of the church, came on the first day of the week. This was very appropriate, for the Lord had been raised from the dead on the first day, Mark 16:9. The Holy Spirit directed them to meet regularly on that day as is seen in I Cor. 16:2, saying, "Upon the first day of the week each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come."

Particularly, SOME THINGS ABOUT THE BEAUTY AND SIMPLICITY OF ITS WORSHIP SHOULD BE OBSERVED. It was on the first day, called by John the Lord's Day, Rev. 1:10, that the Lord's Supper was observed. The example recorded of the church in Troas breaking bread on the first day of the week is what we would have found in all the churches of the first century. Concerning the meeting there, the writer of Acts says, "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread Paul discoursed with them," Acts 20:7. The Lord's Supper and the Lord's Day were joined together. When the first day came, the disciples gathered around the table of the Lord in loving remembrance of Him.

Also, when they did worship, it is equally clear that THE ONLY KIND OF MUSIC EVER MADE BY THEM WAS VOCAL. To the Ephesians, Paul wrote, "Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord," Eph. 5:19. Several centuries passed before instrumental music was introduced into services wherein Christ was worshipped, and of course that was too late to have the authority of the New Testament as the basis for it.

In their worship, THE FINANCE FOR CARRYING ON GOD'S WORK WAS RAISED IN A MANNER QUITE DIFFERENT FROM MANY RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS. Notice the method outlined by the Holy Spirit, "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store as he may prosper," I Cor. 16:2. High pressure methods and novel schemes were unused. Men were not coerced or taxed. Paul said, "Let each man do ac-

YOU MAY HEAR THE HERALD OF TRUTH OVER THESE STATIONS

Alabama, Anniston	WHMA	1450	1:00 p.m.	New Orleans	WDSU	1280	1:00 p.m.	Portland	KEX	1190	8:30 p.m.
Auburn	WAUD	1230	1:00 p.m.	Shreveport	KRMD	1340	1:00 p.m.	Penn., Johnstown	WCRO	1230	7:00 p.m.
Birmingham	WSGN	610	10:30 p.m.	Maine, Bangor	WABI	910	1:00 p.m.	Philadelphia	WFIL	560	2:00 p.m.
Florence	WJOI	1340	9:30 a.m.	Portland	WPOR	1450	9:00 a.m.	Pittsburg	WCAE	1250	3:00 p.m.
Gadsden	WGAD	1350	1:00 p.m.	Maryland, Baltimore	WFBR	1300	3:00 p.m.	Wilkes-Barre	WILK	970	5:00 p.m.
Huntsville	WHBS	1490	1:00 p.m.	Cumberland	WDYK	1230	8:00 a.m.	R. Island, Providence	WPJB	1420	1:00 p.m.
Marion	WJAM		9:30 a.m.	Mass., Gardner	WHOB	1490	1:00 p.m.	S. Carolina, Florence	WJMX	970	10:30 a.m.
Mobile	WABB	1480	6:30 a.m.	Lawrence	WLAW	680	1:00 p.m.	S. Dakota, Aberdeen	KSDN	930	10:30 a.m.
Montgomery	WAPX	1600	1:00 p.m.	Springfield	WSPR	1270	5:00 p.m.	Tenn., Chattanooga	WDEF	1370	1:00 p.m.
Selma	WGWC	1340	1:30 p.m.	Worcester	WAAB	1440	3:00 p.m.	Jackson	WTJS	1390	1:00 p.m.
Tuscaloosa	WJRD	1150	9:00 p.m.	Michigan, Battle Creek	WELL	1400	1:00 p.m.	Johnson City	WJHL	910	11:30 p.m.
Arizona, Phoenix	KOY	550	7:00 a.m.	Bay City	WBCM	1440	1:00 p.m.	Knoxville	WBIR	1240	1:30 p.m.
Tucson	KCNA	1340	3:00 p.m.	Detroit	WXYZ	1270	1:00 p.m.	Memphis	WMPS	680	9:30 p.m.
Arkansas, Eldorado	KSDM	1290	1:00 p.m.	Flint	WFDE	910	10:00 p.m.	Morristown	WCRK	1450	check sta.
Ft. Smith	KFSA	950	1:00 p.m.	Lansing	WILS	1320	1:00 p.m.	Nashville	WSIX	980	4:00 p.m.
Hot Springs	KTHS	1090	1:00 p.m.	Ludington	WKLA	1450	1:00 p.m.	Texas, Abilene	KRBC	1470	1:00 p.m.
Little Rock	KGHI	1250	1:00 p.m.	Muskegon	WKBZ	850	2:00 p.m.	Amarillo	KFDA	1440	1:00 p.m.
Springdale	KBRS	1340	6:00 p.m.	Minn., Minn.-St. Paul	WTCN	1280	7:30 a.m.	Austin	KNOW	1490	2:00 p.m.
Calif., Bakersfield	KPMC	1560	10:00 a.m.	Miss., Aberdeen	WNPA	1240	3:00 p.m.	Beaumont	KFDM	560	1:00 p.m.
Blythe	KYOR	1450	3:30 p.m.	Centerville	WGLC	1580	8:00 a.m.	Big Spring	KBST	1490	1:00 p.m.
Brawley	KROP	1300	3:30 p.m.	Columbus	WCBI	1340	6:00 p.m.	Brownfield	KTFY	1050	4:30 p.m.
Eureka	KIEM	1480	7:15 a.m.	Jackson	WSLI	930	2:00 p.m.	Brownsville	KVAL	1490	1:00 p.m.
Fresno	KARM	1430	3:30 p.m.	Laurel	WLAV	1490	1:00 p.m.	Corpus Christi	KEYS	1440	9:00 a.m.
Los Angeles	KECA	790	3:30 p.m.	Missouri, Kansas City	KCMO	810	12:30 p.m.	El Paso	KEPO	690	3:00 p.m.
San Francisco	KGO	810	3:30 p.m.	Rolla	KTTR	1490	8:45 a.m.	Ft. Worth	WBAP	570	1:00 p.m.
San Luis Obispo	KATY	1340	3:30 p.m.	St. Louis	KXOK	630	9:15 p.m.	Graham	KSWA	1330	4:30 p.m.
Colorado, Craig	KRAI	1230	5:30 p.m.	Springfield	KWTO	560	1:00 p.m.	Houston	KXYZ	1320	8:00 a.m.
Denver	KVOD	630	5:00 p.m.	Montana, Butte	KOPR	580	9:15 a.m.	Longview	KFRQ	1370	1:00 p.m.
Conn., Bridgeport	WNAB	1450	2:00 p.m.	Great Falls	KMON	560	7:30 a.m.	Lubbock	KFYO	1340	4:00 p.m.
Hartford	WTHT	1230	2:30 p.m.	Nebraska, Lincoln	KFOR	1240	10:30 a.m.	Midland	KCRS	550	1:30 p.m.
Delaware, Wilmington	WILM	1450	2:00 p.m.	Omaha	KOIL	1290	5:30 p.m.	Paris	KPLT	1490	9:00 p.m.
Florida, Gainesville	WGGG	1230	1:00 p.m.	Sidney	KSID	1540	12 noon	San Angelo	KGKL	960	1:00 p.m.
Jacksonville	WPDQ	600	8:30 a.m.	N. Hamp., Claremont	WTSV	1230	1:00 p.m.	San Antonio	KMAC	630	9:00 p.m.
Miami	WQAM	560	1:00 p.m.	Lebanon	WTSL	1400	1:00 p.m.	Texarkana	KCMC	1230	1:00 p.m.
Pensacola	WEAR	1230	11:30 p.m.	Manchester	WMUR	610	5:00 p.m.	Wichita Falls	KFDX	990	2:00 p.m.
Tallahassee	WTNT	1450	5:00 p.m.	N. Mexico, Albuquerque	KOAT	1450	3:00 p.m.	Utah, Provo	KCSU	1490	3:00 p.m.
Tampa, St. Pete	WSUN	620	1:00 p.m.	Clovis	KCLV	1240	1:00 p.m.	Salt Lake City	KUTA	570	7:30 a.m.
Georgia, Atlanta	WGST	920	1:00 p.m.	Los Alamos	KRSN	1490	3:00 p.m.	Vermont, Brattleboro	WTSA	1450	1:00 p.m.
Augusta	WGAC	580	2:00 p.m.	Santa Fe	KTRC	1400	3:00 p.m.	Burlington	WJOY	1230	1:00 p.m.
Brunswick	WGIG	1440	1:00 p.m.	New York, Albany	WXXW	850	2:00 p.m.	Montpelier-Barre	WSKI	1240	1:00 p.m.
Columbus	WGBA	1460	7:30 a.m.	New York	WJZ	770	12:30 p.m.	Virginia, Charlottesville	WINA	1280	9:15 a.m.
Macon	WBML	1240	1:00 p.m.	Olean	WHDL	1450	1:00 p.m.	Fredericksburg	WFVA	1230	check sta.
Rome	WLAQ	670	1:00 p.m.	Rochester	WARC	950	3:00 p.m.	Norfolk	WGH	1310	5:00 p.m.
Savannah	WDAR	1400	1:00 p.m.	Saranac Lake	WEAV	960	2:00 p.m.	Richmond	WRNL	910	1:30 p.m.
Valdosta	WGAF	910	1:00 p.m.	Syracuse	WAGE	620	12:00 n.	Washington, Aberdeen	KBKW	1450	9:00 p.m.
Idaho, Boise	KGEM	1140	3:00 p.m.	N. Carolina, Ashville	WLDS	1380	1:00 p.m.	Pasco	WPKW	1340	3:30 p.m.
Pocatello	KEOI	1440	9:30 a.m.	Charlotte	WAYS	610	1:00 p.m.	Seattle	KJR	950	3:30 p.m.
Illinois, Chicago	WENR-WLS	890	2:30 p.m.	Durham	WTIK	1310	2:00 p.m.	Spokane	KGA	1510	3:30 p.m.
Quincy	WGEM	1440	8:00 a.m.	Fayetteville(Sat.)	WFLB	1490	1:00 p.m.	Washington, D. C.	WMAL	630	1:00 p.m.
Indiana, Anderson	WHBU	1240	1:30 p.m.	Salisbury	WSAT	1280	1:00 p.m.	W. Virginia, Beckley	WVNR	620	1:30 p.m.
Bloomington	WTTS	1370	1:00 p.m.	Wilmington	WGNI	1340	8:30 a.m.	Parkersburg, Sat.	WCOM	1230	5:30 p.m.
Evansville	WJPS	1330	1:30 p.m.	Winston-Salem	WAIR	1340	1:00 p.m.	Wheeling	WKWK	1400	1:00 p.m.
Ft. Wayne	WGL	1250	1:00 p.m.	N. Dakota, Fargo	KFGO	790	1:00 p.m.	Wisconsin, Green Bay	WDUZ	1400	5:30 p.m.
Iowa, Cedar Rapids	WMT	600	7:30 a.m.	Ohio, Cleveland	WJW	850	1:00 p.m.	LaCrosse	WKTY	580	4:00 p.m.
Des Moines	KSO	1460	1:00 p.m.	Columbus	WHKC	610	1:00 p.m.	Madison	WIWA	1320	8:00 a.m.
Sioux City	KSCJ	1360	10:30 p.m.	Lima	WIMA	1150	9:00 a.m.	Milwaukee	WCAN	1250	2:00 p.m.
Waterloo	KXEL	1540	5:30 p.m.	Youngstown	WBBW	1240	8:30 a.m.	Neenah	WNAM	1280	8:00 a.m.
Kansas, Coffeyville	KGGF	690	2:00 p.m.	Oklahoma, Ada	KADA	1230	1:00 p.m.	Wyoming, Casper	KSPR	1470	9:15 p.m.
Topeka	WREN	1250	1:00 p.m.	Enid	KCRC	1390	1:00 p.m.	Cheyenne	KFCB	710	12:00 p.m.
Wichita	KWBB	1410	3:30 p.m.	McAlester	KTMC	1400	1:00 p.m.	Cody	KODI	1400	12:00 p.m.
Ken., Bowling Green	WKCT	930	1:00 p.m.	Muskogee	KBIX	1490	2:00 p.m.	Rawlins	KRAL	1240	12:00 p.m.
Harlan	WHLN	1230	3:00 p.m.	Oklahoma City	KTOK	1000	9:30 a.m.	Riverton	KWRL	1450	12:00 p.m.
Louisville	WKLO	1080	1:00 p.m.	Tulsa	KRMG	740	2:00 p.m.	Torrington	KGOS	1490	12:00 p.m.
Newport	WNOP	740	2:00 p.m.	Oregon, Eugene	KUGN	590	1:00 p.m.	Worland	KWOR	1490	12:00 p.m.
Louisiana, Baton Rouge	WLCS	910	1:00 p.m.	Klamath Falls	KFLW	1450	4:30 p.m.	Canada, Trail, B.C.	CJAT	610	9:30 a.m.
Monroe	KMLB	1440	2:00 p.m.	Medford	KMED	1440	7:30 a.m.	Toronto, Ont.	CKEY	580	9:15 a.m.

All times are Sunday unless otherwise indicated.

ording as he hath purposed in his heart; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver," II Cor. 9:7.

A brief look at the ORGANIZATION OF THE EARLY CHURCH IS ALSO VERY INTERESTING. Christ was the head of the church. The Scriptures say in Col. 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." Nothing is said in the Bible about His having some man to be His vicar or vicegerent on earth.

In every local congregation there was a plurality of elders. Acts 14:23 reads, "And when they had appointed for them elders in every church." The terms elders, bishops, and overseers are used interchangeably in the New Testament as is seen in Acts 20:17,28 and Titus 1:5 and 7. There was never one bishop or elder over a church or a number of churches, but always several bishops or elders over each church. These men were shepherds over their congregations as shepherds were over their flocks. They were to "watch in behalf" of the souls under their care, Heb. 13:17 and Acts 20:28.

But there was so much work to be done in local congregations that the elders had to have someone to assist them. To do that work, the Lord placed deacons in the church. Their qualifications are found in the same chapter with the qualifications of the elders, I Tim. 3. Paul said in verse 13 of that chapter, "For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

In the early church, also, were evangelists or preachers of the gospel. They were not called pastors, for that word is used with reference to the elders or bishops. To Timothy, Paul said, "preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching....do thou the work of an evangelist," II Tim. 4:2,5.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH MAGNIFIED THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. "In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace," it is said in Eph. 1:7. Peter said that we are redeemed "with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ," I Pet. 1:18. They taught men needed the benefits of the blood of Christ, and that without Him there is no salvation, Acts 4:12.

BUT, HOW DID MEN RECEIVE THE BENEFITS OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST AND BECOME MEMBERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH? On the day the church of the Lord started, according to Acts 2:36, three thousand believed in Christ as the Son of God, and were then told (verse 38), "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the

Holy Spirit." In the book of Acts we have many other cases of conversion which show that in every instance men believed in Christ, repented of their sins and were baptized to have their sins forgiven. This is clearly illustrated in the story of the eunuch (Acts 8), the conversion of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9), the conversion of Cornelius in chapter 10 and the story of the jailor in chapter 16. All obeyed the same way, and the Lord "added" them to the church, Acts 2:47.

Now friends, had you lived then and rendered obedience as they did, would you not too have been members of the New Testament church? Most assuredly you would. Is it not reasonable to conclude that IF MEN RENDER OBEDIENCE NOW JUST AS THEY DID THEN, THAT GOD WILL STILL SAVE AS HE DID IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE? Just because you happened to live centuries after Christ established His church is no indication that you cannot be members of it now. If wheat made wheat then and still makes wheat, will not the word of God, "the seed of the kingdom," Luke 8:11, which made men Christians then, members of the Lord's church, do the same thing in this century when it is obeyed the same way? We do not need a new plan of salvation, because the Lord's plan will work now just as it worked during the first century.

It is our plea to beg men to RETURN TO THE BIBLE AND THE CHURCH OF THE FIRST CENTURY. If you are a member of a church unknown to the Bible and that practices things unauthorized by the Scriptures, it is to your interest to learn of the church revealed in the Bible. If you have not rendered obedience as did the people of the first century, won't you in humility and love do so soon? We stand ready to help you in turning to the Lord and the New Testament church. Our fervent prayer is that the things we have discussed today concerning the Lord's church and His way may challenge your attention, and that you will yearn to be saved the Bible way and be nothing but a simple Christian, a member of the church of the Christ, worshipping and serving just as the Bible directs.

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