



SOUTH JACKSON BEACON

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No. 33

Is the Church of Christ a Denomination? Robert Notgrass

The church that the Lord built, the church of Christ, is a unique and different institution from all other religious bodies on the face of the earth. One of many ways it is different is that it is not of protestant denominationalism. Other times when we claim that the church is not a denomination, people generally ask, “What do you mean that the church of Christ is not a denomination? Is it non- denominational? Like a community church? What is it and how is it different?”

This is the way that many see the church of Christ today: just another denomination or calling it a non-denominational community church. Even today, some church members have become confused if the church is or is not a denomination. I know that I have refused to join any denomination and have chosen to be just a Christian. Can one be a Christian without joining a denomination? Surely he can. But, if one becomes and remains a Christian only, is he a member of any church? And if so, whose? The answer of course is Christ’s church and his church is not a denomination.

When Christ said that he would build his church (Mat. 16:18), did he have in mind a denomination or a federation of denominations with their own organizations, their own creed books and their own ideas of how the church is to be? When reading passages such as Romans 16:16, do we perceive that they were all denominations? Were they not simply local congregations of people who had become Christians only? If one in the first century could be just a Christian before there were any denominations, why can’t one be just a Christian today in the 21 st century without being a member of any denomination?

Now some may make the accusation saying, “I thought a man by the name of Alexander Campbell was the one who started the church of Christ?” However, the truth is that Alexander Campbell was almost 1800

years too late to establish the church of Christ. Campbell was born on September 12, 1788. But as was already noted, the churches of Christ existed back when the book of Romans was written by the hands of the apostle Paul. Thus, Campbell was not the founder. He simply took on the name used in the first century as does every church of Christ today. The fact is that many back in the 1700-1800 in various denominations concluded that they should abandon human names, human creeds, human traditions and human religious bodies and return to the New Testament as our authority of religion. Campbell, like many others, withdrew themselves from the denominations which they had been raised in and preached in and began to free themselves from all human interferences and hindrances and became free to preach the Gospel as it is in the New Testament. This drive of individuals began to speak where the Bible speaks and remained silent where it is silent. Many desired to be Christians only without being affiliated with any denomination and thus members of the one spiritual body of Christ, the church. Alexander Campbell and others did not seek to make a new denomination, but to be part of the body of Christ that already existed in many other places during that time.

It is wonderful how men are able to pick up God's guide book, the Bible, and start working toward restoring the original church founded by Christ. This is what the men of the restoration did which was far more glorious and significant than the reformation movement of the 1500-1600's who out of that did start all the major denominations that we see today.

Today, it is possible for one to hear of Christ, believe on him as the son of God, repent of all sins, confess faith in Christ and be baptized in the water for the remission of sins just as people did in the first century. This is not a great mystery, nor is it impossible to achieve. Yet, such actions will make the same thing today as it did 2,000 year ago, simply a Christian, a member of the Lord's church. All today who do this in a particular geographical location make up the church of Christ in that location. If they remain true to New Testament teaching in doctrine, worship, practice and daily life they continue to be, even in this complex century, simply a church of Christ, but without being a denomination of any kind. Indeed the church of Christ is not a denomination, but simply Christians following the uniqueness of God's Word as should all mankind.

Congregational News & Notes

Prayer Requested Members

Mary Bolen, Luther & Jo Merritt
Ron and Nadine McDonald,
Fredie Stewart, Mary Lewis,
Roberta Donaldson, Lisa Dukes,
Doug Crouse, Carolyn Callis
Margie Montgomery, Sue Harris,
Betty Mosely, Teriyaki Anderson
James Morris, Freeman Kidder,
Andy Vaughn, Pearl Johnson,
Ken & Paula Wadley, Judy Ellis
Phillip Mullins, Jerry Crabb,
Karen Chance, Shirley Puckett
Gaylon & Betty Cooper
Carleton & Cindy Kidder

Friends & Family

Horace Yearwood, Shirley Bolin,
Beverly Martindale,
Glenn Lovell, Gladys Gowan,
Diane Hubbard, Brandi Rogers,
Marilyn Ferrell, Corey Allen,
Ruby Malone, Justin Puckett,
Kenton Lancaster

Today's Sermons

AM - Christianity - Antique
or Unique?
1 Timothy 1:12-14

PM - Are You Drifting
Hebrews 2:1-3

Happenings

Today

Men's Business Meeting
following AM services

August 24th

Congregational Cookout
We will begin at 3:00 pm.
Meal to be served at 4:00 pm.
Signup sheets are on the
bulletin board

August 29th

Apologetics Press Dinner at the
Henderson Church of Christ.
Meal Starts at 6 PM.
Signup sheet is on the
bulletin board.

Cards to Send

Billy Landers
125 Pope Road
Medon, TN 38356

Sammy & Shirley Puckett
144 Shadow Creek Lane
Medina, TN 38355

Weekly Record

6 AM	4
Bible Class	42/12
AM Worship	75/25
PM Worship	47/16
Wed Bible Study	51/6
Contribution	4772
Budget	4014

Those Privileged to Serve

Aug 18- AM WORSHIP

6 AM - P. Hatcher, J. Butcher

Lead Singing: Mike Wages

Read Scripture:

Jeff Bliss

Opening Prayer:

Greg Long

Sermon: Ray Pack

Closing Prayer: Carleton Kidder

Communion: Joe Venable

Jonathan Orr

Aug 25- AM WORSHIP

6 AM - J. Smith, M. Wages

Lead Singing: John Smith

Read Scripture:

Van McConnell

Opening Prayer:

Mike Wages

Sermon: Ray Pack

Closing Prayer: Joe Venable

Communion: Greg Long

Jeff Bliss

PM WORSHIP

Lead Singing: Paul Hatcher

Opening Prayer:

Mike Wages

Sermon: Ray Pack

Closing Prayer: Jerry Butcher

Communion: Joe Venable

PM WORSHIP

Lead Singing: Ray Pack

Opening Prayer:

Greg Long

Sermon: Singing Night

Closing Prayer: Ronald Clouse

Communion: Greg Long

Aug 21 - WED BIBLE STUDY

Lead Singing: Paul Hatcher

Opening Prayer:

Ronald Clouse

Devo - Mike Wages

Aug 28 - WED BIBLE STUDY

Lead Singing: Marion Thomas

Opening Prayer:

Paul Hatcher

Devo - Ray Pack

South Jackson Church of Christ

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Medon, TN

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Minister: Ray Pack

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(731) 437-9501

Service Times

Early Worship	6:00 AM
Gospel of Christ - Fox 16	9:30 AM
Sunday Bible Class	9:30 AM
Sunday AM Worship	10:30 AM
Sunday PM Worship	5:00 PM
Midweek Bible Study	6:30 PM