

MISCONCEPTIONS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST (1)
Matthew 16:13-19

Introduction:

1. The church of Christ is the 12th largest religious body in America.
2. It is possibly the most misunderstood of all religious bodies.
3. There are two major reasons for the misconceptions about the church:
 - a. We have failed to teach clearly what the Bible says about the church.
 - b. Many are prejudiced and do not bother to find out the facts.
4. Honest people will check the facts before passing on information.
5. We are going to examine common misconceptions of the church in the light of its actual teaching and practice.

Discussion:

- I. **“THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS A DENOMINATION.”**
 - A. There are a growing number of churches which proclaim themselves to be “non-denominational.”
 1. Such are usually “community churches.”
 2. They are “non-denominational” in that they are not aligned with a specific denomination.
 3. Actually, they are “all-denominational,” accepting people from all denominations.
 4. They have no definite doctrine but cater to those of diverse beliefs - a “one size fits all” concept.
 - B. The church of Christ is “pre-denominational.”
 1. The church existed long before denominations came into being.
 - a. The Catholic Church was not fully evolved before the 6th century.
 - b. Protestant denominations began with the Reformation in the 16th century.
 2. The church of Christ seeks to be the church as it was in the beginning simply by following the New Testament pattern.

II. "THE CHURCH OF CHRIST WAS FOUNDED BY ALEXANDER CAMPBELL."

- A. Members of the church of Christ used to be called "Campbellites" as a term of derision.**
- B. Alexander Campbell was a preacher of unusual talents.**
 - 1. He was the son of Thomas Campbell, a Presbyterian minister, who came to America from Ireland.**
 - 2. Through their study of the Bible, father and son concluded they could bring about religious unity if all would drop their denominational creeds and just go by the Bible.**
 - 3. Their aim was to restore the Lord's church, not establish a new denomination.**
 - 4. Alexander Campbell was a preacher, debater, author and editor who was the best known preacher of his day.**
- C. Churches of Christ had existed in the British Isles long before the Campbells set foot in America**
- D. Others also advocated a return to the church of the Bible.**
 - 1. Barton W. Stone in Kentucky.**
 - 2. John Wright in Indiana.**

III. "THE CHURCH OF CHRIST DOES NOT BELIEVE IN MUSIC."

- A. This is perhaps the most widely held misconception of the church.**
 - 1. A lady in Australia accused, "You don't believe in instrumental music and flowers but I think GOD created both of them."**
 - 2. Many do not know there are two kinds of music: vocal and instrumental.**
 - 3. Fewer still know that GOD has authorized vocal music for His church.**

"...speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the LORD, giving thanks to GOD the Father in the name of our LORD Jesus Christ..." (Eph. 5:19,20).

"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" (Col. 3:16).

- B. Acappella music was the norm in the church for centuries.**
- 1. Instrumental music was brought into the church by Pope Vitellius about 660 but was not accepted until the 14th century.**
 - 2. Most of the Protestant reformers rejected it as being “popish.”**
 - 3. Many churches (Greek Orthodox, Reformed, Primitive Baptist, Fundamental Presbyterian and Mennonites) still reject it.**
- C. The church of Christ believes in music in worship, but only the kind GOD has authorized (Col. 3:17).**

IV. “THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BELIEVES WE ARE SAVED BY WATER.”

- A. This statement is often made by those who teach salvation by faith alone.**
- 1. The same folks also teach salvation by grace alone - they can’t have it both ways.**
 - 2. Salvation is “by grace through faith” (Eph. 2:8).**
 - 3. Grace is GOD’s part; faith is man’s response.**
 - 4. The faith that saves is the faith that obeys (Gal. 5:4; Jam. 2).**
- B. Baptism is ruled out by faith only folks for they say it is a work.**
- 1. Believing is said to be a work by the LORD Himself.**
“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of GOD, that you believe in Him whom He sent’” (John 6:29).
 - 2. Faith is often used as a synecdoche to stand for the whole plan of salvation (Acts 16:30-34).**
- C. We are “saved by water” in the sense that in baptism we bury the old man of sin and come forth to new life (Rom. 6:3-5).**
- 1. Christ shed His blood “for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28); we are baptized “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38).**
 - 2. Christ “washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Rev. 1:5); Ananias told Saul to “arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the LORD” (Acts 22:16).**

Conclusion:

- 1. Do not let misconceptions keep you from obedience to the truth.**
- 2. Why not “arise and be baptized and wash away your sins” so that you may be added by the LORD to His church (Acts 2:36-47)?**

