



Personal from...

Why Churches Are Divided

WHY are the churches *divided*? Have the churches *failed*? Do we *really* understand what is the real PURPOSE—the divine MISSION—of the Church Jesus Christ founded?

Did Jesus Christ intend his Church to become divided?

Did Jesus Christ give his Church the commission to work actively in this world's governments, its society, its commerce and industry, *to make this world a better world*?

Is the divine mission of the Church of God to make this a BETTER world? If so, it has failed abysmally.

Should you *join* a church—and if so, *which one*?

WHERE is the original *true* Church that Jesus Christ founded? That is the question that haunted me, back in 1926 and 1927. I had been challenged on a point of God's law in the Bible. I had been *angered* into an intensive, almost night-and-day study of the Bible.

My wife had taken up with a teaching she said she got out of the Bible—a teaching and practice utterly contrary to the CHURCHES. On this particular point all the churches appeared to be in agreement—except possibly one I had branded as fanatical.

Yes, I was angered. I was indignant! I was plain MAD! My wife taking up with religious fanaticism? Surely *no* advertising man could tolerate *that*! She said it was Bible teaching.

“LOOK!” I exclaimed, “you can't tell me all these churches can be wrong!” I firmly believed that. I believed these churches—at least the Protestant churches—were CHRIST'S churches, firmly based on the BIBLE!

Haven't YOU believed it?

So I was goaded into opening the Bible. I was going to *prove* to my wife that “all these churches can't be wrong.” Desperately I searched for biblical

evidence to refute my wife's fanaticism. But I couldn't find that evidence. What I *did* find staggered me!

I had been reared in one of the smaller, but older and respected Protestant denominations. From birth I had been taken to Sunday School. I had taken for granted and assumed the usual teaching of the immortality of the soul, the going to heaven or hell at death and the idea that I was “saved” from birth, since I had a “birthright membership” in the church.

When I read Romans 6:23, I stared at that verse in my Bible in shocked, incredible disbelief! It said, “For the wages of sin is DEATH; but the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” I had always believed the wages we earn for SIN was *just the opposite of* DEATH. I had been taught that what we get paid for SIN was ETERNAL LIFE—in hell fire! This verse says eternal life is something we can only receive AS A GIFT from God.

But NO! Surely no! We already *have* eternal life—so I supposed—we are immortal souls! I learned that many Protestants INTERPRET that verse—that is, they PUT A DIFFERENT MEANING INTO IT. They *change* the meaning of the words. They manufacture a new definition of the word *death*. They define *death* to mean “separation from God.” I looked at this verse again. On the one hand, for sin, we get DEATH. On the other hand, the *opposite* of that penalty is ETERNAL LIFE. Now, it certainly was clear, if ETERNAL LIFE is the very *opposite* of DEATH, then DEATH cannot mean eternal life!

I was confused! My head was swimming!

But there it was, in plain language. Then I read that SOULS can *die*! “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezek. 18:4, 20). Then my startled eyes read, in Revelation 16:3: “and every living *soul* DIED in the sea.” That said SOULS can DIE. Then I saw where Jesus said souls can be DESTROYED! “. . . but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28).

It began to look like some of the churches *were*

wrong, after all! But did not Jesus Christ found his CHURCH? He surely did, and I found where he said the gates of the grave would never prevail against it—IT WOULD EN-DURE—IT COULD NOT BE DESTROYED! I found where Jesus Christ said he would never leave nor forsake it—where he would always be “in the midst” of it. I found where he was the living HEAD of it! Jesus Christ was resurrected from the grave. HE IS STILL ALIVE!

So *WHERE* was the Church *HE* was guiding, directing and using?

I was perplexed. But I kept searching. I continued studying.

I found where Jesus Christ came to DO THE WORK OF GOD. He came to bring mankind the GOSPEL, from GOD. Yet he said that of *himself*—as a human—by his own human power, he could do nothing—he was utterly *powerless*, of himself, for this divine spiritual MISSION. The Father that dwelt within him—by the power of his Holy Spirit—did the work.

So it was really GOD doing it, by his Holy Spirit, using the individual human body of Jesus as his instrument. GOD carried on his WORK of revealing HIS MESSAGE through the individual human BODY of Jesus Christ.

I saw where God’s true CHURCH is called “THE BODY OF CHRIST” (I Cor. 12:27, 13; Rom. 12:5). How could the CHURCH be the BODY OF CHRIST? I searched. I studied. God’s Word made the truth PLAIN. God *started* his Gospel WORK—proclaiming the Gospel (Good News) of his KINGDOM through the individual human BODY of Jesus. But after his resurrection, Jesus sent the same HOLY SPIRIT to enter, on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 31, and thereafter, into the COLLECTIVE BODY of those in GOD’S CHURCH.

The CHURCH, then, is the COLLECTIVE BODY Christ uses as HIS INSTRUMENT, empowered by God’s Spirit, to carry on GOD’S WORK. Jesus Christ heads and directs it from heaven!

How does one get into this ONE BODY? By receiving God’s Holy Spirit. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized [immersed] into ONE

BODY.” To baptize is to immerse—to plunge into. It is God’s Holy Spirit that PUTS ONE INTO the only true Church!

But are there MANY churches? No, everywhere the New Testament speaks of the ONE Body—ONE CHURCH. Christ is NOT divided (I Cor. 1:13). There is ONE true Church. All in it “speak the same thing” (I Cor. 1:10) and there is NO DIVISION!

But WHAT is the divine MISSION of that Church? What is its PURPOSE? The answer is to *do* the WORK OF GOD, which Jesus started, and now continues *through* his Church. And *what* did Jesus start DOING?

Mark tells us. “The *beginning* of



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the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1). Then, beginning verse 2, Mark records how John the Baptist prepared the way before him. Coming, then, directly to the BEGINNING of the WORK Christ did, Mark says: “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee . . .”—DOING WHAT? “. . . preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: REPENT ye, and BELIEVE the gospel” (Mark 1:14-15).

Two things Jesus commanded his hearers to do: 1) REPENT, and 2) BELIEVE. But believe WHAT? Believe JESUS! Believe his message—his GOSPEL. You have to believe that Gospel—that Good News of the KINGDOM OF GOD, to be saved! JESUS SAID SO!

The KINGDOM OF GOD is the GOVERNMENT of God. It is also the divine FAMILY of God, into which we may be born. It is the UNIVERSE-RULING family! You *repent* of—WHAT? Your rebellion against that GOVERNMENT of God. God governs by his LAW, summed up by the Ten Commandments. Some will say, we must repent of SIN! Yes, SURELY! For sin IS the transgression of THE LAW (I John 3:4). It means unconditional SURRENDER to the GOVERNMENT of God—to yield to let God RULE your life, according to HIS laws—it means to live by EVERY WORD IN THE BIBLE (Matt. 4:4).

What is the divine MISSION of God’s true CHURCH? Jesus commissioned his Church: “Go ye into all the world, and PREACH THE GOSPEL to every creature.” Not just *any* gospel. Not a gospel merely *about* the Person of Christ—but HIS Gospel of the Kingdom of God—the Gospel he said we have to BELIEVE in order to be converted and saved!

Again, Matthew records his Great Commission: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in [into] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy [Spirit]: *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have COMMANDED you*: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:19-20). In proclaiming his GOSPEL, Jesus specifically said, teach them to OBEY God’s COMMANDMENTS!

Jesus gave a prophecy for our time—just before the END of this world. The SIGN of his coming and the end of this age is this: “And *this* gospel of the KINGDOM [the same Gospel he taught the original apostles] shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and *THEN* shall the END come” (Matt. 24:14).

That Gospel was not preached after A.D. 70 to all the world. In every generation it has been preached—to a FEW, but *not* TO ALL THE WORLD—ON ALL CONTINENTS!

Wherever God’s one true Church is—the ONE Church that
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is CHRIST'S—it will be preaching THAT GOSPEL to the whole world—over *all inhabited continents*—today. For we are *near* the END!

The Gospel of the *living* Christ is the GOOD NEWS of the *coming* KINGDOM OF GOD to *RULE THE WORLD!* It is the Gospel of the divine GOVERNMENT. It teaches people to REPENT of rebellion against GOD'S government—transgression of GOD'S LAWS. It teaches salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—the remission of sins through Jesus' shed blood and reconciliation to God by Christ's DEATH; and salvation through his LIFE.

It has NO PART in this world's governments—its members are AMBASSADORS, as in a strange land, of THE KINGDOM OF GOD, soon to destroy and replace all human governments of the nations today. Jesus prayed for his Church: "... Holy Father, keep through *thine own name* those whom thou hast given me, that they may be ONE, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them *in thy name*: ... And now come I to thee; ... I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because *they are not OF the world*, even as I am not OF the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. *They are not OF the world*, even as I am not OF the world. Sanctify them through THY TRUTH: THY WORD IS TRUTH" (John 17:11-17).

Jesus said his true Church was to be KEPT *in the name* of the Father—GOD. *Twelve times* in the New Testament, the NAME of this one *true* Church is The CHURCH OF GOD! It is GOD'S Church, and Jesus Christ is its guiding, sustaining, directing HEAD!

In this world, churches are named after MEN, or after the SYSTEM men have devised, or the kind of church government MEN have thought out, CONTRARY to God's

Word—or after a significant doctrine they emphasize—or, what men hope to make it—all-encompassing, universal or catholic. But wherever that ONE *true* Church is, it will be named The CHURCH OF GOD. But that is not all. Many have appropriated God's name but are not proclaiming the KINGDOM OF GOD, as the GOVERNMENT of God, which we must OBEY—teaching obedience to God's Law (Ten Commandments) (including the fourth)—teaching REPENTANCE of rebellion and transgressing God's holy LAW—teaching that we may be now BEGOTTEN into the KINGDOM (Family) of God, and may, by the resurrection, be BORN into the GOD FAMILY!

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That true Church is preaching the imminency of the coming of CHRIST as KING of kings and LORD of lords, to RULE all nations for a thousand years on earth. Not up in heaven, but ON THIS EARTH (Rev. 5:10).

There is only ONE such Church!

It is doing THE WORK OF GOD. It is, as Jesus said it would be, a "little flock," persecuted, despised by the world. But it does have dedicated, consecrated, converted, fully instructed and trained, ordained MINISTERS in all parts of the world—available to call on you, visit you in your home, answer your questions, explain the Bible to you—*IF YOU REQUEST IT!* But none of them will *EVER* call on you, unless YOU of your own free will request it! Paul had visited the elders (ministers) at Ephesus from house to house—*BUT*, regarding the general public, Jesus said, "GO NOT from house to house" (Luke 10:7).

Neither Jesus, nor Peter, nor Paul, nor any of the original true apostles ever approached people and personally URGED conversion on them. God has made every human a FREE MORAL AGENT. God forces each to MAKE HIS OWN DECISION, and *the true* GOD will never force you to be converted.

But if you, of your own volition, want to know MORE about the *very* Church that Jesus Christ founded, and heads today—if you'd like to ask questions about it, why not write to the editor and request a personal visit? We might not be able to have one of God's own ministers call on you immediately—but if you'll make the request and be patient, I'm sure that before too long we can get one of these men GOD has called and trained, to visit you. And let me suggest that you JOT DOWN on paper the QUESTIONS you are going to want to ask. I've learned, personally, by more than 45 years' experience, that you'll forget them unless you do.

Hundreds and hundreds—yes, thousands upon thousands—are being *converted*—their lives CHANGED—by this WORK OF GOD, through *The World Tomorrow* broadcast worldwide; through *The Plain Truth*, the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course and other vital free literature we send upon request. Some, not realizing one of God's own called and consecrated ministers could call and explain and answer questions, have JOINED one of the churches of this world. You cannot JOIN the true Church of God—the Almighty GOD *puts you in*.

But if you have questions about fellowship, doctrines or practice—or ANY questions about the Church or the Bible or the Christian LIFE, write me. I cannot call and visit with you personally any more (as I used to do and wish I still could), but God has now given me many truly called and chosen men who CAN. DON'T go to the churches of this world, or join any, UNTIL you hear the full truth and weigh carefully the FACTS, according to your own BIBLE. *Then* make your decision and take what steps GOD shows you. □