

**PLEASE PRAY FOR THESE:**

Euin Barrier, Bernice Beeson,  
Terry Cantrell, Ora Cash,  
Dickie & Joann Crouch, Emily Devereux,  
Richard Faulkner, Jimmy Hall,  
Eva Lee, Ken & Mabel Lock,  
Melvin & Ruth Messer, Bobby Mills,  
Bill Parr, Sophia Sears,  
Earline Smith, Linda Smith,  
Barbara Staten, Joann White  
Jimmy, Elizabeth, Katie & Laura Thompson,  
Darlene Wilson, Geneva Wortham,  
and those engaged in teaching the lost.

**If you notice someone's absence from the assembly pray for them, and call to see if there is some additional way you can help.**

*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death (Proverbs 14:12).*

**PRAYER LIST UPDATES:**

*Mary Weston* remains in NEA Baptist without a specific diagnosis.

*Bobby & Helen Mills and Terry Cantrell* were involved in a car wreck (were hit from behind) in Jonesboro Thursday. All were treated at NEA Baptist and released.

*Deanna Farr's* uncle, *Coy Fitch*, passed away in St. Louis Thursday

**OTHER NEWS:**

**POT LUCK:** Please stay after this morning's assembly for our regular 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday noon meal together.

**PANAMA MISSIONS:** An information sheet is in the tract listing items you can donate again this year.

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT:** A speakers list is available in the foyer for Wednesday nights through the end of the year.

**GOSPEL MEETING:** Ivie Powell is scheduled for a meeting June 6-9 at Cherokee Street church in Newport.

MIDWEEK NEWS UPDATES AT:  
[www.HarrisburgChurchOfChrist.com](http://www.HarrisburgChurchOfChrist.com)

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY (June):**

- 15 - Maxine Long
- 15 - Irene Faust
- 17 - Laura Thompson (sweet 16)
- 22 - Linda Smith

**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY (June):**

- 4 - Danny & Patsy Sefers
- 5 - Bob & Linda Smith
- 8 - David & Mary Ann Sills
- 11 - Ray & Rose Blanchard
- 13 - Bill & Mary Weston
- 19 - Al & Chris Parr
- 28 - Bill & Charlene Mears

**THE RECORD SPEAKS** (week of 5-23):

Sunday Bible Class	61
Sunday AM Worship	78
Sunday PM Worship	65
Contribution	\$1,577
Wednesday PM Bible Class	68

**WHAT DOES IT SAY ABOUT YOU?**

**Welcome**  
to the Assemblies of  
**Harrisburg**  
**Church of Christ**

P. O. Box 266  
(504 N. Brooks St)  
Harrisburg, AR 72432  
(870) 578-2965

**Sunday:**

Bible Classes 9:00  
Worship 9:45; 6:00

**Wednesday:**

Bible Classes 7:00

**Elders:**

Ray Blanchard 578-2559  
Bill Mears 578-9650  
Mark Weston 931-2790

**Evangelist:**

Al Parr 578-9154  
(Cell) 903-721-0332

**World Evangelism:**

- ◆Cape Town, S.A.;
- ◆Int'l Bible Academe;

**Benevolence:**

- ◆Children's Homes, Inc.;
- ◆Southern Christian Home

**★REMEMBER★**  
Gospel Singing  
next Sunday night

Be a  
Daily Bible Reader



visit [www.HarrisburgChurchOfChrist.com](http://www.HarrisburgChurchOfChrist.com)

May 30, 2010

## WHAT IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST ?

About the time I began preaching the gospel, a well-known preacher in Texas made headlines among us by claiming that the church of Christ was "one big sick denomination." A great deal has been written and spoken in more recent years concerning the church's relationship with other churches around us. One preacher – one of our own – called upon all his brethren in the churches of Christ to think of themselves as "the undenominational denomination." How *should* we think of ourselves? What is the church of Christ, really?

The only proper source of answers to questions of religious truth is *the Bible* (John 17:17). We must look into *the Bible* to learn what the church is (I Corinthians 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33; 16:1). Though many today try to define religious right by comparing one group with another, still the Bible teaches the wise that this is impossible (II Corinthians 10:12).

The name "church of Christ" is not of man's origin, but is a God-inspired designation of the church identified in the Bible (Romans 16:16). The same Bible that reveals to us the existence of the church describes for us its name, nature, origin, purpose, and creed.

(Cont'd)

**BE A DAILY BIBLE READER**

## THE NAME AND NATURE OF THE CHURCH

There are churches whose names designate such things as their *Method* of interpreting the Bible, their pattern of organization (for example, under *Presbyters*), a peculiar doctrine or practice (such as *Baptism*), or their founder's name (such as *Luther*). The church described in the Bible is called by various terms that show its nature. That nature of the church is one of peculiar relationship to the Lord. We find the church called the *church of God* (I Corinthians 1:2), *church of the firstborn* (Hebrews 12:23), *body of Christ* (Ephesians 1:22-23), *bride* (i.e. of *Christ*, see Revelation 19:7; 21:2), *house of God* (I Timothy 3:15), and *kingdom* (Revelation 1:9). Most often, though, it is simply called *the church* (Matthew 18:17 and at least 79 other times). Churches in several communities considered together are called *the churches of Christ* (Romans 16:16). The church is rightly called *the church of Christ* because it belongs to Him (Colossians 1:24); He called it His own (Matthew 16:18). He is the head of it (Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18), and it is subject only to Him (Ephesians 5:24).

## THE ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH

The name "church of Christ" is not of man's origin, but is a God-inspired designation of the church identified in the Bible.

Some churches don't speak much of the time, place and circumstances of their origin, but many make such facts important elements of their identity and teaching. Churches can be found that began in Italy, Germany, England, Scotland, the United States and other places. These began from as long ago as 600 years after the birth of Jesus to as recently as our own generation. The church described in the Bible began, and is still identified, with a peculiar relationship to God and to the Savior Jesus Christ. First, Christ promised to build it (Matthew 16:18). He promised to build but *one*, and is the New Testament is the record of all the facts pertinent to that *one*. No other church on earth today can rightly claim to have been built by Jesus. To make such a claim would make Jesus a deceiver, promising to build *one* church, and then building *others*. Secondly, His church was in existence as early as 50 days after his resurrection (the time from the Jewish Passover – Mark 14:1-15:27 – to their Pentecost – Leviticus 23:15-16). On that day Peter preached the first gospel sermon (Acts 2:1-40) and people were added to the church (v. 47). They could hardly have been added to that which did not exist, therefore the Lord's own church existed at that time. Not *one* of the other churches known on earth today, however, had yet come into existence at that time.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

The Bible also defines the purpose of the church. That purpose is nothing related to the work we see in many churches of our day. They promote political causes and campaign for

**A SHORT COMMENTARY FROM AL** on II Peter 1:3 – Has God given us in the knowledge of Jesus (II Timothy 1:9; Matthew 11:28) everything that pertains to life and godliness, or hasn't He? If He hasn't, this verse is a lie. If God speaks lies in the Bible, why bother with the Bible at all? If this verse isn't a lie, then why don't people believe and obey what's written in it, instead of explaining it away and substituting their own doctrines? The Bible means what it says, or it means nothing at all. Don't deceive yourself.

social change in schools and other organizations. People who have no personal connection to any church have come to think that the purpose of churches is to feed the hungry and house the homeless. However, no human statement of design or purpose will suffice for the church which is subject to Christ. God has clearly revealed His will that the saved be edified (I Corinthians 14:5), and that Christians then, as the body of Christ, show unto to the world the "manifold wisdom of God" (Ephesians 3:10), preaching the gospel everywhere (Mark 16:15), caring for the needy in the process (Acts 6:1-4; I Timothy 5:16; Galatians 6:10).

## THE CREED OF THE CHURCH

Webster defines the word *creed* as "a brief statement of religious belief; confession of faith." Practically every church known to man has its own peculiar creed. Surely, some subscribe to one or more of several "universal" creeds, and by these those churches are nominally linked together. Yet, as one views modern religion as a whole, nothing is more evident than *division*. More than by any other single factor, that division is caused by beliefs and statements of beliefs that are peculiar to each "denomination." But the church which Jesus built is not a denominational, divided church (Ephesians 4:1-13). It has one "creed," one "statement of religious belief; confession of faith." That creed is Jesus Christ himself: his identity as the Son of God (Acts 8:37). Upon this statement the church is built (Matthew 16:1-18), and to promote this creed the Bible was written (John 20:30-31). No other creed is found authorized for the church of the New Testament.

Don't be a *divided* Christian. Be just a *Christian*: simply a member of the same church the first Christians knew. Believing the same doctrine they did, and following the same practices will certainly make us what they were and put us into the same church. - Al Parr

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*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*

(Proverbs 14:12):

**B E A D A I L Y B I B L E R E A D E R**