



Identifying the church of the New Testament – Part 2

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In the last article, we noted that there is but one body and that body is the church established by Christ (Ephesians 4:4; 1:22-23). We also noted that the church described in the New

Testament is the true church and can be identified by its characteristics. The church of the New Testament can be found today simply by looking for the same characteristics.

The example of a missing boy to illustrates how God identifies His church by its characteristics. If a search party is sent out to find the missing boy, they can know whether or not they have found the correct child by identifying certain characteristics. The lost boy is described as a 10 years old, 4 feet tall with blond hair, brown eyes, wearing a blue shirt, red ball cap and answers to Billy. If one came back proclaiming to have found the boy, and he was 10 years old, 4 feet tall with brown hair and blue eyes and answered to Tommy, the parents of the missing child would not accept this boy because it is not be their child. Although his characteristics are close, they will only accept the child that meets **all** the characteristics **exactly**.

We must accept the truth that God will not accept just any person, even if they have a great faith in Him, unless they meet **all** the characteristics **exactly**. It is not good enough to a little like or even a lot like the church described in the New Testament; we must be exactly like Christ's church in order for God to accept us.

We shall briefly consider some of the characteristics of the church of the New Testament. One such characteristic is the name. The name (or designation) of Christ's church is the church of (or belonging to) Christ (Romans 16:16 – the plural is used to describe different congregations all believing and teaching the same thing, not different denominations). Someone may claim there is nothing in a name; however, this is not true in any other aspect of life (e.g., the name on a deed, title, or paycheck). No man would allow his bride to wear the name of another man. The

church is Christ's bride and He will not allow it to wear the name of a man. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus announced He would build His church, thus it belongs to Him. Nowhere in Scripture did John the Baptist ever build or claimed to have built his own church. Any church started by man (based on man's doctrines) is not the church of the New Testament, and thus should be rejected. If one could not find their church in the Bible, they should get out of it today.

Another characteristic is the conditions demanded for entrance. In Acts 2:47 we read, "...the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." It was the Lord who added (not voted in by man) to the church. Those who were being saved were added by obeying the gospel, which consisted of hearing, believing, repenting of their sins, confessing Christ, and being baptized for (not because of) the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38). Examples of these steps can be found throughout the book of Acts (baptism is in every example of conversion).

Many other characteristics could be listed. If you would like to study further with us from God's Word concerning the one church described in the New Testament and its characteristics, you may contact us for either an in-home open Bible study or correspondence course by mail, by simply printing and filling out the form below and returning it to: 221 Barnett Street, West Jefferson, NC 28694. You may visit us at: www.wjchurchofchrist.org.

- ☐ Yes, I am interested in a correspondence course by mail.
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