

# *It Is Written*

*A weekly publication of the  
Junction Highway church of Christ in Kerrville, TX.*

*Vol. 5*

*October 1, 2023*

*No. 40*

## **The Church is Not ...**

By Don Wright

There has always been a great misunderstanding about the church that Christ built. Many believe that the church is something that it is not. Let us consider a few things that the church is not.

### **The Church is Not Plan B**

Premillennialists believe that the church was never supposed to exist. If the Jews had not rejected Christ, the kingdom would have been established, the thousand-year reign of Christ would have commenced, and Jesus never would have built the church.

There are several problems with this theory, not the least of which is that both the prophets and Jesus tell us that the kingdom would be established in the first century (Daniel 2:44; Mark 9:1). We know from the inspired writings of the New Testament that the kingdom was in existence at that time. Paul told the brethren at Colossae that they had been translated into it (Colossians 1:13). How can someone be translated into something that does not exist? Instead of the church being an afterthought, the Bible teaches that it is a part of God's eternal plan (Ephesians 3:10-11).

### **The Church is Not Made Up of Denominations**

The word denomination is defined as "a name or designation, especially a general name for a category." Religiously, a denomination is an "organization whose congregations are united in their adherence to its beliefs and practices" (Webster). A denomination, then, is something that is set apart into a category, separated from others of its kind. It is a part of the whole.

The church is not a part of anything. It is the whole or entire people of God. It is made up of all the saved. When a person obeys the gospel of Christ, he or she is automatically added to the church (Acts 2:47). What church? The church that Jesus built and that belongs to Him. That is why the church is referred to as the church of Christ in the Bible (Romans 16:16). It is a designation of ownership.

Biblically, the church is made up of individuals, not churches. From an organizational standpoint, a denomination is a church of churches, something never seen in the Bible. The church is simply composed of people - God's people, wherever they may be found.

This is important to understand because many believe that all denominations make up the church. The problem is the church is never viewed as such in the New Testament. Denominational churches did not even exist in the first century, so how can they be a part of the church you read about in the Bible. The real point is that the New Testament church is composed of people, not denominational churches. The people that make up the church are those who have truly obeyed the gospel. Since denominational churches do not teach the right plan of salvation, they cannot be composed of the saved.

### **The Church is Not a Social Club**

The religious world today leaves the impression that the church is a social club. Denominational churches spend their money on building gymnasiums, fellowship halls, and life centers, where the main emphasis is on physical things. They have basketball and softball teams and classes teaching everything from sewing to aerobics. They teach mechanics and other secular skills, donate blood, and

some even have tattoo parlors. Many denominations offer academic classes that can lead to one getting a G.E.D. diploma. The social gospel has become so embedded in the minds of people that most would read this and think that there is nothing wrong with these things. Many would conclude that any church not engaged in these kinds of social programs is not a very good church.

The church you read about in the Bible never used the Lord's money to finance fun and frolic, recreation, or entertainment. The work of the church, that is, the local church, is limited to benevolence for saints, evangelizing the lost, and spiritual edification. That is the only work the church is authorized to do today (Colossians 3:17).

Are you a member of a church that has the characteristics of the New Testament church, or are you a member of a denominational church that does not look anything like what you read about in the Bible? The choice is up to you. Find the church that is what the Bible says it is - the church that really belongs to Christ, and become a member of it by obeying the gospel.

## *The Darkening Effect of Words Without Knowledge*

by Jason Hardin

"Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me'" (Job 38:1-3).

"Answer" shows up 66 times in the Old Testament book of Job. Why did those terrible things happen to Job and his family? What did Job do to deserve it all? What sort of sin must he be hiding? Where was God then? Where is he now? Chapter after chapter, everyone is looking for answers.

After 35 chapters of speculation, accusation, and debate, the LORD finally answers. We would do well to meditate on his first question. "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?"

**Words.** It's never been easier to broadcast them, far and wide—spoken words, written words, recorded words, even livestreamed words. But the easier it is to share, the more care we ought to take. "When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent" (Prov 10:19).

**Without knowledge.** What good is an abundance of words without knowledge as the foundation and fuel? "A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion" (Prov 18:2). We need to be so very careful when it comes to speculating, accusing, and debating things we actually know little about. "Do you see a man who is hasty in his words?" That's the reckless path of the fool (Prov 29:20).

**Darkens counsel.** Careless words have a devious tendency (at least for a time) to obscure the truth. Sensational lies are easy to believe and alluring to spread. Foolishness is fun for the moment. Wise counsel that cautions and restrains doesn't seem as thrilling as reckless abandonment. "You do you" costs much less than "Be made new." But the wisdom of Proverbs 6:23 continues to tell us the truth. "The commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life."

Some things are hidden from us by divine design, undoubtedly for our good. There are secret things that belong only to God. May we be humble enough to accept that fact. May we hear the LORD's "Where were you?" questions in Job 38 and be put in our place, even in the 21st century.

In the meantime, as disciples of Jesus, may our words reflect the Light of the world. May they be governed by fear of the LORD, which is the beginning of knowledge. May they be shaped by truth, fueled by love, and grace-giving to the people around us.