

## **"The Churches of Christ Salute You"** **(Romans 16:16)**

Millions of souls around the world today earnestly endeavor to practice pure, unadulterated, New Testament Christianity. One might say that they practice non-denominational or predenominational Christianity! Strictly speaking, they are neither Catholics nor Protestants. Hence, these Christians are *just Christians* and *not* Lutherans, Episcopalians, Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Nazarenes, Mormons, Adventists, Pentecostals, etc. Individually, they are just Christians (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16).

Collectively, they have been baptized by one Spirit into one spiritual body or church. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body ..." (1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22-23). Several descriptive terms for that one body appear upon the pages of the New Testament: "church of God" (1 Corinthians 1:2), "churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16), "house of God" (1 Timothy 3:15), "the church" or "kingdom" (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2:47; Colossians 1:13), "temple of God" (1 Corinthians 3:16), etc.

These millions of souls worship God today exactly the way Christians in the first century worshipped God. Then and now, these souls follow New Testament instructions to know how God wants to be worshipped. Therefore, their worship every Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10) consists of preaching or teaching and communion (Acts 20:7), freewill giving according to one's purpose and prosperity (2 Corinthians 9:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2), singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16) and prayer (1 Corinthians 14:15).

Since these Christians rely solely on the New Testament for their authority in religion, they recognize local congregational organization with biblically qualified elders (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9) to lead them (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28). They also appoint biblically qualified deacons to serve them (1 Timothy 3:8-13), ministers to proclaim the Word of God (Romans 10:13-15; 2 Timothy 4:1) and train teachers to edify them (Hebrews 5:11-14).

Likewise, these Christians look to the New Testament for instruction in Christian living (Romans 12:1-2) and Christian service (Mark 16:15-16; Titus 3:1). They fellowship each other based on their mutual respect for and abiding in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11; 1 John 1:3) and "... have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*" (Ephesians 5:11).

Noting the singularly new names that ascribe praise to Jesus Christ, these millions of souls commonly refer to themselves individually as "Christians" (Acts 11:26) and collectively as the "churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16). We invite you to visit the church of Christ in your community and step back into primitive, Bible-driven Christianity. Some denominations also wear biblical names though they otherwise do not practice primitive Christianity and sometimes congregations of the churches of Christ stray from their biblical moorings. Therefore, it is in your best interest to compare closely what anyone teaches or does religiously to the Bible to ensure that it is biblically correct and pleasing to God (1 John 4:1). If we don't see you in a pew near us, we at *Gospel Gazette Online* look forward to seeing you in the heavenly habitation!