



June 11, 2006 (Vol. 6)

TRUTH

- The Way God Sees It (5)

by Douglas W. Hill
member of North Sparta church of Christ

5. "Church names" quickly identify us all. When you look in the phone book, you see row upon row of names listed. But, dear friend, how many of those names can you actually find in the Bible? Or have we even thought about using the Bible as our standard when it comes to what we call ourselves?

What are local assemblies called in the Bible? They are referred to as a church of God (1 Cor. 1:2) or churches of Christ (Rom. 16:16), or other very similar expressions. These are not so much "names" as descriptions of ownership. Christ, who is God, bought it with His blood (Acts 20:28) and it is called "his body" (Eph. 1:22-23).

Now, some deride & mock the humble appeal to a Biblical description. They declare that they do not believe any one name is required. Frankly, I would like to request documentation of anyone saying that. What members of the Lord's church do affirm is that there is a Biblical pattern for how we describe ourselves (which consequently rules out names invented by men). This does NOT mean we ignore that some denominations (man made religious organizations) use Biblical names. For example, the "church of God" uses a name that is found in the Bible. We commend this one example & would encourage everyone to do ALL things in Bible ways. For the name is not the ONLY thing to consider when trying to identify whether a church is following Christ. It is just one obvious thing.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians "...There are contentions among you. Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, **I am of Paul**; and **I of Apollos**: and **I of Cephas**; and **I of Christ**. Is Christ divided?" (1 Cor. 1:11-13) Was Paul pleased when they were divided? Did appeals to human names & authorities help unite or divide? Is division what Christ is all about? No. This is our point.

It is a simple matter to resolve if we will simply walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). If it is in the book, do it. If it is not, don't make it up & present it as gospel truth. All that does is create division & confusion, which God is not the author of (1 Cor. 14:33). (To be continued)

TEACHING OURSELVES

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One of the easiest failures we make is to neglect teaching ourselves. It is easy to let the teachers spoon feed us in Bible classes & in sermons. We don't have to really prepare our class material before hand... someone else will answer it and I'll just jot down the answers then. Besides, we get so pressed for time... even though we have time for television... mowing the ever growing lawn, maybe reading a book or such like. Life just gets so busy... we forget.

Even preachers & class teachers can fail in this area. We can be so busy focusing on what our class needs to know and hear (which is good and important!), but we forget that studying to teach others is not the same as studying to teach ourselves.

We need to beware of such neglect, lest we end up like this: "Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practise the same things. And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that practise such things. And reckonest thou this, O man, who judgest them that practise such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" (Rom. 2:1-3)

Furthermore, Paul writes: "But if thou bearest the name of a Jew, and retest upon the law, and gloriest in God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth; **thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?** thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou rob temples? thou who gloriest in the law, through thy transgression of the law dishonorest thou God?" (Rom. 2:17-23)

And again "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." (Rom. 2:28-29)

Sit down. Open the book by yourself. Read the text slowly, carefully. Make notes on a piece of paper - applying the principles to yourself & your life. You will be better for it. Your family will be better for it. The congregation here will be better for it.

May we all be the honest and good soil.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Door to Door** - every Tuesday at 6pm, except for Men's & Ladies class night.
- **Men's & Ladies Classes** - Tues, June 13 @ 7 pm.
- **Home Bible Study** – Sat., June 24.
- **Business Meeting** – Sun. June 25 @ 5pm.
- **Gospel Meeting** - Ron Roberts, Oct.15-20, 2006.

PRAY FOR

Mag Bumbalough, Greg Capps, Sabrina Capps, Thelma Cunningham, Donald Eller, Holly Jernigan (Joyce Gardner's niece, surgery 6-15-06), **John Ross Key** (Mary Cox's son), **Marci Miller** (Alisa Fletcher's mother), **Monie Petty, Dave Poteet, Rose Taylor, Doris Williams, Wayne Williams** (Doris' son), **Horace Jones** (Doris William's brother), **Ruth Williams** (Betty England's niece), **Robert England** (at home again), **Ocia Bell-Jones & Charlie Jones** (Mother & brother to Doris Williams); **Sheila Eller & Laken Eller.**

Those in Iraq: Jason Zelenak (Alisa Fletcher's brother), **Cary Matheny.**

NOTE: We appreciate those who went door to door last week. With just 5 people, we knocked on over 60 doors in about an hour and a half. We also gained 4 prospects. We'll do this regularly through the summer, so pray for the work and participate!

We Invite You To All Our Services!

Sunday Bible Study	9 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6 pm
Wednesday Bible Study	7 pm

North Sparta church of Christ

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