

Walters

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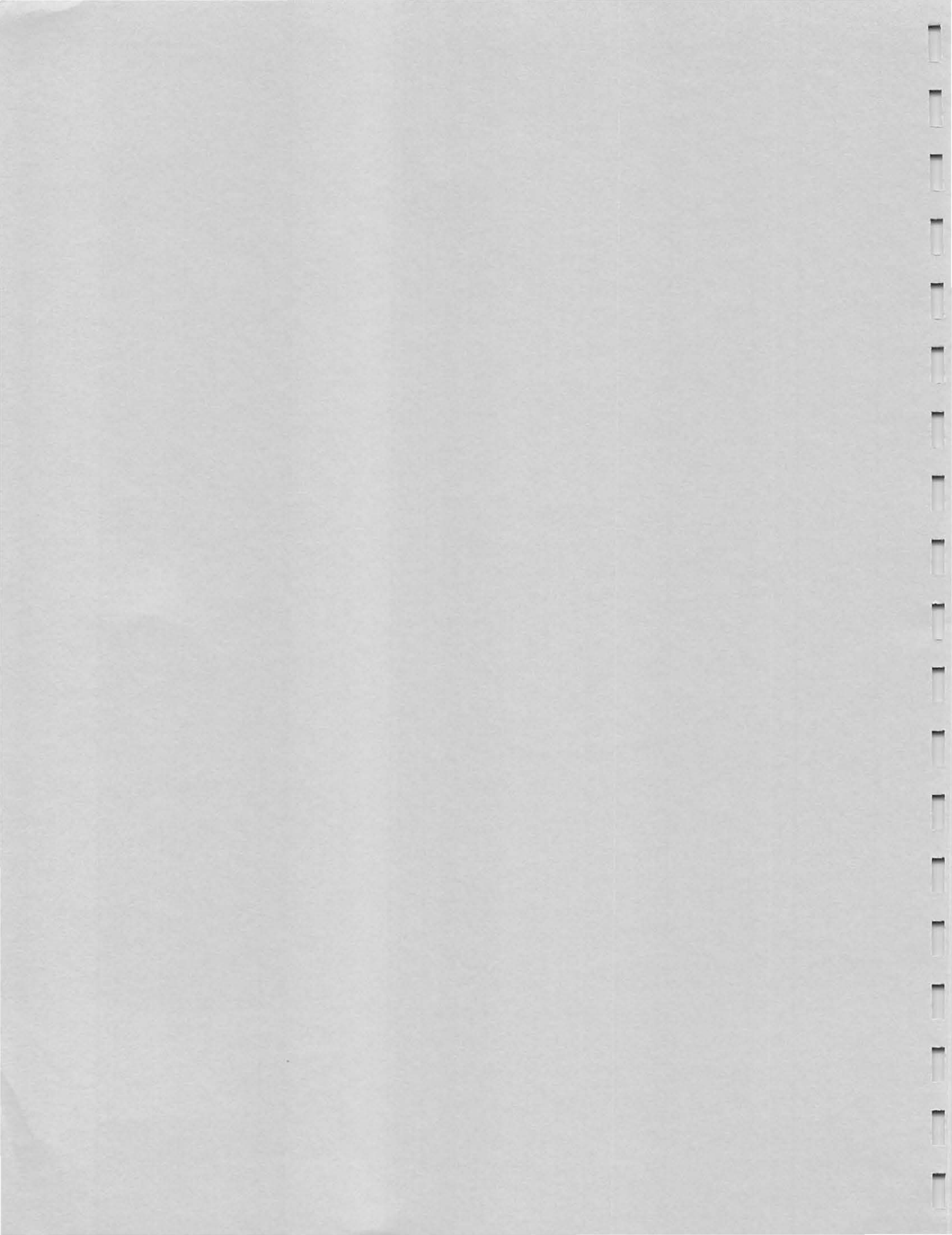
Scott

Debate

1980



*Authenticity of the Church of
Christ*





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DANIEL GLENN (DAN) WALTERS was born October 5, 1942 in Marshall, Texas. He was raised on a farm near Tyler, Texas, and later on a cattle ranch near DeQueen, Arkansas. He was baptized into Christ on May 2, 1954 by P.D. Wilmeth at Tyler. He attended Harding College for two years and was graduated from South-eastern State College at Durant, Oklahoma in 1964.

Walters is a carpenter by trade and a Christian by conviction. For the past 20 years he has endeavored to teach the Word of God, both verbally and through the printed page. He has preached for extended periods in Oklahoma, Texas, and North Carolina. His articles have appeared in *The Gospel Guardian*, *Truth Magazine*, and other journals published by brethren.

Walters believes that respect for the authority of Christ necessarily implies respect for His spiritual body, the church, and for His Word, the New Testament Scriptures. He is convinced that denominationalism results when men abandon the scriptures as a binding pattern for the work and worship of the church and substitute the wisdom of man for the wisdom of God.



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BUFF SCOTT, JR. was born and reared in an area of poverty deep inside the Appalachian mountains of eastern Kentucky on February 4, 1928, one mile from where the Hatfield-McCoy feud began. His mother's maiden name was Hatfield. His father was in the bootlegging trade during the Great Depression but surrendered his life to Jesus when Buff was about 11 years of age. On that memorable night his father threw his pack of cigarettes and pint of "moonshine whiskey" in the same creek in which he was immersed. Buff later experienced a non-religious immersion when the humpback mule he was riding fell through the bridge which crossed over the creek and led into the barnyard! Some years later a Church of Christ "minister" immersed him. He denies any connection between the two events.

Scott's formal education was limited due to a lack of educational emphasis in the mountains by "hillbillies" who thought there were better things to do. At 22, he became interested in Church of Christ theology and soon landed his first job as "minister." He trailed the "minister" circuit in West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Missouri, and Iowa, or until he saw the futility of pulpitering and churchism. He derives his living now from the field of mental health. What he once "cut his teeth on" he now opposes, and affirms that Jesus is neither the head or founder of the Church of Christ.

Scott does not believe that churchism is the answer to the world's problems, that if a solution is found the world must look to Jesus, not to churches.

know as you have other material. - Buff.

The Walters-Scott Exchange on the Authenticity of the Church of Christ

SCOTT'S FIRST EXCHANGE

IDENTIFICATION: The Church of Christ, as a separatist institution, is in trouble. Many of her followers have been lost to reformation. These reformers, in an effort to restore her to the plea she adopted initially when she bloomed to stardom in the early 1800s as a movement to unite the Christians in all the sects, take her to task for her refusal to recognize the principle upon which she stood originally.

As a religious order, she struggles for a prestigious position in a society already overburdened with sectarianism and rabid partisanism. As a church, she takes her place alongside scores of others and announces that Jesus is her head and founder. As a denomination, none has surpassed her in choosing a selective and restrictive designation. Her ensign is Romans 16:16, "The churches of Christ salute you" (King James Version). In indentifying herself to the world, she steers clear of "church of God," even though the *King James Version* of the sacred documents employs the term many times. To "denominate" is to name by a restrictive and exclusive title. The Church of Christ fills the slot for she uses the term exclusively and distinctively on her meetinghouses, sighbords, in newspaper and magazine advertisements, and on radio and television. When an outsider inquires of which church they are members, the answer is invariably the same: "We are members of the Church of Christ," they exclaim. It should be understood that the common nouns used in the sacred writings to designate God's people are descriptive of some aspect of relationship and were never intended to be exclusive or selective.

As a divisive faction, she is second only to the Baptist sect for within her ranks may be found 20 or more *different* Churches of Christ. It is ridiculously insane to claim that Jesus is the head and founder of such a lamentable mess.

As a religious party, her platform borders the irrational. According to her dictates, no one may be saved from the "error of his ways" unless and until he surrenders his theology as garbage and

accepts her proclamations, edicts, and commissions (conveniently coined "commandments of God")

That there be no misunderstanding as to which sect I am writing about, she parades and proclaims herself "the church of our Lord" and condemns all others for their invasion of her heavenly corridors. She does not engage the services of mechanical (musical) instruments in her meetings. Her music is acappella and congregationally vocal. There are no solos. The Lord's Supper is observed every first day of the week.

Some of the leading journals which serve as official mouthpieces are *The Gospel Advocate*, *The Gospel Guardian*, *Firm Foundation*, *Truth Magazine*, *Christian Chronicle*, *Bible Herald*, *Sentry*, and *Vanguard*.

Each paper represents a distinct faction within the Church of Christ. Although each contentious group denies a central office, one has only to take issue with the "home office" on some ideology to feel the authoritative wrath that proceeds therefrom.

Magazines that are free and serve as avenues of reformation or "voices in the wilderness," are *Restoration Review*, *Ensign*, *Mission*, and a few others. These journals are not puppets of some schismatic group nor are their editors bound by "brotherhood policy."

CHURCH PSYCHOSIS: I do not consider it a rigorous assignment to declare that Jesus is not the head and founder of the religious party (church) under consideration. I do not believe he is the head of *any* church. Churchism is sectism. That Jesus established a new people and set in motion a new Israel, colony, commonwealth, republic, household, congregation, assembly, or holy community no born-again believer will deny. One has only to read and examine Galatians 5:20 to conclude that Jesus is not the founder of religious parties. Ambassador Paul placed the "party spirit" alongside drunkenness, fornication, and other desires of the lower nature (*Revised Standard*

Version) The *New English Bible* renders "party intrigues," and the *Living Bible* says that the partisan attitude is "the feeling that everyone else is wrong except those in your own little group." I am inclined to believe that this strikes at the very core of it. *A religious party, then, is any group that classifies all others wrong and whose terms of admission and terms of staying admitted are either partly or fully foreign to the terms inaugurated by the King of kings and his special envoys.*

To deny that the Church of Christ considers everyone wrong except those in her own little group is to flirt with the world's greatest falsehood. To deny that her terms of staying admitted are foreign to the Master's plea is to flirt with another falsehood. The terms of staying admitted in the Church of Christ are well known. The most obvious one is that her members must accept the notion that she only is the "church" established by the Messiah. Nor may her members retain their membership and believe that instruments of music in her public meetings are permissible. And I could go on and on. The divine message does not support any of these partisan deas. Salvation is a personal matter and Jesus is a personal Savior. He and he alone provides salvation to those in his community who are striving to honor him with love and contrite tears. Devotion to churchism is not a prerequisite to a pure life. Churchism is partisanism. And partisanism is condemned. Jesus himself demonstrated his opposition to religious parties when he laid bare the sect (party) of the Pharisees and the sect (party) of the Sadducees. He accused them of not entering God's reign themselves nor permitting anyone else to enter. It was not essential to be a member of either party to receive God's grace. Nor is membership in the religious party known as the Church of Christ essential to receiving God's grace and forgiveness.

In a religious society whose citizens are addicted to churchism, it is difficult to convince anyone that God's gloryland can be reached without church membership. A believer's membership (citizenship) is in heaven (Philippians 3:20). Heaven is the only place it is needed. For one to place membership with some church or religious party is to admit he is joined to something *in addition* to God's universal family or reign. Partyism in the political sphere can be tolerated out in the Christian spectrum it is categorized as evil and a "work of the flesh." When one is persuaded to accept Jesus as his Savior and the Christian faith as his cause, he is immediately born into God's family or community. Should he then join some church and begin wearing the name of some religious party, he becomes something more than just a born-again believer. *He*

is a believer plus a party man. He has surrendered part of his will to a religious party as one would surrender part of his will to a political party. He is no longer a free man! He is shackled to a party and is obligated to support it, endorse it, practice its legalistic rituals, and believe its doctrinal precepts. Should he waver in any of these areas he is soon pigeonholed an inactive member and a traitor to the cause. The Church of Christ wields such a fist as I have described. A man may get out from underneath such an authoritarian mess, whether he be in the Church of Christ or Catholic Church, by becoming an independent thinker and working within the framework of his own party to attain unity among all of God's children. It is not necessary that he leave the group he has known and loved for so many years and journey over to the south end of town and start a "faithful church." He may work for reformation where he is. He would be a non-partisan striving to reform partisans, as a non-alcoholic might work with alcoholics in an effort to reform them. An interesting thought is that Paul never once commissioned believers to divide and start a "sound church," irrespective of the differences that existed in some congregations.

The "church of Christ" teaches that she had her genesis on the first Pentecost following Jesus' ascension and that this information is recorded in Acts, chapter two. The approximate date of this "great event" was A.D. 33. They boldly assert that the "Lord's church" did not exist prior to this date or occasion. It is true, of course, that a great event was unveiled during the first festive period of the Jews following Jesus' ascension into heaven to occupy "David's throne" as King, as recorded in Acts 2, but we may surely rest our oars that it was not the beginning of a "church," any church, whether Baptist Church, Methodist Church, Church of Christ, Church of God, Christian Church, Catholic Church, or any of the other sects among us.

Then what did occur? God's new reign was ushered in! And those who accepted Jesus as Savior and King were added as citizens to that reign and became sons and daughters of a King (Acts 2:47). Thus God's new Israel began, his new arrangement, his new economy, his new congregation, his new *ecclesia*, his new household, his new priesthood, his new colony, his new body of believers.

But why not a church? Did not Jesus say he would found his "church" (Matthew 16:18)? If yes, is it not Christ's church or the "church of Christ?"

The answers to these questions are found in the fact that "church" was never once used by Jesus or any of the inspired writers. The Greek

ecclesia, which is supposed to convey our English "church," does not. There is absolutely nothing in *ecclesia* that delivers "church." A divine-right king forced "church" into our English versions when he commanded his translators: "The old ecclesiastical words to be kept; as the word church not to be translated *congregation*" (*The Christian Baptist*, Volume II, Number 4, November 1, 1824). The king actually forbade his scholars to translate *ecclesia*. Why? He intended to continue his reign as head and king of *The Established Church of England*, not a mere *congregation*!

However, it is not necessary that we deal with the Greek language to determine the errors of king James and his scholars. In Acts 7:38 of his version, we find the "church" existing under Moses. "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us." The Church of Christ decrees that the "church" did not exist prior to Acts 2. But here we have it under Moses. This cannot be explained correctly without admitting that king James and his scholars made a deliberate mistake. Another example is Hebrews 2:12. In this passage king James has the "church" under the reign of David. No tossing of the coin

WALTERS' FIRST EXCHANGE

My brother must be reminded of the proposition which he chose to affirm: *Jesus is not the head of, nor did he found, the church of Christ.* I have no intention of defending some sectarian concept of the church which may exist in the minds of some men. The only church I am interested in is that church described in the New Testament. It is the "church of Christ" or the "church of the Lord" because it is a possession of Christ. The church has no exclusive title or proper name, but is designated in the scriptures by descriptive terms. We are free to use any such term that is accurate and scriptural, as expediency may dictate. We rarely use "church of God" or "church of Jesus Christ" in public advertising simply because we do not want to be confused with human denominations which have adopted such names. Nevertheless, there is an evil tendency toward a restrictive title which Christians should resist.

Saying that Jesus is not the head and founder of the church of Christ is equal to saying that the house that Jack built, paid for, holds title to, and lives in, is not Jack's house. In Matt. 16:18 Christ said, "I will build my church." We know

will relieve my churchly addicted brethren of these dilemmas. They must admit that the "church" triumphed under Moses and David or confess that Jesus is not the head and founder of any church. Should they confess that Jesus did not found a church, the conclusion follows that churches are sects or religious parties, including the "church of Christ."

But another dilemma. When they confess that Acts 7:38 and Hebrews 2:12 are indeed mistranslations, or no translations at all, they will at the same time be confessing that a mistranslation is found in every instance where "church" is used.

So what do we have? If Jesus is not the founder of "church," one or more, who is? *Man.* Jesus started his new reign or community. Man started churches or religious parties. I like to think in terms of Jesus reigning over his congregation or community while man reigns over churches. Jesus has all authority in his new congregation while man exercises authority in churches. Anyone who gives himself to a church gives part of his will to a human master. Should he refuse to give his all to the party, he forfeits his membership, thus demonstrating that he was indeed a member of something in addition to what Jesus set in order.

that He kept His promise, for in Acts 2:47 we read about the Lord adding people to this church. In Acts 20:28 we read of "the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Scholars generally agree that "God" here refers to the Son, since the Father did not die upon the cross.) In Eph. 1:22-23 we learn that Christ is "head over all things to the church, which is his body." In Eph. 4:4 we learn there is only "one body." In Eph. 5:23 we find that Christ "is the head of the church; and he is the Saviour of the body." In I Cor. 12:13 we see that we are "all baptized into one body." This agrees with what we know about those who were added to the church in Acts 2, since "they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." These scriptures not only negate the proposition (that Jesus did not found, and is not the head of, His church), but they prove that He purchased it, shed His blood for it, is the Savior of it, adds people to it, and regards it as His bride. This is the same church, and the only church, of which I am a member. Anyone who accepts the language of the Bible must realize that the proposition

has already fallen, and that my negative obligation has already been fulfilled.

Nevertheless, I intend to answer the fallacious arguments which have been advanced. I am not concerned, as my brother seems to be, about the principles of the restorationists of the 1800s. The church was established about 2000 years ago, and I am interested in the principles held by the Apostles and prophets of the early church. Some ambitious men may be struggling "for a prestigious position" among denominations, but the true church and true Christians care nothing for worldly prestige. The church is a divine institution with a divine head, operating under a divine commission. If Christians preach the gospel, God will give the increase. If this increase is not impressive to the world, we must remember that throughout history only a remnant has been faithful to God.

Division among churches is held up as proof that Jesus is not the head of the church of Christ. In New Testament times there was division in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:11-12), and the Apostle Paul warned that heresies must arise (1 Cor. 11:19). Diotrophes seems to have been in control of one church, and he would not even receive the Apostles (III John 9). Both Peter and Jude speak of false teachers who had gone astray and had led disciples after them. So division, as a result of wrong attitudes and false teaching, existed even in the first century. But this did not negate the fact that the church of Christ existed, or that local churches of Christ existed, or that these churches were non-denominational and were possessions of Christ. The fact that men fail to follow the pattern laid down by Christ in the New Testament does not mean that the pattern is at fault, or that men ought to give up trying to follow it.

Suppose five ladies order the same pattern for a dress, and all set out with good intentions to follow it. But because of failure to follow directions, carelessness, or being misled by the suggestions of others, four of the ladies end up with a finished product which does not resemble the pattern. However, one lady is very careful to follow every direction and is able to create a perfect dress, according to the pattern. The other ladies may grow envious and become angry because their sister succeeded while they failed. But such strife does not detract from the authenticity of the pattern, or from the successful result of the one who followed the pattern.

The church does not say that men must "accept her proclamations, edicts, and commissions." Christians teach that only Christ's word, as contained in the New Testament, is authoritative. Those who proceed without authority, or con-

trary to authority, have rejected Christ, not the church. Gospel papers do not serve as official mouthpieces of the true church. They are the efforts of private individuals to teach the Word, or to promote personal interests. Any Christian who gives his allegiance to a paper has already become apostate and rejected Christ as his head. No "home office" or headquarters controls the church. Faithful brethren do not fear to challenge the opinions of the influential. It is only the hirelings who have adopted the denominational pastor system, who fear to be independent, lest they lose a "preaching job." The error of such weaklings has no bearing upon the identity of the true church.

The fact that the church of Christ considers denominations wrong is given as proof that Christ is not the head of the church. Denominations are wrong for many reasons, but primarily because denominationalism is a system which justifies and glorifies division. It is the institutionalization of division. While churches of Christ may divide, they at least recognize that division is wrong and that someone is to blame for it. The denominational theory accepts division as natural and wholesome. It is also true that the great majority of denominations are made up of alien sinners, since these persons have never obeyed the gospel according to the scriptures, and Christ has never added them to His church. Most denominations teach human doctrines which deny fundamental truths concerning the nature of the gospel and of the church. How could a Christian be loyal to Christ, his head, without declaring such things to be wrong? Failure to recognize denominations does not make the church a sect, anymore than failure to recognize Buddhism or Judaism makes it a sect.

Retaining membership in the church of Christ is no problem. Only the Lord can add one to His church, and only the Lord can take one out of it—in the Day of Judgment. Brother A.C. Pullias, who recently joined the Presbyterian denomination, may think he has left the church of Christ. Brother Scott may think he is no longer a member. But, in reality, no one can leave the church of Christ until the Day of Judgment. If he could, he would have to obey the gospel a second time, should he repent.

Heaven cannot be reached without church membership because of the nature of the church. According to the scriptures, the church is the collectivity of the saved, and all of the saved constitute the church. Talking about salvation outside of the church is a contradiction in terms. Should one who is born into God's family then join some religious party? Certainly not. His loyalty should be only to Christ, and he should

work and worship with others whose loyalty is to Christ.

The church of Christ did not exist prior to Pentecost. The word "church," in the original, means congregation, assembly, or group. Moses had such a congregation (Acts 7:38), and there was a congregation of Israelites at the time of David (Heb. 2:12). The word "church" is not mistranslated in such passages. The point is, these congregations did not belong to Christ, at least not in the sense that the New Testament church belongs to Christ. Christ's church started on Pentecost.

My brother finally contends that Christ did not found a church at all. I predicted this would be the only logical way he could defend his proposition. But his contention degenerates into a mere logomachy, or war of words. I have no quarrel with calling the church the *ecclesia*. But I speak English, not Greek, as do most Americans. We have to use English versions of the Bible, while recognizing their limitations. "Church" comes from an old English word meaning "house

SCOTT'S SECOND EXCHANGE

EARNESTLY CONTENDING: The Church of Christ claims to earnestly contend for the faith that was once and for all delivered to the ancient saints. The claim needs to be examined to determine how ancient she is.

1) *The ancient faith did not employ professional pulpites.* The Church of Christ does. They have been professionally trained and tailored by theological factories to go to God on behalf of the people, thus interfering with the priesthood of all believers. All of God's children are priests (1 Peter 2:9 & Revelation 1:6). Each is responsible for offering his own sacrifice. But the professional hireling in the Church of Christ proposes to do his own thing and others' as well. I charge the Church of Christ pulpiteer of taking advantage of the sheep by fleecing them of their money under the guise that "the gospel must be supported," of manipulating the innocent and indifferent, of playing upon the emotions of the illiterate, and of being a cancer in the body of believers. His malignant function prevents the body from building itself up (Ephesians 4:16). Members of the Church of Christ warm the pews while trying not to fall asleep, shell out cash to feed, clothe, and shelter the "minister" who should find a job and go to work like Paul. Pewwarmers grow weary while trying to do well

of the Lord." Since the church is the house of the Lord, this is not far wrong. If the translators had written *ecclesia*, we would now have the Baptist *Ecclesia*, the Methodist *Ecclesia*, etc. Men can take any word and change its meaning to fit their own conceptions. If my brother's reasoning is correct, there is no such thing as "baptism," since the true translation should be "immersion." The important thing is that people be made aware of the meaning of the original Greek words in the scriptures. Words were coined by men. I may invent the word "zado." If enough people accept it as meaning congregation or assembly, I would be willing to say that I am a member of the "zado of Christ." Meanwhile, why not be satisfied with the words we have and teach people the truth about the correct definitions of the original Greek words?

I am not a member of any religious party, since I have never joined or given my allegiance to any. I am content to accept only the authority of Jesus Christ. My brother would prefer that I recognize and accept those who go beyond that authority.

but find there is really not that much to do since a "minister" has been imported to make their yokes easy and their burdens light. They are spiritually deformed and dying because of a lack of participation.

The professional pulpiteer in the Church of Christ obstructs spiritual growth in that he performs all of the body's major functions. Even the physical body will die if its members are not permitted to exercise their various roles, for activity strengthens and builds. Is it any different with a body of people? Can Mr. Heart say, "I'll do Mr. Liver's work?" Or, "I'll take over for Mr. Lung?" No way. To be active is life. To be inactive is death. The spectator needs to be unchained from the pew and encouraged to begin the long but interesting walk toward spiritual maturity. The pulpit preacher should be removed from his pinnacle and given a seat among the peasants. No longer should he be permitted to control the program or act as a proxy for others. His fellow priests must also be granted the freedom to "serve at the altar." The pulpit preacher may function as one of the leaders, *assuming he is qualified*, but not *the* director, "high priest," or *the* minister. He can no more be *the* minister than he can be *the* priest. All believers with leadership abilities

are to develop and use the gift of leadership (Romans 12:3-8).

No longer should the Christian community be slaves of pulpiteers or the professional clergy. Only when all believers are trained and permitted to function for themselves will pewwarmers awaken to their responsibilities and become shareholders instead of slaves. Everyone may then truly consider himself a minister, ready to strengthen others by means of mutual communication and edification. Those specially qualified and gitted will become leaders and trainers, not masters or "pastors."

2) *The ancient order collected money only for evangelism and the destitute.* When the early saints met to worship corporately, there was no edifice to make a payment on and no professional pulpiteer to support. If no immediate monetary need existed, no collection was taken. The Church of Christ teaches that I Corinthians 16:1-2 gives a binding example, as well as a command, that a collection must be taken every first day of the week. A careful analysis of this incident will show that this particular collection was for a special need, namely to alleviate poverty among the poor saints at Jerusalem. Naturally when the need was met the collection ceased. To be consistent and obey the command precisely as Paul gave it, Church of Christ's would be compelled to use their weekly collection for the very same purposes. But no! The biggest percentage of their collections goes for the upkeep of fancy edifices and to keep the professional pulpiteer afloat, the very opposite of what the ancient saints practiced. *Please permit me to stress the fact that most all monies collected by the Church of Christ go for real estate and to sustain a clergy caste.* The early Christian community had neither real estate (ecclesiastical edifices) or clergy (professional pulpiteers). The Church of Christ has both. Jesus cannot be the head of a system that is so materialistically minded.

3) *The ancient arrangement had solos in their corporate meetings.* The Church of Christ condemns them as petty pieces of entertainment. But Paul told the Corinthians that "when you come together each one has a hymn, a lesson..." (I Corinthians 14:26). These gifts, and others as well, were to be mutually given and mutually shared among those who were talented in these areas. The lessons were not to be congregationally spoken and the hymns were not to be congregationally sung. *Both were to be given in solo fashion.* What was true of one was true of the other. But not in Church of Christ circles. Is the Church of Christ ancient or recent? Is she old or fresh?

The truth is, when the ancient believers came together it was not for the purpose of receiving encouragement from a paid functionary but to *mutually stimulate and strengthen one another.* Paul reminded the brethren at Rome that they were "able to instruct *one another.*" (Romans 15:14). In the Thessalonian epistle he told the congregation to "encourage *one another* and build *one another up*" (I Thessalonians 5:11). The writer of Hebrews directed the brethren "to stir up *one another*" (Hebrews 10:24). When this *one another* system is substituted by an arrangement which usurps the freedoms and prerogatives of God's priesthood, stagnation results.

4) *Ministers and preachers in the ancient congregation did not hang their names on signs to advertise themselves.* If they had done so, everyone's name would have appeared on the signboard for all were preachers and ministers. The Church of Christ practices just the opposite again. Usually only one's name appears on the modern-day signboard. He is the imported pulpiteer.

The Church of Christ will tell you that every believer is a minister, a preacher, and a priest. But whose name appears on the signboard? The professional sermonizer. He delivers sermonettes to Christianettes. Incidentally, "sermon" is not once found in the scriptures.

It is no secret why the professional pulpiteer in the Church of Christ refuses to place on his signboard, "John Smith, Priest," or "John Smith, Saint," or "John Smith, Believer." He has not as yet been able to convince pewwarmers that he is the congregation's saint, priest, and believer. But give him time. And yet, in light of all this, the Church of Christ denies having the "denominational" clergy system. None is so blind as he who refuses to see.

5) *The ancient community considered everything they did to the glory of God in their meetings worship.* The Church of Christ says there are only five acts of worship that can be scripturally performed "during the worship services." They are teaching, praying, Lord's Supper, giving, and singing. Talk about "denominational creeds." This is one of the greatest.

If a brother is meditating about God "during the worship services," is he not worshipping? Meditating is not teaching. It is not praying. It is not the Lord's Supper. It is not giving. It is not singing. *It is the act of meditating.* Therefore an "act of worship." If a sister whispers words of encouragement to an ailing brother "during the worship services," is she not worshipping? If I help an arthritic saint take his coat off "during the worship services," am I not worshipping? Of course, inasmuch as spiritual worship is offer-

ing ourselves (Romans 12:1).

Is it not true that every time I use one of God's gifts to assist my fellow humans, in or out of the public assembly, I am worshipping him? If my view is valid, there are seven "acts of worship" mentioned in one chapter of Romans. They are prophesying (whether past or present), serving, teaching, encouraging, contributing, leading, and showing mercy (Romans 12:6-8). The "five acts of worship" creed of the Church of Christ is bypassed by none other than Paul. I suggest the Church of Christ is later than she thinks.

6) *The ancient colony of believers did not enact a formula which says that all things within the realm of religion must be proven right or wrong by direct command, approved example, or necessary inference.* The Church of Christ does. She decrees that all things pertaining to religion *must* be proven by one of these postulations. *The scriptures nowhere specify this kind of legislation.*

That some things are substantiated by command, verified by example, and confirmed by inference no one will deny. But to combine these three premises into a creed and legislate, without divine authority, that everything we do must find its basis in this kind of restrictive theology, is to make laws where God has made none.

In the first place, this creed falls short of its goal for many things are proven to be accurate and scripturally exact by *statements of fact.* For example: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). These words are not a *command*, not an *example*, and not an *inference.* They are a *statement of fact.* Like the Pharisees of old, the Church of Christ invents doctrines and creeds to meet her separatistic needs. Jesus would never head such a creed-ridden system.

MY RESPONSE: 1) True, the Church of Christ does not wish to be confused with "human denominations." Therefore she justifies her usage of the term in a selective and exclusive manner. I am curious as to what excuse she would devise should there be some "human denomination" that used "Church of Christ" (or

"church of Christ") as freely and as selectively as those who use "Church of God?" Would she cease using "church of Christ?"

2) Yes, there were discords in the ancient community. But we need to understand that not once did any part or segment of any congregation separate, divide, pull out, and go over to the other side of town and start a "loyal church." And not once did any apostle advise such action. The contemporary Church of Christ has separated, divided, and pulled out so frequently that an important question arises: "Which Church of Christ is the loyal one?" All 20 or more assert to be what Jesus founded. Which one is correct?

3) To accept the notion that a "church" existed under Moses and David is to admit that the Church of Christ did not have its beginning in about A.D. 33. To deny that one existed under these great men is to admit that "church" is not a translation of the Greek *ecclesia.* And to confess that "church" is not a translation of *ecclesia* is to agree with this scribe that man started churches. Not once did Jesus say or imply, "Upon this rock I will build my *church.*" He founded his congregation, community, or assembly, and everyone who has accepted him as Lord and Savior is a member of that congregation and a citizen of that community. If he has "placed his membership" with some church, he is a born-again believer *plus* a partisan. His name should be enrolled in heaven only, not in a party set in motion by man (Philippians 3:20). An "alien sinner" is one who has never accepted Jesus as Lord, not one who is not a member of the Church of Christ.

4) My fellow priest, A.C. Pullias, left one sect to join another. His only asset in doing so is that the Presbyterians will offer him more freedom.

5) Even "congregation" and "community" are not immune from ecclesiastical abuse. And if "church" had never been born, man would have devised another term to use as his sacred cow. So the usage of a term alone does not make a group of believers a religious party. *It is when the terms of admission and the terms of staying admitted are either partly or fully foreign to the terms inaugurated by the King of kings that a group of saints becomes a religious party.*

In my last and final exchange, I will deal even more with "church" and King James.

My brother's second exchange deals entirely with faults, some real and some imaginary, that are found in some churches of Christ. If he were a consistent enemy of religious error, perhaps I could take his fault-finding more seriously. But he is an advocate of the most extreme form of unity-in-diversity. The magazines he has mentioned favorably are those which teach unity-in-diversity and seek to accommodate error. He admits his belief that a Christian may remain a member of any denomination, including the church of Rome, and work for reformation within such a body. No apostate church or human religious body has ever been reformed. Luther and Calvin tried to reform Catholicism, Wesley tried to reform the Church of England, Campbell tried to reform Baptist churches, yet these churches still retain their godly doctrines. No one can be an undenominational Christian while engaging in the inscriptural activities of these churches. If he protests and refuses to participate, he will be excommunicated or forced to leave.

The only way to be "a Christian only" is to drop all denominational names and creeds and accept the scriptures alone as a sufficient guide. When one takes this course and joins together with other Christians to work and worship according to God's Word, a church of Christ exists. It needs no sanction from existing congregations, and it is not obliged to bow to any outside pressures from magazines, preachers, or other churches. The faults of one church do not prevent another church from following Christ. This is not true of a denomination, where each church owes allegiance to one higher body.

The church of Christ, which may also be spoken of as the *ecclesia*, the congregation, or the assembly of Christ, is made up of all who have accepted Christ as Lord by complying with the terms of pardon included in His gospel. These include faith in Christ (John 3:16), repentance of sins (Acts 2:38), confession of Christ (Rom. 10:10 & Acts 8:37), and baptism unto Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38, Mk. 16:16, & Gal. 3:27). Until one has responded to the gospel in this manner, he has not "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine" and has not been "made free from sin" (Rom. 6:17-18). Until he has done this he is still an alien sinner. When he does obey the gospel in this manner, the Lord adds him to the church. Thus the church is composed of all the saved.

That I am a member of this church, a Christian

only, and not a member of a religious party may be seen by the following: (1) Many years ago I heard several men preach the pure gospel as recorded in the New Testament. (2) I responded by believing, repenting, confessing, and being baptized into Christ. (3) This made me a member of Christ's body, the church. (4) Knowing that I was already a member of Christ's church, I saw no reason to join any other church. (5) Since that time I have always worshipped with others who have had the same experience, and I have never given my allegiance to any man, party, paper, or organization. Now, if I am a member of a denomination, or religious party, how did I become a member? It is my understanding that no one may be considered a member of any organization until he gives his consent to enter and obeys the entrance requirements. Neither I, nor the brethren with whom I worship, have done either. That is why we call ourselves Christians only.

There are many individual churches of Christ throughout the world. Since each is an independent and autonomous unit, the faults of one may not be rightfully ascribed to another. It is ironic that my brother should mention the faults of any, since he believes that a man may immerse himself in the innumerable faults of denominationalism and still please God. Concerning the fault of "professional pulpites," it is well known that I oppose preacher professionalism and the pastor system in all of its forms. All of God's children are priests, all are ministers, and all are preachers of the Word (Acts 8:4). The scriptures teach that preachers and elders who labor full-time in the Word are to be supported (1 Cor. 9:14 & 1 Tim. 5:17). Nevertheless, it is contrary to the scriptures for a man to preach for money, or to consider himself a mere employee of a church. It is wrong for a preacher to be a ruler or administrator of a church. It is wrong for him to consider himself "the minister" of a church. It is wrong for him to monopolize the pulpit when there are other qualified men in the church. It is wrong for a preacher to be considered an essential officer or "fixture" in every church. On the other hand, no one has a right to legislate as to how long a preacher may work in one church, or as to the method of paying him his support. If a preacher is loyal to Christ, he will accept support when that is expedient, and he will work with his hands when that is expedient. If some churches have adopted the pastor system, they should be rebuked. But their prac-

tice does not condemn other congregations.

New Testament churches collected money from their members to carry on their authorized functions. They supported preachers and helped needy saints. We have only one example of how money was collected (1 Cor. 16:1-2), but several examples of how money was spent. It is asserted that "when the need was met the collection ceased." If the need for money to support the gospel, to teach Christians, and to help needy members ever ceases, I am sure collections will cease also. As for meeting-houses, the atmosphere of persecution dictated that the early churches meet in private houses. Some still meet in private houses. If the church has authority to assemble and to teach and to worship, it has the authority to arrange for a suitable place for this to be done. Today this often means that it is expedient for the church to buy or build a meeting house. As long as this meeting house is used only for worship and teaching, the church has not exceeded its authority. However, I join in opposition to "fancy edifices." Some churches seem to have the denominational idea that the meeting place is a "church" or temple. Much money is wasted on impressive buildings which could be used to preach the gospel to all the world.

It cannot be proved that it was the custom of the early church to include solos in their worship. 1 Corinthians 14 is a discussion of miraculous spiritual gifts which have now ceased. Verse 15 explains verse 26. Paul says, "I will sing with the spirit," meaning that he would sing by the inspiration of the Spirit. Some apparently received special revelations in the form of songs. Since there are no inspired men today, there is no need for one person to monopolize the singing, all being capable of worshipping in song. None of the other scriptures that mention singing indicate solos. History does not indicate that this was ever the practice of the church.

Worship may consist of any activities authorized by the New Testament. The Bible does not say there are five acts of worship. One could itemize Bible reading as one act and teaching as another, if he so chose. He could list meditating about God as another. As for Romans 12, "prophesying" is no longer possible, since there are no more inspired men. Besides, this chapter is not speaking of acts taking place during the

collective worship. The only reason anyone tried to itemize five acts of worship was to make the point that nothing should be done in the assemblies that is not authorized by Christ. For instance, the burning of incense, the lighting of candles, dancing, etc.

All things within the realm of religion must be authorized by Christ, since He has all authority (Matt. 28:18), and He is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22). His authority is expressed through His Word, the New Testament. Common sense and logic tell us that there are only three ways in which a written document can authorize anything: (1) Direct statement or command, (2) example, or (3) necessary inference. If one wishes to classify a "statement of fact" as separate from a direct command, that is acceptable. The church of Christ does not have a creed in regard to such classification. She insists that the authority of Christ be respected.

As to the church existing under Moses and David, it must be understood that *ecclesia*, from which "church" is translated, is not a peculiarly religious word, but may signify any kind of an assembly. Moses had his assembly or congregation; Christ has His. It is that simple.

Even if some church of Christ should agree to call itself the *ecclesia*, to have no paid preacher, to take collections only for particular needs, to use solos in worship, etc., this would not satisfy my brother. He would still insist that the church recognize and fellowship unimmersed sectarians and Roman Catholics who pray to the departed souls of human creatures. According to his doctrine, no doctrinal sin or error, however radical, can separate one from God as long as that person believes the facts about the person of Christ. This is essentially the position of Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, and the greater part of the denominational world. His position demands that one can be saved without scriptural baptism, a direct contradiction of Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38.

Even when we admit that faults exist in many congregations, this proves nothing about the nature of the universal church and its relationship to Christ. Christ will continue to be the head of the church which He established, even if many congregations become disloyal to His teachings.

KING JAMES AND ACTS 19: I refer my readers to the 19th chapter of the book of Acts to confirm my view that the translators under king James were inconsistent and manipulative when they dealt with the Greek *ecclesia*. It has been established already that *ecclesia* was not translated in Acts 7:38 and Hebrews 2:12, that at the command of king James the old ecclesiastical word "church" was substituted, thus placing "church" under both Moses and David.

In chapter 19 of Acts, the riot at Ephesus is recorded. In passages 32, 39, and 41 (KJV) "assembly" is engaged. Two of the passages (32 & 41) refer to the turbulent crowd that had congregated and the other one mentions a civil or "lawful assembly." The Greek *ecclesia* correctly delivers "assembly" in each passage. My concern is why did the translators fail to translate "ecclesia" church in these places, as they did elsewhere? Thus we would have had: "... for the church was confused," "... it shall be determined in a lawful church," and "... he dismissed the church." The reason for this discrepancy is evident: This was not a religious assembly, and the king's translators substituted "church" only when the assembly alluded to the Christian system, new order or arrangement.

"Lawful church" should fit the slot for some of my brethren for they are always talking about "faithful" and "loyal" churches.

The point I wish to make is if "ecclesia" is delivered correctly here it is delivered incorrectly wherever "church" is found. There is no escaping this truth. The king's men went wild in using "church." They even used it in the place of "temple" (37th passage).

"Church" became so common among religionists following king James' version that most all other translations followed suit by using "church" in the place of congregation, assembly, or community. However, there are a few exceptions that should be noted.

"Church" is not found in the earliest Greek manuscripts. William Tyndale authored one of the first English translations from the Greek language. This was 1525, almost 100 years before the KJV made its appearance. He translated the Greek "ecclesia" congregation.

In 1955 "The Authentic New Testament" was published by Hugh J. Schonfield, the only Jew to ever translate the new covenant documents from the Greek language. He changed "church" to community and "baptize" to immerse. Both changes are correct.

The deliberate mistake made by king James and his translators has cost us dearly. For con-

temporary religions have pounced upon this offence by creating and establishing sects and factions under the guise of "church" until they have divided and sub-divided themselves out of practical and impressive existence. The Church of Christ is among the worst divided. Jesus stressed unity. My brethren practice division. Yet they call themselves the "true church."

DANIEL AND THE CHURCH OF CHRIST:

The Church of Christ says that the kingdom of which Daniel foretold, the kingdom that would break to pieces all other kingdoms and stand forever (Daniel 2), is the Church of Christ. The claim borders comedy. If the Church of Christ is Daniel's kingdom, how could she ever break to pieces other kingdoms when she is so broken herself? A divided front cannot break through enemy lines. It takes a strong and united front to incapacitate its foes. The Church of Christ does not qualify. Jesus taught the principle that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand or be influential. Could he have had the Church of Christ in mind?

As stated earlier, there are 20 or more Churches of Christ. Each faction claims Jesus as its founder and head. Does Jesus have more than one body of believers? Paul teaches "there is one body" of believers (Ephesians 4:4-5). He claims also there is one Lord and one faith. The Church of Christ may as well have 20 Lords as to have 20 bodies. They condemn "denominations" for ignoring divine principles, yet they themselves ignore them. "They will not go into the kingdom themselves nor will they permit anyone else to enter!"

A CLEAR PERSPECTIVE: Like all modern denominations, the Church of Christ contains many beautiful people whose only wish is to follow their King and Shepherd in all areas of the new life. I do not entreat them to leave the ones they love and start something "loyal." Most "loyal" believers who have pulled away from their "disloyal" counterparts because of doctrinal hangups have turned out to be yet another sect or party. Reformation is needed where they are. Many lovely saints in the Church of Christ would happily abandon the party spirit (sectarianism) if someone were available to lead and teach them. Again it should be said that it is not necessary that a believer leave the ones he loves to surrender the party spirit, as the sectarian spirit, in the main, is a separatist attitude.

Have I tried to discourage Christians from meeting collectively and worshipping corporately?

Heavens no! I am not so unlearned that I am unable to envision the importance of meeting with others of a common cause to share experiences and stimulate each other's faith. The entire 14th chapter of first Corinthians portrays the significance of coming together.

Then what have I tried to do? Point out the sin of churchism. Listen to me. *A whole group of people may accept Jesus, experience the new birth, live good Christian lives, die saintly deaths, and go where God is without ever hearing of a church!* The good Lord added them to whatever they needed to be members or citizens of the moment they were born anew. Of course they came together to do homage and give adoration to their God, but not as a church or religious party. *They met as a concerned community of believers of a common cause.* They accepted within their brotherhood all who had partaken of the Fatherhood. They did not insist that other believers submit to their opinions, postulations, and interpretations as prerequisites to Christian acceptance. Their only stipulations were trust in God's Son and a life worthy of the vocation in which they had been called. In contrast, churches insist that 101 or more doctrines (creeds) be adhered to and believed before "fellowship" can be enjoyed. The Church of Christ is among the foremost offenders.

Hear me out. The early believers did *not* come together as a sect. They did *not* come together as a denomination. They did *not* come together as a religious party. They did *not* come together as a church. *They came together as a concerned community.* Their meetings were devoid of pulpits, professional pulpiteers, collections for fancy edifices, ritualistic nonsense, and pewwarmers. Their meetings were informal but orderly, active, alive, stimulating, vibrant, responsive, and mutually shared. The Church of Christ holds "services," as at a funeral. Most of her meetings are non-responsive and non-stimulating. Forgive me, Lord, but my spirit is convinced that she is a sect of the deepest dye, and I must have an outlet for my inner voice. If I be condemned because I condemned sectism, it will be because I acted in total ignorance. Let your mercy be a salve to my spirit, as I pray it will be a salve to those who are enslaved by the sectarian spirit. I wish not that they be forever deserted but that they might be rescued by your love and grace. You rescued me from the pits of partisanism when I cried out to you in despair. Now I beg you to rescue by brethren.

MY RESPONSE: 1) A believer may *not* remain a member of a "denomination," once he has discovered the sin of sectarianism, and please

God. Never have I advocated this type of inconsistency. My position is that a Christian, upon discovering the sin of sectarianism, must surrender the separatist attitude and accept all of those whom God accepts. He should remain where he is, whether in the Church of Christ or Baptist Church, and work for the good of all, doing and practicing nothing that would wound his conscience. *He could not find a field more fertile than where he is.* It is not necessary to leave a certain place or group to relinquish the partisan or "denominational" spirit. This has occurred so often with the Church of Christ that there are now 20 or more "true churches."

2) A man may *not* immerse himself in the innumerable faults of sectarianism and please God, and this includes the faults of Church of Christism. He must cease playing the role of a partisan and work within the framework of his own party to achieve unity.

3) It is not a question of "how long a preacher may work in one church." The question is: May a congregation of believers import a professional pulpiteer to scream out directives while they warm the pews and otherwise remain idle? May they perform their duties by proxy? Anyway, if all Christians are preachers why import one to do what the others should be doing? The Church of Christ has the "denominational pastor system" and no amount of tears will change it. Jesus would never head such a system.

4) It was not always true that the early believers met in private homes because of persecution. Some areas were plagued with persecution but not all areas. It is not a question of needing a place to meet. We all agree a place is needed. The question is: Did the ancient Christians meet to take up a collection for real estate? If yes, where is the scripture? If no, the Church of Christ has gone beyond divine revelation.

Nor did they take up a collection to keep a professional pulpiteer afloat. Those who were gifted to do evangelistic work (called "evangelists") were *exported* and financially supported if necessary. No one was ever *imported* to "occupy a pulpit" for a sum of money. The Church of Christ borrowed this practice from her fellow "denominations."

5) It is true that Paul dealt primarily with supernatural gifts in the corporate assembly at Corinth. It matters not whether the solos were supernatural or natural. *The fact is they had solos.* If group singing must now replace solo singing, group messages must now replace solo messages. What is true of one is certainly true of the other, for Paul said that "when you come together each one has a hymn, a lesson..." (message). The scripture is plain. The principles,

Paul introduced to regulate supernatural gifts regulate natural gifts as well. They were to be *mutually* exercised among those with ability, whether solo singing or solo messages. But the Church of Christ denies plain scripture in this instance to protect another one of her sacred cows.

6) I have never insisted that believers recognize unimmersed sectarians and Roman Catholics as blood brothers of the Lamb. For a believer in the Messiah to complete the new birth, he must be immersed in water. Until then he is an *unborn brother*, a child of God in prospect. My younger brother in the flesh was an *unborn brother* while he was in his mother's womb. This analogy is both fair and factual.

WALTERS' THIRD EXCHANGE

It becomes necessary again to clarify the nature of that church of which Christ is the founder and head. The church, or *ecclesia*, of Christ, in the universal sense (Matt. 16:18) is made up of all persons who have obeyed the gospel. It is composed of individuals, not of congregations. It has no organization upon earth. It is the same as the kingdom of God or the new Israel. No sin or error committed by an individual Christian or by a local congregation can be attributed to the universal church. Its nature remains unchanged.

On the other hand, the churches of Christ, in a local sense (Rom. 16:16), are organized assemblies of Christians. It is possible for a local church to fall (Rev. 2:5), to be lukewarm (Rev. 3:16), or to be spiritually dead (Rev. 3:1). However, the church at Philadelphia (Rev. 3:7) was not condemned because of the sins of the church at Laodicea (Rev. 3:14). Each church is independent and autonomous, and must be judged solely upon its own merits.

There are not "20 or more Churches of Christ." There is only one church of Christ, universally, and there are thousands of churches of Christ, locally. Some of these churches have fallen into errors which make them unacceptable to other brethren. Some churches, like those at Smyrna (Rev. 2:8) and Philadelphia (Rev. 3:7), have remained faithful to the teachings of Christ. Yet all the brethren, faithful or unfaithful, remain a part of the universal church, and will not be removed until the Judgment.

When "a whole group of people... accept Jesus, experience the new birth, live good

I do not believe the inspired writers were playing tricks or putting down faith and grace when they wrote about immersion in water on 65 or more occasions.

7) May one be saved without "scriptural baptism?" He cannot be saved with any "baptism" unless it is Church of Christ "baptism!" Who can believe it?

8) How does one become a partisan ("denominationalist")? By joining and supporting the party, either formally or informally. I am a born-again believer but I am not a member of any church or party. Yet I am a member of God's universal family. I even meet with partisans. Yet I am not a partisan.

Christian lives," etc., these people are a church, in the scriptural meaning of that word. The New Testament church is "a concerned community of believers of a common cause." Faithful Christians do not "insist that other believers submit to their opinions." They only insist that all Christians submit to the authority of Christ.

My brother seems to be obsessed with the word "church." I have already agreed that this was not the best translation, and I agree with most of what he says about "church" in this exchange. I also know that "baptism" is not a translation at all, but a transliteration. Yet there is no harm in using the word "baptism" as long as we define it properly as "immersion." Likewise, there is no harm in using the word "church" when we define it as "assembly" or "congregation." When working with average people, it is best to use the words with which they are familiar and which appear in their Bibles.

There is no evidence whatsoever that the use of the word "church" in the King James Version has brought about a single division or created a single sect or denomination. Sects are created when men substitute their opinions for the words of Christ. Men would make the same mistake no matter how *ecclesia* was translated.

The church of Jesus Christ is the kingdom of Daniel's prophecy. The kingdoms broken to pieces (Dan. 2:44) were the world empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. These kingdoms have now disappeared, and the church is a spiritual world empire. The failure of some churches and some individuals to remain

faithful does not alter this fact. The kingdom, or church, will "stand forever."

I agree that services of the church should be "informal but orderly, active, alive, stimulating, vibrant, responsive, and mutually shared." If some services do not meet this standard, they should be corrected. My brother is mistaken in implying that all churches of Christ hold funeral-like services. I believe my brother is sincere and, in his own words, "acting in total ignorance." Perhaps he was previously connected with congregations which were sectarian in attitude, had the pastor system, and held funeral-like services. If so, I pity him. He should investigate further and see that all churches do not fit this mold.

His position on denominationalism is inconsistent. He says in the first exchange that a Christian may remain within the framework of the Catholic Church. He says in the third exchange that a Christian not only may, but should, remain within the Baptist Church. Yet he declares, "A believer may *not* remain a member of a denomination." Is he saying that the Catholic Church and the Baptist Church are not denominations? He says it is not necessary to leave these churches to "relinquish the partisan or denominational spirit." Yet he says that a Christian must practice "nothing that would wound his conscience." Instrumental music in the assembly wounds my conscience, so I must leave any church which insists on practicing it. My brother must know that a man cannot take the Lord's Supper in the Catholic Church, and that he cannot take it each Lord's Day in the Baptist Church. Many such examples could be cited. To remain in a denomination, or within its framework, one must participate in error or fail to do all that the Lord commands. That is why a Christian is forced to leave a denomination or a heretical sect.

My brother emphasizes the sinfulness of division. Yet he must know that all major divisions have been caused by churches forcing their members to participate in acts contrary to their consciences. At the same time he implies that it is sinful to leave an "unsound" church and to start a "sound" one. There is no consistency and no logic in this position.

While seeming to be of a very liberal spirit concerning such innovations as instrumental music, my brother becomes legalistic when it comes to his opinions about the "located preacher" and the "meeting house." He knows that I do not defend the pastor system, and yet he implies that this is the practice of all churches of Christ. As for "importing" preachers, perhaps this would not be necessary if churches developed

the talent among their own members. I once worshipped with a church in which five men, who had secular jobs in the community, took turns preaching on Sunday. In the small church where I worship, I make it a point never to preach when there is a qualified brother present who is willing to speak.

My brother teaches that it is unscriptural and wrong for a church to own real estate in order to have a place to meet. He thus places himself among the no-class and one-cup brethren in demanding specific authority for every practice of the church. The general authority for assembling, worshipping, and teaching gives us the right to acquire a place where this can be done. If God had specified a particular arrangement for our meetings, this would have limited our options. Since He did not, we are free to use any means that is expedient.

The assertion that we must have "group messages" if we have "group singing" is ludicrous. Group singing is harmonious and edifying. Group messages would be confusing and next to impossible. If the early church ever had solos, it was only in order to exercise miraculous gifts. The command to sing is given to all Christians (Eph. 5:19), and for one person to sing alone in the assembly would serve no purpose other than entertainment.

My brother recognizes unimmersed sectarians and Roman Catholics as "unborn brothers" or "brothers in prospect." Such language is foreign to the scriptures. All men are prospective Christians; that is why we preach the gospel to them. Until they obey the gospel, they remain alien sinners. When a child is in the womb, there is every expectation that he will be born in due time. Denominational religionists have set their faces against baptism, claiming that it is unnecessary or that it is "water salvation." They have no intention of being born again in baptism. They are actual enemies of the doctrine of baptism. How, then, can they be brothers in prospect?

I have never heard of "Church of Christ baptism." If there is any such thing, it is unscriptural. There is one baptism (Eph. 4:4), which is the baptism into Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. No matter who performs it or where it is performed, it is valid if the heart of the one being baptized is right. This baptism puts him into the church of the Lord, whether he has ever seen a building or a sign saying "church of Christ" or not.

This exchange should be of value in helping brethren learn more about the unity-in-diversity movement. Some of these brethren want unity only with the "heirs of the Restoration" who

have been scripturally baptized. Others want unity with all denominations. Consistency will demand that the latter position eventually be accepted. Some are attracted to unity-in-diversity because it seems to be a new idea. It is as old as the Israelites who thought they could serve both God and Baal. It is as old as the Corinthians who thought they could be "part-takers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" (I Cor. 10:21). It is as old as the denominational "union meetings" of the nineteenth century. It is as new as Billy Graham and Oral Roberts.

According to my brother's doctrine: (1) We should fellowship professed Christians in all denominations as either brothers or brothers in prospect; (2) we should have confidence that even the unimmersed will be saved; (3) Christians should remain within the framework of denominations, instead of starting unde-

SCOTT'S FINAL WORDS

There has never been but one community of believers. All redeemed sinners are citizens of that one community. But since the birth of "church," that one community has been fragmented into sects too numerous to count. Alexander Campbell's plea in the early 1800s to unite the Christians in all the sects is as current now as it was then. His was a noble proposition that has long been forgotten by the Church of Christ. He did not call for a unification of sectarianism. He called for a reunification of all believers who were at that time entangled in and controlled by the partisan spirit. He well knew the partisan spirit had divided God's community and that only a rededication to the directions of the sacred Spirit would unite them.

When the inspired writer commissioned his fellow priests to "love the brotherhood," he included every born-again believer upon the face of the earth — then and now. That one brotherhood was and still is the one community founded by Jesus the Christ. The Church of Christ was not alluded to, for she was not part of the religious culture of that day. True, there were sects in those days — the sect of the Pharisees and the sect of the Sadducees to mention two, but in the aggregate they were not included in the "brotherhood." The ancient brotherhood

nominal congregations; (4) and they should work for reform within these denominations. Since denominations have never been, and cannot be, reformed, we are left with the classical denominational position of the twentieth century: Christians are saved by faith alone and may be found in all denominations, in which they may remain with God's approval. Denominationalism is therefore justified.

While not intending to do so, my brother has become nothing more than an apologist for the denominational system. His position lends aid and comfort to the whole denominational theory. He has lost any influence he may have had as an advocate of undenominational, New Testament Christianity. It is my hope and prayer that he might be led to give up this doctrine and return, not to sectarianism, but to a knowledge and practice of New Testament truth.

embraced even those who might have continued their membership in religious parties upon accepting Jesus, but the parties as such were not God's community. Ambassador Paul was a zealous partisan, a Pharisee (Acts 26:5). He surrendered this separatist religion to live for Jesus. Even today, the priesthood includes all believers in the Church of Christ party. It should be noted, though, that God's new Israel is larger than the Church of Christ. God's reign stretches far beyond the borders of any sect. Sectism reigns over a restricted territory. God's reign is universal!

It saddens me that the Church of Christ rejects everyone who is not a devout follower of her stereotype proclamations. I speak from experience when I say that she would rather fight and devour each other than upset the status quo by dismantling her partisan walls and battling Satan headon. Mainstream Church of Christ will never "hatch" unless and until they give up their addiction to churchism and separatism and submit to deprogramming with the hope of "drying out."

My prayer is that God will rescue the Church of Christ from the sea of partisan tribulations and help her acknowledge all of those who are blood brothers of the Lamb. Only then will she be able to announce, "We love the brotherhood"

WALTERS' FINAL WORDS

It is tragic that any brother should become so disillusioned by what he perceives to be the errors of fallible men who make up the church, that he would direct his attack, not against the errors, but against the divine institution itself. The church, or *ecclesia*, of our Lord Jesus Christ can never be destroyed, nor can it lose its holy character, even when multitudes of Christians are led astray by Satan. The church of Christ is a "glorious church" (Eph. 5:27). God has chosen to be glorified "in the church" (Eph. 3:21). His "manifold wisdom" is to be made known "by the church" (Eph. 3:10). The church is the "house of God" (I Tim. 3:15). What estimate did Christ place upon His church? He "loved the church and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). These facts having been established, we see that the grandeur and glory of the church are so far greater than that of any other institution known among men, that all comparison would be futile.

Sectarianism is the great enemy of the church in our age. My brother and I both claim

to be enemies of sectarianism. The sects or denominations of men are false religious bodies, plants which the Father has not planted (Matt. 15:13). They are comparable to the heathen nations round about ancient Israel. The Jews were told to make no covenants with them, but to destroy their altars and burn their images (Deut. 7:2-5). Using the sword of the Spirit, we have a commission to deal in the same manner with modern denominations. Yet my brother's doctrine demands compromise and fellowship with them. It demands that Christians remain within the camp of the enemy, rather than heeding the words of the Lord to "come out from among them, and be ye separate." (II Cor. 6:17).

Christ is our only "hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). No man can honor Christ while showing dishonor toward the church, which is His body, or toward the New Testament scriptures, which are His words. Only by "holding the Head" and receiving nourishment from Him through His word, can we expect to increase spiritually (Col. 2:19).



