

(Music)

Good morning. My name is John Mark Hicks, minister of the Northeast Philadelphia Church of Christ at 3200 Primrose Road, and this is the "Let the Bible Speak" broadcast. It is the distinctive concern of the churches of Christ to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. Our plea is for unity among all believer's on the basis of the Bible alone. The churches of Christ in your area have no head but ~~Christ~~^{Jesus} and no creed except the Bible. This program shares those same concerns and is dedicated to the restoration of New Testament Christianity. This is only possible if we let the Bible speak.

(Music)

WHY YOU SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE CHURDH OF CHRIST

This particular broadcast has been airing for some time now, and over the course of time we have considered various aspects of Christinaity. We have particularly represented the plea of the churches of Christ for the restoration of New Testament Christianity. The only true Christianity is the Chrisitiantiy of the Bible. We must if we are to be truely Christian, seek to restore in the 20th century the Chrisitiantiy of the first. This is exactly what the churches of Christ are attempting to do. Every congregation of the church of Christ invites you to visit it with them and study the Bible with them. We sincerely aske you to investigate the church of Christ, and ascertain if we are truely Biblical in our stance. This morning I wish to give you ten reasons why you should investigate the church of Christ.

First, you should investigate the church of Christ because it pleads for the unity of all believers in Christ as our Saviour prayed in John 17. Listen as I read a portion of the Lord's prayer in John 17:20,21. Jesus prays: "I do not aks in behalf of these alone, but for these also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; evan as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send me." Unity--impossible? It is not for our Lord requested it of the Father. Further, in I Corinthians 1:10 declared that there should be no divisions among Christians. The churches of Christ, therefore, plead for unity among all believers in Christ.

Second, you should investigate the church of Christ because it pleads for undenominational Christianity, claiming to be, not a denomination, nor a group of denominations, but the body of Christ, exalting Christ as the head. Colossians 1:18 says that "Christ is the head of the Church which is His body." There are no denominations in the New Testament; there is only one body with many different congregations of the same. Denominationalism is division, and division is sinful. Therefore, denominationalism is sinful. The Church of Christ, therefore, in no way wishes to further denominationalism. Rather, we plead for pure and simple Christianity, without any denominations.

Third, you should investigate the church of Christ because it has no creed except Jesus Christ. Colossians 3:17 records that whatever we do in word or deed, we are to do it all in the name of, or by the authority of, Jesus Christ. We have no human creed book which our members are to subscribe to. Rather, the only authority or source of teaching is found in Jesus Christ, and Jesus alone. We rest upon his authority and not upon the authority of men. Creeds and Confessions are divisive, and should therefore be discarded. Creeds are unnecessary, for we have the Bible, and they only further denominationalism, instead of effecting union. The only creed of the church of Christ is Jesus himself.

Fourth, you should investigate the church of Christ because it believes in speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where the Bible is silent. We firmly believe in the axiom taught by the apostle Peter in I Peter 4:11. There he writes: if any man speaks, let him speak as the

oracles of God. If any man is to speak on religious matters, if he is going to defend anything he practices or teaches, let him speak with Scripture. If he does not have Scripture for what he teaches or practices, then he must remain silent. As noted above, Colossians 3:17 teaches that we must have the authority of Jesus Christ for everything we do in Christianity. If, therefore, there is no authority for a doctrine or practice in Scripture, then we do not practice it. We speak where the Bible speaks, that is, we have a "Thus saith the Lord" for whatever we do, and we are silent where the Bible is silent, that is, we do not teach or practice anything which the Bible does not authorize.

Fifth, you should investigate the church of Christ because it works to restore New Testament Christianity in the present age. There is according to the apostle Paul only one gospel, and it is that gospel which must be preached as it was originally preached. Note what the apostle says in Galatians 1:6-8: "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the name of Christ, for a different gospel which is really not another; only that there are some who are disturbing, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even though we, or angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed." There is only one gospel, and that gospel must continually be preached without change or distortion. The New Testament gospel, and only that Gospel, must be preached in the present age. The church of Christ, therefore, seeks to restore New Testament Christianity in this present age.

Sixth, you should investigate the church of Christ because

it binds no other name but the scriptural name of Christian upon its members. In the Bible, we do not read of Baptist Chrisitans, Catholic Chrisitans or Presybterian Christians, rather we read only of simple Christians. Acts 11:26 record that the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. The church of Christ is Christian and Christian only.

Seventh, you should investigate the church of Christ because it proposes to convert sinners by preaching the simple Gospel of Christ as preached by the apostles in the first cnetury. We prdach as the apostle Paul in I Corinthâans 15:1-4 Christ crucified, buried and rasied on the thrid day. It is that gospel which is able to convict the lost of their sins, and bring them into the saving grace of God the father. Evangelism does not need alot of gimics and dinners to be successful, it only needs the pure and simple preaching of the Gospel of Christ.

Eighth, you should investigate the church of Christ because it believes that the Gsoepel of Christ preached in its simplicity and purity, is God's power, and power enough, to draw men to God. In Romans 1:16 Paul makes this declaration: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to ghe Greek." Preaching the gospel, not preaching tax reduction, not preaching social issues, but preaching the pure and simple Gospel as recorded in the New Testament. The Gospel is God's power tosave men, and we have no right to call for substitution/ The Church of Christ preachâs the gosepl and that only for it is the means by which God will drqw men to Himself

Ninth, you should investigate the church of Christ because it strives to pattern its worship after the New Testament pattern. John 4:24 argues that "God is spirit; and those who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." True worship to God must not only come from the heart, but it must also be in conformity with the word of God. The churches of Christ model their worship services after the services of the New Testament Church; we worship as they did. Only in this way can we ever hope to worship God in truth as well as in spirit.

Tenth, you should investigate the church of Christ because it recognizes no church organization other than that of the individual congregation with its elders and deacons under Christ as its head. Jesus Christ is head and only head of the church of Christ which is the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18). Under the supreme head, the Lord has appointed that each congregation be organized under elders and deacons. For Paul in writing to the church of Philippi, addresses himself particularly to the deacons and elders of that congregation. (Phillippians 1:1). Every Church of Christ is organized as the New Testament church, having elders and deacons where there are qualified men, under the supreme head, Jesus Christ.

These are ten reasons why you should investigate the church of Christ. Ultimately, it all comes down to one line-- the churches of Christ believe in God and His word, and we seek to follow His will and his will alone. We invite you to visit and worship with us when you have opportunity. Come and study the word of God with us, you will be welcome.

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You have been listening to the "Let the Bible Speak" broadcast sponsored by the Northeast Philadelphia Church of Christ at 3200 Primrose Road. If you are interested in learning more about the efforts of the churches of Christ to restore New Testament Christianity then write to this address: Northeast Philadelphia Church of Christ, 3200 Primrose Road, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19114. If you wish to be aided in your Bible study, then write for a free Bible course through the mail or if you wish it is possible to have someone help you to study the Bible in your own home at your convenience. If you desire a Bible Correspondence Course or a home Bible study, write to the Northeast Philadelphia Church of Christ, 3200 Primrose Road, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19114. Thank you for listening, and be sure to tune in next Sunday at 9:15 as we let the Bible speak.