

## Chapter Five

### *“How Does a Christian Become a Church Member?”*

#### **“THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST: ITS MEMBERSHIP”**

In chapter three, “The Church of Jesus Christ: Its Origin,” we observed how the Lord Jesus Christ originally constituted His Church. He constituted His Church with twelve men, called apostles, several of whom appear to have been initially disciples of John the Baptist, who baptized them. At a later time, they were recruited by the Lord Jesus Christ to follow Him as disciples.<sup>1</sup> Of course, Matthew was an exception to this pattern, having been a publican in Galilee and not a disciple of John the Baptist when called by the Savior to follow Him.<sup>2</sup> I surmise that Matthew was then baptized as the disciples of John had been, given the fact that our Lord’s disciples also baptized believers, John 4.1-2.

Judas Iscariot is a question mark. We are repeatedly told in the Gospels that this apostle, the only one who was not from Galilee, betrayed the Lord Jesus Christ. John’s Gospel also frequently informed readers that he was the son of a man named Simon.<sup>3</sup> However, we know little besides the fact that he was selected by the Savior to be an apostle. After washing their feet an upper room, the Lord informed the twelve that His selection of one who would betray Him was to fulfill prophecy, John 13.18 and Psalm 41.9. Therefore, we can only conclude that, like the others and absent any evidence to the contrary; Judas had been baptized, likely by John the Baptist, upon the public confession of his sins after the fashion of Matthew 3.6. If Judas had ever hoped, his hope was a false hope, an issue dealt with in Scripture but frequently ignored by most contemporary Christians.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John 1.35ff

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 9.9

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 10.4; 26.25; 27.3; Mark 3.19; 14.10; Luke 6.16; 22.48; John 6.71; 13.2, 18-26; 18.2, 5

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 7.22-23; 25.1-12

Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ brought His Church into existence by bringing together already existing materials, men who had confessed their sins and submitted to immersion after showing what was taken to be fruits meet for repentance, Matthew 3.8. The question before us is the important matter of Church membership. The Church of Jesus Christ is an assembly, is an assembly that is in some ways a mystery, is an assembly that is spiritual in that it impacts heaven and eternity, and that it was formed by the Lord Jesus Christ using His twelve apostles during His earthly ministry. How does a Christian become a Church member?

I am fully aware that most congregations, including most Baptist Churches, conduct themselves as though they have complete discretion over the matter of how, when, and who they take into their membership. Let me say that because of my deeply held Baptist convictions, I am opposed to interfering with any congregation's exercise of discretion when it comes to matters of membership.

However, that said, I am persuaded that God's Word does not give free rein to congregations to accept or refuse members according to their fancy or whim. After all, the Church of Jesus Christ is His Church and not ours, and He is the de jure head of the Church and ought to be the de facto head of the Church. Meaning? Meaning that Churches ought to handle matters of membership according to the dictates of pertinent Scripture. Sadly, many Churches do not.

Allow me to illustrate: There was once upon a time a Baptist pastor who was prayerfully attempting to evangelize an extended family, including the mother, the grown children, their spouses, and the grandchildren. On the occasion of the pastor's vacation, a nearby pastor quickly persuaded the unsaved matriarch of the clan to be immersed following the most perfunctory profession of faith. She was not saved.

Upon the vacationing pastor's return, a series of events led to the woman's desire to return to the first congregation she had been attending, which, of course, was impossible once she was baptized and a member of another Church. Only it turned out that not only was she not genuinely saved, but that other Baptist pastor had baptized her without (according to him in our telephone conversation) being convinced she was truly saved. His words were, "Just because I baptized her doesn't mean I think she is saved."

Astonishing. As well, even after baptism, that pastor and Church did not accept into their Church's membership those professing Christians they had baptized. Again, amazing.

Consider also the position expressed by the late Dallas Theological Seminary professor Dr. Stanley Toussaint. In a YouTube video course on the book of Revelation, Dr. Toussaint expressed his personal view that Churches should not have a membership at all and that the New Testament does not teach Church membership.<sup>5</sup> I suspect that his personal conviction is held by many in Churches these days. However, we must remember that some important truths are not observable to those not looking for them. Such is the case about Church membership.

Has the Savior left it to each congregation to do that which is right in their own eyes? Is it presently like in the days of the Judges of Israel?<sup>6</sup> Is the matter of Church membership a contrivance adopted centuries after the completed revelation of God's Word? I am not so persuaded. As well, others who embrace historical and informed Baptist convictions are likewise not so persuaded.

We now turn to the Word of God for consideration of this matter of Church membership. The question before us is how the Lord Jesus Christ adds to His Church because Acts 2:47 indicates the Lord does add to His Church:

“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

Three considerations are related to membership in the Church of Jesus Christ:

### **First, ESTABLISHING THE EXISTENCE OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQ2s0ZYaD\\_Q&t=198s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQ2s0ZYaD_Q&t=198s) beginning at the 3:00 minute mark.

<sup>6</sup> Judges 17.6; 21.25

I will show two ways that there is a difference between a Christian who is a part of the assembly known as a Church of Jesus Christ and a Christian who is not a member of said Church:

Membership is a concept that is first shown by *discipline*. A congregation settles the matter of discipline by our Lord's instructions in Matthew 18.15-20, where He said,

- 15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.
- 16 But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.
- 17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.
- 18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
- 19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.
- 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Especially important, one would think, is the phrase in verse 17 where our Lord said, "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church." The concept of the Church advanced in that verse can only be a congregation, with the matter of discipline applying only to one who is part of the congregation. Otherwise, you have a congregation exercising disciplinary authority over someone who happens to be attending when the assembly gathers for worship. That is hardly credible. However, there are those who insist that this verse somehow applies to all professing Christians who they maintain are part of an invisible universal body.

This whole notion of the Church as an invisible universal entity is rightly dispelled by the fact of a congregation's authority to dismiss members for cause. After all, if the invisible universal church can exercise authority over a member and remove an unrepentant member, is the invisible universal church removing a member's salvation? Do Protestants want to go there? They do not want to go there. Therefore, they typically bypass this verse and its logical application to real life. Proof positive of membership shown by discipline is found in First Corinthians chapter 5:

- 1 It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.
- 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.
- 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed,
- 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.
- 6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?
- 7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:
- 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.
- 9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:
- 10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.
- 11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or

a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

- 12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?
- 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

Peter Masters does a fine job of articulating this point about discipline and membership:

First, we learn from *1 Corinthians 5.4-5* that the local Church of the first century was a properly constituted community with the power to exercise discipline. (The case in hand was the expulsion of a man for fornication.) In this passage Paul writes:

‘In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.’

This may, at first sight, seem a strange verse to prove the principle of Church membership, but it is of great relevance for it describes how a special meeting of believers had the power to exclude from their company and privileges someone guilty of serious sin. This was obviously not merely a gathering, or an open public meeting, held at Corinth, including unbelievers and seekers. (*1 Corinthians 14.24-25* shows that unbelievers attended the ordinary public services of the Church at Corinth.) It was very specifically a meeting of disciples or believers, concerned to guard the integrity of their association.

The Corinthian sinner was ‘delivered unto Satan’, which meant that he was deprived of the comforts and blessings of spiritual fellowship and made to live outside the community of believers, back in the world, to bring him to his senses, and to preserve the purity of the Church. In *1 Corinthians 5.12-13* the

apostle continues to use the powerful language of belonging, writing:-

‘For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth.’

Insiders? Outsiders? Insiders or outsiders of what? Of a gathering only, or of formal Church membership? This kind of language can only refer to a definite Church membership of professing Christians, for only such a company would have the authority of the Lord to judge the conduct of other Christians.

It is clear that a Church in New Testament times was a defined circle of people that you could be received into, or put out of. The people in this company had voluntarily committed themselves to the mutual fellowship, service and discipline of their Christian community. They were no longer uncommitted individualists.

Christians who do not accept the biblical concept of Church membership have to adopt a most improbable position to explain the passages just quoted. They have to interpret them as referring to the attendance of the Lord’s Supper, saying that the exclusion of the sinful man in Corinth was a ban on his attending the Lord’s Table.

While Paul does mention the Lord’s Supper, this is only part of his command. The instruction to ‘purge out’ (*1 Corinthians 5.7*) is not primarily a command to exclude someone from the Lord’s Table, but to expel from the body. (The same goes for Paul’s phrase, ‘put away’ (*1 Corinthians 5.13*) and it is obvious to us that when the apostle uses terms like ‘without’ and ‘within’ (*1 Corinthians 5.12*) he cannot mean the Lord’s Table, but the *membership* of the Church at Corinth.<sup>7</sup>

This matter of Church membership is a concept that is also shown by *joining*.

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<sup>7</sup> Peter Masters, *Church Membership In The Bible*, (London: The Wakeman Trust, 2008), pages 8-9.

In the *Acts of the Apostles*, we find several key references to joining a Church, a significant example being *Acts 9.26-28*:

‘And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.’

What exactly was Saul trying to join? Was he merely trying to attend the services of the congregation? This is surely wide of the mark, for he would not have been turned away from the preaching. The congregations of New Testament times showed outstanding courage in their public witness, and the sheer size of the Jerusalem gatherings would have made it very easy for anyone to be present at their public preaching services.

The fact that Church members were afraid of Saul did not mean that they shut him out of their congregations. They were obviously doubtful of Saul in the context of close spiritual fellowship, and would not let him join them at that deeper level, although he tried to do so. Saul was attempting to join the membership of those who had professed Christ. The words of the record confirm this was the case by saying specifically that he attempted to join ‘the disciples’ - the term for the community of professing believers. It was only when Barnabas spoke for Saul before the leaders of the Church that he was able to join them.<sup>8</sup>

The reality of New Testament Church membership, then, is established in three fashions: *First*, the Corinthian congregation’s action against the unrepentant Church member, as directed by the Apostle Paul, First Corinthians chapter 5 shows the pattern of discipline. *Second*, the steps introduced by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 18.15-20 apply not to some

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pages 10-11.

ethereal and nebulous concept of Church consisting of all Christians everywhere, but to an actual congregation of Christians addressing a matter of sin within their circle by removing someone from membership. *Third*, is the example of the Apostle Paul, who sought to join the Jerusalem Church in a sense far beyond that of merely attending public services. Paul wanted to become a part of that congregation, and they, at first, refused before eventually accepting him. Thereby is shown that a Church does have the authority to govern who is allowed and who is not allowed to join, with the Apostle Paul showing the desirability of even an apostle of Jesus Christ being incorporated into a Church congregation's membership.

Church membership is firmly rooted in New Testament teaching.

### **Next, ESTABLISHING THE METHOD OF BECOMING A CHURCH MEMBER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

“This brings us to a study of a vital term used in this and other passages of *Acts* -- the word *join*. The Greek word means to *glue*, *stick* or *cement* two things together; and it always signifies a very close dependence or bond.<sup>9</sup> The prodigal son, for example, is said to have *joined* himself, or *glued* himself, to a native of a far country for employment. Here the word describes a dependent, needy employee who pledges himself to obey his employer for money.

In *1 Corinthians 6.16* this same word (glued together) is used to describe sexual relationships, even sinful ones, and in *1 Corinthians 6.17* the word is used again to describe the deep bond of total commitment that marks a true Christian (‘He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit’).

In *Acts 8.29*, Philip is told by the Holy Spirit to join himself (the same glue verb again) to the Ethiopian eunuch's chariot, which he did in a sense. He embarked on a determined witness and stuck tenaciously to that seeking nobleman until saving light dawned. The glue verb is only used in the New Testament to indicate a close, special obligation or commitment, and in every

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<sup>9</sup> κολλάω - Bauer, pages 555-556.

passage refers to a relationship that is mutual, both parties consenting.

Another example of the use of the glue verb is *Acts 5.12-14*. Following the judgment of Ananias and Sapphira, many people were put off joining the Church. The passage reads:

‘And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women,)’

The crowds continued to turn out to the open air preaching places, such as Solomon’s porch, but many were frightened of closer involvement after the incident with Ananias and Sapphira. There was a difference between being in the congregation and being glued or joined to the church. Such passages prove beyond doubt that the New Testament churches - our pattern for today - possessed a clear membership structure.<sup>10</sup>

It is clear that Christians join Churches. That not all Christians were considered to be part of the Church is also clear, thereby showing the concept of any such thing as an invisible universal church to be invalid. It is also seen that membership is the result of the Lord adding to the Church, *Acts 2.47* and that those thereby added are said by Paul to be “joined unto the Lord.”<sup>11</sup> Thus, to be a Christian is to be “in Christ.”<sup>12</sup> However, to become a Christian who is a Church member is to be “joined to the Lord” in some sense other than being regenerated or justified. So, how does one join a Church? The way the process is supposed to happen is as follows:

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<sup>10</sup> Masters, pages 11-12.

<sup>11</sup> I Corinthians 6.17

<sup>12</sup> Romans 8.1-2, 16.3, 7, 9, 10; I Corinthians 1.2, 30; 3.1; 4.10, 15; 15.18-19, 22, 31; 16.24; II Corinthians 1.21; 2.14; 3.14; 5.17, 19-20; 11.3; 12.2, 19; Galatians 1.22; 2.4; 3.17, 26, 28; 6.15; Ephesians 1.1, 3, 10, 12, 20; 2.6, 10, 13; 3.6, 11; Philippians 1.1, 13; 2.1, 5; 3.3, 14; 4.21; Colossians 1.2, 4, 28; 2.5; I Thessalonians 2.14; 4.16; 5.18; I Timothy 1.14; 2.7; 3.13; II Timothy 1.1, 9, 13; 2.1, 10; 3.12, 15; Philemon 6, 8, 23; I Peter 3.16; 5.14

First, the sinner responds to the Gospel of God's grace and trusts Jesus Christ to the saving of his eternal and undying soul. When that takes place, the individual is justified by faith in Christ, and for the first time in his existence is at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Romans 5.1.

Next, the hopeful convert to Jesus Christ who is thought to be a qualified candidate for believer baptism goes public with his profession of faith.<sup>13</sup> The baptism by immersion required by the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, Matthew 28.18-20, is the public declaration of faith in Christ using the ordinance of baptism to testify of the convert's newfound relationship with Christ and His saving work, Romans 6.1-6:

- 1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?
- 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?
- 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
- 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
- 5 For if we have been planted together *in the likeness* of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:
- 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

However, immersion in water, the Church ordinance of believer baptism, accomplishes far more than a public declaration of one's new relationship with Jesus Christ by faith. Baptism also brings the believer into close association with other Christians in that Church where his baptism as a Church member has been authorized.

I will not take time at present to verify what I have just stated. I will treat the topic of water baptism as how a convert to Christ becomes a Church member more fully in chapter 14. For now, let me clearly state the position I

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<sup>13</sup> Bobby Jamieson, *Going Public: Why Baptism Is Required For Church Membership*, (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2015), pages 35-53.

intend to defend: Members are added to the Church by the Lord Himself. He does so by the use of means. By means, I refer to steps of compliance that are taken by Christians.

Therefore, when a sinner hears the Gospel and comes to Christ, and then when the new Christian is baptized by a congregation's authority to undertake the Great Commission, that baptized Christian is thereby added to the Church by the Lord when servants of the Lord are obedient by doing what He has directed them to do. I have clearly shown the fact of Church membership in the New Testament in this chapter. I have also relied upon the book written by Peter Masters wherein it is explained that Christians join Churches.

Remaining for examination are literary devices used in the New Testament to describe the Church congregation.

### **Finally, Therefore, EXAMINING SOME REINFORCING PASSAGES**

Six passages make little sense outside the correct understanding that Christians who are members in a way other Christians are not comprises a Church, and in a way unsaved people are not, and even if they attend without joining the Church do regularly hear the Word of God preached and taught:

Galatians 2.4:        “*And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.*”

This verse establishes that there are times the Church congregation gathers to address issues that are not public, and, therefore, Christians who are not members, as well as unsaved people, are not permitted to observe what transpires. Outsiders wanted to sneak in to observe the private functions of the congregation, according to Paul. We should ask ourselves two questions: *First*, that such meetings take place is undeniable, as this verse shows. On what basis are some included, and others excluded except by being members in good standing? *Second*, if the congregation's meeting was not exclusive and private, why would individuals have tried to sneak in to spy on the Christians who were members?

- Ephesians 4.11-12:
- 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
  - 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

From Ephesians 4.8, which itself is a reference to Psalm 68.18, it is clear that a Church is comprised of Christians who are members in a way other Christians are not, and in a way unsaved people are not. The Apostle Paul declares in verses 11-12 that the Lord Jesus Christ gave four kinds of gifted men to the Church. It must be asked, to whom? Are apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers given to Christianity at large, and they are completely unaccountable for what they say and do? Is that the way God does anything, without responsibility and accountability? No.

Those four kinds of gifted men are given to congregations, individual Churches of Jesus Christ. That question asked and answered, it must also be asked to whom should these gifted men's ministries and activities be directed? Given to all Christians everywhere? If that be so, where is the accountability of those being trained by them?

We know from First Corinthians 8.1 that knowledge by itself only puffs up the learner. What must accompany instruction is obedience in response to the direction that is being given, to the duties to be assigned, and to the tasks to be performed. How does that happen except within the congregation's membership? It doesn't happen apart from Church membership, and that is a serious problem in contemporary evangelical Christianity.

Ephesians 5.21: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

This directive from the apostle implies that Ephesian believers should see one another as a community rather than an ill-defined gaggles, with the

community coming before our whims and desires. This verse makes no practical and workable sense apart from Church membership.

First Timothy 3.1: “This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.”

You understand that the word here translated bishop comes from a Greek word that means overseer. The question is overseer of what? A gaggle of Christians who come and go without regard for anything except their convenience? This verse makes no sense apart from Church membership.

First Timothy 3.5: “For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?”

Here the Church is seen to be parallel to another institution, the family unit here described as “his own house.” But what is a family? Is a family unit nothing more than a group of people who decide they want to live together, individuals who just come and go as they please? Some people act like that is what a family is, but we know better. You are either a member of a family, or you are not a member of a family. The office of bishop is to be held by someone whose skill in ruling over one situation shows him to be qualified to rule over the other situation, the Church of God. Does this comparison between a family and a Church make any sense unless a Church is comprised of those who are members, in a fashion similar to family members? No, it does not.

First Timothy 5.17: “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.”

“Once again we must ask, how can there be ‘rule’ in a church which has no constituted membership? There could be no orderly oversight of a nation which had no proper citizens, an army without enlisted soldiers, an industry without employees, or a family without children. The will of God is clearly that there

should be a spiritual family in which elders are responsible to nurture and help members, and members are responsible to pool their strengths and concern to the ministry of that family.”<sup>14</sup>

Understand that the vast majority of a Church’s gatherings and functions are open to anyone in the world to attend, to engage in, to involve with, and to benefit from freely. However, the Word of God establishes that there are some things a congregation must do privately, with the involvement of only certain people.

Who are those certain people? Are they the ones with clout who have attended Church for the longest time or who have given the most money? Not at all. They are ones who have been added to the Church by the Lord. Our understanding is that a person is added to the Church by the Lord when he comes to saving faith in Jesus Christ, and is then baptized in obedience to Christ’s command, thereby becoming a member of that Church. Can a person become a member who was saved somewhere else, and who was baptized somewhere else? Do you mean like the Apostle Paul? Yes, there is a place for that in God’s Word. However a child of God comes to be a member of a New Testament Church, in Corinth, in Philippi, or Galatia, membership is very important.

Though I anticipate dealing directly with the benefits that derive from membership in a Church in a subsequent book, keep this in mind: Membership in a Church is very important, as evidenced by the fact that the most serious response the Corinthian congregation could exhibit when dealing with a sinning member’s refusal to repent was to deprive him of his membership.

Another matter to consider: If one becomes a member by being added to the Church by the Lord, how serious a matter it must be, therefore, to quit the Church and go somewhere else. We know the Lord adds members to His Churches. Therefore, this matter of being somehow subtracted from a Church of Jesus Christ is a profoundly important matter for prayerful and serious consideration. Consider, as well, the comments written by Paul in First Corinthians 12.15-26:

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<sup>14</sup> Masters, page 13.

- 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?
- 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?
- 17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling?
- 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.
- 19 And if they were all one member, where *were* the body?
- 20 But now *are they* many members, yet but one body.
- 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.
- 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:
- 23 And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness.
- 24 For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked:
- 25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.
- 26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

How serious a matter it is to dismember a congregation by disregarding its importance and by ignoring the clear declarations about what constitutes a Church found in God's Word.