

The Church of Christ

In Faith and Practice

Introduction:

This book, written by a group of experienced Evangelists, is presented to the reader for the purpose of showing what the Church of Christ believes and practices and why.

The purpose of this book is not to compare “religions” but to set forth by precept, command, and example what is set forth in the Bible in reference to obedience to the Gospel and worship to God.

The reader will find articles on the following subjects:

1. The Name
2. The Necessary Steps for Obedience
3. The Items of Worship

The Name

Miles King

Is there anything in a name? Possibly you have heard people say there is nothing in a name and the name doesn't amount to anything -- it is not important. If the name is not important, why did God change Abraham's name from Abram to Abraham? Why did He change Sarah's name from Sarai to Sarah and Jacob's name from Jacob to Israel? (**Genesis 17:5, 15; 32:27-28**).

If there is nothing in a name, why do people not name their sons Judas or Nero or Lucifer? Or why do they not sign checks with the name of a friend? Here is the answer: NAMES ARE IMPORTANT!

Especially is the name of Christ important. Before his birth, an angel announced to Mary, "*And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS*" (**Luke 1:31**). Jesus pointed out to the apostles, "*If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.*" (**John 14:14**). Then Paul said later, "*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...*" (**Colossians 3:17**).

Then Peter said when speaking of Christ, "*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*" (**Acts 4:12**).

In the New Testament, the disciples were called Christians (**Acts 11:26**). They were commanded to glorify God in this name (**1 Peter 4:16**). Now today we should strive to be nothing more or less than Christians. Would you not lay aside every human religious name and glorify God through the name of His Son? To do so, you will need to become a Christian and wear the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Faith

Johnny Elmore

What is faith?

The writer of Hebrews states, "*Faith means the assurance of what we hope for; it is our conviction about things we cannot see,*" (**Hebrews 11:1**, Goodspeed). Prof. G. B. Smith defines it: "An attitude of confidence in the reality and trustworthiness of something that cannot be absolutely proved." I have never seen New York City; yet I am confident there is such a place. I cannot foresee the honesty and integrity of friends; yet I have confidence in them. Religiously,

faith involves confidence that superhuman powers will be exercised for one's good if proper conditions on the believer's part are fulfilled. Faith is the ability to trust God even when we cannot trace Him, to believe when others doubt, to endure when others falter, to sing when others lament, and to hope when others despair.

Faith in Christ is essential to salvation.

When the Philippian jailer implores, *"What must I do to be saved?"* Paul and Silas reply, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household,"* (**Acts 16:30-31**). Christ says, *"You believe in God, believe also in Me,"* (**John 14:1**), and *"If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins"* (**John 8:24**).

How does faith come?

Faith is the result of testimony believed. The New Testament was written to produce faith. John wrote, *"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name,"* (**John 20:30-31**). When the testimony of the witness is believed, whether preached (**Romans 10:17**) or written, faith is the result.

Faith only will not save.

The New Testament teaches that we are not justified by faith only (**James 2:24**), that faith apart from works does not profit (**James 2:14**), that faith separate from works is imperfect (**James 2:22**), and that faith without works is as dead as a corpse (**James 2:26**).

Believers given power to become sons.

Although faith, mere assent of the mind, will not save, it gives authority or power. John declares, *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name,"* (**John 1:12**). Jesus said, *"...whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"* (**John 3:16b**). Truly, believers in Christ should not perish. They have the right to become sons of God. If you are not a child of God but you are a believer, will you not exercise the right you have to obey the Savior's voice in all things and become a child of God?

Repentance

Clovis T. Cook

It may be said that repentance is as old as sin because sin calls for and demands repentance. The only way to free ourselves of the guilt and consequence of sin is through repentance. It seems to be the burden of John's preaching: he taught, "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (**Matthew 3:2**). Jesus teaches it repeatedly by precept, parable, and exhortation. His warning is, "...*but unless you repent you will all likewise perish*" (**Luke 13:3**). It is a part of the great commission. "*Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*" (**Luke 24:46-47**). Paul declares, "*Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent*" (**Acts 17:30**). Peter reasons, "*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance*" (**2 Peter 3:9**).

What is repentance? Does the word of God define this important term? Some say repentance is sorrow. It is true that Godly sorrow is an essential element of repentance, but it alone is not repentance. Many people think that when tears flow freely they have repented. This is not necessarily so. Some repent and never weep, and some weep and never repent. Paul says, "*For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted...*" (**2 Corinthians 7:10**). Repentance is an actual change of mind, purpose, inclination, and the amendment of one's ways; John, evidently with doubt in his mind as to the purity of purpose of some who came to him for baptism, calls upon them to "*bear fruits worthy of repentance*" (**Matthew 3:8**). This teaching was right, for genuine repentance, like a good tree, will always bear good fruit. Repentance must be, and this obligation is laid upon the sinner.

Confession

Joe Hisle

According to **Matthew 10:32**, those desiring to become Christians must be willing to verbalize their faith in Jesus with a statement affirming him to be the Son of God. Jesus said, "*Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.*" In view of the fact that many have denied Jesus, it is only logical that man would be required to make a statement of his faith before he is added to the fold of God. Despite the fact that

Jesus requires a confession of his name, this confession must be prompted and motivated by our faith. When one realizes the promises that are his through Christ, it should be counted as a glorious privilege to recognize the claims of the Savior.

What does a confession consist of? As has already been stated, a confession is a statement of our faith in Jesus and his claim to be the Son of God, a truth that is the very “rock” upon which the church is founded (**Matthew 16:16-18**). With the declaration, “*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,*” the Ethiopian eunuch cleared the way for his baptism into Christ (**Acts 8:35-39**). When the eunuch made this statement, Philip, the evangelist, was assured that he understood and believed the terms of salvation and that he was a scriptural candidate for baptism. In following this example, it is required that we also affirm our conviction in the Savior.

How is a confession made? By the inspired words of the Apostle Paul, we learn that the confession is made with the mouth. “*For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*” (**Romans 10:10**). Therefore, the confession is made when one publicly (as Jesus said “*before men*” in **Matthew 10:32**) states his belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. When such a stand is taken, it boldly points out to the world, even to Satan himself, that we are not going to pass our opportunity to accept Christ and be buried with Him in baptism for the remission of sins.

There were many, even during the lifetime of Christ on earth, who would not confess Him. Notice **John 12:42-43**: “*Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*” If we allow popularity, pride, prejudice, simple neglect, a lack of concern, or any other hindrance to cause us to fail in confessing our Lord, we stand to be denied on Judgment Day (**Matthew 10:33**). Jesus said, “*He who is not with Me is against Me*” (**Matthew 12:30**). A failure to confess Christ is to deny him!

BAPTISM

Edwin Morris

In **Matthew 28:19**, Jesus said, “*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*” Scriptural baptism is to be administered in the name of the Trinity. There is but one baptism (**Ephesians 4:5**). This one baptism is water baptism (**Acts 10:47; Acts 8:36**).

The word “baptize” comes from the Greek word “*baptizo*,” and Thayer (Greek-English Lexicon) defines it as, “*immerge, submerge, immersion.*” Persons sufficiently taught are to be baptized, or immersed, in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Thus, we see the mode of baptism is to be a burial. **Colossians 2:12** says, “*buried with Him in baptism.*” **Romans 6:4** says, “*Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death.*”

Why should a person be baptized, or what is the purpose of baptism? The scriptures plainly teach us why we should be baptized.

1. It is a command from God (**Acts 10:48**).
2. It is for the answer of a good conscience toward God (**1 Peter 3:21**).
3. It is for the purpose of getting into Christ (**Galatians 3:27**).
4. It is to get into Christ’s death (**Romans 6:3**).
5. It enables one to be raised with Christ (**Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:5**).
6. It enables one to walk in newness of life (**Romans 6:4**).
7. By baptism, we enter the Kingdom of God (**John 3:5**).
8. By baptism, we have the forgiveness of sins (**Acts 2:38, 22:16**).
9. By baptism, we are saved (**Mark 16:16**).

In each case of conversion in the book of Acts, penitent believers are taught to be baptized.

- In **Acts 2:37**, the multitude asks, “*What shall we do?*” In verse 38, Peter answers, “*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.*” Verse 41: “*Then those who gladly received his word were baptized.*”
- In **Acts 8:12-13**, the Samaritans and Simon himself are baptized. In verses 36-39, the Eunuch is baptized.
- In **Acts 10:47-48**, Cornelius and others are baptized.
- In **Acts 16:14-15**, Lydia and her household are baptized. In verses 30-33, the jailer is baptized.
- In **Acts 18:8**, many of the Corinthians are baptized.
- In **Acts 22:16**, Saul is baptized.

The scriptures teach that baptism is essential to salvation.

Singing

J. Wayne McKamie

Singing is a golden language, a heavenly music, and a way to express our deep emotions to God. Through the years, God's people have expressed themselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; God sanctioned compositions.

Why do we sing?

We sing because God teaches us to do so, not simply because “we like it” or “it's doing good.” Notice the passages in the New Testament that teach on singing: **Matthew 26:30; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; 1 Corinthians 14:15, 26; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12; James 5:13.** What do we learn from these scriptures?

What do we sing?

We sing what God has told us to. We may not assemble and just sing anything we please. God has spoken and has limited what we sing: psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

1. A Psalm – a sacred or pious song
2. A Hymn – a song of praise directed to God
3. A Spiritual Song – a song of which the message is the thing revealed by the Spirit.

We should note that the word “song” is generic, thus the reason God specifies spiritual songs.

What is the purpose and object of singing?

The purpose certainly is not to call the people together nor to let people know it is time to start worship. **I Corinthians 14:15** -- “*I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.*” Let us not be more concerned over how it sounds than how it pleases God and fulfills His commands. It must be worship, not entertainment!

Which instrument do we use?

We are to make melody—make music—but, in our worship of God, with what instrument is this instruction to be accomplished? Notice **Ephesians 5:19**: “...*singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*” Many times we are taught to sing, but not one single time are we told to employ or to play on a mechanical instrument of any kind. Vocal music is all the New Testament teaches. The first instrument was introduced by Pope Vitalian I, some 600 years after the church was established. For many centuries, men would not accept such

in church work, and hundreds of thousands do not now. Of all the things that may be said against such, the greatest is:

The Silence of God

There has never been a law so flagrantly disregarded, so abused and violated, as the law of exclusion. In establishing Biblical authority, we must remember that for any practice for which there is no precept, example, or necessary inference, we must lay it aside. God's silence must be recognized. When God specifies the ashes of a red heifer (**Numbers 19:2**) for cleansing, He excludes all others and all other colors. A precept from God always includes and excludes. It includes what He says and rejects what He does not say. When God specifies "*sing and make melody in your heart,*" (Ephesians 5:19), He includes doing precisely that and excludes anything else. We must recognize this principle from both angles.

"Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted" (**Matthew 15:13**).

The Teaching

Jerry Cutter

In the Church of Christ, we have a divine principle. We will speak where the Bible speaks; we will be silent where the Bible is silent. We can safely do only that for which we have apostolic command. If there is no command or example for it, it is barred. We believe true teaching strengthens the church; false teaching jeopardizes souls. Hence, it is a proper conclusion to believe the Bible is not silent on such a vital subject as the teaching.

First, we notice the teaching in the Bible was always done in an undivided assembly. In the Old Testament, the people were taught: men, women, and children, in one assembly (**Deuteronomy 31:11-13; Joshua 8:35; Nehemiah 8:1-3**). In the New Testament church, the teaching was always done by a man in an undivided class. The women were commanded to keep silent in the church. In **I Corinthians 14:23**, the whole church is spoken of as having come together in one place. In **verse 26**, Paul speaks of when they come together. What about when the whole church comes together into one place? **Verse 31**: "*For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.*" All may learn, according to divine authority, when the whole church comes together in one place. This idea is contrary to popular belief, but it is concrete Bible teaching. To deny this teaching is to deny the Bible. Let me remind you, there is not one example of where the Lord, apostles, teachers, or preachers in the New

Testament ever divided their assemblies to teach them. Not one. I do not believe man has ever formulated a better method of teaching the scriptures than that found in the Bible.

Next, what about women speaking in the church? **1 Corinthians 14:33-35** teaches, *“For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.”* Again, *“Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence”* (**1 Timothy 2:11-12**).

May a woman teach anywhere? Yes. She may teach privately (**Titus 2:3-5**). Why do I say privately? Because the same writer, Paul, directly commands the woman to keep silent in the church, and we know the Bible does not contradict itself. Confusion comes from the doctrines and commandments of men (**Matthew 15:9**). Peter warns of the untaught and unstable people who *“twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures”* (**2 Peter 3:16**).

I close this terse article with a prayer in my heart that the reader will read it carefully and prayerfully and, by so doing, that he will be better able to worship and serve God (**John 4:24**). *“Thus says the Lord, ‘stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls’”* (**Jeremiah 6:16**).

Contribution

Wayne Fussell

One of the ancient practices of Apostolic Christianity that should be restored to our age is New Testament liberality. We see in **1 Corinthians 16:2** the answers to several questions about giving. Let us examine that verse which says, *“On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”*

- I. WHEN should we give? He says, *“On the first day of the week,”* or as authorities agree “every week.” We should give on Sunday and not during the week. This is God’s pattern. This verse also suggests that our giving should be done regularly and systematically.

- II. WHO is to give? Paul states, “*each one of you.*” That does not leave a single Christian without responsibility to contribute. No Christian is exempt.
- III. WHAT is to be done? “*Lay something aside.*” God requires that we should lay by in a common store or treasury of our means for His work. This command suggests purposeful and not thoughtless giving, as we further see in **2 Corinthians 9:7**. “*So let each one give as he purposes in his heart....*” When we plan our budgets, God should be placed at the top of the list.
- IV. HOW MUCH should we give? The Bible says, “*as he may prosper.*” This instruction shows proportionate giving. Old Testament adherents gave ten percent; however, we are not subject to that law. But has God lowered His standard of giving? We should be willing to give more than they did because we possess more. The question should not be, “How much must I give?” but “How much can I give?”
- V. WHY should we give? Our text says “*that there be no collections when I come.*” Necessities will arise; we should be prepared. Further, we give to prove our love for God, for love loves to give. Also, it pays to give. Read **Luke 6:38**. “*Give, and it will be given to you.*”

We see, therefore, that the church should be composed of the most liberal, warmhearted, sacrificial givers – constantly giving of their time, talents, and money to God and His cause.

The Lord’s Supper

Ronny F. Wade

Memorials have been erected since the beginning of time. None, however, is greater or of more significance than the Lord’s Supper. It is a solemn reminder to every Christian of the Lord’s suffering and death. All that we know about this memorial, we learn from the Bible. Such questions as how and when it is to be observed can be answered only when we allow the Bible to do it. It shall be our purpose in this brief article to discover as much as we can about this great feast.

In **Matthew 26:26-29**, **Mark 14:22-25**, and **Luke 22:15-20**, we read of the institution of this great Supper. A careful study of these verses will clearly teach that the Lord used a cup containing the fruit of the vine and a loaf of unleavened bread when He instituted this Supper. But, someone will say, “I have been to the

church of Christ, and they didn't observe the communion that way." I am sorry to say it, but this statement is true. Now, everyone knows what a pattern is. A pattern is something we follow or duplicate. The Lord's Supper, as the Bible records it, is a pattern; and we should try to follow it as closely as possible. Even though we recognize the above statements as true, there are some churches of Christ that refuse to follow the divine pattern concerning the communion.

And, as a result, instead of one cup containing the fruit of the vine and a loaf of unleavened bread, they have many loaves. But someone might say, "Those who contend for one cup are hobby riders." Think about this, Friend – does following a Bible example make one a fanatic or hobby rider? What could be better than doing things just the way the Lord did them? Another reason we believe the Lord wanted His Supper observed in this fashion is the fact that, when the Holy Spirit delivered the Supper to the Apostle Paul in **1 Corinthians 11**, it was delivered in the very same way. Read it and see.

Now that we have learned how the communion is to be observed, let us learn when it is to be observed. In **Acts 20:7**, the disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread. Not only do we learn from this passage when it is to be observed, but also who is to observe it. Thus, we learn from the Bible how the Supper is to be observed – as the Lord did it; when it is to be observed – the first day of the week; and who is to observe it – the disciples. May these thoughts help you in your quest for eternal life.

Prayer

Jerry Cutter

We believe prayer is as much of a command of God as any command in the Bible; and, in order for us to be saved, we must be a praying people. Prayer was stressed constantly by the Bible writers.

- **1 Timothy 2:8**: *"I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."*
- **1 Thessalonians 5:17**: *"Pray without ceasing,"*
- **Luke 18:1**: *"Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart."*
- **1 Corinthians 14:15**: *"I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding."*
- **1 John 5:14**: *"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."*

By the above statements, we get an insight into prayer and its importance to us. Let us notice briefly how to approach God in a manner that will be acceptable, well-pleasing in His sight.

1. One must do His will (**1 John 5:14-15**).
 - a. To do His will is to keep the commandments (**Psalms 119:172; James 5:16; 1 Peter 3:12; John 9:31**).
2. One must pray to God through Christ (**Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:17; Hebrews 7:25; John 14:14**).
3. One must be humble (**James 4:10; Psalms 95:6**).
4. And, one may pray for a number of things.
 - a. All men – **1 Timothy 2:1-5**
 - b. Wisdom – **James 1:5**
 - c. The sick – **James 5:14**
 - d. Enemies – **Matthew 5:43-46**
 - e. Food – **1 Timothy 4:3-5**
 - f. Forgiveness of sins – **James 5:16; 1 John 2:1-2; Acts 8:22**

In conclusion: *“And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him”* (**1 John 5:15**).

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