

4-8-22

The Sure Word by Jonnie Hutchison

“THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST GREET YOU”

The phrase that is the title of this article appears in the New Testament as the inspired Paul closes the letter to the church in Rome. “Greet one another with a holy kiss. The **churches of Christ** greet you” (Romans 16:16). Who were these “churches of Christ”?

The word “church” appears seventy-four times in most of our English translations of the Bible. The first time it appears in the New Testament is in reference to a promise made by Jesus Christ. After Peter made the confession, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Jesus answered, “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build **My church**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18). It is important to note that Jesus did not promise to build many diverse kinds of churches teaching different and conflicting doctrines. He used the singular “church” and the possessive “My” to describe the church He would build. This implies only ONE kind of church with the same belief and practice. Did Jesus build His one-of-a-kind church? the answer is found in Acts chapter two. Before the events of that chapter the church is always spoken of in the future tense. But in Acts two and after the church is spoken of in the present tense. “...And the Lord added to **the church** daily those who were being saved.” The Lord built His church in Jerusalem in the first century. Any so-called “church” that claims to be the Lord’s church but came into existence at a different place and time is not the church that belongs to Jesus.

The term “churches of Christ” as used by Paul simply refers to two or more individual congregations of the one church of Christ. We read in the New Testament of the church in Antioch, Corinth, Philippi, Colossae, etc. Each of these congregations were churches that belonged to Christ thus constituting the “churches of Christ” in the first century.

Faithful churches of Christ today are striving to follow the divine pattern revealed in the New Testament for the terms of entrance into the church, the mission, the worship, and the organization of the original church of Christ. Our constant plea is to be just Christians added by the Lord to His church with no affiliation to any man-made religious organization or human creed. Friends the Bible only makes Christians only and the only Christians. We invite you to study the Bible with us as we strive to be simply Christians, members of the one church Jesus built. Write or email greenplaincoc@gmail.com for a free DVD & visit gbntv.org.