

PLAIN SPEECH

Volume 1 – Issue 52 – 12 October 2008

“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

By Scott Parker

YOU MAY ATTEND ANY CHURCH OF YOUR CHOICE

Most Americans are so accustomed to having choices that they have bought into the idea that individuals are free to “attend the church of their choice.” Such is religious profanity. The Bible teaches there’s only one right choice pertaining to church membership – the Lord’s choice. But Scott, what then of the title of this article? Well, let me expand the thought. One may, indeed, attend any church of his/her choice so long as the church he/she assembles with...

Points to Acts 2 for the Time of Their Origin

Any “church” that claims a date of origin earlier or later than this may never be “attended,” for it would be at odds with God’s Word. The church one reads about in scripture began in the first century. Understanding this, “churches” like the Lutheran Church which traces its point of origin to 1520 are not approved of God. Many other examples could be given.

Claims the City of Jerusalem as Their Place of Physical Origin

God’s Word will not allow for any other location. The church read about in the Bible had its literal beginnings in the city of Jerusalem (**Isa. 2:2-4; Acts 2:14-17, 41, 47; 1 Tim. 3:15**). Denominational Churches do not claim such. For example, the Lutheran Church claims Germany as its place of origin. Is Germany Jerusalem? No, thus the Lutheran Church cannot be “attended” with God’s approval. The same would hold true with any other denomination.

Wears a Name That is in Harmony With Scripture – Specifically the New Testament

While it is a scriptural choice, a local congregation does not necessarily have to wear the name, “church of Christ.” For instance, it would be just as scriptural for a local church to be identified by the name “church of God” (**Gal. 1:13**). Yet, scripture is silent concerning names like Methodist and others. Churches that do not have names authorized by the New Testament are in error.

Has the Right Builder

Ask nearly any denominationalist and they will tell you about some human builder. Mormons speak of Joe Smith. Seventh Day Adventists throw around the name William Miller. The honest student of scripture will admit that the church one reads about in the Bible was built by Jesus Christ (**Matt. 16:18**).

Has the Right Head

The Pope is not the head of the church as Catholics claim. Neither is John Wesley. No man on this earth is the head of the church. Jesus, enthroned in heaven, is the head of the church (**Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23**).

Has the Right Terms of Entrance

Many denominational churches insist that prospective members be voted on so as to be admitted to their group. No such pattern is seen in scripture. The Bible teaches one is added to the church by the Lord after he/she has met the terms of pardon set forth in the New Testament (**Acts 2:36-41, 47**). Any church that teaches otherwise is teaching error.

Has Proper Oversight

God’s will is for each local church to be overseen by a group of men who meet certain qualifications outlined in the New Testament (**1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Plp. 1:1**). All churches that bind other criteria or loose said criteria must be avoided.

Does not Teach Error or Condone Immorality

Any church (not just denominational ones) that does either must be avoided (**Rom. 16:17-18; 2 John 9-11**).

Worships God Properly

Jesus said all must worship God in spirit and in truth (**John 4:24**). Any church that worships contrary to the New Testament pattern is not pleasing to God and, thus, must be avoided.

Has the Right Mission

The church we read about in scripture simply teaches the lost (**1 Tim. 3:15**), helps needy saints (**1 Cor. 16:1-2**), edifies the saved (**Eph. 4:16**), and disciplines the wayward (**1 Cor. 5:1ff**). Churches with any other focus must be avoided to please God.

So you see, one may truly attend the church of his/her choice so long as that local church meets the biblical criteria noted above. To do any less is to fellowship devils (**1 Cor. 10:16-21**).

Does the church you “attend” meet God’s standards, as noted above?