

Reflections

Volume 1 Issue 19

A Weekly Publication Of The Pine Street Church Of Christ

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Pine Street
CHURCH OF CHRIST
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ASSEMBLY TIMES

Sunday Bible Study
9:45 AM

Sunday Worship
10:45 AM & 6:30 PM

Wednesday Bible Study
7:30 PM

RADIO PROGRAM

"For The Glory Of God"
8:45-9:00 AM
MAGIC 99.5 FM
Cable Channel 15

WEB SITE

www.pinestreetcoc.com

Reflections is a weekly publication of the Pine Street church of Christ including Bible-based articles for the spiritual edification and education of all readers. Please contact us if you have comments or questions about the content of the paper.

What Is The Meaning Of Church?

By Jeremy D. Joy

The Biblical concept of "church" is widely misunderstood in religion, even in "conservative" churches of Christ. We mistakenly view the church as an institution or organization that we join and that membership in it is like punching a ticket to Heaven. However, such a view ignores the proper meaning and usage of "church" not to mention our personal

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relationship with God. What is the meaning of "church" and how is it used in the New Testament (NT)?

"Church" (used 115 times in the NT) means "called-out (ones)" or "assembly." It does not necessarily imply a religious assembly (used 4 times) unless it refers to people who have obeyed the call of the gospel (used 111 times; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 1 Peter 2:9-10). Sectarian concepts, however, ignore a basic element of "church" — people. The "church" is not an institution that comes between an individual and God (such as the Roman Catholic church) or one of many denominations. "Church" is a collective noun (like herd, flock, tribe) that includes people in a group. Various figures of speech emphasize a different



**I will meditate on Your precepts, and
contemplate Your ways.
— Psalm 119:18**

aspect of our relationship with God. "Called-out (ones)" are also branches on the vine (John 15:1-8) and members of the body (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

Generally, "church" is used in one of two senses — the *universal* and *local* church. The universal church includes the saved regardless of time and place (Matthew 16:18). The local church, on the other hand, includes the saved at a specific time and place such as the church at Philippi (Philippians 1:1). These "teams" aid in the spiritual growth of each Christian and perform the work that God has assigned. The context of the Scripture determines the sense in which "church" is used.

However, "teamwork" involves *leadership*

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(decision-making) and *collective action* (coordinating the abilities of the “team” to act as one). Qualified men may be appointed as elders to fulfill the need for leadership (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Their leadership is limited to that particular “team” (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4). Furthermore, a common treasury is the means by which many act as one. Financial responsibilities are met by using funds collected on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:1-2) for the work of evangelism (1 Timothy 3:15), edification (Ephesians 4:11-16), and benevolence (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). Each one who contributes shares in the work for which the funds are used. God has provided the “tools” (leadership and collective action) whereby a “team” may act and how they are used.

Nowhere has God assigned the universal church a work to do. Unlike the local

church, it has no leadership (except Jesus who is the head; Ephesians 1:22-23) or function (except individuals who are salt and light; Matthew 5:13-16). Protestant denominationalism and “church-hood” projects supervise the work and finances of other churches under the control of a “headquarters” or “sponsoring church.” The autonomy (self-rule) of a local church is compromised when it participates in such activities.

Are you functioning as a member of the “team” by participating in the worship and work and by encouraging other “team-members” to grow and mature? Or have you simply punched your ticket for Heaven like joining a social club or a civic organization? A concept of “church,” denominational or otherwise, that does not include people is unscriptural. We need to carefully and thoroughly examine the subject and then determine if our beliefs

Pine Street News And Notes

“Let brotherly love continue” — Hebrews 13:1

Members of our church family who are sick and in need of our prayers:

Others who are sick and in need of our prayers: **Love Postlethwait’s** brother-in-law, **Blane Morris**, has lung cancer...**Wanda Rockwell’s**, brother-in-law, **Bill Price**, is not well...**Crystal Shockley’s** grandmother, **Dorothy Myers**, is improving...**Janet Webber’s** mother-in-law, **Florence Webber**, is confined to her home.

The Training Class will be on Sunday evening, August 17. The schedule is posted on the bulletin board.

Preaching reports from **Kent Clark** and

Daniel Ruegg are posted on the bulletin board.

Please check the bulletin board for Gospel Meetings throughout the Ohio Valley.

Jeremy will be answering questions from “The Question Box” this evening.

Is there someone who needs encouragement? Look for opportunities to encourage one another this week.

The Scripture reading today is: Psalm 119:129-136.

The sermon today is: “Are You Desperate For Jesus?” (AM).