

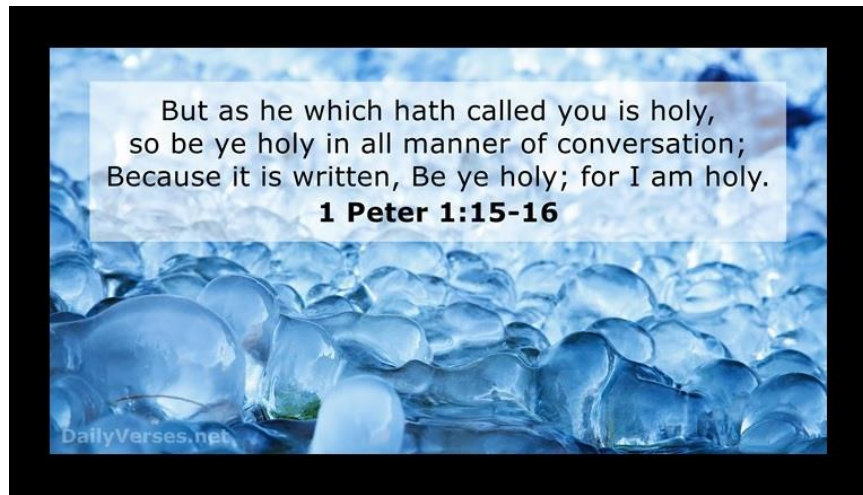
Churches Under Christ Newsletter (May 1, 2021)

The Churches Under Christ Ministry helps churches who want to organize under Christ alone and is under the authority of Charity Baptist Tabernacle of Amarillo TX, Ben Hickham Pastor

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God's Word Commands a Holy, Separated Church Jerald Finney

"The biblical doctrine of separation is based upon one of God's essential attributes—His holiness." *"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth"* (1 John 1:5-6). "The perfect will of God is always the same: '[B]e ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

God's Word lets us know "what fellowships are permissible, as well as which ones are not." Separation from error and the errant is for a believer's spiritual well-being," that of others, "and usefulness in service." Separation glorifies God. Union with the worldly, the profane, false teachers, and disobedient brothers displeases God.

Most believers agree that God's Word proclaims the principle of separation, but few are concerned with personal or church application; fewer even want to open their minds and heart to the principle as applied to the relationship between church and state. The Bible teaches separation of church and state. "Separation from evil and every false way is always God's order. We are called to be separated unto Christ and declared positionally sanctified 'in Him' the moment we believed and were saved.... Separation is a Biblical truth—past, present, and future."

Christians find it "a problem to understand why" God commands churches to be solely under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, even if this means they must separate, not only from civil government (incorporation, 501(c)(3), 508(c)(1)(A), etc.), but also from compromised Christian organizations, ministries, and churches. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). False teaching from within (1 Co. 5:6-8) or without (Lk. 12:1) taints or corrupts. An established church, a church who has combined with the state, has false teaching from within the church, and has invited false teaching from without the church.

Churches are to separate from worldliness. The influence of worldliness through man's law—incorporation, federal tax exempt status, legal status of any kind—"destroys sensitivity to what is truly acceptable to God and what is not." God commands:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17).

Churches are to separate from false teachers. They should not enter into fellowship with churches, ministries, and organizations "which have rejected God's infallible and final Revelation:"

"And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

God's desire is that a church never join with civil government and any man-ordained and -created organizational scheme or any organization not in "strict adherence to the truth of the Word of God." "Any common religious or spiritual endeavor (worship, evangelism, prayer, education, relief, etc.) with those who have rejected Bible truth is in direct conflict with this Biblical commandment of separation if [a church] participates with them."

Rejection of Bible truth is wickedness, and "it is His will for His own to separate from all such evil." God says He will *"be a Father"* unto those who separate from apostasy (2 Corinthians 6:18). *"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"* (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Churches must not only separate, but they must also *"have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"* (Ephesians 5:11). We should vehemently sound a warning to all groups "riddled with unbelief ... but we must also vehemently sound a warning to all believers who might be drawn subtly into complicity with" heresy and apostasy.

Churches are to separate from spiritual fornicators—those who fornicate with civil government and justify it through false teaching, heresy. A heretic who denies Bible truth is to be rejected, not embraced: *"A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject"* (Titus 3:10). A Bible believing and practicing believer, and church by extension, must not find himself in common cause with such,

"whether it is by ecclesiastical affiliation, or by any form of joint ministry or worship. The clear call is for everyone who names the name of Christ to separate himself from every dishonorable vessel; that is, those who have turned away from the truth of the infallible Word. Only then will a vessel be 'meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work.' Only when a believer has 'depart[ed] from iniquity' and has separated from those 'who concerning the truth have erred' can he truly have fellowship 'with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.'"

*"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth**. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their*

*word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; **Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, **Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.** But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. **If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.** Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them **that call on the Lord out of a pure heart**"*** (2 Timothy 2:15-22).

On this point, most churches "turn away from the plain teaching of God's Word because of:

"their refusal to separate from false teachers and ... affiliations as previously mentioned. For them, the desire for visible unity, respectability, popularity or success; or the avoidance of appearing to be schismatic or 'too negative' takes precedence over simple obedience to the Bible. They may even justify their disobedience on the basis of love or opportunities to witness. But it is still disobedience, and God says we are not to walk in fellowship with disobedient brethren:

'Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother' (2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15).

"There is no such thing as so-called 'first and second degree separation,' just Bible separation, plain and simple."

Many brethren in state affiliated churches say and do many commendable things. But, "by their very church association ... they are repudiating Biblical separation." Refusing the call to be separate is **sin**. No matter how impressive are their "numbers and far-reaching influence, if they do not hold to sound doctrine" and warn of against union with the world, God's Word is slighted. "It cannot be pleasing to God when there is not, first of all, an agreement on—and then practice of—the Truth. *"Can two walk together, except they be agreed"* (Amos 3:3)? "All who support and thereby join in the fellowship with compromising ministries are partakers with that error. Loss of reward awaits all who thus identify themselves with those who do not hold to the *'doctrine of Christ'*"—all of it, from Genesis through Revelation.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17): "One who practices Bible separation is not the one who causes divisions between believers. Divisions are caused by those who do not practice sound doctrine." What is more important than the purity of the church? *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it"* (Ephesians 5:25).

Reasons for Bible separation include:

1. It maintains church purity.
2. It promotes spiritual well-being.
3. Full reward at the judgment seat of Christ. *"And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully"* (2 Timothy 2:5); See also, e.g., 1 Corinthians 3:13-15 and Revelation 3:11). God is a jealous God and He wants our undivided loyalty. "He is not pleased when His children are identified, even

in the slightest, with compromise or error. Such doublemindedness prevents our fellowship with Him (1 Corinthians 10:16-21)."

4. "Finally, separation from disobedient brethren is necessary in order to maintain a strong, consistent testimony in the midst of theological turmoil and confusion. Compromised fellowship clouds the issues, dulls the spiritual discernment and silences Scriptural reproof.

"Be not deceived, evil communications [wrong fellowships] corrupt good manners [right conduct]]" (1 Corinthians 15:33). Only a separated Bible believer is able, in obedience to God's clear command, to sound a faithful warning concerning the deception that Satan is sowing in the Church today (Acts 20:28-31). Always remember that our God is HOLY, and He calls us to be holy. In order to be obedient to His command, we must endeavor, but the grace of God, to be separated wholly unto Him, regardless of the cost or the scorn of man."

Note. The unattributed quotations are from the tract, "What Does the Bible Say about SEPARATION?" Fundamental Evangelistic Association; P.O. Box 6278—Los Osos, California 93412.

HIGHLIGHTS OF APRIL 2021 MINISTRY ACTIVITIES.

April 1-9: Carried over from prior months. Calls and emails with a pastor who is working with this ministry as the church establishes a common law trust. He completed Questionnaire 1 and I sent Questionnaire 2 for him and the church to complete. Also discussed property tax exemption requirements with him.

Apr. 3. Counseled concerning a minor issue with a church that established a trust with the help of this ministry in 2019.

Mar. 31-Apr. 13: Received, reviewed, corrected completed Questionnaire 2 received from a pastor of a church which is in the process of establishing the common law or "Bible" trust.

Apr. 7: Call from a pastor in Washington state. He has gone over the website and it totally on board. Has been talking about these matters for years. He was a pastor. Never incorporated. Started going to a home group. He did not go to Bible school. Believed in OJT. He is going to continue to talk about this. He said that the Lord has given him a passion for this.

Apr. 9: Called from a pastor who is having problems with his tax lady doing his personal income tax. She is saying that the church has to file. I explained that definitely no and the reasons, etc. He says the church giving has gone up since they established the trust. He has explained all matters to the church.

Apr. 10: Email from a gentleman requesting permission to copy from my book in PDF Format and paste in my Bible studies for sharing such studies with friends; and on social media along with his personal website. Of course, I agreed. I suggested that he give credit for the source, but added that I do not require that. He replied: "I absolutely do believe the same way and will give proper citation as necessary. Thank you and God bless you!"

Apr. 12: Call from a gentleman about helping a church made up of members from Russia. The church is now incorporated and wants to dissolve the corporation.

Apr. 12-present: From last month. Working with another church which is in the process of establishing the Bible trust relationship. The church is a new plant, is not incorporated or compromised in any way, and has no property.

Apr. 14: Call from a deacon or a church. The church voted last Sunday to dissolve the corporation. The church wants to establish a Bible trust. Holds real estate. He does not know if they transferred the real estate to the corp. The corp. has 3 board members who are gone—either dead or incapacitated. They are not compliant with the corp. requirements, at least since the original trustees left. Send email to “Need Help” and they are to send me copies of the deed, corp. papers, ins. He said corp. papers require that the property be transferred to another 501c3 corp. I sent him the link to the webpage [Need Help?](#)

Apr. 15: Call from a lawyer in Minnesota. A church has reached out to him. The church wants to dissolve the corporation. He is going to help them do so, but wants me to help him as a legal aid with establishing the common law or “Bible” trust.

Apr. 18-22: Counseled a pastor of a church which is under Christ only (established a common law or “Bible” trust) about an inquiry from the property tax office.

Apr. 20-present: Call from a pastor of an incorporate church I have communicated with for quite a while. The church, inc. had been sued by members who had been disciplined out and it took a lot of time and money for legal help in successfully resolving that dispute. The church now wants to go forward with dissolution of the corporation and organization under the Lord Jesus Christ only. Emailed the initial mailing with attachments. He sent copies of the corp. docs. I reviewed Texas non-profit corporation law, etc.

Apr. 20-present. Email from a church which just executed trust documents and is now under Christ and Christ alone. He, as trustee of the trust, is in the process of obtaining an EIN “for banking purposes only” opening a trust bank account. **Note.** Should anyone claim that getting the EIN “for banking purposes only” compromises the legal status of the trust (or the church), please contact me and I would be glad to explain why it does not, if property done.

Apr. 29-present: Call from a pastor who found out yesterday that church is incorp. when he found the corp. papers. He has been the pastor 5 years. We discussed everything for some time. I sent him a link to the webpage that explains ministry procedures. I informed him that I will get the 1st mailing to you in the next few days as time allows.

In addition to the above summarized activities, the ministry received numerous other lesser important calls and inquiries.

PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT THIS MINISTRY IF YOU CANNOT ACCESS A RESOURCE IN THE NEWSLETTER OR FOR ANY REASON. YOUR COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

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