

The Church of Christ
(The SECT everywhere spoken against, Part Two)

by

Kenneth Fortier

“But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect” (Acts 28:22)

As we said in part one, we will draw a curtain over all religious views in our investigation of this sect everywhere spoken against. We will attempt to remain unbiased and as far from partisan spirits as is humanly possible. We will conform our thought to the Word of God in all we write. No sectarian philosophy nor opinions will influence our quest. Walk along with us as we engage in this investigation so that we may know what this sect—the true Church of Christ—is.

1. The creed of this sect advocated by Paul and backed up with the approval of God is the first step in our search for the truth.

When we attempt a description of any religious party of our day, the first thing we inquire about is their creed. When we have found that, we have made a fair start towards learning the distinguishing features they propagate. Let us now inquire for the CREED of this ancient sect or heresy. And by their creed we mean their rules of religious faith and practice.

Was it the Nicene Creed? We answer very positively, a resounding NO. For that creed was not formulated until 300 years after this ancient sect had become so numerous that it was everywhere spoken against. If, then, we find that this Nicene Creed was not their creed because it came after, what shall we say of all church creeds which have been formed since then? None of them can be the creed of this sect spoken against for they are all too new—by hundreds and hundreds of years!

Let's turn and see what the one advocating this sect; the one whom God had chosen to be the Ambassador to the Gentiles—the Apostle Paul—has to say. Let us also remember that he is speaking under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and chosen by Jesus Christ himself as an Apostle to spread the teachings of the Church of Christ throughout the world. Paul said: “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for teachings, for rebuke, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, so that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*” (2 Timothy 3:16–17). It is very true that this is said more in honor of their creed than it is to describe it; yet, it points directly to the rule by which regulated their practice of faith—the Scriptures!

Paul, the one we address in this investigation because he was one well acquainted with the practices of this sect, said of its members: “Now, therefore, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:19–20). The foundation of a church is its

constitution. As Christianity is a system of faith as well as practice, all church constitutions must express the faith of the church organized upon them. This expression of faith is called the creed of the church.

Now as this sect, the Church of Christ, was built upon the proclamations of Apostles and prophets, it was organized upon and governed by the teachings of these inspired men chosen by God, and by that alone! We have just discovered their CREED! It was the Holy Scriptures, given by Divine inspiration and backed up by Christ Jesus, the founder. And it was given with power—in signs, wonders and marvelous works, by the Holy Spirit through the Apostles to prove it!

To this position there is not one dissenting voice. All, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, agree that the Church of Christ had no creed, no rules or practice, at the beginning, nor for many years after, except the writings or teachings of the Apostles and prophets of God. There is no controversy here!

2 Their name.

In describing a religious sect, it is always necessary to find its name; for sometimes more than one church adopts the same creed, and yet has a different name. For example, the Nicene Creed: The Roman Catholic, the Greek Orthodox Catholic, the Coptic Catholic, the English Catholic, the Methodists, the Old Apostolic Catholic, the Luthern, the Baptist, the—Oh well, almost every church of today adopts it, so this acceptance of the Nicene Creed is a blind guide.

As you can see, if you wish to know to which party a man belongs, it is not enough to find that his sect uses the Nicene Creed. You would not be able to tell a Roman Catholic from a Luthern if both say they believe in this Creed. One more thought: The Creed of this ancient sect spoken against was found to have the writings or teachings of the Apostles and prophets of God as their Creed—in other words, Holy Scriptures! But, again, like the Nicene Creed, all, Catholic and Protestant, have adopted it. Because of this, we must, in such cases, ask for the actual name of the sect. So, in pursuing our investigation for a description of this ancient sect of believers in Christ, we ask for its name!

In reading this ancient sect's Creed—the Bible, we find that collectively they were called the Church of God, the Church of the Lord, the Church of Christ (See 1 Corinthians 1:1, Acts 20:28, 1 Timothy 3:5, Romans 16:16, 1 Corinthians 11:16). Ask them if they belonged to St. Peter's Church, St. Mary's Church, St. Mark's Church, etc., and the reply would be "No, we never heard of such a church!" Ask them if they belonged to the Church of Christ at Ephesus, and (if they lived there) they would say, "Yes, would you like to visit with us?"

In their individual capacity they were called saints, yes, Saints! And they didn't have to be dead! Neither did they have to be "beatified" or pass a court of inquiry to be "canonized!" They were also called brother and sister (not of the flesh), disciples of the Lord, and finally Christians! (See Ephesians 1:1, Galatians 6:1, Acts 20:7, Acts 11:26. These are only some of the verses saying this.)

To any of these titles or names they would answer. Call them Saints and they would respond, "Here I am." Call them disciples of Christ, and they would say, "Speak, for thy servant hears." Call them Methodists, Marionite Catholics, Roman Catholics,

Greek Catholics, Southern Baptists, Northern Baptists, plain Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and they would be as silent as a grave. But call them CHRISTIANS, and they would respond, "Here I am; for though I should suffer as a Christian, I am not ashamed" (1 Peter 4:16). Or, should you, if it were possible, speak to one of this old sect in reference to his church, he would say he belonged to "the Church of God at Corinth" (1 Corinthians 1:2), or the Church of Christ at some other place.

Our next step in investigating this ancient sect called Christians is to inquire about their church polity and their officers. This is very essential in giving a description of any religious body, for, as you know for yourselves, churches differ more in religious politics than in anything else. Because of this, no one can fully define any sect until they have pointed out the polity and officers of that church.

The next installment of our investigation is too long to print in this article, so it will appear in the next part. It is in order, that you, yes, you the reader, to check up on everything said so far. Investigate this ancient sect's Creed, the holy Bible; find out for yourselves if what we have written is true. Remember, if we want an unbiased view, we must keep the curtain pulled, covering all outside prejudices and philosophies. We are looking for what the apostles say is this sect everywhere spoken against, not men of latter times.

.....
Copyright © 1981 by Christ For Catholics. This article may be copied freely for wider distribution, providing that the source from which it is taken is suitably acknowledged. Many thanks go to Carl Ketcherside for permission to use his words as our own, and to modify or enhance what he once said. (Acknowledgment: Christ For Catholics, Volume 1, Number 13, 1981; published by Christ For Catholics, Farmington, MN.) This notice must remain attached to this article.
.....