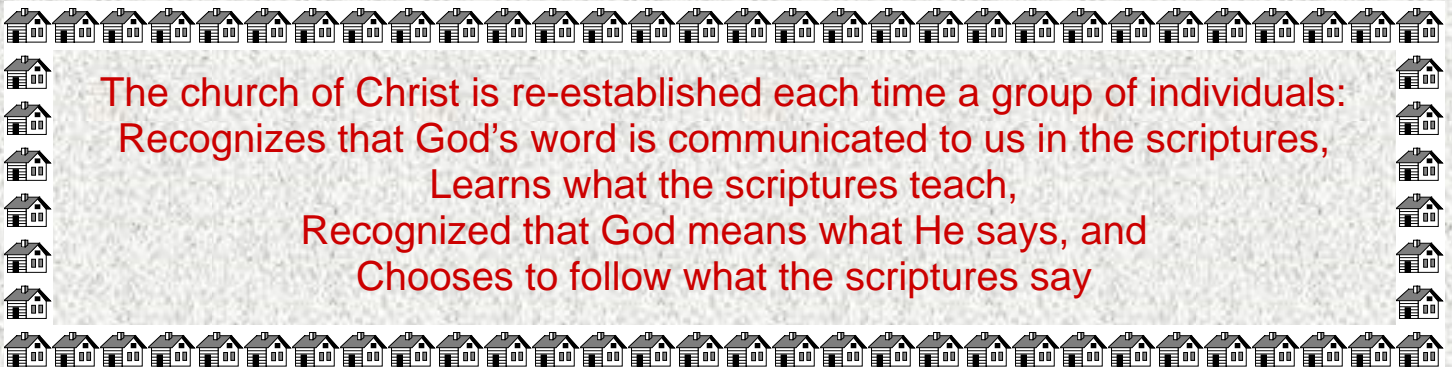


## WHAT IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

The church of Christ is Christ's church.

The church of Christ was established on the day of Pentecost, 50 days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ.



The church of Christ is re-established each time a group of individuals:

- Recognizes that God's word is communicated to us in the scriptures,
- Learns what the scriptures teach,
- Recognized that God means what He says, and
- Chooses to follow what the scriptures say

The church of Christ does not seek to be come a denomination of Christ's Church by following some of what the scriptures say and some of what we might prefer, but rather seeks to completely follow the scriptures to be the church.

The church of Christ attempts to speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible is silent.



How many times do you have to say the Bible teaches this, but I am going to teach that - before you are longer Christ's church?

Is it better to add to the scriptures or to take away from the scriptures?

## CHURCH GROWTH HISTORY FEEDBACK

In the May issue of the Christian Array newsletter I took available Church of Christ attendance data and proposed curves to fill in the blanks for a growth history. I commented that any comments from recipients would be published. The only comments came from Buster Dobbs, which ended up in an e-mail chain, which is reproduced below (in reversed order for readability):

### By Buster:

We sow and water gospel seed, and God gives the increase (1 Cor 3:6), but it does not follow that this is only a two factor proposition.

Example: Noah preached righteousness (2 Pet 2:5). He made not a single convert and God gave no increase. Now, who failed? Noah? God? The answer is neither because there is a third factor: the people.

In the parable of the sower (Luke 8) Jesus taught the seed will fall on varying soils, and he also taught that each person is responsible for the nature of the soil of his heart.

### By Benton:

God gave a judgment on the people before Noah – he wiped them all out and restarted the gene pool with Noah's family.

I have no doubt that there is a circumstance where non-growth is justified as it was in Noah's case. However, my observation is that it is not justified often. It seems to me that the uniform teaching of the New Testament is that we should be taking the gospel to the world. You went to a very old case in the Old Testament to demonstrate your point. I would think the parable of talents is a much more appropriate teaching for us to follow.

I believe we need to learn how to communicate

that God expects the church to grow, we are presently not growing, and this is what we need to do for the church to have sustained scriptural growth. As you might suspect, I am still working on the third part.

I would appreciate any insights you have.

### By Buster:

You are right ... we should be taking the gospel to the entire world. There is, however, a difference in scattering seed and in counting noses.

The third factor is the people to whom the gospel is preached.

Jesus went to Nazareth after his baptism but had a negative response and no good results (Matt 13:58).

Whose fault was that? Jehovah? Jesus? or the people? ("because of their unbelief.")

Was the father pleased? Was Jesus happy?

Shall we blame Jesus and the Heavenly Father?

I do appreciate your zeal.

Have a peaceful and pleasant day.

### By Benton:

You make an interesting point which I have thought about a lot. We have a crystal clear concept that Jesus was the Son of God today. Jesus primarily made vague references to being the Son of God and to what the kingdom was to be to mostly uneducated individuals. In addition to being a really hard concept to grasp in real time, His plan was to fail and be crucified so that He could be resurrected.

## CHURCH GROWTH HISTORY FEEDBACK, Page 2

With crystal clear knowledge, no persecution, and extreme wealth – do we have any excuse to fail? Can we keep sowing seed on rocky ground and complain of the results? Can we become self entertaining bureaucracies and justify ourselves because everyone else has become a self entertaining bureaucracy also?

Clearly we are ten talent people if they ever existed. I don't think one talent man results will play well on judgment day.

I appreciate your comments.

### By Buster:

Thanks for your patience and understanding. Our job is to preach the Word of God (Mark 16:15-16). We throw the seed everywhere because, no matter how smart we are, we cannot read the mind of another. It is not for us to determine whose mind is hard, shallow, or good ground.

Even seed sown on good ground does not produce alike - some 30, some 60, some 100-fold.

When we fall into the trap of thinking that we are personally responsible for how someone else receives the message, we are headed down a blind alley. The next step is to feel guilt for not reaching the artificial goal we have set for ourselves, and the step after that is thinking that we have to tweak the gospel to make it more palatable to the listener, and that opens the door to apostasy. Our responsibility is to teach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). It is not ours to force the result.

Thank you for caring and for listening.

### By Benton:

I feel the guilt, but have and will remain a strict

constructionist.

### By Buster:

Our task is to "Go into all the world and preach *the gospel* to every creature ..."

Paul gives us this solemn charge: "Preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching."

### By Benton to readers:

Buster and I are old friends. Our primary focus differs on Buster's concern regarding over focusing on numbers to the point of sacrificing truth and my concern on focusing on numbers to try to wake the church up to what is (or is not) happening.

## FILL-IN PREACHERS

**We are starting a pilot program to coordinate fill-in preachers for various congregations in the greater Houston Area. The presumption is that there are some larger congregations who have more men willing to present an occasional sermon than opportunities exist, and there are some smaller congregations where more opportunities exist that speakers.**

**Visit [thearray.org](http://thearray.org) and click on FILL-IN PREACHERS to see if any of the speakers / topics are interesting to you, or if you would like to add a topic to the list.**

**If you want to add a topic, you need to indicate your name, home congregation, phone number, and 1 to 4 topics. Each title and description of a topic should be 15-30 words. Send the list to [info@thearray.org](mailto:info@thearray.org).**

# THE CHRISTIAN ARRAY

DEDICATED TO SUSTAINED SCRIPTURAL CHURCH GROWTH IN OUR GENERATION

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## AREA WIDE ACTIVITIES

July 6-9 - 6-8 p.m. Family VBS at Memorial Church of Christ, 500 Echo Lane, 77024

Feb 27-28, 2009 Area Wide Men's Retreat, Camp Holy Wilde, New Caney, Texas

HoustonCofC is a Yahoo group hosted by Steve Sandifer [steve.sandifer@sbcglobal.net] for the purpose of communicating Houston area news among the brethren. It is open to any member of the church at no cost.

### The Christian Array Newsletter

This newsletter will be sent to members of the church on a monthly basis as an attempt to promote area wide activities and church growth. If you do not want to receive this newsletter, send an e-mail to [info@thearray.org](mailto:info@thearray.org) and it will be stopped.

If you know of anyone who would like to receive this newsletter, send their e-mail addresses to [info@thearray.org](mailto:info@thearray.org).

## GUARANTEED CHURCH GROWTH

If your congregation does the following, BCE Publications guarantees that it will grow.

Poll your congregation three times at 6 months intervals with the following results:

- 50% of the members know who their elder is
- 50% of the members will say that a minister is their friend
- 50% of the members will say that they are uplifted by the song services
- 50% of the men will say that their input is considered before physical decisions are made
- 50% of the members will say they are an important part of the work
- 50% of the members will say they are aware of the goals of the congregation
- 50% of the members will say that they know what their part is in achieving your goals

**GUARANTEE:** For the first congregation which does this and does not grow by at least 10%, we will send \$1000 to the church related children's home of your choice in your name.

I have never met a person who said that if they did this their church would not grow. If your congregation is not growing, what have you got to lose?

The Christian Array is dedicated to support the sustained scriptural growth of the churches of Christ. It is published by BCE Publications, a 501(c)(3) organization with Benton F. Baugh, Ph.D., P.E. as editor. BCE is solely responsible for the content. Any announcements, requests for publication, or comments should be e-mailed to [info@thearray.org](mailto:info@thearray.org).