

# WHY I AM A MEMBER OF THE LORD'S CHURCH

By Earl Martin, Houston, Texas

I was raised and baptized in the Baptist church (Mother's). When a teenager I started attending the Methodist church (Daddy's), because they had more fun, such as dancing etc on Sunday nights. My closest friend was a member of the Church of Christ and we had many discussions, and yes, arguments. I married a member of the Church and remained bull-headed for about 14 years. Not being able to change my wife to the Methodist church, I started studying on my own the New Testament to prove her wrong. I proved I and my parents and their parents had been wrong for all of those wasted years. I was baptized by my childhood friend within 3 months of study. Then, after more than 20 years of study with Mother and Daddy, I baptized them, both of whom were in their 80's

What did I find from study?

## **"The Truth shall set you free"**

The facts that are presented are my reasons for being a member of the Church of Christ. To you, who are members of the Church of Christ, I pray that this lesson may help you to teach others. To you, who are members of the Church of Christ, I pray that this lesson may help you to teach others. To you, who are not members of the Church of Christ, if the evidence is strong enough to merit your accepting the conclusions reached, I pray that you too, may be-

come a non-denominational member of the Lord's church. If the evidence is too weak, reject the conclusions and seek stronger evidence from God's Word. Accept only the Bible as divine authority, since it is the only God-given blueprint of His true church.

## I. FIRST, WE MUST STUDY GOD'S WORD

II Timothy 2:15 - "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."

There, then, is the division that must be made at the right place.

What part does the Old Testament play in salvation or how shall we "rightly handle the word of truth" the Bible?

Galatians 3:24 - "So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith."

**Colossians 2:14** - "by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. "

**Ephesians 2:15** - "by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, "

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**Galatians 5:4** - "You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. "

I, then, cannot find any binding reasons for what I do regarding salvation in the old law.

**Where, then, shall I look?**

**Hebrews 8:6-13** - "But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. For he finds fault with them when he says: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. "

**Hebrews 9:15-17** - "Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. For where a will is involved,

the death of the one who made it must be established. For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. "

Christ had to die before His new will was binding.

**John 12:32-33** - "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. "

The lifting up, of course, is on the cross.

**John 14:2** - "In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? "

This is, then, what ultimate salvation means, the inheriting of one of these prepared rooms for a prepared people.

**Matthew 25:34** - "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. "

If we are to inherit these prepared rooms where there will be no sin, we must find how to become sin-free or "set apart."

**John 8:32** - "and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. "

**John 17:17** - "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth."

So we are not made free by some "feeling" we received at a mourner's bench, or while "down in the corn field", but by God's eternal truth.

**I Corinthians 10:12** - "Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. "

I, then, must look to the New (Law) Testament for my reasons.

**WHY I AM A MEMBER OF THE LORD'S CHURCH—EARL MARTIN****II. NEXT, LET US EXPLORE HOW GOD'S WORD TEACHES.**

**1. By Specific Command.** Such as The Ten Commandment Law which contains "you shall" or "you shall not".

**By Approved Example.** Such as in **I Corinthians 11:1** "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." Jesus left us the perfect example (**I Peter 2:21** - "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ").

**3. By Necessary Inference.** Such as in **Genesis 6:14** - "Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch." This surely infers that absolutely nothing but gopher wood was acceptable.

We might reflect here on the argument presented by some that "the scriptures do not say specifically not to" (the underlying thought being, if not specifically prohibited it is allowed). This line of reasoning is beyond my comprehension. When God told Moses to speak to the rock (**Numbers 20:8**- "Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle."), there was no specific "thou shalt not strike" it too. But, I believe all agree anything but speaking was prohibited by necessary inference.

To see how severe God's punishment was for this going beyond that which was commanded, read **Numbers 20:12**- "And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."; and **Numbers 27:14**- "because you rebelled against my word in the wilderness of Zin when the congregation quarreled, failing to uphold me as holy at the waters before their eyes."

(These are the waters of Meribah of Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.) " Many other examples of this principle could be given if time permitted.

We therefore have a responsibility to (1) do what God commands us, (2) abide by scriptural examples, and (3) observe inferred instructions.

**III. JUST HOW IMPORTANT IS THE CHURCH?**

**Ephesians 5:25**- "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,"

**Matthew 16:18**- "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. " (My wife wears my name.)

**Romans 16:16**- "Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you. " The church can scripturally be referred to as the bride of Christ.

The Church was important enough for Christ to die for it.

**Let us observe these important facts in summary of what has been said:**

1. I cannot depend on "feelings" for salvation. (**Proverbs 14:12**- "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. ")
2. I cannot look to the Old Testament for my pattern for living and worship. (**Ephesians 2:15**- as I quoted before it was abolished)
3. I cannot depend on tradition. (**Matthew 15:9**- "in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.")

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4. I cannot have my "good old.....religion." (I **Peter 4:17**-“For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ”)
5. I must depend on God's book, specifically the New Testament, for my reasons for what I do religiously (**John 12:48-50** " The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment — what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me." ). We are to read the Old Testament for learning (Galatians 3:24; Romans 15:4).

**IV. MY REASONS FOR BEING A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.**

Because I want to be saved-become an heir to salvation. Saved people are God's children, God's children are "in Christ" (in the church), if "in Christ" we are baptized into Christ.

**Galatians 3:26-29**-“for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.”

**So, the Church is the saved and if I am a member of the church I am "saved".**

There are too many people who have a building in mind as the Church. The "called out" of every nation are the Church. If we would quit using the term "go to church" and use "go to

church services", maybe this could become clearer. Let me assure you I am not a member of a building.

**I am a member of the Church of Christ because it is:**

**A. Scriptural in NAME.**

**Romans 16:16**-“Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.”

**B. Scriptural in ORGANIZATION.**

- 1. Has elders** that meet scriptural qualifications over the local congregation. The term pastor, elder, overseer or bishop is the very same office. (1 **Timothy 3:1ff**)

**Acts 14:23**-“And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

**Acts 20:28**-“ Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. ”

**1 Timothy 5:17**-“Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. ”

An unmarried person, or one who had not proven his ability by ruling his children does not qualify. (See Titus 1:6)

- 2. Has deacons** serving under elders. (1 **Timothy 3:8ff**).

**3. Has preachers** serving under elders and called scriptural names. Can be called a minister (**Romans 15:16**); preacher (1 **Timothy 2:7**); evangelist

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(Acts 21:8); or possibly a pastor (if the qualifications specified earlier are met).

**Psalm 111:9** - "He hath sent redemption unto his people; He hath commanded his covenant for ever: Holy and reverend is his name. **ASV**" (Only time reverend mentioned in the Bible and refers to God).

**C. Scriptural in WORSHIP.****1. Have prayer.**

**I Thessalonians 5:17**- "pray without ceasing."

**I Timothy 2:8**- "I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; "

**2. Unaccompanied singing** (no instrument used, see II 3. above "By Necessary Inference").

**Matthew 26:30**- "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. "

**Ephesians 5:19**- "addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, "

I cannot find where a choir can obey the command "sing" for me.

**3. Giving** (on the first day of week).

**I Corinthians 16:2**- "On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. "

**II Corinthians 9:7**- "Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" I cannot find "tithing" taught in the New Testament..

**4. Lord's Supper.**

**Acts 20:7**- "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight." This surely did not represent a "common meal" for this is condemned in **I Corinthians 11:34**, "if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home — so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

**5. Bible study** (preaching or teaching doctrine).

**Acts 2:42**- "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. "

**D. Scriptural in TERMS OF ENTRANCE INTO THE CHURCH.**

One must:

**1. Hear (preaching of God's Word).**

**Romans 10:13-14**- "For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?"

**2. Believe (that Jesus is the Christ and Lord).**

**Romans 10:17**- "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."

**Hebrews 11:6**- "And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him "

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**John 8:24**- "I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins."

**3. Repent (turn away or turn again) of past sins.**

**Luke 13:3**- "No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

**4. Confess (that Jesus is the Christ).**

**Matthew 10:32**- "So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, "

**Luke 12:8**- "And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God, "

**Romans 10:9**- "because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

**5. Be Baptized (before saved from sins).**

**Acts 2:38**- "And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

**Acts 2:47**- "praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. "

The Lord adds us to His Church when we comply with His conditions. We cannot "join" His Church. Nowhere can a verse be found that we believe into, confess into, repent into, (all are unto, or "pointing toward" or "in the direction of"), but we are baptized into Christ.

**SUMMARY**

We have a responsibility to know God's way:

**Acts 17:30** - "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,"

**John 12:48** - "The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. "

**I Peter 4:17 - II Thessalonians 1:8**- All those who do not "obey the gospel" shall suffer eternal punishment.

**Yes, I am a member of the Church of Christ because:**

1. It recognizes the Bible only as authority in religious matters. (**John 12:48-50** "The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment — what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.")

2. It looks only to the law now in effect for what God expects of us today (**Hebrews 7:12** "For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well.")

3. It is scriptural in name, organization, items of worship and conditions under which we enter the Church.



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4. It pleads for unity of all religious groups on the basis of the Bible only (**John 17:17-21** “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”)

**CONCLUSION:** From your own heart, answer Yes or No.

1. If you cannot find the name of the church you belong to in the Bible, will you reject it's name?
2. If you cannot find the organizational set up of the church you belong to in the Bible, will you reject it?
3. If you cannot find the items of worship in the church you belong to in God's Word, will you reject them?
4. If you find the church you go to allowing preachers to base salvation on anything other than the total of what God commands, will you reject it?
5. Will you be just a plain New Testament Christian that God may add you to His church?

## IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION?

A theme of this newsletter is and will be “Impossible for Evolution”. This is a discussion of things which are not possible for atheistic evolution to explain, not just unlikely events. Three basic concepts of this are:

**FIRST LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS:** The energy going into a system, minus the energy coming out of a system, equals the change in energy stored in the system. This means that you cannot create something from nothing. Only Jehovah does that.

**SECOND LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS:** Heat will, of its own accord, flow only from a hot object to a cold object, This means that all systems run down. This means that the universe could not have simply existed forever, because if it had existed an infinite amount of time it would be run down and uniformly cold. The simple fact that you are warm is a proof of God.

**AWL FACTOR:** A cell cannot take on the responsibility of doing a task which it does not understand. To illustrate this, consider the following example. A first lonely monkey on a small island pushed a lever down each morning. It releases a treat for a second lonely monkey on a second island. Feeding the second monkey will indirectly benefit the first monkey. Next year a tropical storm will blow the second monkey off the second island on a tree which will float to the first island to be the mate of the first monkey. If the second monkey had not been well fed, it would not have survived the trip. It was impossible for the first monkey to have learned to push the lever daily for this indirect benefit. Now presume the first monkey was deaf and blind. This simply adds additional impossibilities to the situation. This is the learning capacity attributed to many living cells by the atheistic evolutionist. It is simply not possible for a cell to start doing what it does not understand or does not directly benefit it.

The term “AWL” comes from discussions with a highly intelligent friend. When I try to back him into a corner asking him how he could believe such a thing—his final response is “Aren't We Lucky”. The discussions with him have simply stopped there so far.

If anything happens which violates one of these three concepts, it is a direct proof of God. In coming newsletters we will discuss things around you which violate these concepts and which you can use as a demonstration of the existence of God.

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## WHAT HAPPENS?

The church of Christ is what happens when a group of individuals elect to speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent

A denomination is what happens when a group of individuals do what they want to do rather than what the Bible says.

Rebellion to the word of God is what happens when you teach what you prefer rather than teaching the word of God.

Apathy is what happens when we replace outreach with maintenance.

## 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).

## ARTICLES NEEDED

Whereas we are interested in articles which support the themes of this newsletter and articles of general interest, we want to request articles which oppose these viewpoints. It is educational to be exposed to and understand various points of view.

## SUSTAINED SCRIPTURAL CHURCH GROWTH CONFERENCE

We are considering sponsoring a conference on sustained scriptural church growth in the greater Houston area. The presumed time would be this Fall, and potentially every Fall thereafter. If you would like to speak at such a conference, would attend, or be involved in any other way, let us know at [info@thearray.com](mailto:info@thearray.com).

The conference would not address doing the same things to continue to not grow. It would be focused on what we can do to remain scriptural and grow.

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## MONEY PAGE

### 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? (Offer made since 2001)

### IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION?

**We will offer \$100 to the first person who can explain how we could have violated the first law of thermodynamics and have come into existence without God.**

**We will offer \$100 to the first person who can explain how we could have violated the second law of thermodynamics and have existed forever without God.**

**We will offer \$100 to the first person who can explain why the AWL Factor concept is not valid (See page 7)**

**(Offer first posted 8/08)**

### IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION!

This publication continues (since 1991) to make a standing offer of \$100 to the first person who can give any reason (1 or more) as to why atheistic evolution is a better explanation for the universe and/or life than creation by God, The Father of Adam, Abraham, and Jesus; as revealed in the Bible.

We will also give you \$100 if we cannot give you 12 reasons why atheistic evolution is impossible as an explanation for our existence.

We will discuss this any place, any time, and in any forum.

(This offer has been made repeatedly since June of 1991 with no takers)

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**AREA WIDE ACTIVITIES**

Oct. 11 - 6-8 p.m.      Area Wide Singing at Memorial Church of Christ, 500 Echo Lane, 77024  
For more information or to be on the song leader list contact Wade Price at  
wprice@eprod.com

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 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. All past copies of the newsletter can be found on the website "thearray.org".

**E-MAIL ADDRESSES**

A goal of this newsletter is to develop a mailing list of as many members of the church as possible and to communicate church related information to as many members as possible. In that light, we would appreciate:

1. Your forwarding the church member e-mail addresses which you have.
2. Sending the directory of the congregation you attend or any other directories which you might have.
3. Give us an idea of how to collect church member e-mail addresses.

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.