IS THE CHURCH JESUS BUILT ON EARTH TODAY?
Sermon by Donald Townsley

INTRODUCTION
1. Let us look at the importance of this question.
   (1) If His church is NOT on earth, NO church has a divine right to exist -- Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28; Heb. 8: 2.
   (2) If the Lord's church is not on earth, all churches are HUMAN INSTITUTIONS; all people would be members of the wrong church.
   (3) If the Lord's church is in existence, we ought to find it.
   (4) QUESTION: How can we find it???
2. With this question comes the church succession question.
   (1) The Baptist use this line of argument.
   (2) Can any church trace itself back to New Testament days?
   (3) This is not necessary in order to prove identity of the church.
3. It is an admitted fact that the church existed in the days of the apostles.
   (1) QUESTION: Is it in existence NOW?
   (2) Can it be identified?
   (3) It must not be something like it, or nearly so -- it must be identical.

I. A CHURCH WHOSE HISTORY IS AFTER THE APOSTLES IS NOT THE CHURCH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.
1. CATHOLIC CHURCH -- 606 A.D. in Rome by Boniface III.
2. LUTHERAN CHURCH -- In Germany 1520 A.D. by Martin Luther.
3. EPISCOPALIAN CHURCH -- In England by Henry VIII, 1534 A. D.
4. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH -- In Switzerland by John Calvin, 1536 A. D.
5. BAPTIST CHURCH -- 1607 A.D. in Holland by John Smythe.
6. FREE WILL BAPTIST -- 1730 A. D.
7. HARD SHELL BAPTIST -- 1832 A. D. by Daniel Parker
8. CHURCH OF GOD -- 1886 A. D. in Tennessee by A. J. Tomlinson

II. THE SUCCESSION OR ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH IS IN THE SEED
1. SEED will bring forth after its KIND -- Gen. 1: 11- 12; Gal. 6: 7 - 8
2. We can tell the SEED by its FRUIT -- Matt. 7: 17 - 20.
3. All institutions, political, fraternal, or religious are perpetuated by SEED.
5. QUESTIONS:
   (1) Do we have the same SEED?
   (3) What is the SOIL? The HEART of man -- Matt. 13:19.
6. The crop depends on the SEED, SOIL and CULTIVATION -- I Cor. 3: 6, 9.
7. The church is in the SEED; just as the oak is in the acorn.
   (1) The church needs no succession of officers.
   (2) Suppose there was no church for centuries. . .
III. WHAT DID THE SEED PRODUCE WHEN IT WAS FIRST SOWN?
   1. CHRISTIANS -- Acts 11:26
   2. CHURCHES OF CHRIST -- Rom. 16:16

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH
   1. TIME and PLACE of its BEGINNING -- Acts 2; Mark 9:1
   2. FOUNDATION -- I Cor. 3:11
   3. TERMS of admission. . .
   4. DOCTRINE -- II Tim. 3:16 - 17
   5. NAMES or titles as a church and as members.
   6. ORGANIZATION -- Phil. 1:1
   7. WORSHIP -- Acts 2: 42; John 4:24; Eph. 5:19
   8. WORK -- Eph. 4: 11 -12

V. ANY INSTITUTION CLAIMING IDENTITY WITH THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH MUST BE LIKE IT IN THE ABOVE CHARACTERISTICS.
   1. Any other institution has no divine authority for its existence.

CONCLUSION
   1. Is there a church on earth today with the characteristics of the church of the New Testament??
   2. YES.

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