

practices. The names are not in the New Testament. Neither are most of their doctrines and practices. Let us place the blame where it is due and not be ashamed of the gospel, including the God-given name “church of Christ” (Rom. 1:16; 16:16).

- Steven F. Deaton

Great peace have those who love Your law,
And nothing causes them to stumble.
- Psalm 119:165

Notes

- * Email webmaster@hebronlanechurch.com to receive email notices of bulletin web posting.
- * An excellent [sermon series](#) on “Respectable Worldliness” by Steve Curtis is available on our web site (audio & PowerPoint charts) or via US mail (audio CDs).

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Permit #10
Shepherdsville, KY

Church of Christ
3221 E. Hebron Lane
Shepherdsville, KY
40165-8959



Hebron Herald

Published by the Hebron Lane Church of Christ
Shepherdsville, KY

Volume 28 Number 7

August 2004

Change The Name?

Believe it or not, some brethren advocate changing the name that is on the sign in front of the building. No, not here at Hebron Lane, but elsewhere. Some say the name “church of Christ” causes confusion or is offensive. The belief is that a name change will aid in getting more people in the door. This is patently false.

The name “church of Christ” is divine. “The churches of Christ greet you” (Rom. 16:16). The Holy Spirit revealed this, just as much as He revealed the name “Christian” for individual followers of Christ (Acts 11:26; 1 Pet. 4:16). “Church of Christ” is not the only designation given to a congregation of believers. The Spirit also called them “the church of God,” “the house of God,” “the body of Christ,” or simply the “church” (1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 4:12; 1 Thes. 1:1). Any of these are proper and right to use. Brethren generally use “church of Christ” in order to correctly identify themselves and as an expedient to help other Christians find a church patterned after the New Testament.

The question then comes up, “Why is it wrong then to take down a name like ‘Main Street church of Christ,’ and put up ‘Main Street Church?’” The question goes to one of motivation. Why describe it as such? If it is to cause less confusion, it falls short. What person of the world, religious or not, will be able to better know the nature of the congregation by reading “church” instead of “church of Christ?” If it is to get away from the stigma attached to the scriptural name, then should we give up all scriptural designations? Should we cease calling ourselves “Christians” and use the name “disciples?” If you change the name, but preach the pure gospel in all boldness, people will still view the group as radical and repugnant (Jn. 15:18-20).

Confusion is caused by Satan, not God (cf. 1 Cor. 14:33). Names such as Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Adventist, Pentecostal, cause confusion. All claim to be followers of Christ, and generally accept each other as brothers. However, they wear different names, teach contradictory doctrines, and hold to a divergent range of

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Let The Church Be The Church

The Church: Distinct from the School

The school conducted by Christians may do some things the church does, but is not the church. The school may make arrangements to sing, to pray, to study the Bible, and to disseminate truth in every way possible. What the school does is an extension of the home and of the state in preparing young people for life (Eph. 6:4; Rom. 13:1). This is no substitute for the work of the church and is not in competition with the church.

Such schools must also guard against going into apostasy or abusing the role God has given to them. For instance, a school should not attempt to serve as "a missionary society," taking donations from churches in order to teach the Bible and other subjects to its students, or to selecting fields of endeavor and providing financial support to send men to these fields. Let the school be the school and let the church be the church.

The Church: Distinct from a Business

A business conducted by Christians may do some things the church does, but is not the church. The business may make arrangements to sing, to pray, to study the Bible, and to disseminate truth in every way possible. The business is an extension of the individual, whether acting independently or in concert with others, in making an honorable living (Eph. 4:28). This is no substitute for the church and is not in competition with the church.

Such businesses must also guard against going into apostasy or abusing the role God has given to them. For instance, a business should not attempt to serve as "a missionary society," taking donations from churches and then selecting fields of endeavor and providing financial support to send men to these fields. Let the business be the business and let the church be the church.

The Church: Distinct from *Every Other Effort*

The church is distinct from every other effort and every other organization in performing its own work through its own organization. We are thankful for every legitimate effort to disseminate and teach the truth of God's Word. In the past years, schools began the day with Bible reading and prayer. Families have often opened their homes to conduct monthly Bible studies for young people. Businesses conducted by Christians sometimes make Bible study materials available to customers or invite a preacher to teach weekly Bible lessons for interested employees. Several Christians have combined their funds to rent meeting rooms at motels for gospel preaching in places where the true gospel is unknown. Athens Bible School in Athens, AL and Florida College in Temple Terrace, FL have taught Bible classes, conducted daily devotionals, and presented Bible lectureships through the years. A group of brethren associated with R. J. Stevens has conducted an annual singing school, utilizing the facilities of a defunct college. Businesses which produce or market Bibles, songbooks, tracts, magazines, and books occasionally provide complimentary samples or give away outdated and damaged materials in an effort to disseminate the truth.

Countless other examples could be added, but none of these efforts is a substitute for the daily ongoing responsibility of each and every local church to press forward in doing its own work through its own organization as "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). The examples and efforts enumerated above do not diminish or detract from the duty of local churches to sound out the word of the Lord during regular worship periods, Bible classes, singing schools, gospel meetings, radio programs, special lectureships, and other endeavors. No one of the activities listed above, nor all of them combined, diminishes the unique role, organization, and glory of the local church in God's plan for the redemption of the world.

Let individuals, families, schools, and various business and service organizations do their best to please God and to bless the world. But, first and foremost, emphatically, we must remember this imperative: *Let the church be the church!*

- Ron Halbrook