

UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY (2)

WDXE – January 29, 2012

When you read your New Testament of Jesus Christ, you are reading in Original Christianity. That's right! Original Christianity was established by Jesus Christ almost 2000 years ago, but much of the Christianity you see around you and in the world is not original at all! While Christianity is listed in the almanacs as the largest of the world religions, it is like other world religions in that it is sub-divided into competing groups. This division is contrary to original Christianity.

Hello I'm Larry Murdock. I preach for the Gandy church of Christ. Good morning and welcome to this program.

The division we see among believers in Christ was not caused by original Christianity, it was caused by late-comers (false teachers) who taught things that was not in original Christianity. The apostles of Jesus Christ warned the early church members that after their death men would bring in many false doctrines and practices. They would change the church from its original pattern. They also predicted that many Christians would be led astray by those false teachings. Consider the warning that the apostle Paul gave to the elders at Ephesus: [Act 20:28-31 KJV](#) "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. (29) For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. (30) Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. (31) Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." (Acts 20:28-31 KJV.) Even in later years Paul was still warning Christians about a time in the future when believers in Christ would fall away from Christ.

To a young preacher by the name of Timothy Paul wrote: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, (2) through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared (as with a hot iron, [KJV](#)), (3) who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. (4) For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received

with thanksgiving, (5) for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer. (6) If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. (7) Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; (8) for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.” (1Timothy 4:1-8 ESV.)

How does a person know when he is hearing an “irreverent, silly myth”? A person cannot know the difference unless he is well-acquainted with original Christianity found in the pages of the New Testament of Jesus Christ. Friends, the Bible is right always! When people are preaching and teaching something that contradicts the Word of God, or cannot be found in the Word of God, then you have found that about which the apostle warned.

Did you notice what some people would be teaching? Paul called it “the teachings of demons.” And who would be teaching these things? Deceitful spirits! These spirits were the two-legged kind, that is, human beings, for Paul says they have consciences that are seared “as with a hot iron.” These men lie without any pain of conscience because they have hardened hearts. In the western states of America farmers would brand their cattle so they could be identified from cows that were not their own. The tool they used was an iron bar that was shaped on the end into an identification mark. The cowboys would put the end of the iron into a fire and get it red hot. They would then brand the cow with that hot iron. For a while the cow’s hide would be very tender. But after a while the brand would be become scabbed over and hard. Here is the image of a hard, scabbed over, conscience. When a person with a hardened conscience tells a lie, he can tell the lie as if it is true and feel no guilt. Friends, the teachings of demons will harden our hearts against God’s truth.

How can a false teacher find employment? Can’t people compare the teaching of a man with the Word of God and know that this teacher peddles lies? Yes, the hearers can do this if they sincerely desire the truth. Not every hearer desires the truth! That’s right! Paul warned about believers who have what he called “itching ears.” In his last letter Paul warned Timothy that “the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will

accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.” (2 Timothy 4:3, 4 ESV.) Friends, we should thank God that we still have the original New Testament of Jesus Christ so that we can judge the teachings of men by that original standard. That standard stands tall and true. The word of God has been translated into the major languages of the world and is ready to be read and practiced wherever searching hearts can be found. You can know the truth; and that truth can set you free. (cf. John 8:32.) You can free from your sins when you are obedient to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. But you can also be free from the doctrines of men, if you know the truth found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. You can be free from scams because you know the truth. You can be free from the doctrines of demons because you know the truth. You can also be free from the religious division that plagues the world when you know the truth that Jesus Christ brought to the world. Friends, the truth shall make you free.

If you do not have the New Testament of Jesus Christ then you need it. You need it because it contains a description of the original church of Christ. If you do not have the New Testament then contact the people you hear about at the end of this program. Or, contact a church of Christ near you.

The original church of Christ is in the world today! That’s right! It is in the world because it patterns its teaching and practice strictly by the description found in the New Testament, the book that contains original Christianity. Jesus Christ has influenced more people than anyone who ever lived on this earth. Even Atheists have to agree that Christ’s life and teaching have influenced more people than anyone else over has. Therefore, in order to be a knowledgeable person, everyone should read at least [two of the books of the New Testament]. The ones I recommend are the two books written by the inspired Dr. Luke, one of Paul’s great friends and traveling companion. The book entitled Luke tells the story of the Jesus Christ, his birth, his teaching, his practice. It also tells of Jesus’ death for the sins of the world, his burial in a borrowed tomb, and his resurrection on the third day following his death on a Roman cross. The second book I recommend is the Book of Acts. This book, written by the inspired Dr. Luke, is also called the Acts of the Apostles. The book begins with the Ascension of Jesus Christ back to his heavenly Father. Jesus’ eleven apostles watched him ascend into a cloud. While they stood gazing into the sky trying to get a last glimpse of the departing Christ, two men in white apparel stood by them and said, “You men of Galilee,

why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who is taken up from into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11.) The eleven apostles returned to Jerusalem to wait ten days for their baptism in the Holy Spirit. While they waited the disciples chose a new apostle to take the place of the twelfth apostle, Judas Iscariot, who had betrayed Jesus to the persecuting authorities, but then hanged himself out of shame for his deed. They chose a man by the name of Matthias. He was numbered with the eleven apostles and then came the Day of Pentecost. On that great Jewish feast day the Holy Spirit fell upon the apostles and they began to speak in foreign languages that were understood by thousands of people who had gathered for the feast from all countries the Middle East. That was the day when the original church of Christ was established. This was the day when original Christianity had its beginning. Read further in the book of Acts and you will learn what people did to hear the good news and obey Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins.

Those people who first heard the gospel were pricked in their hearts. No doubt many or most of them had had a part in the crucifixion of Jesus. Perhaps they were among those who had shouted “crucify him, crucify him.” But when they heard the preaching of Peter and the rest of the apostles, they said, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Peter answered, “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (39) For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. (40) And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. (41) Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.” (Act 2:38-41 KJV.) The Church of Christ had begun. It started with about 3,000 members. The church of Christ is still in the world today and still teaching the New Testament of Jesus Christ as it was back then. Are you acquainted with the church of Christ? Have you heard of its goal of restoring New Testament Christianity to the world of today? In the words of Romans 16:16, “the churches of Christ salute you.”

May God help you to find original Christianity as it is lived and practiced in the world today.