

DAILY READING

WEEK 12 THE TRUTH AND PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH

WEEK 12 — DAY 4

Scripture Reading

1 Cor. 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours.

1 Cor 1:10 Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.

THE GROUND OF THE CHURCH

Being the Oneness of the Church

The ground of the church is the oneness of the church. Whoever loses the oneness of the church, the oneness of the church's fellowship, loses the ground of the church. Any ground apart from the oneness of the church and the oneness of her fellowship is not the ground of the church. The divisive, sectarian ground of Roman Catholicism and of many Christian denominations is not the ground of the church.

Being Local

Since the expression of the church is local, the church's practical ground is also based on locality. The universal oneness and fellowship of the church is expressed locally. There should be only one church in a locality, and in a locality the church should have only one fellowship. This ground is the ground of oneness in a locality. Any ground apart from the local ground of oneness is not the ground of the church.

THE DESIGNATION OF THE CHURCH

Since the church is uniquely one in her universal essence and in her local expression, she should not have a name, either universally or locally. The church is the church; she does not need another name, just as the moon is the moon and does not need another name. Although the Bible uses a few phrases to describe the persons to whom the church belongs and the places where the church is, these descriptions are not the church's name. Let us examine these descriptive phrases.

1. “The church of God”; “The churches of God” (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 10:32; 15:9; 11:16).

The first description of the church is “the church of God,” or “the churches of God.” This means that the church belongs to God and includes all God's children.

2. “All the churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16).

The second description is “the churches of Christ.” This means that the church was purchased by Christ for Himself by the shedding of His blood. It also means that He has regenerated and made the church His Body by His life. The church includes all whom He has redeemed and who possess His life.

3. “The churches of the saints” (1 Cor. 14:33).

The third description is “the churches of the saints.” This means that the church is composed of the saints and includes all the saints.

4. “The church which was in Jerusalem”; “The church of God which is in Corinth” (Acts 8:1; 1 Cor. 1:2).

With the exception of the preceding three descriptions, which tell us to whom the church belongs, the Bible describes a church in relation to its location. For example, it says “the church which was in Jerusalem” and “the church of God which is in Corinth.” These expressions merely describe the location of a church but do not denominate the church by the name of its locality. The name of the locality is not the name of the church. The Bible uses these four descriptions to indicate to whom the church belongs and where a church is located, but these descriptions are not names. A name encloses a small number of God's children, separating them from the rest of God's children and forming them into a sect. The many names in Christianity today are sectarian names that prove the existence of division.—*Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures*, vol. 6, ch. 1.