[The Answer To The No-Church Church Controversy](http://savedbygrace.com/religion/false-doctrine/no-church-controversy)

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***Introduction***

The false doctrine known as “Lordship Salvation” was produced and designed by men trying to stop the lousy life style of those who called themselves Christians. I believe that there is a similar if not duplicate motivation in the No-Church Church movement.

Today, if seems many are dissatisfied with the contemporary church and seek to either divorce themselves from it, or redefine it. Martin Luther said, “Farewell to those who want an entirely pure and purified church. This is plainly wanting no church at all.”

After examining much of what has been written the following points can understood by the framers of the No-Church Church movement.

**Point One**: “The tradition of the Babylonian religious system has, for the most part, replaced “the church in thy house.” In the process, the organic nature of the church has been replaced by manmade institutions and organizations. This all comes from a failure to follow the simple Pauline pattern. And are we not to follow Paul?”

**Point Two**: What is the church?

“The word church is not, at first, easily defined or identified today because of the influence of centuries of religious tradition. If we would clear our mind of these traditions we would find that this word conveys quite a very simple truth … ”

**The Common definitions**

Among the ***common*** definitions of the word church, we find the idea of:

1. A physical building, as in, “It’s our turn to clean the church.”

2. An organization, as in, “We are members of First Church.”

3. A meeting, as in, “Church starts in a half-hour.”

4. A doctrinal system, as in, “I’ve spent all my life in the Baptist church.”

The writer concludes with: “These are all NON-BIBLE churches.”

**Point Three**: This then, brings us to another aspect of the definition of the church. The one true church has but one head, and that is Christ. There is no other head

of God’s church. This is how we can identify the true church – by its headship.

“Now, the question is, who is the head of “your church”? Are you satisfied with the headship of Christ over His church? Or, do you desire to belong to another “church” that has another head?”

**Point Four**: “God’s building”

1 Cor 3:9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.

“God’s building” –just think of it! God has a church building in this dispensation. It is made up of those of us who have been saved by His wonderful grace. Praise the Lord for the church building of God! Are you satisfied with this truth? Or, do you embrace another “church building” instead?

Are you the house of God? Or, do you attend a man-made building that has been fraudulently pawned off as the house of God?

**Point Five**: “If you go somewhere to worship the Lord, are you not, in reality denying the truth of who you are in Christ Jesus? Are you not worshiping the Lord in the flesh, rather than in t he spirit? Hasn’t someone corrupted your mind “from the simplicity in Christ”

1 Cor 11:3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

Note: Many people have left “grace churches” and started “home churches” because of these 5 basic points…. This causes us to consider, debate and to question some things and this is good!

***Questions We Have Been Considering In The Light Of These Points***

Is it wrong for a church to own buildings?

Is it wrong for a church to have a pastor & organization?

Is it wrong for a church to have a name other than the “Church of God”?

Should churches on/y meet in homes?

As we consider these questions we turn to the final authority for all matters of faith and practice… the Word of God – Rightly Divided.

**Concept Of The Church From The Pauline Epistles**

**One: The Church Is Christ’s Body**

Eph 1:22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things **to the church**, 23 **Which is his body**, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

There is nothing ambiguous about this passage the church IS his body.

**Two: The Church Is The House Of God**

1 Tim 3:14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: 15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to **behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God**, the pillar and ground of the truth.

**Three: The Church Is God’s Building**

1 Cor 3:9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, **ye are God’s building.**

**Four: The Church Is God’s Temple**

Eph 2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

**Five: The Church Is God’s Habitation**

Eph 2:22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

So, the church is a spiritual entity, and these trappings around us are irrelevant; RIGHT?

**Question** – Defining the spiritual nature & character of the church is essential in defining who we are as the children of God but what are the practical aspects of this truth here in the Physical world?

The word church, like many other Bible words, is generic and requires modifiers. On

Examples would include: Baptism, Gospel and Righteousness.

**One of Paul’s most common modifiers is location!**

Rom 16:1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is **at Cenchrea:**

**Commentary**… Funny I thought the Church was in Rome or in Me or in you… you mean it can be in more than one PLACE at a time??

1 Cor 16:19 The **churches** of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

**Paul Also Uses The Possessive Form:**

Col 4:16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the **church of the Laodiceans**; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

1 Th 1:1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the **church of the Thessalonians** which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Cor 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all **churches of the saints**.

2 Cor 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the **church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:**

1 Tim 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

**Question**: Could I say then, based on these verses the Berean Bible Church In Edgewater? Could I say the church of the Saints in St. Pete or Tampa??

What then, can I or do I learn about the nature & character of the local church from Paul’s modifiers?

***One***: It is locally expressed, not universally at large

***Two***: Letters to the church at large? How delivered?

***Three***: Not an ethereal entity but a practical reality.

It has an address!! (A VERY practical point we will look @ later)

***Four***: Being local, it is distinct member among many

1 Cor 4:17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, **as I teach every where in every church**.

Paul uses the plural twenty (20) times in his writings.

Rom 16:16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The **churches** of Christ salute you.

**Five**: The “church”, while not a building, IS associated with it’s meeting

It is a **PLACE** to “come together”

1 Cor 11:18 For first of all, when ye **come together in the church**, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

It is a **PLACE** for “teaching”.

1 Cor 14:19 Yet **in the church** I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.”

It is a **PLACE** where there are rules of conduct

1 Cor 14:28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

1 Cor 14:34 Let your women **keep silence in the churches**: for it is not **permitted** unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

**NOTE:** Clearly a reference to the place of gathering & not the church “at large”

The **PLACE** is NOT necessarily a house!

1 Cor 11:20 **When ye come together therefore into one place**, this is not to eat the Lord’s supper. 21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. 22 What? **have ye not houses to eat and to drink in**? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

***The Church Has A Local Address And Thus A Local Identity***

It is not really at issue whether the church meets in a house, tent, hilltop, vale, gymnasium or cellar, or owned building. What is at issue is whom it is that meets, and what transpires there!

If you went to Thessalonica in Paul’s time do you not believe you could ask directions to that church?

It had a NAME

It had an Address

It had meeting times

It had identity!

I appreciate labels – gives me at least an idea of the contents. Imagine a grocery store with no labels on the cans!

**The Issues Of Identity And Mission**

The Church has an Identity and needs an identity to maintain its mission which in its most basic form is the reaching of the lost and the edification of the saints.

**The Church Is …**

**A Lighthouse Of Truth On The Sea Of Confusion:**

Phil 2:14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, **among whom ye shine as lights in the world**; 16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. – Written to the church @ Philippi!!

**A PLACE for the lost to find the truth & God’s people**

1 Cor 14:23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or **unbelievers**, will they not say that ye are mad? 24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: 25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

**A PLACE to have our spiritual needs met**

Eph 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. 17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

You need a doctor you need an address. You need groceries you need an address.

You need a lawyer you need an address. You need the truth? You need an address!!

**A PLACE where the truth is upheld**

1 Tim 3:14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: 15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

**A PLACE where the saints care**

1 Cor 12:25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the **same care one for another**. 26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

There are TWO in the world rules all children should be taught

1. Life isn’t fair

2. No one out there cares

The church, the body of Christ, is to be the exception

**A Place Where We Learn Of Our Identity – v.27 above**

**A Place To Find Guidance & Accountability**

1 Th 5:13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves. 14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. 15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

**Conclusion**

There is much more that could be said but we have said enough, I think.

The No-Church Church movement is not sound in doctrine.

The No-Church Church movement is all but invisible to the eyes of those looking for the truth. With no names, no addresses, no dates, no times there is no HOPE.

You see we agree with the basic premise of the 5 points made at the beginning of this message, however we understand that moving the problem from one location to the next does not solve the problem, it only moves the problem. Does the church need reformation? No, it has all it needs in Christ. The church only needs to remember who they are, In Christ!

Is it wrong for a church to own buildings? – No

Is it wrong for a church to have a pastor & organization? – No

Is it wrong for a church to have a name other than the “Church of God”? – No

Should churches only meet in homes? – No

Should the church run to the hills and hide because the church is not functioning properly? NO – you stay and fix it!

The Church – It Is Not The Place, Rather It Is Who And What You Find There