

Seven Facts About the Lord's Church

Harmony M.B.C., March 14, 2009 (Morning)

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Acts 16:5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

The Lord began to turn my mind to things about the church this week and I began to think on the many facets of this wondrous institution of our Lord Jesus Christ and was reminded about what an amazing miracle among men one of His churches is individually, and what a glorious thing all His churches on earth are collectively.

We have to admit that the churches of the Lord have been despised by the world, assaulted by Satan, found to be struggling against sin in every generation, but nevertheless, they have survived all these centuries since Jesus founded the first church at Jerusalem and commissioned it to begin the work of His kingdom on earth.

The churches of the Lord Jesus Christ have never been in the limelight, have never been glorified or exalted by governments or cultures, and have never sought to be so glorified or exalted. As it turns out, the purely spiritual nature of the Lord's churches have always caused it to be at odds with secular agendas, if those agendas strayed from the moral and ethical values of our Savior...which almost inevitably they do. Because of that, the Lord's churches have always come into conflict with cultures, people, and governments when they turn to evil pursuits and practices. This is the way it will always be for the churches of the Lord which keep themselves pure and separated from commingling with worldly aspirations.

Within the framework of these thoughts I began to review the many characteristics of Jesus' true churches, and I want to talk about seven things that personify them:

I. The Lord's church is the only spiritual institution on earth that was organized, nurtured and made to grow, and given specific authority, or power, by Christ alone.

- **Organized:** 1Cor. 12:28 "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles..."
(“first” = Gr. Proton = at the beginning)
 - > We have the biblical record of when this occurred in Luke 6:13 and elsewhere.
 - > In writing to the church at Ephesus, Paul clarifies the starting point of the Lord's church: (Eph. 2:20) And are built upon the **foundation of the apostles** and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*;
- **Nurtured and made to grow** (referred to in the bible as “edified”):
 - > Mat. 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock **I will build my church**; (“build” = Gr. oikodomeo = to build up; to edify [promote spiritually]) and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
 - > 1Cor. 3:9 For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, **ye are God's building**.
 - > Eph. 2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord:

■ **Empowered or authorized by the Lord Jesus Christ:**

- > Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power (Gr. *exousia*; power to act, authority) from on high.
- > Mat 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

II. It is the only institution on earth that was organized specifically as a place for God to inhabit:

- Eph. 2:22 In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.
- 1Cor. 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

III. It is the primary means that God has chosen to reveal the many facets of His wisdom to eternal beings through:

- Eph 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be **known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,**

IV. The Lord's church is the only institution on earth that exists for, and aims at, promoting a purely Christ-centered agenda

- Paul's claim concerning the focus of the Christian ministry says it all: 1Cor. 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is **Jesus Christ.**
- 2Cor. 5:20 Now then **we are ambassadors for Christ,** as though God did beseech *you* by us; we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.
- 2Cor. 10:4-5 (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity **every thought to the obedience of Christ;**

V. It is the only institution on earth whose members are added by the Lord alone

- Acts 2:47 ... And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.
- 1Cor. 12:28 And **God hath set some in the church,** first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

VI. The Lord's church is the only assembly on earth in which each individual member is essential to the full function of the organization

- 1Cor. 12:18-26 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where *were* the body? 20 But now *are they* many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23 And those *members*

of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that *part* which lacked: 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 honored, all the members rejoice with it.

VII. The Lord's church is the only institution on earth that will outlast time:

- Eph 3:21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.
- 2Cor. 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ.
- Rev. 19:7-9 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.