

# WHY I AM A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST #4

**I AM A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BECAUSE IT HAS THE RIGHT "ORGANIZATION."** This subject was noted briefly in #1 of this series. However, we need to explore it in more detail here.

The church in the New Testament was organized by God, not by man. Therefore, for the church today to be approved of God, it must be organized according to the pattern of the church of the first century.

The **HEADQUARTERS** of the church of Christ in the New Testament was in heaven, not on earth. Philippians 3:20 says, "*For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.*" This was not determined by man. It was God's divine will. There is no place on earth to which we look and ask for guidance or counsel. The New Testament is our authority — not Rome, not a man.

Jesus is the only head of the church [Eph. 1:22-23; Matt. 28:18]. The church of Christ in the world today has its headquarters in heaven. There is no man-made ecclesiastical body, synod, conference, council or any other type of governing body on earth. Each congregation is autonomous, governed solely by the Word of God.

Each local congregation of the church of Christ in the Bible had **ELDERS** to oversee it [Acts 14:23]. These men are also called: **BISHOPS** [1 Tim. 3:1-2], **PASTORS** [Eph. 4:11], **OVERSEERS** [Acts 20:28], and **PRESBYTERS** [1 Tim. 4:14]. They are men, not women, and are always spoken of in the plural (more than

one). Such men never had oversight of a group of churches, but only the local congregation of which they were members. The church of Christ today is organized the same way. When two or more men in a congregation meet the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-8 and Titus 1:5-9, they are appointed as elders or overseers of that congregation. The elders in a congregation have the responsibility to see to it that God's Word is obeyed (cf. 1 Peter 5:2-3). They oversee all the work and every member of the local congregation.

**DEACONS** are special servants of the church. They have no authority to rule over the congregation as do the elders. They simply perform tasks assigned them by the elders so the elders may be relieved to give more attention to Spiritual matters. Deacons must also meet certain qualifications (1 Tim. 3:8-13). *Elders* oversee (superintend) the local church, not *elders and deacons*.

**EVANGELISTS/PREACHERS** preach the Word of God [2 Tim. 4:2]. Their function is to study and preach the complete word of God without fear, favor or compromise [Acts 20:26-27; 1 Tim. 4:13]. This directive comes from God, not man. *Preach the Word!*

The remainder of the local congregation is made up of **MEMBERS**. They are involved in many areas of the work of the church [1 Cor. 12:12-27; Phil. 1:1].

**IS THE CHURCH OF WHICH YOU ARE A MEMBER ORGANIZED LIKE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?**

— Garland M. Robinson