

1: How is the church the Body of Christ?

WE BEING THE MEMBERS OF CHRIST. Let us look at a fourth point. When we were saved, not only did God regenerate us and give us eternal life; He made us one spirit with the Lord.

Photo courtesy of the Rev. Wilfried Nausner The Rev. Shane Bishop The Rev. Why church membership matters A UMC. Because I love the love. You feel it every time you walk into the church, or a member calls you, or you are asked to help out! And at Grace they love everyone, even a year-old with the challenge of Autism and his crazy parents. You will be loved just the way you are," writes Glenda Haley. Photo courtesy of Glenda and Tim Haley. The credit card company offers cash back to cardholders; the country club discounts rounds of golf for those paying dues; the coffee shop gives free beverages to loyal customers on their birthdays; and the gym lets members use all of the equipment as often as they like. The United Methodist Church, though, is a different kind of organization. When performing at its best, the church focuses its attention and resources more on non-members than members. This reminds us that while we seek to make members, our ultimate purpose is for the benefit of the whole world. Church membership, then, is not about privileges like assigned pews, having say in important church decisions, or getting to the front of the line at potluck suppers. Rather it is a call to participate as part of a fellowship of followers of Jesus Christ who seek to make the world more like the Kingdom of God. But it is not our task to make good members! Nobody can love the church in general or the universal church. It has always to be our neighbor that comes first. It has to be our neighbor that comes first. Our membership ritual, part of the Baptismal Covenant, reflects these values. A commitment to Christ Those desiring to become professing members of a United Methodist congregation respond to a series of questions. They are first asked to renounce wickedness, evil, and sin, and to accept the freedom and power of God to resist evil, injustice, and oppression. Then they are asked if they confess Jesus Christ as their Savior, and trust and serve him as their Lord. Then there are two questions about church membership. As members of this congregation, will you faithfully participate in its ministries by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service and your witness? My grandmother passed away and it was a really tough time. But the church helped my whole family get through it. Shawn Kasik is a member of St. Photo courtesy of Shawn Kasik. Connected globally Question 1 is about becoming a member of The United Methodist Church, a global web of local congregations. We describe this relationship as connectional. All members of every congregation are joined to all others across the globe, which is an exciting part of what it means to be the church. For example, our participation in the Imagine No Malaria campaign has reduced deaths from that disease by half. You and I did that! Though we may never meet one another, nor the people who directly benefit from that ministry, we are making great things happen. Lives are being changed in ways no one of us, nor any single congregation, could do on our own. Being a connectional church makes ministries like this possible. Connected locally Question 2 asks new members to commit to the people with whom they worship every Sunday. We vow to be part of the body of Christ in our local community, and to support it well. We pledge to think less about our individual desires and more about the good of the whole. We live into this vow when we teach a Sunday school class, serve as an acolyte or usher, or stand shoulder-to-shoulder working on a local mission project. We fulfill our promise by serving on committees, giving a portion of our income, and setting up tables and chairs. We are faithful when we support one who is struggling, visit another in the hospital, and support others in grief. All in this together When the new members finish their vows before the congregation, the worshipers then renew those same vows as a sign of our commitment to one another. In this section of the service, the pastor asks the congregation to do all in their power to support the new members. Shane Bishop emphasizes that in the church he pastors. Better together In some circles, it is popular to talk about church membership as optional. The Christian faith though, was never intended to be a solo journey. The first followers of Jesus came together for teaching, meals, prayers, and more Acts 2: The same is true today. We are better together as part of a local congregation. We are better together as part of a global church. He may be reached at jiovino_umcom. This story was first published on June 9,

2: Membership in the Church

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ Romans So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Why does everyone on an athletic team wear the same uniform? They want to be identified as a part of the team and their opponent wants to know what team they represent. In all my years of athletics, from pee wee to college, I always loved wearing the team jersey. I wanted to be identified with my team and feel the same way to this day. I have t-shirts, polo shirts, sweatshirts, ties, jackets even cufflinks of my alma maters Boston College and Duke University. And I wear them with pride because I want everyone to know that I am associated with such great schools and teams. Simply going to church occasionally or even regularly is not enough. What identifies you is being a member of a local church. Being a Christ follower makes you part of The Church but membership is what identifies you as a part of a local church. The membership commitment communicates clearly that you represent Jesus Christ through your local church. Here are four reasons why you should be a member of a local church. The word partnership is used and that is a very good way of understanding membership. Throughout the Bible believers were identified with a local church whether in Corinth, Ephesus, Colossae or other cities. One of the major themes of the Bible is commitment and there is no better way to commit than becoming a member of a church. It Gives Stability A church is on the front lines of the spiritual battle. It faces opposition in many ways and needs to have a solid core of people who support it with their time, talent and treasure. For a church to be successful people need to step up to higher levels of commitment. Membership is a high level of commitment and the more members in the church the more stable and secure the church will be. The stability of the church allows it to take the risks necessary to make an impact in their community. It Provides Accountability Being a church attender is not the same as being a church member. Attending allows you to be a part of a church without necessarily being known by the church. When you become a member you are making commitments seven at my church that you are then held accountable for fulfilling. Accountability is a necessary aspect of the Christian life and membership ensures it will regularly function. For the leadership of the church there is nothing like knowing people have "skin in the game" especially as decisions are made. It Benefits You Becoming a member of a local church is a defining moment in your Christ followership. Membership is making a commitment and communicating it in a public way. Like the case with any commitment, successful people are just ordinary people who make commitments others are unwilling to make. In a world where membership in almost every group is falling you can help the church be the one place where it is increasing. He is the author of Comeback:

3: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints membership statistics - Wikipedia

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

Comment from webservant of Jesus-is-Savior. They teach that water baptism is absolutely essential to go to heaven. This is the same damnable heresy which Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism teaches. Official Website - www.Churches of Christ broke away in from the Christian Churches because they believed musical instruments should not be used in church. Their website is www.Campbell was convinced that the historical creeds and confessions of the church were a source of Christian division rather than union He convinced Thomas his father that infant baptism was not Christian, and in all of the Campbells were immersed by a local Baptist minister. However, even the Baptists were not Biblical enough for the Campbells Churches of Christ believed musical instruments should not be used in Worship services, but the Christian Church believes musical instruments in worship services are indeed Biblical. In , the Christian Church Disciples of Christ organized nationally and had its headquarters based in Dallas, Texas. Brief Summary of Distinguishing Beliefs Independent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ have held to historic, orthodox views on the Bible, God, the Trinity, and Jesus, but the Disciples of Christ group has become very liberal and most do not even believe in hell. In the Campbell-Rice Debate on page , it states, "Millions of ages to come, there will be millions in paradise who will be delighted to revert to recall and point to some river, pool, or fountain, in which they put on Christ and vowed eternal allegiance to Him. Corey He continues, "According to most Disciples, Baptism is one of the three indispensable acts which determine one membership in the one holy catholic Church. Baptism by immersion is an act of obedience to Christ, and as such it is necessary for the remission of sins and salvation. Mayer, page Mayer quotes Walter Scott on page as Scott gives the 5 steps to being saved and receiving Eternal Life: Repentance of personal and actual sin; 3. Peters, a false prophet. As with all Church of Christ followers, Peters espouses a false salvation by water baptism, forsaking of sinful lifestyle, mandatory confession of Christ to others, et cetera. Salvation is solely by faith in the Lord. And a good thing, for we have no self-righteousness to offer God Isaiah Jesus proclaimed that He is the way, the truth and the life John Peters is a heretic! COC is straight out of the pits of Hell. They believe salvation can be lost. The Christian Church believes we are saved by grace, BUT we work and remain faithful to the Lord in order to finally make it to heaven some day. However, if one loses salvation and comes back to Christ, he amazingly does not have to be baptized again. Evangelist Joe Boyd, in a conversation with a Christian Church worker, was told that only way he could have his sins washed away would be to be baptized. Then he was also told that after baptism he would have to work in order to make to heaven, and that he could not be sure of heaven until the end of his life. The Christian Church worker had no reply. To have complete assurance you were going to heaven in the Christian Church would be only possible if you drowned in the Baptistry. Most any Bible version can be found in the Christian Churches. Census II, page , by S. Christian Church and Churches of Christ believe that women can be pastors of Churches. Verses such as 2 Timothy 2: The Christian Church and Churches of Christ, however, do not believe the following verses forbid a woman from being pastor of a Church and preaching to and teaching men from the pulpit. Christian Churches are openly a part of Local Ministerial Associations where different pastors believe in different methods or ways of salvation. While some of the Christian Churches are stagnant and dying, others The Independent Christian Churches seem to be growing in phenomenal leaps. These "mega-churches" still hold to the basic doctrines of the Christian Church and Churches of Christ regarding Water Baptism as being necessary for remission of sins and rejecting the Unconditional Eternal Security that most Baptists hold to. Churches of Christ are also unique in that they do not take a literal view of the Book of Revelation, but rather take a figurative view of the last book of the Bible.

4: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING A MEMBER AND BEING A CHRISTIAN

Being a member of the body of Christ is the first benefit of being a church member only in the sense that it is the first of the benefits that I am dealing with in this series of messages. 3. Though my intent is to deal with the benefit of being a church member, let me begin by directing your attention to a broader subject in the New Testament.

Being a Christian is something individualistic, whereas being a member is something corporate. Being a Christian is something one does for himself, whereas being a member is something for the Body. In the Bible there are many terms with opposite meanings, such as purity and uncleanness, holiness and commonness, victory and defeat, the Spirit and the flesh, Christ and Satan, the kingdom and the world, and glory and shame. All these are opposites. In the same way, the Body is in opposition to the individual. Just as the Father is versus the world, the Spirit is versus the flesh, and the Lord is versus the devil, so also is the Body versus the individual. Once a man sees the Body of Christ, he is free from individualism. He will no longer live for himself but for the Body. Once I am delivered from individualism, I am spontaneously in the Body. The Body of Christ is not a doctrine; it is a realm. It is not a teaching, but a life. Many Christians seek to teach the truth of the Body, but few know the life of the Body. The Body of Christ is an experience in a totally different realm. A man can know the book of Romans without being justified. Similarly, a man can know the book of Ephesians without seeing the Body of Christ. We do not need knowledge; rather, we need revelation to know the reality of the Body of Christ and to enter the realm of the Body. Only a revelation from God will usher us into the realm of the Body, and only then will the Body of Christ become our experience. In Acts 2 it seems as if Peter was preaching the gospel alone and that three thousand people were saved through him. But we must remember that the other eleven apostles were standing beside him. The Body of Christ was preaching the gospel; it was not the preaching of an individual. If we have the view of the Body, we will see that individualism will not bring us anywhere. If we realize that a Christian is nothing more than a member, we will no longer be proud. Everything depends on our seeing. Those who see that they are members will surely treasure the Body and honor the other members. They will not see just their own virtues; they will readily see others as being better than themselves. Every member has a function, and all the functions are for the Body. The function of one member is the function of the whole Body. When one member does something, the whole Body does it. When the mouth speaks, the whole body is speaking. When the hands work, the whole body is working. When the legs walk, the whole body is walking. We cannot divide the members from the body. Therefore, the movement of the members of the Body must be focused around the Body. Everything that the members do should be for the Body. Ephesians 4 says that the Body is growing into a full-grown man. It does not say that individuals are growing into full-grown men. No one can know or apprehend by himself. An individual does not have the time or the capacity to experience the love of Christ in that kind of way. I am not of the body" v. This is to despise oneself and covet the work of others. This is to be proud of oneself, thinking that one man can be all-inclusive, and despising others. Both concepts are harmful to the Body. We should not imitate other members or be covetous of other members. In this way we will not become discouraged and give up when we find that we cannot be like others. At the same time, we should not despise other members, thinking that we are better and more useful. When we are at odds with the brothers and sisters, it means that we are surely at odds with God. Some Christians are like butterflies; they act independently. Others are like bees; they live and move together. The butterfly flies from flower to flower, going its own sweet way; but the bee works for the hive. The butterfly lives and works individually, but the bee has a body-consciousness. We should all be like bees, having the consciousness of the Body so that we can live together with other members in the Body of Christ. Wherever there is Body-revelation, there is Body-consciousness, and wherever there is Body-consciousness, individual thought and action are automatically ruled out. Seeing Christ results in deliverance from sin; seeing the Body results in deliverance from individualism. Seeing the Body and deliverance from individualism are not two things but one. As soon as we see the Body, our life and work as individuals cease. It is not a matter of changing our attitude or conduct; revelation does the work. We cannot enter the realm of the Body by anything other than seeing. A real inward seeing settles the whole problem.

5: Better Together: Why church membership matters – The United Methodist Church

Being a Christian is something one does for himself, whereas being a member is something for the Body. In the Bible there are many terms with opposite meanings, such as purity and uncleanness, holiness and commonness, victory and defeat, the Spirit and the flesh, Christ and Satan, the kingdom and the world, and glory and shame.

Top of page Introduction: See the bibliography at the end. Church of Christ members are among the most sincere students of the Bible. They are attempting to bring the church back to a pure biblical faith and obedient practice. This is most refreshing! They are a beacon of light in their effort to restore biblical Christianity. However, many Christians believe that the Church of Christ is mistaken on some key issues. We should note that Church of Christ people are not monolithic in their views. One group is the traditional faction. This group is sometimes referred to by outsiders as "ultraconservative" or "legalistic" or "legalistic patternists. This second group emphasizes, like most other Christians, that salvation is by grace. Below is a summary of the doctrines of the majority within the Churches of Christ. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. They reject denominationalism and believe that they themselves are not a denomination. This is an unquestioned orthodoxy and they are careful not to use the term "other denominations" as that would include themselves in the denominational world. They often deny that there are true Christians in the denominational world. They put very high emphasis on "wearing the right name," which means that any group that does not call itself the "church of Christ" cannot be part of the true church. They shun the use of the historic creeds and confessions of Christendom and believe that they have no creed themselves, relying only on the Bible. Their views, however, are in print in journals and numerous tracts. And they are famous for the creed-like formula: Baptism is only by immersion and it is an unstated inference that baptism can only be performed by another member of the Church of Christ. They even pronounce the word baptized differently by placing the accent on the second syllable. They believe that the New Testament is primarily a new legal code—the Law of Christ—that replaces the one of the Old Testament. This approach, they believe, leads to certain important conclusions such as the prohibition of instrumental music in worship. They generally reject the Old Testament except in such instances that they find passages in the Old Testament that lend support to their doctrine. They will say that we are saved by grace, but. What comes after the "but" is not consistent among them; here are some answers they may give: God fills the gap with his grace. When asked how they know that they are saved, they will probably say something like, "I have been obedient" or "I have been pleasing to God. Christ is said to save by furnishing man an example. He simply showed man how to save himself. Despite their emphasis on patternism, works righteousness, the Law of Christ, and their view of grace that is similar to the pseudo-Christian cults, they deny that they are legalists. There is little or no place for the Holy Spirit in regeneration or sanctification. Some even reject the notion that the Holy Spirit indwells a person, despite numerous mentions of this in the New Testament. This is a view they share with non-Christian groups: They refuse to fellowship with other Christians, even other conservative Christians. Question for the Church of Christ: Have we summarized your views correctly? The Church of Christ is convinced that they have the precisely correct understanding of the Bible. But critics say that they have strayed from their original purpose of Christian unity. They accuse the Church of Christ of having a different gospel, being divisive and sectarian, legalistic, and ignoring or explaining away passages of Scripture that do not fit their presuppositional interpretation. Church of Christ author K. Could any of these charges against such a biblically based group be at all true? Here is an article by a Church of Christ insider offering a candid look at their exclusive thinking. See chapter 18 of Heritage. If you are a Church of Christ person reading this, let us describe a situation that might be revealing. How do you feel inside? Do you greet this person with love and a feeling of warmth to be with another believer and servant of the Lord? Alexander Campbell, in while still living in Scotland, became concerned about the strict sectarianism of his Presbyterian group, which practiced a form of closed communion in which one had to have a token in order to participate. The whole idea repelled Alexander. When his turn came at one point, he returned his token to the elders and did not take communion. In his heart he renounced allegiance to any church that proclaimed its path as the only way to the throne of God. Yet he

insisted that the members of even these churches were true Christians. His concern was that the denominational structure imposed requirements that were not consistent with biblical unity. Barton Stone, a Presbyterian minister on a similar tract, rejected sectism and started his own movement independent of Campbell. While the two groups had very different views on many issues, they agreed to accept one another as brothers in the faith and merged in 1801. However, the hypercon contingent resolutely refuses to acknowledge any association with these men. According to Richard Hughes, the reason is that to acknowledge any historical association would be to deny that they are direct descendants of the New Testament church. It would also be an admission that they are a denomination started by men. Stone and Campbell became leaders of the idea that Christians should be able to spiritually unite on a few fundamental ideas. They held that insistence on matters of interpretation, denominationalism, credism, and ecclesiastical tyranny were not in the spirit of Christianity—given the many calls for peace and unity in the New Testament. Personal interpretation of Scripture should not be the basis for judging others or made the basis of Christian communion. Reflecting this noble idea, Stone and Campbell often said in slightly different variations, Let us acknowledge all to be our brethren who believe in the Lord Jesus, repent of their sins, and humbly and honestly obey Him as far as they understand his will and their duty. What a wonderful picture! If we may editorialize, this movement is perhaps the most underappreciated movement, at least in modern church history. These men had a passion for unity as fundamental to the Christian faith. They hailed with enthusiasm the least indications of a growing spirit of forbearance and brotherly love among the different denominations. They saw a spirit of unity among Christians as dethroning sin and Satan and converting the world. We find much to admire in the original Restoration Movement. Every Christian group has its own set of warts. Campbell noted the status of Christian division, "The constant insisting upon them [doctrinal opinions], as articles of faith and terms of salvation, have so beaten them into the minds of men, that, in many instances, they would as soon deny the Bible itself as give up one of those opinions. However, reflecting the sinful and divisive tendencies of all of us humans, the Restoration Movement itself soon began dividing over differences. For most of the nineteenth century, the terms "Church of Christ," "Disciples of Christ," and "Christian Church" were used more or less interchangeably. These have further divided so that today one can count over 2 dozen factions. Divisions came from every manner of opinion, including instrumental music, the manner of serving the Supper, millennial theories, missionary methods, orphan homes, cooperative programs with other Christian groups, whether to have Sunday School classes, etc. Those with opposing views were labeled "not sound in the faith" or "liberals" or "extremists" and were marked to be avoided, according to W. Carl Ketcherside in chapter 15 here: CC churches seemingly spend a great deal of time studying other groups with the intent of condemning what they believe to be their many egregious errors. This has a tendency to bolster unity within their group. Sadly, the noble goal of uniting Christians ended up dividing us further. The divisions are so severe among the ultra-conservative factions that there is one faction referred to as the "One Cup" group. Most of these ultraconservative factions refuse to have a meal in the church building, and would condemn any other group that disagrees. Here is an interesting article about this "Reflections" Issue Number 100. Campbell edited this journal from 1828 to 1844. Hughes believes that the editors of these journals wielded so much authority that they functioned much like bishops! Campbell postulated two key doctrines: His followers tended to coalesce around one or the other of these themes. So splits and disagreements were inevitable. His goal of restoration tended to be sectarian and exclusivist. Campbell himself shifted emphasis over his life. As he aged, he became more ecumenical, which could only have irritated the restorationist element within the movement. Stone on the other hand began very ecumenical but became somewhat more sectarian later. The two men merged in the middle of their lives when their thinking was fairly similar. He himself was never baptized for remission of sins. Stone came to believe in the doctrine, but never insisted on it as a test for Christian fellowship—arguing over and over that, "To denounce all not immersed as lost, and to cut them off from salvation, however holy and pious they may be, appears to dethrone charity and forbearance from the breast. In trying to simplify the basic tenets of Christianity, Scott developed a short list of important concepts. The list actually had different configurations. An early configuration included: Hear the Gospel i.

6: Bible Questions for the Church of Christ - Faith Facts

Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or.

In American congregations, the terms "Communion" or "body and blood" are used. The term "Eucharist" is not used. Though doctrinally Churches of Christ hold to the closed communion viewpoint, in practice congregations rarely prohibit visitors from taking communion, on the view that per 1 Corinthians All but "a very small segment" of churches use unfermented grape juice instead of wine [17]: Membership grew in 33 states and declined in The percentage of members attending services appears to be high relative to that of other Christian groups. The divorce rate was 6. In keeping with their non-denominational focus, recently some congregations have identified themselves primarily as community churches and secondarily as Churches of Christ. Churches of Christ purposefully have no central headquarters, councils, or other organizational structure above the local church level. While the presence of a long-term professional minister has sometimes created "significant de facto ministerial authority" and led to conflict between the minister and the elders, the eldership has remained the "ultimate locus of authority in the congregation". Churches of Christ hold to the priesthood of all believers. As a result, most divisions among Churches of Christ have been the result of "methodological" disputes. These are meaningful to members of this movement because of the seriousness with which they take the goal of "restoring the form and structure of the primitive church". The remaining congregations may be grouped into four categories which generally differ from the mainstream consensus in specific practices, rather than in theological perspectives, and tend to have smaller congregations on average. This group is notable for opposing congregational support of institutions such as orphans homes and Bible colleges. Similarly, non-institutional congregations also oppose the use of church facilities for non-church activities such as fellowship dinners or recreation ; as such, they oppose the construction of "fellowship halls", gymnasiums, and similar structures. In both cases, opposition is based on the belief that support of institutions and non-church activities are not proper functions of the local congregation. Approximately 2, congregations fall in this category. The no Sunday School group generally overlaps with the "one-cup" group and may overlap with the "mutual edification" group as defined below. Another group opposes the use of multiple communion cups the term "one-cup" is often used, sometimes pejoratively as "one-cuppers", to describe this group ; there are approximately congregations in this group. The last and smallest group "emphasize[s] mutual edification by various leaders in the churches and oppose[s] one person doing most of the preaching" the term "mutual edification" is often used to describe this group ; the group includes roughly congregations. An American family Bible dating to A. Regarding church practices, worship, and doctrine, there is great liberty from congregation to congregation in interpreting what is biblically permissible, as congregations are not controlled by a denominational hierarchy. The relative importance given to each of these three strategies has varied over time and between different contexts. In this regard the approach is much like that of science which, in practice moves deductively from one hypothesis to another, rather than in a Baconian inductive manner. Some argued that it fostered legalism , and advocated instead a hermeneutic based on the character of God , Christ and the Holy Spirit. Traditionalists urged the rejection of this "new hermeneutic". More generally, the classical grammatico-historical method is prevalent, which provides a basis for some openness to alternative approaches to understanding the scriptures. Congregations differ in their interpretation of the age of accountability. Beginning in the s, many preachers began placing more emphasis on the role of grace in salvation, instead of focusing exclusively on implementing all of the New Testament commands and examples.

7: What does it mean to be a part of the family of God?

Being a member of church vs being a member of the body of Christ Kevin Davis. Loading Unsubscribe from Kevin Davis? Cancel Unsubscribe. Working Subscribe Subscribed Unsubscribe Loading.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that the benefit of church membership that I will be focusing on today is the most important of benefits. Being a member of the body of Christ is the first benefit of being a church member only in the sense that it is the first of the benefits that I am dealing with in this series of messages. Though my intent is to deal with the benefit of being a church member, let me begin by directing your attention to a broader subject in the New Testament. I hope you have your Bible in hand, because we will read a good number of verses this morning. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? With the exception of Romans 7. It is important to note that, with the exception of Romans 7. Please hang on that distinction: Turn to First Corinthians chapter 12, and read verses with me: If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? First, the baptism to which he refers in verse 13 is not Spirit baptism. It is water baptism, which is how a Christian becomes a member of a New Testament church. Next, verse 26 can only be a practical reality here on earth if the body of Christ is a congregation. By doing this, Paul distinguishes the Corinthian congregation from all other Christians, showing them to be a church in the fullest sense of the word. To what is this referring? If you will examine Matthew And except for Romans 7. He never uses the phrase in an inclusive sense with reference to all Christians everywhere. Apposition is when two words or phrases are placed side by side to show that they have identical meanings. This tells us that Paul is, in Colossians 1. The problem with most professing Christians is not that they use these two terms interchangeably, but that they attach erroneous meanings to both of these two terms. Paul pointedly indicated that the Corinthians were *umei*. I do not suffer when a Christian in Sumatra is persecuted, or when a Vietnamese Christian is martyred. I am sad when I find out about it, but since most martyrs suffer and die for the Lord Jesus Christ without the outside acknowledgment or awareness of anyone but God and those who persecute them, how can their deaths directly affect me? Thus, how can this verse possibly refer to all Christians everywhere? Quite simply, it cannot be a reference to what it is not. I am not positive, but I have an idea why so many are in error on this matter: Folks, it has taken some 1, or 1, years to persuade Christendom that baptism is by the immersion of the believer. This is Baptist stuff we are dealing with today. And though there are quite a number of people who are called Baptists, and who call themselves Baptists, there are not nearly so many who rightly divide the Word of truth and believe the Bible doctrines that make thoroughgoing Baptists. Is there blessing in that? Is there benefit in that? Think just a moment, before we conclude. Would there be benefit in being one of a company of individuals owned by the Lord Jesus Christ, identified by His name, associated with His cause, as opposed to not being owned by Him, not identified by His name, and not associated with His cause? In a very general sense, in an abstract sort of way, there is obvious benefit to being a member of the body of Christ. Next week, the Lord willing, I will show you some very specific blessings and benefits associated with being a member of the body of Christ. Broadman Press, , page

8: BIBLE VERSES ABOUT BEING A PART OF THE FAMILY OF GOD

The mission statement of The United Methodist Church is "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" (The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church ¶1). This reminds us that while we seek to make members, our ultimate purpose is for the benefit of the whole world.

And, even, also, namely. Anointed One; the Messiah, the Christ. From chrio; Anointed One, i. The Messiah, an epithet of Jesus. Pulpit Commentary Verses To this favourite image St. Paul reverts several times Romans It is probable that he was familiar with the image from the fable of Menenius Agrippa, who had used it as a plea for civil unity Liv. So also is Christ. Christ and the Church form one body, of which Christ is the Head; one Vine, of which Christians are the branches John Matthew Henry Commentary Christians become members of this body by baptism. The outward rite is of Divine institution; it is a sign of the new birth, and is called therefore the washing of regeneration, Tit 3: Each member has its form, place, and use. The meanest makes a part of the body. There must be a distinction of members in the body. We should do the duties of our own place, and not murmur, or quarrel with others. All the members of the body are useful and necessary to each other. Nor is there a member of the body of Christ, but may and ought to be useful to fellow-members. As in the natural body of man, the members should be closely united by the strongest bonds of love; the good of the whole should be the object of all. All Christians are dependent one upon another; each is to expect and receive help from the rest. Let us then have more of the spirit of union in our religion.

9: 1 Corinthians Now you are the body of Christ, and each of you is a member of it.

Bible Verses about The Body Of Christ 1 Corinthians ESV / helpful votes Helpful Not Helpful For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

Our text this morning is Colossians 1. Although the verse before us describes the Lord Jesus Christ, giving several reasons why He should be recognized as being preeminent in all things, it is the first half of the verse which is of interest to us today. The church mentioned in this verse is not a universal church, but a congregation, like ours. There will someday be one, grand church, comprised of all church age believers, but that will be when we all get to heaven. Thus, Calvary Road Baptist Church is a body of Christ, just like other churches that are constituted in the New Testament fashion are bodies of Christ. Some of you here today are members of this church, while others of you are not members of this church. What benefit accrues to an individual as the direct result of being a church member, of being in the body of Christ? Surely, there are some benefits that are not so much enjoyed by that person who is not a member of the body, who is not a member of the church, as those of us who are members? How, then, are you blessed by God for being in this body of Christ? Allow me to rehearse six benefits with you this morning, associated with being in this church, the body of Christ. Have you ever wondered what it would be like to actually belong, to know where it is God wants you to be? If that sense of belonging is not yours, it is your fault. Listen to what First Corinthians It means that you are a part of this congregation because God placed you here. Because God placed you here you belong here. Please understand that God makes use of various means to get a sinner saved, and baptized, and into a church such as ours. But no matter the means used, so long as it is Scriptural and honoring to God, it is God Who is doing the setting of the various members into the body. To state the matter again: You are a part of this congregation because God has placed you here. This is where He wants you to be. Sadly, most people live out their entire lives without any real sense of belonging, and without any credible basis for believing they belong some place. Southern California Christianity is all about revolving door memberships in Churches, with folks approaching church membership the way they do restaurant dining; picking and choosing what they want rather than submitting to the revealed will of God. But notice what Paul seeks to impress upon the Corinthians he wrote to, in First Corinthians My friend, the point that Paul was making in this passage, among other things, is that each and every one of us is different, having a role to play in the proper functioning of our congregation. True, some are more prominent than others. But none of us are without importance. None of us are unnecessary. Truth be told, we are so intimately linked together that when one of us is having a rough time of it, it affects us all. What does this boil down to? It boils down to this: You may not get many attaboys, but that does not mean you are unimportant. Whether others are smart enough to realize it, or are spiritual enough to realize it, you should realize that because God has placed you here it is important for you to be here. And it is important because you are important. It is the work of the ministry, which you do, which results in the edifying, or the building up, of the body of Christ. In short, this church grows as a result of what God uses you to do. I get very irritated at the decisionist approach to evangelism, because it is so at odds with what the Word of God teaches about things related to salvation. In this regard, decisionism has come to be a religious system that has set up certain people as so-called super soul winners, as though salesmanship skills are somehow related to the miracle of the new birth. The art of persuasion, that leads to many false professions of faith, does not result in real conversions. When that sinner is hopefully converted to Jesus Christ, he is then baptized and taught to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. Formal instruction and training is accomplished most frequently by the pastor. But there are innumerable opportunities for each member of the church to guide and instruct by the examples that you set, by the encouragement that you give, and by the support of that hopeful convert that is provided by each and every one of you. Do you not see how important what you do here is? Every wink, every nod, every smile, every gesture, every prayer, every kind word, every invitation to come back to church, every time you volunteer to do something, or to help someone. In this church you have ministry that is meaningful! Some of you obviously have ministries that are more formal than others. Our deacons, and our music director, and our choir, and our ushers and greeters are quite prominent.

So, for the person who wants his life to count for something in addition to being important, to have an eternally meaningful position to occupy, no better place can be found than in this church of Jesus Christ. When I speak of fellowship, I speak not of how a person feels, but of what is, of fact, of reality. Fellowship has to do with having something in common with others, with being joint participants with them in an enterprise or in an experience. And is that not what we have in our church? Of course it is. The military, law enforcement, the fire department, and such types of work have something approaching what can be found in a church, which is why such occupations have so few people who are committed to really serving God in a church. They get an approximation of this church camaraderie at work. The tragedy with those uniformed occupations is that such camaraderie as they have is not spiritual, is not godly, and is emotionally and intellectually superficial. But even so, it substitutes in the lives of so many in those occupations for the deep and fulfilling camaraderie, the real and profound communion, that God desires members of this church to enjoy. Of course, the fellowship of which I speak, the camaraderie that I am talking about, comes only from men and women who have banded together to serve God in His great gospel enterprise. For you see, only this type of involvement counts for eternity. Only this type of involvement requires spirituality and personal holiness. Only this type of involvement calls upon God to co-labor with us in matters that are His declared causes and concerns, not those issues and items that interest only you. You have already seen, in Ephesians 4. Where else but in your church is there a promise of spiritual growth for the child of God? Oh, there are other passages in the Bible which speak of a Christian growing and maturing. But when rightly understood such growth, not only numerically but by the maturation of the individual Christian, takes place best in the church. Why does Christian growth in maturity take place best in the church? There are all sorts of reasons, from the oversight of the pastor, to the discipline of the church, to the exhortation of other believers. Read from Ephesians 4. My friends, there is no place on earth where you will be treated better and with more love than the place where people are challenged to behave toward you in the ways we have just read. Where you are truly loved you will really grow. As imperfect a place as this church is, it is a place people are loved with a God-given love. Thus, you see, those who want no part of the church, those who want no part of this church, are those who have no personal commitment to their own spiritual growth, 1, and who have no yearning for the love of their brothers and sisters in Christ here, 2. This is alarming, because of what the Lord Jesus Christ commanded: Can you love me if you leave me? Do you love me if you leave me? Will you love me if you leave me? Are you loving me if you leave me? Love and personal growth as a Christian come together in the local church. Notice the last half of Ephesians 5. I do not rightly know how to reconcile the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior, Who is to be trusted, and at the same time those who trust Him are promised persecution and even martyrdom. I can only accept what Paul says in Romans 8. Suffice it to say, the Lord Jesus Christ is quite capable of delivering anyone from anything at anytime, whether it be an individual Christian or an entire congregation. Perhaps this is accomplished when church members exhort each other and encourage each other during times of difficulty and discouragement. Many of us have experienced such in our Christian lives from fellow church members. The head provides guidance to the body. The head provides direction to the body. The head provides wisdom and insight that is valuable to the body. And what the head does for the body it does not do for those outside the body. Thus, there is the benefit of the guidance of the Lord Jesus Christ, the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the wisdom and protection of the Lord Jesus Christ, for those who are members of this church that is not guaranteed those who are not a part of the body. Many people think there is no benefit to being a member of a church. If he comes to Christ, it is a blessing to him to be here. But if he refuses Christ, that same opportunity he has by being here becomes a curse to him. But that is the person who attends church but who is not converted. The benefits for the child of God who is a church member are many and varied. God places Christians in the body. Since God is good and gracious, that means a Christian is blessed thereby. It should surprise no one, then, that because God places a Christian in a church he would, therefore, be important and necessary in that church, whatever appearances to the contrary might suggest. Then there is meaningful ministry, fellowship, growth and love, and deliverance and guidance. Some of you derive benefits from this church, even though you are not converted and are not a member of this congregation.

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