

Should the North Charlottesville church of Christ Exist?

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Introduction: It is imperative that we understand the purpose behind our service to God.

- A. Men can blindly following others without understanding God's will. **(Mt 15:8-9, 12-14)**
 - 1. Most people make human relationships their priority in choosing their religion.
 - 2. Service to God other than a basis of a living faith in His word is vain. **(Mt 6:7-8)**
- B. A living faith is filled with purpose and leads you in a different path than worldly religion.
 - 1. It is not uncommon to find the people of God in very small numbers at different times in history!
 - 2. Consider how insignificant Daniel appeared in Babylon. Someone might ask: "How could my families have their social needs met with such an insignificant few?"
 - 3. Why were God's people reduced to a remnant? **(Ezk 6:8-10, 14:22-23)**

I. What does God expect of a local church?

- A. The purpose of a local church is to glorify God by submitting to Him as the Head!
 - 1. Every Christian must recognize and submit to God's plan. **(Eph 4:4-6)**
 - 2. This plan can be easily given up by a local church. **(Acts 20:26-32)**
- B. Consider how we view the Bible and what a local church is to do.
 - 1. There is a revolution going on among churches of Christ where brethren are rejecting the necessity of having authority before we teach or practice a thing.
 - 2. Jesus life was focused on "doing the will of the Father who sent Me." **(Jn 5:19-21, 30)**
 - 3. There was not a single thing Jesus did without the fellowship and authority of the Father. **(Jn 8:28-29)**
 - 4. Jesus' light was delivered in the form of words. They were recorded for us to see and respond to. Jesus showed us the response He expects! **(Jn 12:46-50)**
- B. Local church must have bible authority for its teachings and practices.
 - 1. In the Old Testament the example of Nadab and Abihu teaches this. **(Lev 10:1-3)**
 - 2. The New Testament also recognizes this point. **(Heb 7:12-14; 2 Jn 9-11)**
 - 3. By limiting ourselves to only what God has revealed we allow our teaching and practice to glorify God. **(1 Pt 4:11; Col 3:17)**
- C. There are some fundamental conclusions that every Christian must draw.
 - 1. We must know if a teaching or practice is **authorized by God's word!**
 - 2. Every Christian must be willing to give "Book, Chapter, and Verse" for any practice or teaching they engage in. **(Col. 3:17).**
- D. How did God choose to equip His people? **(Eph 4:11-12)**
 - 1. It is easy to become sidetracked on things that appeal to our flesh but in the end do nothing for the work of God.
 - 2. Apostasy comes from God's people seeking please themselves. **(2 Tim 4:2-4)**
 - 3. Be prepared! Many will close their hearts and their Bibles. **(Rom 8:5-8; Jer 6:16-17)**
 - 4. When we close our Bibles it is easy to be comfortable with the things we have always done. Also when one generation adds things having no Bible authority, the next generation will go much further.
 - 5. We are not to substitute for the drawing power of the gospel by an appeal to the flesh. (ex. "fellowship halls") **(Jn 6:44-45; 26-27, Rom 1:16-17)**

II. Why did the North Charlottesville church begin?

- A. I took over 2 years in planning the work here.
 - 1. A Christian visited this area to consider moving here and gave me a report.

2. I began my own research to consider where faithful churches existed in this state. I also took several trips here.
 3. The existing church in this area had a history of teaching and practice that identifies them to this day. They have a defined fellowship.
- B. Consider how fellowship impacts one's belief about Baptism.
1. Baptism is the final step to find forgiveness of sins. **(Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16)**
 2. A failure to understand the purpose of Baptism can result in men being sincerely immersed in water but not having received the baptism Christ instructed. **(Acts 19:1-5)**
 3. This truth is why those churches of Christ had to separate from the various denominations and stand with other Christians upon this truth.
 4. Can one who believes God's will on the purpose of water baptism work together in fellowship in a church that does not?
 5. You may be tolerated if only give financial support to those who differ with you. If you allow all who want to receive Christ be taught contrary to what you say you believe. And that only preachers and literature that teaches contrary to what you say you believe be used. You are forbidden teach what you believe with anyone.
 6. Could you accept those conditions and be taken seriously by anyone that you believe what you say you believe? A separation of fellowship is demanded!

III. What should a Christian do when problems arise in a local church?

- A. It is not surprising when a local church faces problems. They all do.
1. The challenge comes in solving problems keeping the "unity of the spirit." **(Eph 4:1-3)**
 2. When the right spirit is present brethren will in time solve any issue. **(James 3:17)**
- B. Local churches were often troubles by outside forces (individuals).
1. I have on several occasions seen a local church disturbed by a man who had an agenda. The tactics of a divisive man is seen over time. **(James 3:14-16)**
 2. Often a man has a track record, a history of how they deal with brethren. **(Mt 7:15-20)**
- C. Brethren can be captured by evil men.
1. They work in the background so they cannot be opposed. **(2 Pt 2:1-3)**
 2. They work to meet the social needs of one in order to separate him from brethren. They try to destroy the influence of the ones who could help the recruit. **(Gal 4:16-19)**
 3. How many "house churches" have been formed across the country by men of this spirit? They live in what I call "the land of throw-away people."
- D. We must not let bad experiences cause us to quit! **(Rom 3:8)**
1. Satan often uses another's bitterness as a tool for you to become bitter. Please do not give in to this darkness. **(Rom 12:17-21; Heb 12:14-15)**

IV. The power of a living faith that submits to God's way

- A. Do you have an alternative to being a part of the North Charlottesville church? Are you willing to remain at a church that goes beyond the authority of Christ? **(2 Jn 9-11)**
- B. A compromised fellowship is a sure path to unbelief.
1. Do you understand the path "mainstream" churches of Christ are taking?
 2. Do you understand the path the Christian church took after that division?
- C. A Biblical faith will always stand with those who stand in the truth. **(Heb 11:35-38)**
1. Should I have left the Baptist church?
 2. Should I have left a local church that was moving into "liberalism?"

Conclusion: God will bless those who know Him and stand upon what is right.

- A. Do you remember these men? Sethur? Gaddiel? Palti? Shaphat? -- Caleb? Joshua?