

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

August 26, 2007

Churches of Christ

by David King

"The churches of Christ greet you" (Rom. 16:16).

This simple salutation makes a great bumper sticker. But like most labels, this name is easily misused by brethren who fail to appreciate the meaning of the term.

The New Testament never specifically addresses the question of a formal name for the church. Jesus said that He would build His church (Matt. 16:18), and He did so (Ac. 2:47). But it was never given a formal title. Occasionally, a modifier is added indicating ownership ("the church of God," Ac. 20:28; 1 Cor. 10:32), or composition ("the church of the firstborn," Heb. 12:23). But in the vast majority of cases, it is called simply "the church" (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18). There was never any need to give it a formal name, because it was the only thing of its kind.

In like manner, local congregations are sometimes identified by their allegiance ("the churches of God," 1 Cor. 11:16), their geographic location ("the churches of Galatia," 1 Cor. 16:1), or their composition ("the churches of the saints," 1 Cor. 14:33). But the far more common expression is simply "the churches." "The churches of Christ" belongs in the first category here; it refers merely to local congregations that are loyal to Christ.

The sheer variety of terminology used to describe the church in general or local congregations in particular reinforces one very obvious but often overlooked lesson: Identifying the "right" church is not a matter of picking the "right" name. The Lord's church is defined not

by the label it wears, but by its character, its conduct, its allegiance to the law of Christ.

This lesson has some practical implications in our lives as members of this church.

First, when we are visiting or move into a new town, we cannot depend on the name that's posted on the sign in front of a building to determine if a church is a good place to worship. Instead, we have to look at what goes on inside: Do they honor the teachings of Christ, or of men? Is their worship and work consistent with the New Testament? Are their personal lives faithful to the One whose name they wear? Any group can call themselves a "Church of Christ," but there is no truth-in-advertising law to regulate the accuracy of that claim. We must dig deeper to determine if the name is deserved.

Second, when identifying our religious affiliation to others, we should be careful how we express ourselves. "I'm a member of the Church of Christ" is not unscriptural, but it is fraught with sectarian implications that can leave the wrong idea in the minds of the uninformed. A safer approach would be to say simply, "I am a Christian," or "I am a member of the Lord's church." Another alternative would be, "I worship with churches of Christ," which is accurate, if incomplete.

The point of this article is not to argue that "names don't matter." They do. Certainly we should not trivialize the Lord's church by giving it some human label. But neither should we enshrine a single scriptural term as a substitute for doing our homework.