



Find the true church

How can I find the true church by myself?

Dear Andrew, *

Is there actually still a true church today? Since Jesus spoke of it as His church, I would prefer calling it the church of Jesus Christ. Jesus said: *“The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it [My church].”* (Matthew 16:18 NKJV) Jesus’ words show us that His church still exists. Therefore, we can search for it and find it.

An experience to illustrate: Three sisters, who each belonged to a different church, asked a pastor: “Which church is the right one?” He asked them three questions, which they answered in the affirmative. After that he told them how they could resolve the problem for themselves with a relatively short Bible study. They completed this Bible study and then they all joined the same church.

Why should a person discover this themselves? Can’t you just ask an expert? Or ask individual churches and groups? Naturally. But almost all of them claim to be the true church, although they generally have very different teachings. So, in this way we won’t accomplish anything.

It would be best to follow the example of the inhabitants of Berea (Greece).

The Bible refers to their attitude as noble:

“Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.” (Acts 17:11 NIV)

This is good advice! Back then the people in Berea eagerly listened to Paul’s preaching. But they daily searched in the Bible themselves, to see if it was true. That is why I recommend also doing this when confronted with the question about the right church of Jesus. A short Bible study is a good method to use.

But first, let’s take a look at the three questions that the pastor asked. These questions are an important prerequisite for a successful study of this question.

1. Do you believe that Jesus Christ taught the truth and practiced it in His life?

Jesus said: *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”* (John 14:6 NKJV) *“Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you ...”* (Matthew 28:20 NKJV)

* Andrew after the biblical Andrew in John 1:41-42.

Peter said: “*Jesus committed no sin; He died for our sins.*” (1 Peter 2:22-24)

“... *Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.*” (1 Peter 2:21 NKJV)

We should and want to follow His example in all things. That is why John said: “*He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.*” (1 John 2:6 NKJV)

I believe that Jesus taught and revealed divine truth and that His whole life was an example for us. Every true Christian believes this. This is the first requirement for our purpose. Do you believe this too?

2. Do you believe that the true church of Jesus has to concur with the teachings and example of Jesus?

Does the church of Jesus today – after almost 2,000 years – still have to concur with Jesus? Wasn't there any ongoing development? What did Jesus Himself say?

Jesus said: “... *the Scripture cannot be broken.*” (John 10:35 NKJV)

Here, Jesus referred to the Old Testament. Naturally, this applies to the whole Bible including the New Testament. According to Jesus the Scripture cannot be “broken”. When you break something, then you have multiple pieces. Jesus is conveying here that we cannot at will accept one part and reject another part. John said in complete agreement with Jesus:

“*Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.*” (2 John 9 NKJV) This is a clear denial of any ongoing development of Biblical teachings. What God has revealed through His Son (Hebrews 1:1) cannot, may not and doesn't need to be improved by humans.

The apostle Paul said: “*But even if we [the apostles], or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.*” (Galatians 1:8-9 NKJV)

Even the apostles or the angels don't have the right to change the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, no one else may either. Thus, we have established: The church of Jesus today has to concur with Jesus Christ and His word.

Do you believe this as well?

3. Are you ready to join the church of Jesus now when you find it?

Why is this willingness important now before the study begins? Jesus said:

“*If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God ...*” (John 7:17 NKJV)

Jesus was saying: Whoever wants to do God's will, will also discern it. God will help those, who have a sincere desire to know and do God's will, to know the truth and thus also know the church of Jesus. A divine promise says:

"He [God] holds success in store for the upright ..." (Proverbs 2:7 NIV) – God has promised the Holy Spirit's help to those, who are obedient to Him (Acts 5:32). He has promised to guide us into all truth (John 14:26 and John 16:13). Most certainly, this includes the truth about His church. A wonderful book about Jesus' life says: "To those who thus yield themselves to God, having an honest desire to know and to do His will, the truth is revealed as the power of God for their salvation." (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 455.3) Are you ready to join the church of Jesus when you have found it?

Now, how can I find out for myself, what the true church of Jesus is?

There is a simple way. Study the gospel of Matthew. It has about 40 pages. It doesn't contain all of the teachings of Jesus, but does include most of them.

You might like to underline/highlight the verses about His teachings, His example and what is said about Him. I did the study as follows:

I used a notebook with margins on both sides of the page and divided it as follows:

I wrote the chapter and verse in the left margin.

I wrote in the left half of the main column the sentence or part of a sentence directly from the Bible, which contained a teaching or exemplary behavior of Jesus. I wrote in the right half of the main column what teaching this sentence contained.

In the right margin, I made columns for each of the churches, which I wanted to examine (for example a column for the Catholic Church, Evangelical Church, Adventist Church and the Baptist Church).

I made a plus mark in each church's column that supported that particular teaching.

In the end, the church, which had a plus mark for every teaching, concurs with Jesus' teachings. This is the church of Jesus, which I want to join.

Bible Passage	Bible Text	Teaching	Churches			
			Cath.	Evan.	Adv.	Bapt.
Matt. 1:1	The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ.	This is history and not a myth or legend.	+	+	+	+
Matt. 1:18	Mary was found with child of the Holy Spirit.	Miracle of a birth from a virgin.	+		+	+

In Bible studies I have often first studied a chapter or portion of a chapter of Matthew before we started with the general Bible topic.

The interest in this study was always very high. A man once said to me: “By the time I was in chapter four, I realized that I am not in the right church.”

May our wonderful God richly bless you, especially when you tell others about Jesus. Remember that this is the utmost you can do for a person, “... ‘Everyone who calls out to the Lord for help will be saved.’ But how can they call to him for help if they have not believed? And how can they believe if they have not heard the message? And how can they hear if the message is not proclaimed? ... ‘How wonderful is the coming of messengers who bring good news!’” (Romans 10:13-15 GNT)

How can I join the church of Jesus?

Jesus said: “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20 NKJV)

The early church didn’t have access to the Jewish houses of worship. They met in house churches. The smaller the group, the stronger the personal relationships will be. The time during corona showed that church buildings can be closed very quickly. I am convinced that house churches present a good survival chance in such situations.

Many people were deeply touched by Peter’s Pentecost sermon. They became open to believing in Jesus. Acts 2:37-47 gives an account of this:

“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation.’ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ [doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (NKJV)

We can see here: God wants us to join His church. The path into the church first leads to repentance, to rethinking (that is what the biblical expression “repent” means).

We turn away from our previous path, confess our sins to God (more on forgiveness in Letter to Andrew No. 16) and we decide to follow Jesus and to do what He says. We accept Jesus in our lives as Savior and Lord.

“He [Jesus Christ] came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:11-13 NKJV)

To believe in His name means to trust Him so much that I entrust Him with my life. This can be compared to a wedding. We enter a covenant with Christ, who has shown us His great love. The outward sign that I have entered a covenant with Jesus is by the biblical baptism through immersion. It symbolizes the burial of my old self and the resurrection of a new person. Romans 6:4 says:

“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” (RSV)

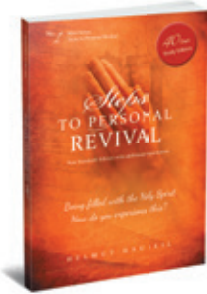
According to Jesus, new life comes from a new birth, *“born of God”*. (John 1:13, John 3:6, 8). Becoming new takes place through the Holy Spirit. We receive Him when our baptism was a true surrender to Jesus: *“and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* (Acts 2:38 NKJV) (Look *Letter to Andrew No. 20*: Let you be baptized about biblical details).

Humans are programmed to function in days – a time frame of 24 hours. That is why we maintain our natural life by daily eating, drinking, exercising, sleeping, etc. The same applies to our life with God (2 Corinthians 4:16). We maintain our extraordinarily valuable friendship with Jesus by committing ourselves to Him every morning and asking for and receiving the Holy Spirit with a promise (for example: Luke 11:13 *“how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”* NKJV). We delight to daily contemplate about Him, read about Him, talk with Him, let Him be a part of everything that concerns us and make decisions together with Him. Because we are God’s “hands and feet” on this earth, by which He wants to make His love and goodness perceptible and tangible to all people. In this way, we will become strong and happy people, who He can lead to a fulfilled life here (John 10:10) and later to eternal life – a life without pain and distress, without tears and grief, an existence in paradise, which He will create anew.

I hope that you – as I have – find a spiritual home in the church of Jesus, where you feel well in every sense and make progress. Expect great things from God and undertake great things for God.

With warm greetings and good wishes,

Helmut



BOOK 1: STEPS TO PERSONAL REVIVAL

Being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Our lord himself has given the command:¹ Let yourselves be consistently and repeatedly filled anew with the spirit!²

1 Ellen G. White, *Mount of Blessing*, MB 20.3 (egwwritings.org)

2 Johannes Mager, *Auf den Spuren des Heiligen Geistes* (Lüneburg, 1999), p. 101

www.steps-to-personal-revival.info

FOREWORD FOR LEADERS AND FUTURE LEADERS MULTIPLYING THE RESULTS

CHAPTER 1: JESUS' MOST PRECIOUS GIFT

What did Jesus teach about the Holy Spirit?

Are you acquainted with Jesus' most powerful message?

CHAPTER 2: WHAT IS THE CENTER OF OUR PROBLEMS?

Is there a spiritual cause to our problems? Is the cause a lack of the Holy Spirit?

What is the main problem with being a carnal Christian?

CHAPTER 3: OUR PROBLEMS ARE SOLVABLE

What is God's solution for our problems? How can we grow to be happy and strong Christians? What is the relationship between baptism and the Holy Spirit?

CHAPTER 4: WHAT DIFFERENCES CAN WE EXPECT?

What advantage do we have with a life filled with the Holy Spirit

What do we lose when we don't pray for the Holy Spirit?

CHAPTER 5: THE KEY TO PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

How can I implement and experience God's solution for me?

How should I pray so that I am sure of being filled with the Holy Spirit?

CHAPTER 6: WHAT EXPERIENCES LIE AHEAD OF US?

Personal experiences, as well as experiences from churches, a conference and a union

CHAPTER 7: INTEREST AND SHARING

The Joy that we give returns to our own hearts. (German Proverb)

How can I help others to experience "Life in Abundance"?

How do we pass on the message? Which ways are there?

Read
more

BOOK 2: STEPS TO PERSONAL REVIVAL

ABIDE IN JESUS – HOW DO YOU DO THAT?

“Abide in Me, and I in you.” Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service.

Ellen G. White (*Desire of Ages*, DA p.676.2)

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Abiding in Him is not a work that we have to do as a condition in order to enjoy His salvation. Rather it is our consent to let Him do everything for us, in us, and through us. It is a work He does for us – the result and the power of His redeeming love. Our part is simply to yield, to trust, and to wait for Him to accomplish what He has promised. (Andrew Murray)

CHAPTER 1: JESUS' MOST PRECIOUS GIFT

Are you acquainted with Jesus' most powerful message?

What functions does the Holy Spirit have?

How can our character be changed?

Jesus on the Holy Spirit in the Parable. About the Leaven

CHAPTER 2: SURRENDER TO JESUS

Do I lose my own will? Or will I become stronger? What can prevent us from surrendering?

Does surrender to God mean that we have to give up our own will?

CHAPTER 3: JESUS ABIDING IN YOU

What effects does “Christ in me” have on my life?

The ultimate achievement: being imbued with the fullness of God.

The Effects of “Christ in you”. How do we get deliverance from the power of sin?

Will we become “carnal” again by sinning?

CHAPTER 4: OBEDIENCE THROUGH JESUS?

How can I live in joyful obedience? What is joy? How does obedience through “Jesus in me” work?

God has designed: Collaboration between God and Man.

CHAPTER 5: ATTRACTIVE FAITH THROUGH JESUS

How can oneness be achieved among believers?

What makes our faith appealing to our family and the world?

What changes in us make us witnesses? How does revival generate mission?

