

Reflections



The True Church of God Member

It is essential that we understand that the Church of God, the 'real' church which is the body of Jesus Christ, is not the physical organization that we are affiliated with such as the Church of God, International or any other church organization. Neither is it a building, a chapel, a meeting place, or any other physical structure. The true Church of God is composed of people, individuals, those who have the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit regardless of their church organization. Can their be 'true' church members in just about 'every' church organization? Absolutely not. There are basic 'identification marks' whereby we could single out a son or a daughter of God. Belief in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice and teachings, adherence and obedience to the Ten Commandments, the Food Laws, acceptance of both the Old and New Testament Scriptures are among the most basic of those identification marks as far as the Church of God, International is concerned regardless of the ideas of other "church of God" groups or of other so-called "God-believing" individuals or organizations. A 'true' son or daughter of God, or one who claims to be, must exhibit the same character traits as his/her Father, or at least should be struggling hard to be "like" his/her Father. After all, we do believe we are created 'in the image and in the likeness of God.' For a more detailed explanation on this subject, please request for the brochures "Where is the True Church?", "Must You Be a Member of a Church to Be Saved?" and "Why You Were Born."

The Shepherd and the Sheep

In John 11, Jesus described Himself as a Shepherd and his followers as the sheep. Some church members have ideas that when they turn away, go back into the world, stop attending church services and reject Jesus Christ, that somehow they are "lost sheep." This isn't quite the case if we carefully study what is written in Scriptures. First, a "sheep that is lost" does not stay where it is but wanders

along trying "to find where the others are"! Unlike those who stop attending, this is not the case with a "lost sheep." Jesus said that when he makes a call, his sheep will hear his voice. Whose voice do you hear and listen to? Jesus Christ's or your church leader or some other person who discredits Jesus Christ? Think about it very carefully, if you are a lost sheep and Jesus has found you, and talks to you through the Bible, will you listen to His voice? But if you don't even recognize let alone obey your True Shepherd, how can you claim to be a sheep of His? To say you are a sheep of Jesus Christ means that you recognize Him as your Shepherd, therefore you should be obedient to His voice and His commandments, the question is: do you really believe and obey Jesus?

The Sabbaths of God

The Church of God International firmly believes that the Sabbath, the Fourth Commandment, is as binding today as it was in the days of the Israelites. This is not negotiable and we believe it is part of the covenant that identifies who is a true son or a daughter of God. Regardless of the many excuses that we always come up with not to keep it or the many reasons why we find it difficult to observe, Sabbath-breaking is in the same category as murder, adultery, covetousness, theft or any of the other commandments, the penalty of which is eternal death. Any person who disregards or rejects the Sabbath and teaches men (or women) to do so are disrespectful of the Father God and will not be a part of the Kingdom of God. The same is true of the annual holy days that God instituted and commanded to be observed. To find out more about the Sabbath, request for your free copy of "Saturday-Sunday, Which?", "Keeping the Sabbath Holy" "God's Holy Days" and "Why Would Anyone Keep Saturday for Sunday?"

The Church is NOT Trouble-Free

The history of the church of God is not exactly "smooth-sailing" since the day it

was founded in the first century until now. From the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the Acts, the Epistles of Paul, Peter, John, James, Jude and Revelation, we can clearly read that the churches are beset with all kinds of problems. There are numerous cases of people going back to their old ways of life, succumbing to personal weaknesses, even accepting totally different doctrines from the ones they were originally taught and myriad of other problems, both personal and organizational. Our idea that a church is a place of safety, of refuge, of peace, is not entirely accurate. Ideally, a church assembly, should be a good place to be, to fellowship with people of like minds, to be encouraged and be strengthened. But we know that people in the church are people who are struggling with personal weaknesses, and occasionally, with personal ambitions, and sometimes, there are those who are just "spying out" on the liberty of the church. John speaks of church brethren turned anti-christs (I John 2:18-19), Jude warns of godless men among the congregation (Jude 3-4), Paul was abandoned by fellow laborers and warns that there are those who are preaching a different doctrine (Galatians 1:6-7, 2 Timothy 2:17-18, 2 Timothy 4:10). We read of the seven churches in Revelation 2-3 with its own set of particular weaknesses and strengths and warned by no less than Jesus Christ himself of being removed if they do not change their ways. If you are looking for some "religious" good time, the church is not really the place to be, especially the Church of God. But should you decide to stick with one of God's churches, you will have to share its "ups and downs," the good times and the bad times, the thick and thin, and clearly understand that it is "he who endures to the end" who will have authority over the nations (Revelation 2:10, 26). **AG**