

# Calvary Assembly



The Foursquare Church  
Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Hebrews 13:8

Bunbury, Australia



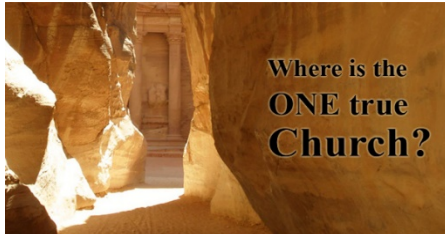
The Sword of the Spirit

The Word of God

From the Pastor's heart

## The True Church

*Rev 3:13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*



Are there many churches or just one Church? This verse gives us a clue to the question in the picture. The clue is in plurality as the letters are to 7 churches mentioned in the book of Revelation. So what is the Church and is there only one Church? In today's world of Churches, we find that there are literally thousands of churches and some going so far as to say that they are the one

true church. Wikipedia estimates that there are 41,000 different denominations and probably as many if not more para church groups. Para church groups are organisations that name the name of Jesus but follow their own activities other than church activities like conducting services. They range from help groups to donors of things and money to needy people. Someone like Compassion or World Vision can be considered as a para church group.

In this smorgasbord of Churches and the like, we find a great amount of anomalies, corruption, false doctrines and deception rife in Churches. This is not something new. It has been around since the nation of Israel began its journey as one nation unto God. They had been chosen by God to represent Him on earth while all others on earth were rejected of God and were not called His people. In a sense they were the one true church *Act 7:36 He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years. Act 7:37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. Act 7:38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:* This verse gives us the typology of Jesus in Moses and an understanding that Jesus was already amongst His people and represented His church even in the wilderness. *1Co 10:2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 1Co 10:3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 1Co 10:4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.* Both the manna which fell and water from the Rock were Jesus because He called Himself the bread of life and the living water.

This brings us to the meaning of "Church". Here are some thoughts on what people think Church is:

1. Christians who have their own beliefs and forms of worship
2. A place (building) for public (especially Christian) worship.
3. A service (form of activity) conducted in a house of worship.
4. The body of people who attend or belong to a particular local church
5. The bride of Christ

If we take our learning from the verse above, we must realise that the body of Israel as a nation also represented the Church of Christ. So, collectively, with Christ, the Church must mean Christ incarnate (embodied in human form) as a body of believers with Him as the head of the body. *Col 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.* Since we cannot have a headless body, we also conclude that Jesus is the Head of the Church even as we are His body. *1Co 12:12 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.*

Taking this concept further, of many members of the body being the Church, we can conclude that there are many believers who worship in different scenarios ranging from local bodies to home groups etc. calling themselves Churches but meaning that they are in Christ. However, the simplicity of this reasoning cannot suffice in explaining the true Church. As time has gone by, we have discovered that there are many anomalies concerning the concept of Church and what it means to people today. Most associate Church with a physical building. While it is a building in a sense, it is not the building made with bricks and mortar but the spiritual building of God's habitation. So, a Church must have the life and presence of God through Jesus in it before it can be called a Church. The question then arises,

if the habitation of God is full of evil, can it still be called a Church? According to the letters of Jesus to the 7 churches in the book of Revelation, He still called them churches even though they had been infiltrated by evil. *Rev 2:20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. Rev 2:21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Rev 2:22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. Rev 2:23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*

Based on these verses, we can conclude that, even though there have been infiltrations of evil into most of the Churches, Christ still considered them His body. Yet, the world and many Christians are quick to judge the Church based on mistakes, sin and bad practices. They do not judge themselves first when they do this because their expectation of Church is external to them and in their opinion require purity on a perfected level. Their expectations are not entirely wrong but it concludes judgement not grace. They do not understand that each one of us who are saved and born again are going through the perfecting process. Not everyone in Church is a bad person or is deliberately sinning. Many make mistakes that is not sin but just honest mistakes as a weak vessel of flesh just like anybody else. So, in trying to arrive at an understanding of the true Church, I think we need to examine our thought processes and decisions we conclude on. This will help us avoid traps and pitfalls of judging others when we ourselves fall short of the true concept of Church.

Yet, we should not be without opinion as we are required to discern good from evil and know how to move into purity and maintain it because we are the temple of the living God. Many local bodies and denominations have moved away from the fullness of the gospel and have gone into what I call "Modified Christianity". This is both bad and dangerous as we are called into accountability by the Head of the body that is Christ even though we may not feel accountable to anyone else. That accountability takes many courses in the outworking and daily life of the Church in question. Many local bodies have splits, fall into major sin, teach false doctrines and basically become dead to God because they have strayed or totally avoided listening to the Holy Spirit. Most of them who end up in this situation justify their journey and end. Few go on to realising their error and often carry that error or sin into another local body. This is where things get really tough. These are in many ways God's judgements that come out of a neglect of following His commands and keeping holiness and righteousness as forefront practices in the local body or denomination. What is interesting to note is, many denominations can actually influence all or some of their local body attachments by what they choose to follow. I am reminded of a rather large Denomination in Australia one day deciding to allow the drinking of alcohol as a norm and the practice of divorce as an unavoidable evil to which little or no discipline is applied anymore, either by counselling or taking a stand on God's commands. As time has gone by, many other denominations have allowed the practice of homosexuality which now goes under the acronym of LGBTQI. It means, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex. The things they have not yet legalised in countries is sex with children and animals, which I believe will come along next. As you can see, what you allow is what will condemn you and bring the wrath of God on both the Church and the world.

In both cases, Israel suffered immensely under the judgements of God for all their practices that ranged from fornication to idolatry and witchcraft. When God destroyed the known world in the time of Noah and subsequently Sodom & Gomorrah in the time of Abraham we know these judgements will come again. Since then, we have seen all forms of natural disasters and social breakdown because of what the world and the Church has allowed and practiced. How much of this problem belongs to the Church? That is a good question. I think, this verse tells us what needs to be done internally within the body for the rest of the world to be blessed. *Ch\_7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

So, based on this verse we can conclude that God is willing to forgive and heal, if the Church will play its part in cleansing the temple not only for itself but for the nations of this world. This is a great responsibility on the Church. The true Church will always only lift Jesus up as its Head and Builder. Secondly, it will allow the Holy Spirit to guide all its activities. Thirdly, it will love God and God's people and do everything it can to save lost souls. Fourthly, it will prepare a habitation for God to dwell in so that God may be all in all. I trust that God will give us wisdom about who the Church is, what to do in it and about it and to re-examine our own involvement based on our walk with Christ. Let us not be found as evil doers or busybodies in the Church but as righteous men, women and children who walk in all truth and love.

Lots of love  
Pastor Noble  
09/04/2017

The Bride of Christ

