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The Church -- The Body of Christ

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The church which Christ said He would build (Matthew 16:18), and which was established on the first Pentecost after His resurrection (Acts 2:47) is called in the scriptures, "the body of Christ." In Ephesians 1:22, 23, Paul calls it "...the church, which is his body." In Colossians 1:18, he calls it "...the body, the church..."

The New Testament Teaches There Is One Body

The figure of the church of Christ as the spiritual body of Christ emphasizes the singularity of the church. Christ spoke of building "my church"- singular (Matthew 16:18). Paul wrote that "we have many members in one body" (Romans 12:4, 5); also, "But now are they many members, yet but one body" (I Corinthians 12:20). Both Jew and Gentile are reconciled unto God in one body (Ephesians 2:16). "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:4, 5). The church is the body. The body is one. Therefore, the church of Christ is one. Let each be sure he is a member of this one.

Christ Is the Head of the Body

The Church Christ's dominion over the church is complete. He was given "to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body..." (Ephesians. 1:22, 23). He is "the head of the body, the church" (Colossians 1:18). As members of one's physical body are subject to his mind, so must the members of Christ's spiritual body (the church) be to Him. What he does not command and teach, the church must not do nor teach (II John 9, 10). The "effectual working" of "every part" (i.e., every member) is dependent on growing up "into him in all things, which is the head of Christ" (Ephesians 4:15, 16).

Christians Are Members of the Body of Christ

The relationship of a Christian to Christ as the head of the body (the church) is that of complete subjection (Ephesians 5:24). The relationship of a Christian to fellow Christians as members of the one body (the church) is that of complete union and harmony. Every joint is to supply his part to make the body strong (Ephesians 4:16). All the members are united in the one body (Romans 12:4, 5; I Corinthians 12:12-20). Each member must perform his own work (I Corinthians 12:14-19). One member is as important as any other member (I Corinthians 12:21-23). There must be no schism in the body (I Corinthians 12:24, 25). There must be mutual sympathetic care for each other (I Corinthians 12:25-27).

The Importance of Being Members of the Body

Christ is the Saviour of the body (Ephesians 5:23). If one wishes to be among the saved, he must be in the body. Men are "called unto the peace of God" in one body (Colossians 3:15). If one desires this peace, he must be in the body. Man is "reconciled unto God in one body" (Ephesians 2:16). If one is to have the benefits of this reconciliation, he must be in the body. The "fullness of him that filleth all in all" is in the one body (Ephesians 1:23) If one is to enjoy this fullness, he must be in the body. One cannot be subject to the head and united with Christ without being a member of the body.

How to Become a Member of the Body

Paul wrote to the members of the church at Corinth (I Corinthians 1:2), "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body..." (I Corinthians 12:13). This is by being "buried with Christ in baptism" (Romans 6:3). Have you done this?