

Introducing the 1st Century Christianity

(Romans 14:17). They offered the gospel, for they knew it was God's power to save (Romans 1:16), and any other appeal was beneath them.

Many would say, "Oh, if only such could be today." But it is! Free men and women over the earth have despaired of denominationalism, seeing in it neither necessity nor relevance but only a cause of division. They desire the simplicity of what Christ authored, and their number is increasing. How many have taken such a stand? Who knows! They are related and connected only in Christ and not in some organization with machinery to keep a tally. We will not try to number them. What is important, though, is that a group of such people meet within minutes of where you live (see an address below).

They are just Christians. They worship and serve God in the same way the early disciples did (John 4:23-24). Christ is their only creed and the Scriptures their only guide. They are not members of any human organization; they are simply a congregation, or church of Christ. They, in turn, would like to share Christ with you and with the entire world. You too can be just a Christian and serve God without belonging to any denomination, bound by denominational laws or obligations. If such freedom appeals to you, please contact or visit us NOW!

For more information:

Visit church of Christ, Kobape Village, Okonfo Area, Ogo Oluwa, Off Osogbo-Gbongan Road, Osogbo, Osun State or any church of Christ meeting in your area.

www.cocogooluwa.org, e-mail :info@cocogooluwa.org

Schedule of Meetings: Sundays (Worship) - 9.00a.m & 5.00p.m. Mondays (Bible Study) - 5.30p.m. Saturdays (Prayer/Singing Class) - 5.30p.m.

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There seems no better way of describing the present day religious chaos and divisions other than the way Israelites were described by an inspired author in the book of Judges: "In those days, there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). Consequent upon this, so many people today are growing weary and disenchanted with present religious divisions (schism, denominations) which has been foretold in the Bible. (Acts 20:29-31.)

Many are displeased with the denominational structures, dogmas and unscriptural (most often anti-scriptural) practices which is a clear deviation from 1st Century Christianity. This have made some people opined that Christianity is not relevant today while few still regards it as a cheat. We believe they have made that decision because they are not sufficiently acquainted with the Scriptures to be able to distinguish between the relevant gospel of Christ and what men over the centuries have attempted to add to and subtract from it. Meanwhile, some are lamenting today just as Jeremiah did when he said: "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?" (Lamentations 1:12).

Are you not also troubled and bordered by some of these things? Having several groups of people claiming to be Christians but with different church names, conflicting belief system, various and antagonising practices, different applications of the word of God (to their destruction anyway - 2 Peter 3:16) and yet holding the same Bible? Are you not feeling a yearning to return to the simple, uncomplicated religion of Christ, stripping away all the non-essential elements of religion and simply abiding by the truths of Christ? Truths which transform the soul and bind it to God. If you are, let us suggest that it can and has been done.

The Bible, the only God's word to man, presents Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Acts 8:35-37; I John 4:15; John 5:31-47; Acts 17:2-3). He was foreshadowed and predicted in the Old Testament which God used to govern His people until Christ should come and establish the New (Jeremiah 31:31-33; Galatians 3:19,23-24). The New Testament reveals the religion of Christ and by studying it, one learns all about the way of Christ for salvation.

Interestingly, in the New Testament, we learn that among the followers of Christ there existed no denominational organizations whatsoever and not even a single denomination to be a member of in the first century. All began at a later time. In the New Testament we see people hearing the gospel and obeying the conditions of God's grace. From the book of Acts of the Apostles, we learnt how the people of the old became Christians. They heard the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16) preached to them and they believed the facts of the gospel which are: the **death** of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-3; John 19:33); **burial** of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:4; Matthew 27:59-60); and **resurrection** of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:4; Matthew 28:5-6) for the purpose of saving men. These facts were **preached** (Mark 16:15), **heard** (Romans 10:13-17), **believed** by them. They also **repented** of their sins (Acts 17:30-31; 2:38; Luke 13:3), **confessed** their faith in Christ (Acts 8:37; Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:8-10) and were **baptized** in water (Acts 8:38; 6:3-4; Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15-16; 1 Peter 3:21; Galatians 3:26-27) for the remission of their sins. We noted that they received the promises of God for obeying the conditions of God's grace. God promised remission (forgiveness) of sins (Romans 6:17-18); gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 5:32); and eternal life (I John 2:25)

Being thus saved, they were added to the Lord's people,- the church by God Himself (Acts 2:36-47). As the gospel spread, we find them assembling together in congregations in various localities. Each congregation was under its own elders (otherwise known as bishops, pastors, presbyters, overseers - Acts 14:23; 1 Peter 5:1-4) and no one else on earth. These elders could not make laws and be

masters. They were given the responsibility of tending and caring (pastor) for the congregation as shepherds would a flock (Acts 20:17,28; I Peter 5:1-3). The only headquarters those disciples knew was heaven, where their head, Jesus Christ, was and is (Ephesians 1:22-23).

Their worship was something in which to participate, not something to watch or be entertained. On the first day of the week, they would eat the Lord's supper in commemoration of their Saviour who died for them and hear preaching (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29), they would all sing (Ephesians 5:19) without instrument of music, they would all pray with various ones leading (1 Corinthians 14:15-16) without cursing (Romans 12:14), and they would share in their mutual responsibilities by sharing their prosperity (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). We find no contributions being collected on any other day than the first day of the week (i.e Sunday) and no hierarchy levying or taxing them or telling them how much to give. They had no organizations clamouring for their support. They gave as they individually purposed in their own hearts (2 Corinthians 9:6-7) according to what they have individually and not what they did not have (2 Corinthians 8:12). In all of these, they were all necessarily involved for each saved person was a priest (Revelation 1:5-6). No one could perform his service or worship for another.

They lived godly lives, cared for their poor and taught others. They sent out preachers to teach others in far communities. With simplicity of faith and fervour there was no need of centralization. Without organized machinery, the gospel was preached to the whole of civilization in a short time (Colossians 1:23). These Disciples of Christ were known as Christians (Acts 11:26; Acts 26:28; I Peter 4:16) without any divisive adjective such as 'ABC family' or 'XYZ Communion'. They wore no sectarian or denominational names. Their religion was not materialistic or sensual. They did not seek to impress men with pious ceremony, rather they sought to impress God with the only thing that has ever impressed Him, contrite obedience (2 Samuel 15:22, Galatians 1:10). Their appeal was not social or recreational