

Question: Do modern churches of Christ claim a historical link to the church set up by the apostles in New Testament times?

No one who understands the Bible claims authentication of any church today as the original church by a historical, unbroken link tracing back to Jerusalem. It cannot be done historically, nor is it necessary that it be done to identify the Lord's church today. How is it valid, then, for any group to claim spiritual identity as the church of Christ without this link? What right does any group have to say that they belong, spiritually and organically, to the Lord's church?

First of all, Jesus taught the validity of New Testament Christianity for all ages when he gave the "Great Commission" (Mt 28:18-20). The gospel was to be for "the whole world" until the "end of the ages." The gospel is for all ages of time, for all nations, for every tribe, for every tongue. Faithful men in the first century were instructed to teach future generations (2 Ti 2:2).

As the gospel of Christ is proclaimed in its purity, without the addition of creeds (Ga 1:6-9), its simple message (1 Co 1:19--2:13) becomes the "power of God unto salvation" (Ro 1:16). Within the gospel is a divine power that is called "the seed" (Lk 8:1-15) by which spiritual life is generated in every age, wherever the gospel is proclaimed. The word "seed" represents the intrinsic power of the gospel, delivered by the Holy Spirit, to save the soul of man when planted in an honest heart (Jn 6:63; 16:13-15; 1 Pe 2:22).

Jesus is the head of the church (Ep 1:22-23), and it is His right to determine who is saved and who is in His fellowship. No ecclesiastical power devised by man has the right to take the place of Jesus Christ on this earth. The power of the gospel, or the seed (Lk 8:11), generates life wherever it is sown. Disciples are made when they obey the gospel (Mt 28:18-20) and the Lord adds them to His church (Ac 2:47). As individuals are "born again" by the word (1 Pe 1:23), they meet together with others of "like precious faith" (2 Pe 1:1) in order to work and worship as Christians did in the first century (Ac 20:7; He 10:25). In this manner, wherever the gospel is preached, churches that belong to Christ will appear and they will all teach the same thing (1Co 1:10).

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[MEETING INVITATION]