Describe The 20th Century Church Of Christ

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I. Because of common interest it's a joy to attempt to describe the church of Christ.

A. To those that are members it is impossible to describe it without turning to the 1st century when we believe the church was established. This necessitates a Bible orientated description of origin and purpose.

1. It is earnestly believed there is the church of Christ described in the Bible and its sincerely wished that today we might be members of such.

B. To those not members the theological reasonings of honest minds as to when, and how it started and through what trials it has come could be less than interesting. Those members of it feel this information is most important, the average non-member simply asks "What is its contribution, work, service, and purpose of today--forget the musty past."

1. Thinking in the audience are those belonging to both these classes we will seek to serve both honest inquirers in our presentation.

II. What better way is there to describe the church than to do an acrostic on the word "church" itself.

A. The definition I'm sure is known.
I. Church comes from ekklesia, the called out, the congregation, the assembly.
   a. Used 192x in one Eng. translation.
   b. 4x refers to non-Christian groups.

Acts 19:32"Some therefore cried one thing..."
Acts 19:39"But if ye inquire any thing con..."
Acts 19:41"And when he had thus spoken..."
Acts 7:38"This is he, that was in the chu..."

C. Perhaps its most famous usage is by Jesus:
   Matt. 16:18"And I say also unto thee, Tha..."

B. Could we then do an acrostic on church, hoping these 6 letters will impart some information.

1. Though 6 has a semi-completion to us, it also bows to Jewish usage and professes in this short span of time to be inconclusive.
   Thus you must keep studying.

2. Tis hoped 6 observations will help.

III. Acrostic on church.

A. Our 6 letters.
   1. C-creed.
   2. H-head.
   4. R-religion.
   5. C-called.

B. Chronologically we approach.
   1. C stands for Creed.
      a. Creed comes from Latin "I believe."
      b. Does the church, written or unwritten
I believe Christ is the Son of God.
Acts 2:22 "Ye men of Israel, hear these
Acts 8:5 "Then Phillip went down to
John 20:30-31 "And many other signs
Acts 8:12 "But when they believed P.
Matt. 16:16 "Thou art the Christ the
2 Tim. 1:12 "I know whom I have believed
Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in a
John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth, and the
d. What's distinctive about this?
(1) Either/or choice -- son of God or
blasphemy (John 7:28).
(2) Accept virgin birth, miracles, resurrec-
tion, assent of Jesus.
(3) Literally it's believed that he is all he
said he was.
I Tim. 3:16 "And without controversy
Rev. 19:16 "And he hath on his vest
(4) The sonship of Christ is Heavenly
required confession of all.

2. H is for Head.
a. That every body has a head surely is an
accepted fact.
(1) Eugene Johnson of Hartsville told of
capturing and dressing a turtle. "1/2
hr. to boat him as hooked in leg, jaw
broken with screwdriver, head cut off
but heart kept beating and claws tore
me up as I dressed him, cut feet off." I'd say that headless fighter was a bit
than normal! Most bodies have heads!

b. Head of church of Christ.

Eph. 1:22-23 "And hath put all things under

Matt. 28:18 "All power is given unto me

Matt. 16:18 "And I say unto thee that

John 5:22 "For the Father judgeth no man

John 12:47-48 "And if any man hear my

1) A head is essential to permanency.

2) The function of a head is to give direc-

tion.

3) This Jesus, not man, does today.

2 Tim. 3:16-17 "All scrip. is given by

2 Pet. 1:3 "According as his divine

c. What's the significance of this?

1) Church is not a legislative body.

2) It has no earthly headquarters.

3) No one can speak for the church, some

speak against it and too much but none

as its voice.

4) None can "organize" the church.

a) American Bible Society--how do we

get to your people?

b) No census taken for years.

c) Scoffing at church rolls. The Lord

knows them that are his.

d) Organization at a bear minimum.

5) Temptation to polarize around strong

voices; i.e. papers, colleges, personal-
alities.

a) Church doesn't have bishops--has

editors!
3. U stands for Unity.
   a. Here dreams arise and also know shattering.
   b. The dream is that with the Bible as a standard of authority saints may be one in Christ.
   Acts 4:32"And the multitude of them
Eph. 4:4-6"There is one body, and one Spirit,
I Cor. 1:10"Now I beseech you, br., by the
I Cor. 1:12-13"I am of Paul, & I of Appol
I Cor. 3:3"For ye are yet carnal--division
Rom. 16:17-18"Mark them which cause
Acts 9:2"That if he found any of this
John 17:20-21"Neither pray I for these
Gal. 5:19-20 Variance work of flesh
c. Dream shattered--we're externally and internally divided.
(1) Over rebaptism, premillennialism, orphan homes, dogmatism.
(2) Ours always over doctrine--never morals.
(3) Each man feels he has "Bible on his side."
(4) Main stream of this still at peace and in unity today.
d. Significance.
(1) What is standard of authority?
   (a) Matters of faith--doctrine.
   (b) Matters of opinion--liberty.
   (c) All things--love.
(2) Must morals and doctrine be equally
viewed—are they of kindred importance

(3) Is there a difference between fellowship and endorsement—could Paul teach in school of Tarranus without endorsing all that's there?

(4) Does a little deviation matter?

(5) Thus we claim not to be the only Christians but Christians only.

4. R is our letter for Religion.

a. It means binding back to God.

b. Qt.: How is one bound then back to God?
   John 11:27 "Yea Lord, I believe that thou
   John 8:24 "If ye believe not that I am
   Rom. 2:4 "Despisest thou the riches of his
   Luke 13:3 "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repine
   Acts 3:19 "Repent ye therefore, and be converted.
   2 Pet. 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his
   Acts 8:36 "And as they went on their way
   John 3:3-5 "Jesus answered and said unto
   Rom. 6:4 "Therefore we are buried with
   Mk. 16:16 "He that believeth and is baptized
   Acts 2:38 "Then Peter said unto them, Repent
   Gal. 3:27 "For as many of you as have been
   Acts 22:16 "And now why tarriest thou? and
   I Pet. 3:21 "The like figure whereunto even
   Acts 10:48 "And he commanded them to be

c. It's believed salvation and church membership are on the same conditions.
   Acts 2:47 "Praising God, and having favor with
   Acts 5:14 "And believers were the more a
   Eph. 1:22-23 "And hath put all things under
(1) Added to the Lord, added to body—same act at same time.

But what's peculiar to that religion? and this is asked in a good sense. I'll name some items.

(1) Name of church multiple.
   a) Church.
      Acts 9:31 "Then had the churches
   b) Of God.
      I Cor. 1:2 "Unto the church of God
   c) Of firstborn.
      Heb. 12:23 "To the general assembly
   d) Of Christ.
      Rom. 16:16 "The churches of Christ sa
   e) Body.
      I Cor. 12:27 "Now ye are the body.
   f) Saints.
      I Cor. 14:33 "For God is not the author o

(2) Name of members.
   Acts 26:28 "Almost thou persuadest me t
   Acts 11:26 "And the disciples were calle
   I Pet. 4:16 "If any man suffer as a Chris

(3) Organization of the organism.
   a) Elders.
      Acts 20:28 "Take heed therefore unto
      [1] Also bishop, overseer, pastor,
          teacher, presbyter
      [a] Yet we do little about their work
      thus failing to see things to which
the qualifications pointed.

(b) Deacons.

Phil. 1:1 "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Corinth, who are beloved of God and called to be saints."

(c) No clergy—laity separation, no Rev.

(d) No women preachers.


I Cor. 14:33-35 "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."

I Tim. 2:12-14 "But I suffer not a woman to teach, or to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

(e) Congregational autonomy.

(f) Worship via 5 avenues, with weekly observance of Lord's supper.

[1] Sing.


(g) Aim is to walk in the steps of Christ as guided by word.

Eph. 4:1 "Walk worthy of the vocation of God which ye have obtained, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love;"

Col. 1:10 "That ye walk worthy of the Lord, who hath called you unto his own kingdom and glory."

(h) Each church handles its discipline.

Gal. 6:1 "Br. if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness;"

I Cor. 5:11 "With such an one no not to be associated, even as ye have learned of me."

2 Thess. 3:6 "Withdraw yourselves from such a man, that he may be ashamed;"

Titus 3:10 "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition;"

(i) Evangelical spirit.

Yet how can you export something if it isn't good for you!!

5. C is called.

a. What names will you accept?
(1) Christian= Follower of Christ.
(2) Disciple.
   73x in Matt.
   44x in Mark.
   38x in Luke.
   73x in John.
   31x in Acts.

(a) Though not in epistles shows one taught and trained.

(3) Saints-- called out.

(4) Brethren.

b. Call Bible things by Bible names--yet Bible not in it!

c. Search for conviction and character.

Rom. 1:16"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of God.

6. H - the Hope.

a. To evangelize world.

Mk. 16:15"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world..."

b. Speaks as oracles of God.

2 Tim. 2:2"And the things that thou hast heard..."

Jude 3"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to make you know..."

c. Be current recipient of Grace of God.

(1) Justified.

Rom. 5:1"Therefore being justified by faith..."

(2) Forgiven.

I John 2:12"I write unto you, little children..."

(3) Redeemed.

I Pet. 1:18-19"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed..."

(4) Saved.

Titus 3:5"Not by works of righteousness..."

d. Like Jesus go about doing good.
Acts 10:38 Jesus of N... who went about  
Rom. 8:29 "For whom he did foreknow he  
ed Faithful unto death and await His return.  
Matt. 24:42-44 "Watch therefore: for ye  
Acts 1:10-11 "And while they looked steady  
2 Thess. 1:7-8 "And to you who are troubl...