



THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION:

We live in a time that we call the "Church Age." During this time God is preparing a body of people that is called His Church. These people, the Church, are also called the body of Christ. Jesus is the head of the Church, "For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the Church. It is His body (the Church) that He saves" (Ephesians 5:23 NLT). To be saved you must be in the Church.

HOW DO YOU GET INTO THE CHURCH?

You have to be born into the Church. This birth is not the birth of being born of your mother. You must be born again. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Do not be surprised that I said to you 'You must be born again' "(John 3:7 NLT). Jesus had told Nicodemus that he must be born of the water and of the Spirit or he could not see the holy

nation of God (John 3:5 NLT).

In Acts chapter 2 the first people were born into the Church. "All at once there was a sound from heaven like a powerful wind. It filled the house where they were sitting. Then they saw tongues.... These came down on each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they began to speak in other languages which the Holy Spirit made them able to speak" (Acts 2:2-4 NLT).

There were one hundred and twenty people who were first born into the Church. However, many people saw what was happening and asked how they also could enter the Church. "Peter said to them, `Be sorry for your sins and turn from them and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and your sins will be forgiven, You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38 NLT).

Three thousand people obeyed Peter's words and were also born into the Church that day. This took place on the Day of Pentecost (a Jewish feast). We call the Church that was born that day the Pentecostal Church.

The saved body of Christ, the Church, was growing rapidly. It continued to grow as was promised. "This promise is to you and your children. It is to all people everywhere. It is to as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39 NLT).

You also may be born into the Church. You must be born again just as the first believers were born into it. Some would like to teach that there is another way, but there is none. "No! There is not another kind of good news. There are some who would like to lead you in the wrong way" (Galatians 1:7 NLT). God warns us about false teachers and we must be careful that they do not lead us the wrong way.

The Bible tells of many others who were born into the Church by repenting, being baptized in Jesus' name, and receiving the Holy Ghost. The Samaritans (Acts 8), Cornelius' family and friends (Acts

10), and the Ephesians (Acts 19) also spoke in new languages as they were born into the Church.

In a short time it was said of the Christians (another name for the Church) that they had filled Jerusalem with their teachings. Later people were saying that the Church had turned the world upside down with the good news of salvation through Jesus.

REFORMATION:

Not all people understand the warnings about wrong ways and false teachings. Some began to follow the teachings of men and not the teaching of God. They claimed to be a part of the Church, but they were not. The true Church of Jesus Christ was still called by His name and filled with His Spirit. However, false teachers gained control of the organized church and the government.

People who taught that you have to repent, be baptized in Jesus' name, and speak with new tongues when you received the Holy Spirit were persecuted. They still believed the teachings of the Bible. They did not listen to ungodly men who controlled the organized church. Many people died because they stood for truth. Finally more organized church leaders began to stand against false teachings. They tried to lead the organized church back to Bible teachings. Men like John Wycliffe, John Huss, Savonarola, and Martin Luther led what is called the Reformation. They suffered greatly to try to lead men back to Bible truths. False teachers persecuted them because of the truths they taught.

RETURN TO PENTECOST:

In the early 1900's, in Topeka, Kansas, U.S.A., there was a group of people who were born again of the 'Spirit. Just like on the Day of Pentecost, they spoke with new tongues as God filled them with the Holy Spirit. Since then millions of people around the world have

received the Holy Spirit, evidenced by speaking in new languages.

The Holy Spirit, who comes to lead and guide into all truth, has shown many of these people that they must be baptized in Jesus' name also. This is the way the people who were born into the Church in the Bible were baptized. Baptism in Jesus' name was part of Peter's teachings on the Day of Pentecost. Men of God around the world are preaching the full message of salvation as found in the Bible.

In 1945 two organizations who preached this message joined together to form the United Pentecostal Church. Our basic teaching is:

"The basic and fundamental doctrine of this organization shall be the Bible standard of full salvation, which is repentance, baptism in water by immersion in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the initial sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. We shall endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit until we all come into the unity of the faith, at the same time admonishing all brethren that they shall not contend for their different views to the disunity of the body."

*Articles of Faith, Manual,
United Pentecostal Church International, (Inc.)*

CONCLUSION:

"On this rock I will build My church. The powers of hell will not be able to have power over my Church" (Matthew 16:18 NLT). Jesus is

still building His Church. You can be a part of it, but you must be born again just as the early Church was. Those who are born into His body and live a holy life for Jesus are the ones that He is going to take to heaven to live with Him forever.