



Warners Chapel Church of Christ

8999 Lasater Road
Clemmons, North Carolina 27012
Telephone 336-766-6078

www.warnerschapelchurchofchrist.org

Preacher: Kevin V. Rutherford

"The churches of Christ salute you" Rom. 16:16

A CORDIAL WELCOME AWAITS YOU

JANUARY 14, 2018

IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST A CULT?

By Kevin Rutherford

In some material handed to me some time ago the church of Christ was referred to as a "...most deceptive and dangerous **cult**." The word "cult" is most often used to cast a particular religious group in a negative light. It is similar in usage today to the word "**sect**." when you look up the word "cult" on the internet with a search engine you will find Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic churches, and the church of Christ accused of being cults. I don't believe any of these churches are cults. I simply give this as an example of how the word "cult" is so loosely used today as a way of trying to scare people away from a particular church.

On CNN's Nancy Grace television program, a Baptist preacher referring to churches of Christ said, "It kind of is a borderline cult, unfortunately. I don't want to make it to be some kind of Hare Krishna group, but it has cult-like characteristics..." This particular Baptist preacher cited the following as evidence that the church of Christ is a cult. "Well, in the sense of exclusivism, the attitude that they are the only ones who know the truth. The tactics that they use are sometimes just — not only un-biblical but unethical, and they can be very ungracious, unfortunately." I suppose if "exclusivism" were to be the key characteristic denoting a cult, then Jesus Christ would have to be considered a cult leader (Matthew 7:13, 14; John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

There are two significant reasons why the church of Christ should not be considered a cult. The first is that the church of Christ does not fit accepted definitions of a cult. The second is that the church of Christ does not fit listed and published characteristics of cults. In his book *Understanding the Cults*, Josh McDowell says "a cult is a perversion, a distortion of biblical Christianity and/or a rejection of the historic teachings of the Christian church (page 17)." Based on this definition alone, we could say that the church of Christ is the least cult-like of any church in the world. The church of Christ teaches that we should follow the pattern of New Testament Christianity set forth in the Scriptures (Romans 6:17; 2 Timothy 1:13). Furthermore, the church of Christ does not appeal to any man-made document for its authority in religious practice, but rather uses the Bible as its only guide and standard (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

The church of Christ follows the historic teachings of Christ and His New Testament in worship (John 4:24), in organization (Ephesians 4:11), in teaching (1 Peter 4:11), and in living (Matthew 4:4). Therefore, if we go by Josh McDowell's definition of a cult, the church of Christ is not a cult.

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In his book, *Understanding the Cults*, Josh McDowell also gives us a list of characteristics of a cult. Those are given below with some information briefly explaining what the Bible teaches and therefore what the church of Christ believes with regard to those matters.

Cult Characteristics

1. New Truth: God has revealed something special to them.

The church of Christ teaches all truth has been revealed (Rev. 22:18, 19), no other gospel is to be accepted (Galatians 1:6-9), and God speaks to man through the written word (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

2. New Interpretation: Some cults believe they alone have the key to understanding.

We believe the Bible can be understood by those who read it if they will apply common sense reasoning to their study (Ephesians 3:4; Acts 17:1-4). We do not look for some new interpretation.

3. Non-Biblical Source of Authority.

We believe the Word of God alone is to be our authority (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). It alone can save (Romans 1:16). It is the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). This characteristic would categorize most denominations as cults, and leave the church of Christ as one of the few, if not the only one which is not a cult.

4. Another Jesus: Sometimes the cult leader.

Jesus is not going to return to establish a new religion. When he does return it will be obvious (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), will mark the end of time (2 Peter 3:10-13), and will bring Judgment (Acts 17:31).

5. Double Talk: Say one thing publicly but believe something different internally.

This is called lying (Rev. 21:8). What we teach is what we believe. Further, we encourage people to determine the meaning of words by looking at their context (i.e. the Biblical context).

6. Denial of the Godhead.

We do not deny the Godhead. In fact we believe there is more than One Being who possesses the nature of divinity or godhood. (Genesis 1:26). They are three in one (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:18).

7. Changing Theology: No sure foundation for doctrine.

The Word of God is truth (John 17:17). The truth will set you free (John 8:32). We accept nothing but the unchanging Word of God as revealed in the Scriptures. There is no more solid foundation than this for religious doctrine and practice (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Matthew 7:24-27).

8. Central Charismatic Leader.

The church of Christ has no earthly headquarters and no single human leader. Christ is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18). He rules over the church by His authority as expressed in the revealed and written word of God (John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 14:37).

9. False Prophecy.

The church of Christ teaches that the gift of prophecy is no longer given to man (1 Corinthians 13:8-13). Therefore, we do not have any prophets to give false prophecy. The Bible teaches that false prophets are condemned (Deuteronomy 18:21, 22).

10. Salvation by works.

The church of Christ does not believe anyone can be saved based on the merits of their works (Ephesians 2:8, 9). One is saved by grace through faith. However, this does not mean that a person is exempt from following the law of God. One must have an obedient faith to please God (James 2:14-26). Note the importance of good works in Ephesians 2:10.

The church of Christ has been the target of many untrue attacks and accusations. However, we must always remember that just because someone says something is true doesn't mean that it is. Having examined both the definition and the characteristics of cults, we must conclude that the church of Christ is in fact the least cult-like of any church in existence.



OUR SICK Please Remember in Your Prayers

Please continue to remember **Bob and Carolyn Plunk, Wayne & Cathy Hutchins, Mary Ellen Dull and Dot Pegram** in your prayers.

Please continue to pray for **Jeannie Moore**. She was ill this past week with a cold and running a low-grade fever. She was to see the oncologist this past Thursday to determine the status of the cancer and treatment.

D.J. Harrison was admitted to the Baptist Hospital this past Tuesday, with chest pains. She was discharged this past Wednesday. Tests are being performed to determine the cause of the problems she is having.

Atha Clark would like to thank everyone for their prayers, calls, and cards sent to her while she was out sick.]

Dana Hinson was reported ill this past Wednesday evening.

Allen Womack (past member of Warners Chapel) underwent surgery this past week and had a large malignant mass removed along with the entire upper lobe of his lung. He has other spots that Dr.'s believe can be treated with oral chemotherapy. Please keep him in your prayers.

Katerina Allen's father, **Tommy Forssberg**, is doing better. He appreciates the prayers, cards, and phone calls during his illness. He and his wife, Gudrun were scheduled to leave for Sweden this past Saturday.

Please remember Madelene's niece, **Renee Morgan** in your prayers. She will be having more surgery for cancer on January 19th. For those who would like to send her a card, her address is 174 Lonely Pines Trail, Dobson, NC 27017.

Please continue to pray for **Maribel Gil** (Andy's cousin). She has developed an infection in a lung. She is doing okay for now.

PLACED MEMBERSHIP

We are pleased to welcome Charley and Pat Belch into the family of Christ that worships here at Warners Chapel. The Belch's address is: 1836 Hunters Forest Drive, Winston-Salem, NC 27103. Tel. 336-765-2455. Please add them to your directory.

SHUT-INS

*Mildred Barker
Lutrelle Chipman
Ernestine Martin
Kim Matthews*

*Di-Ann Moser
Dot Pegram
Bob Plunk*

Please continue to keep the shut-ins in your prayers.



WE ARE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU VISITING WITH US THIS MORNING. WE INVITE YOU TO RETURN THIS EVENING AT 6:00 P.M. FOR THE SUNDAY EVENING SERVICE AND AT 7:00 P.M. EACH WEDNESDAY EVENING FOR THE MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY.

WARNERS CHAPEL EVENTS:

Jan. 14 - Bundling of House to House in the Annex following evening worship service.

Jan. 19 - There will be a girls singing and devo at the home of Mary and Julia Tesh on Friday from 7-8 p.m. This is for any girls in the youth group and also young adult girls. Please bring finger foods.

Jan. 21 - **Congregational Fellowship Potluck Meal** in annex following morning worship service. Everyone is invited.

AREA EVENTS:

Feb. 24 - **Ladies Day** at the Cary church of Christ from, 9-12 Noon with lunch to follow. The theme is "Spring Cleaning for the Heart & Soul" The speaker will be Kathy Pollard.

Read the New Testament in 2018

Jan. 15 - Matt. 10:21-42

Jan. 16 - Matt. 11

Jan. 17 - Matt. 12:1-23

Jan. 18 - Matt. 12:24-50

Jan. 19 - Matt. 13:1-30

Jan. 20 - Matt. 13: 31-58

Jan. 21 - Matt. 14:1-21



SOUTHWEST FOOD PANTRY

Suggested food for January, 2018:

Peanut butter/Jelly (plastic containers)

FOR THE RECORD

Sunday Bible Study - Jan. 7, 2017	129
Sunday Worship Service	165
Contribution for Jan. 7, 2017	\$7,210
Daily Adult Bible Readers:	44
Chapters Read:	936
Sunday Evening Worship Service	128
Wed. Evening Bible Study - Jan. 10, 2017	101

Lord's Day Appointments For January, 2018

Serving the Lord's Table For January:

Roger Allen

Allen Cooper Mark Clemmons
Rodney Brown
Gaye Ruark
Clayton Workman
Mark Roy

Preparing Communion for January:

Making Announcements on Sunday:

Making Announcements on Wednesday:

Lord's Day Appointments - January 21, 2018

DEVOTIONS:	OPENING PRAYER:	SONG LEADER	SCRIPTURE READERS
Scripture - Mark Minor	Morning - David Moore	A.M. - Roger Allen	A.M. - Bill Carothers
Song Leader - Tommy Rose	Evening - John Allen	P.M. - Nathan Roy	P.M. - Shawn Thomason
Prayer - Andy Santiago		Wed. - Walter Cruz	

Greeters for January:

Brad and Betty Hoots

Opening and Closing Building

Sunday: - January 21 ~

Wednesday: - January 24 ~

Lord's Day Appointments - January 14, 2018

DEVOTIONS:	OPENING PRAYER:	SONG LEADER	SCRIPTURE READERS
Scripture - Shawn Thomason	Morning - Joe Everett	A.M. - Tim Allen	A.M. - Tommy Rose
Song Leader - Tim Allen	Evening - Mike Lundgren	P.M. - Roger Allen	P.M. - Keith Warner
Prayer - Jack Piper		Wed. - Clayton Workman	

Opening and Closing Building

Sunday: - Jan. 14 ~

Wednesday: - Jan. 17 ~

Greeters for January:

Brad and Betty Hoots

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES - Nursery open for small children during all services.

SUNDAY:

Bible Classes 10:00 AM

Morning Worship 10:50 AM

Evening Worship 6:00 PM

WEDNESDAY: Mid-Week Service 7:00 PM

"GETTING TO KNOW YOUR BIBLE" at 10:30 p.m. each week night on Cable 8
SEARCH PROGRAM - Sunday Mornings at 7:30 a.m. on Cable 68

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8999 LASATER ROAD
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ELDERS

DEACONS

David Moore
Tim Allen
Joe Everett
Todd Hinson
Steve Tesh

Randy Warner
Keith Warner
Andy Santiago
Mark Minor
Jason Allen
Mike Cooper

Jody Everett
Gene Southern
Shawn Thomason
Mark Roy
Adam Warner
Jacob Woodbury