



BROAD STREET

BANNER

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From Where I Sit . . .

"The Necessity of the Church"

(Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 5:25)

Nearly 2000 years ago, Jesus announced to the disciples His plans for His church (**Mat. 16:17-18**). Luke, the earliest church historian, gives us ample evidence of the implementation of this purpose as recorded in Acts 2:38-47. Luke tells us that those who responded to that first Gospel sermon were added to the body--the church which Jesus said He would build.

The church became a reality on that eventful feast-day! The inspired writer tells us that those who were being saved were being added to that institution that very same day. Some reject the message concerning an "organized" church due to some dissatisfaction or disenchantment. They cry: "preach Christ and leave the church out of it" -- or "The church doesn't save, Jesus does!" I understand the sentiment of this latter statement, for certainly the Bible teaches that Jesus alone is savior. It would be sad to use that logic to say the church is not important or necessary, for the Lord made it so. He made it His body of the saved.

We have an obligation to examine whether salvation can be separated from the church by examining God's purpose and intent for the church. We need to view the church through Christ's eyes and see just what it was and is to Him. It would be a tragic fallacy to reject the church on the grounds of her problems--inadequacies--or failures! **GRANTED SHE HAS SOME!** Not because God's plan isn't perfect, but because we humans are inadequate to perfectly work the plan. These problems are based on our human involvements. The church as conceived in the mind of God is perfect. May we come to love the church the way Christ loved her (**Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 5:23-25**)

The Bible teaches that the Church is inseparably linked with God's eternal purpose, and one cannot minimize her importance. The mystery of God was defined as "**the uniting of Gentiles and Jews (all men) in one body.**" The whole of religious history centered around this act. We all were to be fellow heirs and of the same body (**Eph. 3:3-6**). Gentiles, without Christ, were aliens, strangers, they had no hope, they were without God. Yet they, along with the Jews, were reconciled in one body by the cross (**Eph. 2:11-16**). Man is saved in the one body of Christ!

Furthermore, the church exists as the visible, working body of all men so united in Christ in keeping with God's eternal purpose for her (**Eph. 3:9-11**). From this passage we learn that thee "manifold" wisdom of God is made known **BY THE CHURCH**. The message of salvation and uniting in one body is what the church is commissioned in the eternal plan to preach.

We note in **Eph. 1:22-23** that the church is the "body"--and the "fulness" of Christ---that which makes Him complete. It shows His manifold wisdom. Yes, Christ is the HEAD, and his church is the BODY, which works in keeping with His eternal purpose. **THUS: Christ and His church are INSEPARABLE!** It is only as men are brought into the body of Christ--the church--that God's purpose in him is accomplished. It's no wonder then that in **Acts 2:47** the Lord added to the church (body) those who were being saved!

. . . . Terry Broome