

Takes More Than a Right Name to Make a Church Scriptural

by James P. Needham

The story is told of two boys who were playing with a cat. One said to the other, "If you called a cat's tail a leg, how many legs would he have?" His playmate replied without hesitation, FIVE! But the other said, "No he wouldn't." To which his companion answered, "I know he would. He has four legs, and if you call his tail a leg, that would make five." The other youngster, with a gleam in his eye, replied, "No it wouldn't, because calling his tail a leg wouldn't make it one!"

So it is in religion. Some folks think all we have to do to make a church scriptural is put up a sign with "church of Christ" on it. In the vein of the little boy we say, "Calling a group a church of Christ does not make it one." We are not minimizing the necessity of calling the church by scriptural titles.

We believe it is necessary to speaking as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11), and we are always happy to see people forsake error and embrace the truth. It is necessary however, to point out the need for abandoning all error. We must believe and practice the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. There is no salvation and should be no consolation in being half right.

It is encouraging to see some of the Christian churches changing their name to "church of Christ" and they are to be commended for such forsaking of error, but it is of little consequence when they continue in many other errors such as: The use of instrumental music in their worship, talent shows, social gospelism, political action, the operation of secular schools, begging from the pulpit, etc. etc. all of which are just as wrong as an unscriptural name. To be scriptural a church must not only be right in name, but also in doctrine and practice. It is always good to see people come nearer the truth, but it would be much better to see them come all the way. For this we shall pray and work.

As we have said many times, "If we are wrong show us. We will change." Our pulpit is open to any reputable person who will come and try to show us where we are wrong provided he will allow us the same privilege. We don't know how to be fairer than that. Will anyone else in this area make that proposition? - January 29, 1973