

**PEANUTS**



In this classic comic strip Sally, Charlie Brown's younger sister, appears to display the same approach to evangelism that so many sincere people do. It is almost as though they can't believe the other person doesn't see things like they do. And it is so frustrating that they attempt to coerce, bully, or otherwise force the person to believe and hold the same views as they do. But it doesn't work very well, does it?

In the church, we have been guilty (in the past) of doing the same thing. Statements were made that if you are not a member of the church of Christ, then you were going to Hell. And while many would not say such a thing directly, they implied the same conclusion that the church of Christ is the only true church.

The good news is that in more recent times, brethren have looked for ways to express biblical truth in a way that more people would listen and consider what is being said.

Now wait just a minute! Are you saying that the church of Christ is not the only true church? Let me answer that loaded question by saying that I believe the church of Christ is the original church. It is the church of the New Testament. But I do not believe the church of Christ should be treated like a denomination. And a number of well-intended brethren have done just that. By suggesting that our church is better than their church, we fall into the denominational mindset. This is a matter only of what is right or wrong.

What is the church of Christ? It is NOT a building with a sign. It is the saved people of God around the world. It is not one congregation. And we don't need to imply or especially to state that if they don't become members of our church, they are lost.

The fact is that if people do not become members of the New Testament church, they WILL most certainly be lost. Yes, I believe that we at Tanner are a congregation of that church. No, I do not believe that every church is right. In fact unless a church is following the teachings of Christ, and has obeyed the Gospel of Christ, then it is NOT Christ's church.

Likewise, unless a person does the same thing, he is Not a Christian, and therefore not a member of the church of Christ.

The point is that we need to reach out to people in love and well-chosen words to help them see the truth...Christ died to save people. And if one is saved, he is a member of the original church—the church of Christ. And we don't have to beat them over the head with our lunchbox to get them to see it. Just preach the Word, and they will see.

NOTE: Did you notice that I did not use any Scripture? For this topic, that is your job. Prove what you believe about the church. Make your case for the church of Christ being the New Testament church of Jesus Christ.

*Robert*