

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Romans 16:16

It was my privilege recently to preach in a church of Christ in Georgia, USA, whose beginning predated the work of Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone in the mid 19th century. The Christians there resent being called "A Stone-Campbell Church." Time was when all New Testament Christians resented being called "Campbellites." Now it is the mark of a "superior understanding."

In Acts 11:26 it is said that Paul and Barnabas labored a whole year together in Antioch and many people were brought to the Lord, but the church there was not known as the "Paul and Barnabas church." We can, and we should, respect and admire the work of such men as Barnabas and Paul and Stone and Campbell, but the church doesn't belong to them. Paul settled that in 1 Corinthians 1:13, when he asked, "Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"

The Scripture which serves as the caption of this column is a reference to all the local churches then in existence. Those churches were possessions of Christ, the members having been redeemed by Christ's blood (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18-19)—thus "churches of (or belonging to) Christ."

Some 21st century churches who were once so identified, have now repudiated that association. Some of their adherents seek to justify their action saying it is because they were embarrassed by some beliefs, teachings and practices of churches of Christ they have known.

The churches of Christ in Corinth, Ephesus, and Colosse, as well as those in the areas of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia had situations which were intolerable. Yet, the faithful didn't deny or disavow Christ. All of them received teaching and were the beneficiaries of the prayers and encouragement of the apostles.

All Christians "were once in darkness, but now ye are light in the Lord." All of us must be taught to "Walk as children of light" (Eph. 5:8). It was true in the first century and it is true in the 21st century. "If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter" (1 Peter 4:16).

—**Mack Lyon**, speaker for *In Search of the Lord's Way*