

household of God (Ephesians 2:19); people of God (I Peter 2:10); disciples (Acts 6:2, 9:1, 21:4). We can see that God did not restrict names of his saints to just one title.

Another name is used frequently in the Bible to refer to the church. It is "the Way." We see examples of that throughout; read Acts 9:2, 18:25-26, 19:9, 19:23, 24:14, 24:22, II Peter 2:21. We also note that Jesus called himself the Way (John 14:6), suggesting the

Way is both the Savior and the saved.

There is no requirement the name on a sign in front of a building must read "Church of Christ," or that its members only use that term. As we have seen, some other names are scriptural. At least one congregation has put on its building, "Christians meet here." The name "church of God" is scriptural, but the popularity of a denomination by the same name may create confusion

among those seeking the one true church.

That said, the name "Church of Christ" on a building where Christians meet is a convenience. Travelers looking for the correct place to worship will find it easier by looking for that name. But we should be careful not to make that the only name we may call ourselves. ~

Morris Fraser

# NAVARRE MESSENGER

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Everything and everyone has a name. We identify by names. "Paul" could be the boy in the neighborhood. "Mrs. Jones" may have been our fifth-grade teacher. "Exxon" may be the place where we buy gasoline.

Using names is a necessary and convenient method of identification. Imagine, instead of saying "tree," we would always be forced to say "that large plant with a whole bunch of flat green things all over it." Or, rather than saying "Paul,"

we had to stretch our conversation with "that red-headed boy who wears blue jeans and a sweater and lives four houses down."

While we understand the occasional need for expanded explanations in identifying things, we frequently use shortcuts that may become a substitute for formal names. No one says "the cathode-ray tube used to view entertainment and sports programs." People know the concept as

"television," but almost everyone just says "TV," and everyone understands what we mean.

Now let's take that idea into the religious world.

When the apostles met in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost following Jesus' ascension into heaven and eventually taught more than 5,000 people, all of those followers made up the only group of believers. There was one church

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### Navarre church of Christ

8490 James M Harvell Rd  
Navarre, FL 32566

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### Assembly Schedule

#### Sunday

Bible Class for all ages\_9:00 AM

Morning Worship Service\_10:00 AM

Evening Worship Service\_6:00 PM

#### Wednesday

Bible Class for all ages\_7:00 PM

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along with some more useful information

(“called-out”) in the whole world. They sometimes were referred to as a sect (Acts 24:14), some thinking they were a part of the Jewish religion. They only needed one name to identify themselves (Acts 11:26) because no other similar groups existed.

As time went on and divisions occurred among the believers, each group took a different name to distinguish themselves from others. As divisions increased within major groups, the number of separate groups increased. Today, estimates of groups which claim allegiance to Jesus – so-called Christian churches – range from 33,000 to 41,000.

Since each group wants to be identified by its own name, they took different titles, ranging from the large Catholic Church based in Rome to small groups with very specific names, such as the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas.

The names of many of the denominations which espouse

belief in Christ have taken names which do not always refer to biblical principles but set forth one or more of their primary tenets. Here are just a few of the better-known groups and the meaning of their name:

Catholic – universal.

Baptist – baptism is immersion.

Methodist – referring to their methods, values and traditions.

Lutheran – named for founder Martin Luther.

Presbyterian – named for its structure of leadership, “presbyter” meaning “elder.”

Anglican – separated from the Catholic Church by English king Henry VIII.

Episcopal – referring to leadership by bishops, from the Greek “episkopos.”

Jehovah’s witnesses – identifies God by his “personal name” and their mission.

Seventh-day Adventist – worship on Saturday and awaiting imminent return of Christ.

Nazarene – focus on one as-

pect of Jesus.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (also known as Mormon Church) – reflects belief in its status as being formed in America and the name of a prophet who narrates the Book of Mormon.

Some denominations use names found in scripture. The Latter-day Saints church uses Jesus’ name but adds to the concept. “Church of God” (I Corinthians 1:2) is a Pentecostal religion. “United Church of Christ” originally formed with the uniting of two bodies: the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches. “Church of Christ, Scientist” focuses on the non-physical yet healing beliefs of Mary Baker Eddy. The phrase “Assembly of God” is not found in the Bible, but the words themselves are scriptural; the organization that they name today is Pentecostal.

We have examined some of the great and large contrasts between names and biblical

doctrine. Let’s examine the names that actually are attached, scripturally, to the house that God created.

If you look elsewhere in this paper, you will see the name “Navarre Church of Christ.” “Navarre” merely identifies a location and is not meant to refer to a scriptural precept. “Church of Christ” comes from Romans 16:16, where Paul tells his readers, “The churches of Christ salute you.”

Using that name does not guarantee that what is taught by its members is infallible truth. We are human, and we can make mistakes. But it is a strong statement that efforts are made to adhere to what the Bible teaches.

Let’s look at some history. In the early 1800s in America, two movements were underway to avoid errors of denominationalism and return to the beliefs and practices of the church of the First Century. One movement was led by Barton W. Stone, a Presbyterian in Kentucky. The other was

led by father and son, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, immigrants from Scotland living in Pennsylvania, who also were Presbyterian but who later joined a Baptist association.

The two movements joined in 1832. One disagreement was about what each individual should be called. The Campbells wanted to be known as Disciples of Christ and the churches they started were known as the Christian Church. Stone preferred the name Christian and his followers would be in a Church of Christ. Their differences did not appreciably hinder their further work together.

However, during the next century-and-a-half, the members of that group, almost inevitably, took doctrinal positions that conflict with scripture. Eventually, the Christian Church officially declared itself to be a denomination and fellowshipped traditional denominations. Churches of Christ took a more conservative approach, but by the last quarter of the 20th Century some

groups were engaging in unscriptural practices, although they usually retained their congregational name.

The name “Church of Christ” has become so identified with a certain religion that some (unfortunately, including some of its members) use it as a name for individuals. Where a member of the Baptist Church or the Methodist Church may call himself a Baptist or a Methodist, a few Christians often respond to the question, “Which church do you belong to?” with the answer, “I’m Church of Christ.” Since a church is an assembly of individuals, that answer is in error and tends to tell others that the Lord’s church is a denomination on the same plane as Baptists or Methodists. We should be careful how we name ourselves.

The Bible offers a number of ways the church may be identified. Just a few: bride of Christ and bride of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7); body of Christ (Ephesians 5:22-23); flock of God (I Peter 5:2);