

Our Lord's Church

By Rev. Francis Peffley

1. The Church began on Pentecost, as is shown in Matt. 28:18-20. This was about 10 years before the first book of the New Testament was written.
2. The Church was not then, nor is it now, the chaotic 25,000 or more groups shown below; rather it is one Faith (Rom. 12:5, and Eph. 4:3-5), one Fold and one Shepherd (John 10:17-21).
3. The New Testament, when completed (100 A.D.) and available in print (1440 A.D.), did not supplant Christ's One teaching Church.

Our Lord's System

The Apostles were commanded to teach (Matt. 28:19). They did preach everywhere (Mark 16:15, 20) as St. Paul said: 'faith cometh by hearing' (Rom 10:17).

Our Lord's Guarantee

"Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world" (Matt.28:20). "The Holy Spirit shall abide with you forever" (John 14:16). "He shall teach you all things" (John 14:26).

Consequences

St. Paul calls the Church "the Pillar and Ground of the Truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). Christ promised that "the gates of hell shall never prevail against His Church" (Matt.16:18).

Conclusion

Hence (if Christ kept His promise, as He necessarily did) the Church which began on Pentecost still exists as:

Christ's One-Holy-Catholic-Apostolic Church.

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New Testament History

43 A.D. First book of the New Testament was written.

100 A.D. Last book of New Testament was written. St. John maintained (Jn 20:25) that Jesus did and taught many other things not recorded in the Bible. St. Paul urged Christians to follow these unwritten teachings (2 Thes. 2:15 and 2 Tim 2:2), which were passed on by word of mouth.

397 A.D. Because of bitter persecutions, etc. the New Testament was not placed under one cover until 397 A.D. by the Catholic Council of Hippo. If the Church was infallible then, why is it not also infallible now?

1440 A.D. Between 397 and 1440 (when printing was invented) individual Bibles written by hand were extremely scarce and costly. How then would an unwritten and unavailable New Testament fit into today's "Bible-only" theory?

1940 A.D. The Bible remains one precious source of religious truth, which, however, requires an authorized interpreter, as today's 25,000 sects conclusively prove.

1955 A.D. If all or most non-Catholics everywhere gave the same interpretation of the Bible, their system might deserve consideration. But, as we know, the interpretations "are tossed about by every wind of doctrine."

Effects of Bible-only Theory

- 890** – Eastern Orthodox (11 groups) seceded from the Catholic Church (890-1054).
 - 1517** – Lutherans (20 groups) founded by Martin Luther.
 - 1523** – Mennonites (17 groups) founded by several "reformers."
 - 1534** – Protestant Episcopal, equivalent of Anglicans.
 - 1560** – Presbyterians (10 groups) founded by John Knox.
 - 1600** – Baptists (23 branches) founded by John Smith.
 - 1739** – Methodists (19 groups) founded by John and Charles Wesley.
 - 1827** – Disciples of Christ founded by Thomas and Alexander Campbell.
 - 1829** – Brethren, Plymouth (8 groups) founded by J. Nelson Darby.
 - 1830** – Latter-day Saints (7 branches) founded by Joseph Smith.
 - 1831** – Adventists (5 branches) founded by William Miller.
 - 1865** – Salvation Army founded by William Booth
 - 1879** – Church of Christ, Scientist founded by Mary Baker Eddy.
 - 1896** – Volunteers of America founded by Ballington Booth.
 - 1901** – Pentecostal Assemblies (9 groups) founded by revivalists.
 - 1927** – Four-Square Gospel founded by Aimee Semple McPherson
- And a lengthy list of others too numerous to mention.

God wills that all "Come to the knowledge of the Truth" (1 Tim 2:4).