

## A Health-Conscious Church:

In **Revelation 14:7** we read: “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come.” In the light of this judgment, God calls His people to place Him at the center of their lives. He calls them to “give glory to Him” in their lifestyles. God’s true church urges people to present their bodies to Him as “*a living sacrifice*.” **Romans 12:1**. It urges them to give up alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and unclean foods. **1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20; and 10:31**. It calls them to live *free* from all

disease-causing addictions, to live the abundant life of God-given health.

## A Church Eagerly Expecting His Coming:

God has an urgent message for today, a message that paves the way for Christ’s Second Advent. God’s true church pulsates with an advent consciousness. It believes and preaches with power that Jesus is coming soon. That long-awaited Event is the only hope for this old world and “the blessed hope” of the church. **Titus 2:13**. **R**



by Mark Finley

Could it be that some of us are clinging to the wrong thing in the name of religion? There are over 1800 different denominations, creeds, and religious groups in America today! New churches are rapidly springing up across the country. Materialism has *not satisfied* the restless longings of the 21st century seekers. Our insatiable search for pleasure has not met the needs of our hearts and souls. Deep within our being is this inner longing to know and discover truth. For this reason there is a turning toward religion, a hunger for genuine Christianity, a heart cry for truth which will support us in life’s toughest times.

So the question is, *how* does the average person ever sort out the claims and counterclaims of all these religious organizations? There are so many conflicting theories and doctrines. Here is an *eternal principle*: You do not go to the *church* to find the truth—you discover the *truth* to find the church.

In **1 Timothy 3:15** Paul gives one of the clearest definitions of the church in all the Bible: “The church of the living

God,” he says, is “the *pillar and ground of the truth*.” The church is not merely some social institution where people assemble to feel good. It’s not some human organization built on man’s tradition. The true church is the *custodian* of, the *protector* of, the *preserver* of, the *proclaimer* of **God’s Truth**. John Milner sums up our dilemma in these words: “There is but one inquiry to be made, namely, *which is the true church*. . . . By solving this one question . . . you will at once solve every question of religious controversy that has ever been or that ever can be agitated.”—*The End of Religious Controversy*, page 95.

Where do you start in the quest for truth? With so many denominations, so many truth claims, maybe you’ve asked yourself, “Why doesn’t God make it *easier* to sort it all out so we can clearly identify His last-day church?” Well, the Word of God in fact does give guidelines, definite specifications which go back all the way to Christ’s early church in the days of the apostles. Let’s take a quick look at them now.

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## A Church That Uplifts Christ:

Multiplied millions in our world follow the creeds of Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, the New Age movement, and supposedly “Christian” cults which fail to teach the full deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Staying away from those can considerably *narrow* our search, as we remember **Acts 4:12**—which tells us He’s our *only* Savior, our only means of salvation.

## A Bible-Believing Church:

As long as the apostles were alive, the church stood firm and true. But compromise crept in, and pagan practices and teachings were accepted. When faithful Christians protested against corruption, they were bitterly persecuted by the official church! During the Dark Ages millions of believers gave up their lives rather than compromise their faith. The reign of intolerance lasted for centuries. But God’s truth managed to triumph once again. The Bible, long chained to monastery walls and cathedral pulpits, was translated into the *common language*. Ordinary believers discovered what Scripture really taught. Courageous reformers uncovered more and more lost truths from the Word of God. The true church makes the Bible its *only* rule of faith and practice. **Psalm 119:105; John 5:39; 2 Timothy 3:16.**

**Do all religions today really “keep the commandments of God?” Or do some pay lip service to God’s Ten Commandments, while ignoring the specifics of those commands?**

## A Commandment-Keeping Church:

The Bible speaks of a “remnant” as God’s last church in the last days. How do we identify this remnant? What sets it apart? Two important clues are given, two characteristics to identify this group. **Revelation 12:17** in the King James Version says: “And the dragon [Satan] was wroth [enraged] with the woman [the church], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God. . . .” Here’s God’s description of His true church. At first glance you’d think almost any church would fit it. But do all religions today really “keep the commandments of God?” Or do some pay lip service to God’s Ten Commandments, while *ignoring the specifics* of those commands? The Second Commandment forbids bowing down to images. But many congregations bow before icons of wood and metal and marble. The Fourth Commandment, perhaps the most ignored of all, calls us to “Remember” the seventh day as God’s holy Sabbath. **Exodus 20:8-11.** Any calendar shows the seventh day of the week to be Saturday, not Sunday—but drive by most churches on Saturday and you’ll find empty parking lots. Yet one distinguishing characteristic of God’s true church is obedience to His commandments, to *all ten* of them. That includes the *fourth*, instructing us to keep the seventh day holy. Most

Protestant churches *do* agree about *nine* of the commandments—the *difference* of opinion and practice is over the fourth. God’s last-day church strives to follow *all* of God’s commandments.

## A Church Having the Spirit of Prophecy:

The *other* characteristic **Revelation 12:17** says God’s church will have is “the testimony of Jesus.” What is that precisely? **Revelation 19:10** tells us: “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” God’s last-day church will have the gifts of the Spirit, including the spirit of prophecy. The gift of prophecy is one of God’s identifying marks of His true church. In **1 Corinthians 1:6-7** Paul portrays God’s last-day church this way: “Even as *the testimony of Christ* was confirmed in you: So that *ye come behind in no gift*; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

## A Church Practicing Bible Baptism:

A person’s last words are often important. The last words of Christ as recorded in **Matthew 28:19-20** is this command of Jesus: “Go therefore and make disciples of ALL the nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *teaching* them to observe *all things* that I have commanded you. . . .” True Bible baptism—the baptism by immersion of adult instructed believers—is a sign of God’s true church. It should be an easy



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sign for all churches to measure up to, yet many continue merely *sprinkling* or *pouring* a bit of water on an *infant* who’s oblivious to the whole ceremony! And God’s true church has a purpose: it’s a worldwide mission movement. It is carrying out the mission of reaching and teaching the world, spreading the good news of Jesus’ salvation.

## A Church Teaching the Biblical View of Death:

Spiritualism is leaping across denominational boundaries, from sightings of Mary among Catholics, to seances being held in Protestant churches, to New Age “channeling” of spirits supposedly from the dead. Yet God condemns spiritualism even with the *death penalty*, for He knows how its insidious evil can lead His people astray. **Exodus 22:18; Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Leviticus 20:6, 27.** The Bible teaching—in strong contrast to spiritualism—is that the dead *unconsciously sleep* until the resurrection. **John 11:11-14; Ephesians 5:14; Ecclesiastes 9:5; Psalm 6:5, 13:3, 37:10, 20.**

Our heavenly Father has so much He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

1. God’s true church is a *Bible-believing* church. Jesus said of *God’s Word*, “Thy \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_.” “They [the Scriptures]. . . testify of \_\_\_\_\_,” for Christ is the central theme of the Bible. (JOHN 17:17; 5:39, KJV)
2. God’s true church *uplifts Christ* as the world’s only Savior, for besides Jesus “There is \_\_\_\_\_ under heaven . . . whereby we \_\_\_\_\_ be saved.” (ACTS 4:12, KJV)
3. God’s true church is an Adventist church, eagerly awaiting the Master’s Second Advent, for Jesus Himself promised, “I \_\_\_\_\_ come \_\_\_\_\_,” and preaching that when He comes, “\_\_\_\_\_ eye will \_\_\_\_\_ Him.” (JOHN 14:3; REVELATION 1:7)
4. God’s true church teaches the *Biblical* truth about *death*. Jesus taught death is but a *sleep* when He first told His disciples, “Lazarus \_\_\_\_\_ . . . Then said Jesus . . . plainly, Lazarus is \_\_\_\_\_.” The Word of God teaches also that it’s an *unconscious* sleep, for “The dead \_\_\_\_\_ nothing.” (JOHN 11:11-14; ECCLESIASTES 9:5)
5. God’s true church preaches the *health* message that your \_\_\_\_\_ is the “\_\_\_\_\_” of God, so whatever we *eat* or *drink* should be “\_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.” (1 CORINTHIANS 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 10:31)
6. God’s true church is a *Commandment-keeping* church. Revelation speaks of “the *remnant* . . . which \_\_\_\_\_ the Commandments of God” and “the *saints* . . . are they that \_\_\_\_\_ the Commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” (REVELATION 12:17; 14:12)
7. God’s true church practices the Bible method of *baptism by immersion*, not by *sprinkling* or *pouring*. The Scripture says, “We are \_\_\_\_\_ with Him by \_\_\_\_\_ into death.” (ROMANS 6:4; COLOSSIANS 2:12 KJV)
8. “The Spirit [God’s Holy Spirit] and the bride [His church] say, \_\_\_\_\_,” *inviting us to join* them. But conversely, God calls us to come *out of any false church* when He cries, “Come out of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ people.” (REVELATION 22:17; 18:4)

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**SCRIPTURE REFERENCES**

- Rev. 14:6-12** The message of God’s true church in earth’s last hour is an *urgent* one!
- Revelation 14:6** (*first part*) God’s true church preaches the *everlasting gospel*. (See Ephesians 2:8; 1 John 1:7, 9; John 1:12.)
- Revelation 14:6** (*last part*) God’s true church is a *world-wide*, international mission movement. (See Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15)
- Revelation 14:7** (*first part*) God’s true church calls men and women to *give glory* to God in their lifestyle. (See 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 10:31.)
- Revelation 14:7** (*middle*) God’s true church announces, “The hour of *God’s judgment* has come.” (See Matthew 12:33, 37; Acts 24:25; Daniel 7:9-10.)
- Revelation 14:7** (*last part*) God’s true church calls all humanity to worship the *Creator*.
- Revelation 4:11** The very basis of worship is the fact that God *made* us.
- Exodus 20:8-11** God’s memorial of Creation is the seventh-day Sabbath.
- Genesis 2:1-3** God’s true church leads us back to the Edenic life of keeping God’s commandments—including the day He blessed and sanctified.
- Revelation 14:12** God’s true church leads men and women to faith in Jesus and obedience to His Law.
- Revelation 14:8** God’s true church warns against the false doctrines and errors of spiritual Babylon.
- Psalms 6:5, 115:17** God’s true church teaches the truth about *death* (See also John 11:11-14; Ephesians 5:14; Ecclesiastes 9:5; Psalm 13:3; 37:10, 20, and 146:3-4, etc.)
- John 10:16** Jesus, the Good Shepherd, calls men and women to follow Him and become part of His true movement.
- Revelation 22:17** The Spirit and Bride say “Come.” Through His mighty all-powerful Spirit and His Christ-centered, truth-teaching church, Jesus appeals to us to become part of His people—His heaven-bound family!