

## THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BOMONO BA MBENGUE

My name is Effiong Louis Bassay and I was born in Bomono ba Mbenguè. I grew up knowing that Sunday morning is for church and the population was very committed to that exercise even if the people were not too concerned with the notions of salvation and of everlasting life. At least it was a good social gathering. That is not the case today: Sunday morning is for sport, pepper-soup, quarter development meetings or simply for a rest at home.

It frustrates me to go to church every week and pass by friends and neighbors who do not see the beauty of what I see. I have spent all my life studying the things of God and trying to understand the one thing that matters. And the time has come for me to share it and to be devoted to my people.



I understand that the fault is not entirely that of the population: churches have become businesses, occultist in nature, deceitful with false miracles and flattering promises. The sins of the clergymen have become so rampant. The superficiality of churches has become so evident that noble men have decided to make good use of their time by staying away from churches.

Howbeit, I need you to come (Isaiah 1:18) and let us reason together. The Bible described the Berean Jews as noble because they examined the scriptures everyday (Acts 17:11). In this brochure, I want to share just a glimpse of who we are.

## THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST . . . WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE ?

You have probably heard of churches of Christ. And perhaps you've asked, "Who are these people? The church of Christ has its legal existence in Cameroon by presidential decree since December 14, 1971 and has been in Bomono for over 30 years. Yet it may still sound like a new church and you may be wondering if there is something different about them: what is their message, how do they worship and what do they believe about the Bible.

### 1. Worship

Jesus said, "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). From this statement we learn three things:

- Our worship must be directed to the right object: God
- It must be prompted by the right spirit;
- It must be according to truth.

To worship God according to truth is to worship him according to his Word, because his Word is truth (John 17:17). Therefore, we must not exclude any item found in his Word, and we must not include any item not found in his Word.

Worship in churches of Christ centers around five items, the same as in the first-century church. The five items of worship observed by the first-century church were: (1) singing, (2) praying, (3) preaching, (4) giving, and (5) eating the Lord's Supper. This is simple yet biblical. However let us emphasize two of these five items:

#### A Cappella Singing

One of the things people most frequently notice about churches of Christ is that we sing without the use of mechanical instruments of music -- a cappella singing is the only music used in our worship. A cappella by definition means the music of the church.

Simply stated, here is the reason: we are seeking to worship according to the instructions of the New Testament. The New Testament leaves instrumental music out, there-

fore, we believe it right and safe to leave it out, too. If we used the mechanical instrument we would have to do so without New Testament authority.

There are only 8 verses in the New Testament on the subject of music in worship. Here they are:

- 1) And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30).
- 2) about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God...(Acts 16:25).
- 3) Therefore I will praise Thee among the Gentiles, and sing to thy name (Romans 15:9).
- 4) . . . I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also (1 Corinthians 14:15).
- 5) . . . be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart (Ephesians 5:18,19).
- 6) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God (Colossians 3:16).
- 7) I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee (Hebrews 2:12).
- 8) Is any one among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise (James 5:13).

Mechanical instruments of music are conspicuously absent in these passages. Historically, the first appearance of instrumental music in church worship was not until the sixth century A.D., and there was no general practicing of it until after the eighth century. Instrumental music was strongly opposed by such religious leaders as John Calvin, John Wesley and Charles Spurgeon because of its absence in the New Testament.

#### Weekly Observance of The Lord's Supper

Another place where you may notice a difference between churches of Christ and other religious groups is in the Lord's Supper. This memorial supper was inaugurated by Jesus on the night of his betrayal (Matthew 26:26-28). It is

observed by Christians in memory of the Lord's death (1 Corinthians 11:24,25). The emblems - bread without yeast and wine - symbolize the body and blood of Jesus (1 Corinthians 10:16).

We observe the Lord's Supper on the first day of every week. Again, our reason centers in our determination to follow the teaching of the New Testament. It says, describing the practice of the first-century church, "And upon the first day of the week . . . the disciples came together to break bread ..." (Acts 20:7).

Some have objected that the text does not specify the first day of every week. This is true--just as the command to observe the Sabbath did not specify every Sabbath. The command was simply, "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). The Jews understood that to mean every Sabbath. It seems to us that by the same reasoning "the first day of the week" means the first day of every week.

## 2. Membership

Perhaps you are wondering, "How does one become a member of the church of Christ?" What are the terms of membership?

Churches of Christ do not speak of membership in terms of some formula which must be followed for approved acceptance into the church. The New Testament gives certain steps which were taken by people in order to become Christians. When a person became a Christian he automatically was a member of the church.

The same is true of churches of Christ today. There is no separate set of rules or ceremonies which one must follow to be inducted into the church. When one becomes a Christian he, at the same time, becomes a member of the church. No further steps are required to qualify for church membership.

On the first day of the church's existence those who repented and were baptized were saved (Acts 2:38). And from

that day forward all those who were saved were added to the church (Acts 2:47). According to this verse (Acts 2:47) it was God who did the adding.

To become a Christian as taught in the New Testament,

- 1) One must **hear** the gospel, for "faith comes by hearing the word of God" (Romans 10:17).
- 2) One must **believe**, for "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6).
- 3) One must **repent** of past sins, for God "commands all men, every- where to repent" (Acts 17:30).
- 4) One must **confess** Jesus as Lord, for he said, "He that confesses me before men, him will I also confess before my father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32).
- 5) And one must be **baptized** for the remission of sins, for Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every- one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins ..." (Acts 2:38).

### Emphasis on Baptism

Churches of Christ have a reputation for placing much stress on the need for baptism. However, we do not emphasize baptism as a "church ordinance," but as a command of Christ. The New Testament teaches baptism as an act which is essential to salvation (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16).

We do not practice infant baptism because New Testament baptism is only for sinners who turn to the Lord in belief and penitence. An infant has no sin to repent of, and cannot qualify as a believer.

The only form of baptism we practice in churches of Christ is immersion. The Greek word from which the word baptize comes means "to dip, to immerse, to sub- merge, to plunge." And the Scriptures always point to baptism as a burial (Acts 8:35-39; Romans 6:3,4; Colossians 2:12).

As we move in this neighborhood in Bomono, we hope you will decide to give us a chance to share Christ - that you will offer yourself in obedient faith and become a member of the church of Christ.

Cameroon Mission Work (CA.M.WORK) is a ministry opportunity spearheaded by Louis and Linda Bassay after they returned from the USA in summer 2018.



The work is devoted to the Lord with the intent of saving souls, strengthening the saved and serving the society. This is a continuation of what has long been their passion. It is a full-time commitment for Both Louis and Linda and covers a wide range of activities based on the nature of work in Cameroon and the multiple training and awareness they are receiving from Harding University.

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