

## Whose Church Is This? 02-07-16 AM

If we are living a life that shines like a light on a hill, we can be expected to be asked about our spiritual life. Perhaps we will be asked about our congregation. They might ask “what does your church teach” about subjects like abortion, baptism, marriage, or other issues relevant to day to day life. When we answer a question like this, we want to make sure that the listener is not confused about the nature of the church that Jesus built; a church should belong to Christ, not to men. As the Scriptures say “you are Christ's, and Christ is God's” (1 Corinthians 3:23). Never miss an opportunity to explain to someone that we belong to Jesus as a church by being the church of the New Testament. We are that church by our doctrine (2 John 9) and our organization (Ephesians 4:11-12).

But it may be the case that we miss an important perspective that we ourselves ought to have. While it is correct to say that the church belongs to Jesus, there is another sense in which the church belongs to us too. Consider passages such as Galatians 1:22 or 1 Thessalonians 1:1, where the church is identified in a possessive term as belonging to the members of the church. Have we been given the church? “Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe” (Hebrews 12:28). Indeed, in one sense we have received the church.

Many Christians do not perceive that the church is their possession too. It reflects in the way they talk; they refer to the church in terms such as “or and them”. Perhaps they lack a vested interest in its future. Perhaps because they do not have a sense of ownership, they are not sacrificial to its needs.

How is this OUR Church? Consider the Bible you use. Is it *your* Bible? You did not write it, nor are you allowed to change it, add to it or take from it. Yet you would consider it your possession, and you would make those appropriate notes or marks that you see fit to fit it to you. So it is with the church. We cannot change the nature, purpose, structure or authority of the church. Yet it does in a manner of speaking belong to us. We are responsible for its soundness (Revelation 2:14, 20). We are also responsible for its Spiritual life (Revelation 3:1). When there is no sense of possession, there is no care for its condition.

What should we do to increase our sense of ownership? First, we need to set a mind of vested ownership in the church. Paul had such a mind for the church in Corinth in 2 Corinthians 11:2. Second, we need to prepare to do the works you are called to do. Whether it is to serve as a teacher or elder or deacons, we need to walk in the works God has called us to (1 Corinthians 7:7). Finally, we must understand that you are called to make sacrifices to the work of the church (Romans 12:1-2).