



Beware of Counterfeits

Counterfeit currency has become so great a problem in our society, many stores now have counterfeit detection machines at their checkouts. This no doubt has helped to pull fraudulent cash from the marketplace, however, there are still many portals into the money system for counterfeiters to use. In it's 2002 Crime Overview, the London Police Service (London, ON) disclosed a 17% increase in fraud reports, and a 73% increase in counterfeit money reports over the previous year. The likelihood that you will receive a bogus bill is increasing year after year.

One encounter with a counterfeit note will be enough to make anyone appreciate the high cost of these look-a-like bills. The bank of Canada will not and cannot honour counterfeit money, for to do so would encourage criminal

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action. They will take your fake money, removing it from the market, but you receive nothing in return. A \$5 bill may not hurt too much, but imagine losing \$20, \$50 or \$100 to counterfeit! OUCH!!

Friend, I suggest there is a much more serious counterfeit operation in the world than this, one which few are aware of, and which affects us far beyond our pocketbooks. Would you believe that counterfeiting is more of a problem in the religious world than it ever will be with our currency? A common perception among people, whether religious or not, is that it really doesn't matter – Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, etc.. Just different ways to the same end, right? Not so! These have different doctrines, hopes and philosophies. A prophet of

wrote many years ago, "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" (Amos 3:3) The prophet speaks of the agreement needed between God and those who will serve Him. There are not as many ways to God as there are religions in the world. We must come to God

Counterfeiting has become an emerging crime due to the technological advances in computers, colour photo copiers, and scanners.

The number of counterfeit bills in Canada has risen significantly since 1995. In 1995, there were 55,858 counterfeit bills worth \$1.3 million seized or passed in Canada. That number peaked to 132,572 bills worth \$5.9 million in 1998. In 2000, there were 104,653 bills worth \$42 million.

(Edmonton Police Service)

LIMESTONE CHURCH OF CHRIST

according to His will, not our own. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6) Any religion which excludes Jesus as the means by which eternal life is obtained is counterfeit. Furthermore, of the 'religious texts' from both antiquity and our modern era, none compare to the consistency and accuracy of the Bible. It is a perfect text, the inspired word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; Jude 3).

But even in the realm of what is commonly called Christianity, we must carefully seek that which is authentic. Counterfeit churches have become a powerful tool of Satan. We hear and read statements such as "Attend the church of your choice," "One church is just as good as another," "It doesn't matter what you believe, so long as you believe." These statements all proceed from the one whom Jesus identified as "the father of lies" (John 8:44).

Counterfeit Christianity has been a source of frustration for many, causing multitudes to give up on 'organized religion.' Let me say bluntly, the denominational mess which surrounds us is contrary to God's will. The apostle Paul specifically taught against sectarianism (1 Corinthians 1:10-13). Jesus prayed for His followers, that "...they all may be one..." (John 17:20-21). Jesus came to establish ONE

church (Matthew 16:18). The apostle Paul likewise spoke of just ONE church (Ephesians 4:4; cf. 1:22-23). If Jesus only built ONE church, and yet there are thousands in existence today, we have a problem. How do we know which church is the Lord's? Just as there are identifying marks to find a specific house, car or person, there are identifying features of the Lord's church.

Friend, it is so important that we be added to the church Jesus built. Being part of a denomination will simply not do. Jesus purchased the church with His blood (Acts 20:28). Which church? His church. If we are in a church which was started by someone else, we are in the wrong body of believers. The Bible may be used, the worship may be uplifting, the people may be wonderful; but "...unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it..." (Psalm 127:1).

Take the quiz provided here. Do you attend a church? Is it the church spoken of in the Bible? Perhaps you're so discouraged by all the division, and thus you don't go to church. Friend, the Bible clearly identifies the Lord's church. Seek it out, and be added to it!

IDENTIFYING THE LORD'S CHURCH – QUIZ

- How many churches did Jesus build? (Matthew 16:16; John 17:20-21)
 One, made of all denominations
 An infinite number
 Only one
 - How does one become a member of the Lord's church? (Acts 2:38, 41, 47)
 Apply for membership
 A parental pledge during infancy
 The Lord adds me to the church
 - Are names important? I once asked a woman if she'd be OK with me calling her 'Bob'? Nope! Which of the listed names is biblical for the Lord's church? (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 1:2)
 Roman Catholic; Anglican
 Baptist; Methodist
 Pentecostal; Presbyterian
 Church of Christ; Church of God
 Lutheran; Salvation Army
 - Where and when did the Lord's church begin? (Acts 1:8-2:47; Isaiah 2:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Daniel 2:36-44)
 Rome (606 AD)
 England (1605 AD)
 U.S.A. (1900 AD)
 Jerusalem (33 AD)
 Germany (1517 AD)
 - How does the Lord's church raise money? (1 Corinthians 16:1-3)
 Bake sales, bingo, suppers, etc.
 Sunday collection only
 Collection at every service
 - How often does the Lord's church take communion? (Acts 20:7; Exodus 20:8)
 Once a month
 Each and every first day of the week
 It doesn't matter
 - Who is the head of the church? (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:22-23)
 Jesus
 The Pope
 An elected official
 - Where does the church get its doctrine and practices? (Hebrews 5:9; Matthew 15:1-9; Colossians 3:17)
 From a creed book
 From tradition
 From the New Testament
 - If the church does things which are not authorized by the New Testament (Revelation 22:18-19; 1 Corinthians 4:6)
 It's okay, if it's from the heart.
 It is unacceptable to God.
 Doesn't matter. God accepts all.
 - What is the purpose of baptism? (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21)
 it shows that we're saved already.
 It's to wash dirt off our bodies.
 It is the point at which we are saved.
 - Once a person is saved, can he be lost? (Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 3:12-19)
 Yes.
 Only if an unforgivable sin is committed
 No, once you're saved, you can never lose your salvation.
 - The book of Acts gives many examples of conversion to Christ. How many of these prayed a sinner's prayer to be saved? (Acts 2:38; 8:12, 26-40; 9:1-20; 22:16; 10:34-38; 16:13-15, 25-34; 18:8; 19:1-7)
 Everyone.
 About half.
 No one.
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10 identifying marks of the Lord's church

1. **ORIGIN.** The church was built (Matthew 16:18) and bought (Acts 20:28) by Jesus in the first century. It began at Jerusalem (Acts 1-2). Any church which claims a different place, time or person of origin is not the Lord's.
2. **NAME.** Since Jesus owns the church, it ought to wear His name (Romans 16:16). Any church wearing the name of someone or something else doesn't honour Him.
3. **STRUCTURE.** Jesus is the only head of His church (Ephesians 1:22-23). Each congregation is to have qualified bishops and deacons (1 Timothy 3:1-15). Elevating men with titles is condemned (Matthew 23:6-10). Men are to take leadership in the church (1 Timothy 2:11-12). A church which claims some earthly head, which has a "pastor", which employs flattering titles, or which has women leading in worship cannot be the Lord's.
4. **MORALITY.** God redeemed His people to be holy (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Peter 1:15-16). There are many churches which are soft on various moral issues, such as drinking, gambling, fornication, divorce, and homosexuality.
5. **SALVATION.** The church that Jesus build preaches the same gospel that Jesus announced after His resurrection (Mark 16:15-16) and which Peter preached at Pentecost (Acts 2:38). Any church preaching "faith only" is not His.
5. **AUTHORITY.** The church teaches and practices only what is authorized in the Bible (Colossians 3:17). A church which goes beyond the Bible goes beyond the Lord's law.
7. **WORSHIP.** The church observes the Lord's death each Lord's day (Acts 20:7), not at irregular intervals. They give praise to God (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16) with their voices, not with instrumental music, which is foreign to the New Testament.
8. **DOCTRINE.** The church abides in the teachings of the New Testament. Any church upholding extra-biblical doctrines (ie. Calvinism, Premellennialism) is not the Lord's.
9. **PURPOSE.** The church is commissioned to save souls from sin (Luke 19:10; Matthew 28:19-20). A church which acts like a social club is not the one Jesus built.
10. **FELLOWSHIP.** The church obeys God's instruction regarding fellowship (1 John 1:7). A group which fellowships anyone and anything cannot be the Lord's.

meeting at:

Lakeshore Lions Hall
935 Sydenham Road

Sunday Bible class.....10:00 a.m.

Sunday worship.....11:00 a.m.

Wednesday Bible class.....6:30 p.m.

We seek to be Christians, nothing more, nothing less. Rather than innovate the Lord's church with our own ideas, and thus come up with our own church, we desire just to follow His blueprint, and to be His people in His way. Not only is it possible, but it is essential to have the 1st century church alive and active in the 21st century. You're invited to join us in this worthy endeavour.