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 a 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.
A Church That Uplifts Christ:

Multipled 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 12:6-7 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 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 itsinsidious 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 unconscious—sleep until the resurrection. John 11:11-14; Ephesians 5:14; Ecclesiastes 9:5; Psalm 6:5, 13:3, 37:10, 20.
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)


Your Name: _______________________________________ Date ____________