

Who Drew The Circle?

Members of Christ's church are often accused of being too narrow in their thinking. There is a charge against the Church of Christ that it is too limited in its membership. Opponents argue that the church has drawn a circle around itself and does not include any that would disagree with us. This is a first cousin to the question, "Do you think that your group is the only one going to heaven?" I am not about to disagree that a circle has been drawn around the Church, but my question is, who drew the circle?

As members of the body of Christ we are obligated to preach the gospel of Christ. The gospel is defined as "good news" or "glad tidings". The apostle Paul said, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek*" (Romans 1:16). The brethren at Thessalonica were told that those who did not obey the gospel would be punished eternally in hell (2 Thess. 1:8,9). When the gospel was preached for the first time on that Pentecost day, 3,000 responded to the gospel and were baptized and the saved were added to the Church. If the saved were the ones who obeyed (were baptized), then they would have been in the group who were added to church. It seems reasonable then to believe that the baptized believers were saved and added to the church. Where were the ones who did not obey? A circle could be drawn around the saved or the church, but who drew the circle?

John wrote, "*If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*" (I John 1:6,7). Who do we have fellowship with? Those who walk in the light. It would be fair then to say a circle has been drawn around the ones who walk in the light. That is, those who follow the teaching of the Lord. Those who do not follow the teaching are excluded, they are outside the circle. Who drew the circle?

God through His inspired word (2 Tim. 3:16,17) has given us direction on how to be saved, live a life in harmony with His will. The boundary has been established. A circle has been drawn around His people, but it is God who has set the boundaries, it is God who drew the circle.

-Bill Dedmon
