

THE CHURCH – WHAT'S THAT?

What is the church? The church is a body of believers in Jesus Christ.

There are two ways in which the Bible talks about the church:

1. The universal church sometimes called the body of Christ or described as the bride of Christ.
2. The local church which is the gathering of believers in one place who gather to worship and witness in their own area.

By describing the church as the body of Christ, we are reminded of the unity which exists between all true believers, Romans 12:5. Christ is the head of the body, Eph 5:23. There is no earthly head. Individual or local churches have elders who are responsible to God for how they rule, but they are not the head of the church, Heb 13:17.

The church is described as a flock, reminding us that we belong to Christ who as the Good Shepherd gave

His life for the sheep, John 10:11. Jesus spoke of making a flock from His own sheep together with other sheep who were not of this fold,

John 10:16. The result would be one fold having one shepherd. This reminds us that the church is composed of Jews and Gentiles, brought together with one Shepherd who cares for them. Christ is the Chief Shepherd, 1Peter 5:4. There are no national or social distinctions, all are one in Christ Jesus, Gal 3:28.

By describing the Church as the bride of Christ, we are reminded of His love for us and the cost that He paid to make us His own, Acts 20:28; Eph 5:25. As the bride of Christ we are required to be holy in life and dedicated to Him, 2Cor 11:2.

The church is sometimes called a building reminding us that we are a temple of God, 1Cor 3:10; Eph 2:21; 1Pet 2:5. God is the builder, Col 2:19. Christ is the foundation for the building, 1Cor 3:11. He is the living stone which we are built upon, 1Peter 2:4. Peter's statement of faith in Christ was greatly praised by Jesus, Matt 16:17. All who trust in Christ as Saviour are part of that "Building", 1Peter 2:5.

Who are members of this universal church?

All those who trust in Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord become members of the uni-



ICILONGANINO – CINSHI?

Bushe icilonganino cinshi? Icilonganino libumba lya bantu abatetekela muli Yesu Kristu.

Kwaliba imisango ibili umo Icipingo cilondolwela pa mulandu wa Cilonganino:

1. Icilonganino cakwa Kristu – Limo limo citwa umubili wakwa Kristu nangu nabwinga wakwa Kristu
2. Ulukuta – lbumba lya batetekela abalongana kukushinshimuna pamo no kubila imbila nsuma mu mushi umo bekala.

Mu kutila mubili wakwa KRISTU, cilatwibukisha pa mulandu wa mumfwano uwaba pakati ka bantu bonse abatekelela, Abena Roma 12:5. Kristu e mutwe wa mubili, Abena Efese 5:23. Tamwaba umuntu uwalinga ukwita umutwe. Cila lukuta mu ncende yaluko lwalikwata bacilolo abo Lesa abomfya kukutungulula, lelo aba tabali umutwe wa lukuta, Abahebere 13:17.

Lubali lumbi, icilonganino cakwa Kristu capashaniwa, ku mukuni, mu kutwibukisha ukuti tuli bakwa Kristu, umuceni musuma, uwapele umweo wakwe pamulandu wa mpanga, Yohane 10:11. Yesu asosele pa mulandu wa kupanga mukuni umo ukufuma ku mpanga shakwe pamo na shilya ishishali mwi cinka, Yohane 10:16. Ili lembo liletwibukisho kuti mu icilonganino cakwa Kristu mwaba ba Yuda pamo na bena fyalo ukubikwa pamo na bena fyalo ukubikwa pamo na kacema umo uubasakamana. Kristu e Kacema mukalamba, 1 Petro 5:4. Takuli muncishanya wa musango uuli onse, pantu bonse bali umo muli Kristu Yesu, Abena Galatia 3:28.

Mu kulondolola icilonganino cakwa Kristu pamo nga nabwinga wakwa Kristu, cilatwibukisha pa mulandu wa kutemwa kwakwe pali ifwe pamo no bucushi aculile pakuti tube abakwe, Imilimo 20:28; Abena Efese 5:25. Ifwe, pamo nga nabwinga wakwa Kristu, tulingile ukuba abamushilo kabili abaipela kuli wene, 2 Abena Korinti 11:2.

Ishwi lya cilonganino, limo limo, lilola ku nanda ya mapepo. Ici cilatwibukisha ukuti tuli mu nanda yakwa Lesa, 1 Korinti 3:10; Abena Efese 2:21; 1 Petro 2:5. Lesa e kakula wa iyi nanda, Abena Kolose 2:19. Kristu e cakukulapo,

1 Abena Korinti 3: 11. Ena e libwe lya mweo pantu tulekula, 1 Peter 2:4. Yesu alitasha pakalamba ubunte bwakwa Petro pamulandu wa citetekelo muli wene, Mateo 16:17. Abantu bonse abatetekela muli Kristu pamo ngo mupusushi baba muli iyo nanda, 1 Petro 2:5.

Bushe ababa mu cilonganino cakwa Kristu ni bani?

Bonse abasumina muli Yesu Kristu pamo ngo Mupusushi kabili Shikulu wabo. Takwaba imilimo yakubomba lelo kuba fye ukwingila muli ci cilonganino palya pene umuntu asumina muli Yesu Kristu, Imilimo 2:47.

Bushe cilonganino cakwa Kristu catendeke lilali?

Catendeke pa bushiku bwa “Pentecost” (panuma ya nshiku amakumi yasano ukufuma apo Yesu atutubukileku bafwa), Imilimo 2:1. Ukufuma ilya nshita cicilicilekula pe sonde ponse. Mu nshita shimo citwa “Icilonganino icishimoneka” pamulandu wakuti tacimoneka kabili tekuti umuntu acisonte. Ici cilonganino catendeke mu nshita ilya Lesa apongolwele Mupashi wa Mushilo pakati ka basambi no kubabatisha kukuba umubili wakwa Kristu, Imilimo 1:5; 1 Abena Korinto 12:13. nga cakuti umuntu asumina muli Krsitu alengila mu cilonganino cakwa Kristu ku maka ya Mupashi wa Mushilo uwikala mu bantu abasunina bonse, Abena Efese 1:13; Abena Roma 8:9.

Bushe nililali ici cilonganino cikaleka ukukulwa?

Kristu alilaya ukwisatusenda kukuba nankwe, Yohane 14:3; 1 Abena Tesalonika 4:16–17, mu nshita ya kusumbulwa kwa cilonganino mukuba pamo na Kristu pe na pe. Ekutila, ababa muli ici cilonganino bantu abaitwa no bwite bwa kumulu, Abahebele 3:1. Ubwikalo bwa bantu abatetekela pamo nganabwina wakwa Kristu, kwikala pamo nankwe Yohane 14:13; Ukusokolola 21:3, 9.

Bushe abantu abatetekela baba shani na Lesa?

Icilonganino cakwa Kristu caba lupwa – abantu bamo aba muli ulu lupwa baba mumulu, kabili bambi baba pano isonde, Abena Efese 3:15. Lesa e wishi wa ulu lupwa, Abena Roma 1:7; 1 Abena Korinti 1:3. Takwaba umulimo wa kubomba pakwingila muli ulu lupwa; lelo kufyalwa fye cipya cipya, Yohane 1:2. Ifyakwingila muli ulu lupwa fibombekelwa ku maka ya mupashi wa Mushilo, Yohane 3:6–8; kabili ficitika ilyo umuntu atetekela muli Kristu, Abena Galatia 3:26. Amapange yakwa Lesa yakutila abatetekela



batendeke ukwikala no kwenda nga bamu lupwa ico bakwata Umupashi Wakwe mukati kabo, Abena Efese 5:1.

Mu cipingo cipya, limo limo, abatetekela betwa pamo nga bantu abapokelela ubwana, Abena Roma 8:15, Abena Galatia 4:5–6 ekutila abasalwa. Balingile ukulapala Kristu mu mibele pakuti abe ibeli pa babwananyina abengi, Abena Roma 8:29; Abahebere 2:11–12.

Ala ici cishinka cakwishibo, “kuti Lesa aba ku lubali lwesu”, cabuseko. Atutemenwe cakuti atutumine Umwana Wakwe kukutufwila, Abena Roma 5:8. Alitwelele membu shesu shonse ico Kristu alitufutile mu mulopa Wakwe, Abahebere 9:12 kuti twaikunkunsha na pa cifuba atuti,

versal church, or body of Christ. This is not something that you do, this happens automatically when you trust in Jesus Christ, Acts 2:47.

When did it start?

This church was born or started on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:1, and since that time it has been growing down through the centuries and across many countries to make a truly universal and united church. Sometimes this is called the “Invisible church” because you cannot point to it and say, “that’s the body of Christ, or that’s the universal church.” The church came into being when God poured His Holy Spirit upon the body of disciples and baptised them into the body of Christ, Acts 1:5; 1Corinthians 12:13. When you become a Christian you are brought into that body by the Spirit of God who lives in every believer, Eph 1:13; Romans 8:9.

When will it be complete?

Christ has promised to come and take us to be with Himself, John 14:3; 1Thes 4:16-17, this is called the rapture of the church. The church will go to be forever with Christ, and so we are people who are called with a Heavenly calling, Hebrews 3:1. Our destiny as the bride of Christ is to be with Him, John 14:3; Rev 21:3,9.

Our relationship to God

The church is a family, part of the family is in Heaven and the rest on earth, Eph 3:15. God is the Father of this family, Rom 1:7; 1Cor 1:3. We are born into the family by being born again so we cannot work our way into favour with God, John 1:12. This is a work done by the Holy Spirit, John 3:6-8. This happens when we believe in Christ, Gal 3:26. God’s plan is that we might take on the family likeness since we have His Spirit within us, Eph 5:1.

Sometimes the New Testament views us as God’s adopted children reminding us that He has chosen us, Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5-6. We should become more like Christ in our behaviour so that He might be the first born of many brethren, Romans 8:29; Heb 2:11-12.

What a great privilege we have when we know that “God is for us.” He loved us enough to send His Son to die for us, Rom 5:8. He has forgiven us all our sins because Christ has paid for us by His blood, Heb 9:12. We can truly say, “If God is for us who can be against us?”, Rom 8:31.

The local church

The Lord Jesus promised that where two or three were gathered together in His name, there He would be in their midst, Matt 18:20. This tells us that when we gather with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we are there for Him.

The early church were involved in four main activities when they gathered together, these were the study of the Scriptures, breaking bread at the Lord’s supper, fellowship and prayers., Acts 2:42.

Believers are encouraged to be present at the the meetings, we should not be isolated Christians, Hebrews 10:25. We need each other so that

we can be encouraged in the faith and also so that we can be a help to others, Eph 4:12-15; 1Timothy 4:13; Heb 10:24.

The apostles' doctrine. In these days the New Testament had not yet been written, so the apostles appointed by the Lord had authority in the churches, 1Cor 1:1. The apostles laid down the foundation truths for the church, Eph 2:20; Rev 21:14. In these days, we do not have apostles like that and God's message to us has been completed, Jude 1:3. So we should give attention to the study of Scripture, 1Tim 4:13; 2Tim 2:15. The local church should uphold the truth of God. We must remember that the local church is really God's Church and so obedience to His word is very important, 1Tim 3:15.

Breaking of bread. By doing this we are showing our obedience to Christ, Luke 22:19. There are no rules laid down for the ceremony, but it is a very important part of the life of the local church who want to remember Jesus death and thank and praise God for His goodness in sending His Son.

We also show our unity as believers, 1Cor 10:16. We are united to Christ and we are united to one another because of that, 1John 1:3. Paul accused the church at Corinth that when they gathered together, because they were making a division between those who had food and those who had none, they were not really celebrating the Lord's supper at all, they were simply having an ordinary feast, 1Cor 11:20-22.

Fellowship. Fellowship means to have things in common. We have plenty of things in common with other Christians, Eph 4:3-6. Christians have fellowship with God and walk in His light and are in fellowship with other believers who are also walking in the light, Eph 5:8; 1John 1:7. To walk in the light means to believe the right things (doctrine) and to do the right things (behaviour).

We show our fellowship with other believers at the Lord's supper when we share a common loaf and drink from the cup. However the New Testament idea of fellowship means much more, it involves sharing in many different ways. At Jerusalem they shared their food and their possessions, Acts 2:44,46; 4:32,34. Also, when the Gentile Christians heard about the famine in Judea (Jerusalem), they sent a gift to help them, 2Cor 8:4. This is called fellowship.

Paul thanked the Philippians for their fellowship (partnership) in the Gospel because they had helped him, Phil 1:5.

Christians, who are God's people, do not have anything in common with unbelievers, 2Cor 6:14. They should not have any fellowship or participate in unholy behaviour, Eph 5:11.

Prayers. In the early church, it was the habit of believers to meet together for prayer, Acts 1:14; 4:24; 12:12. The disciples wanted more than anything to be taught how to pray, Luke 11:1.

The church is a holy community. The behaviour of Christians in a local church should be different from that of unbelievers, Phil 2:15. As Paul rebuked the church at Corinth reminded them of what others do and how it was not right for Christians to behave in that way because they

“Lesana nga abamwina mwesuwu, nani engapinkana naifwe?” Abena Roma 8:3.

Ulukuta

Shikulu Yesu alaile ukuti ukuli babili nangu batatu abalanganina mwi shina lyakwe, akalabako mukati kabo, Mateo 18:20. Ili lembo liletweba ukuti ilyo tulongana na babwananyina tulonganina Wene.

Mu nshita icilonganino cakwa Kristu catendeke, abena Kristu babikile imitima ku fintu fine. Balecincila kukusambilila malembo, ukumokaulo mukate, mwi senge pamo na mu mapepo, Imilimo 2:42.

Abaletetekela balekoseleshiwa ukulasangwa kukulongana kwa babwananyina, Abahebere 10:25; tekuipatula ku babwananyina. Ifwe bonse twabelapo ukukoseleshanya mu citetekelo, Abena Efese 4:12-15; 1 Timote 4:13, Abahebere 10:24.

UKUSAMBILISHA KWA BATUMWA. Muli shilya nshiku ilyo icipingo cipya ninshi tacilalembwa, abatumwa, abasontelwe na Shikulu

ebaletungulula inkuta, 1 Abena Korinti 1:1. Ebalelondolola ifishinka apo cila lukuta lulingile ukushintilila, Abena Efese 2:20; Ukusokolola 21:14. Muli shino nshiku ilyo abatumwa tabali pakati kesu, amashiwi yakwa Lesa yalipelwa kuli ifwe mukupwililila, Yuda 3. Eico, tulingile ukubika mano kukubelenga

malembo, 1 Timote 4:13; 2 Timote 2:15. Ulukuta lulingile ukubika mano ku cishinka cakwa Lesa. Twilaba ukuti ulukuta cilonganino cakwa Lesa pamo no kuti ukunakile cebo cakwa Lesa cikankala nganshi, 1 Timote 3:15.

UKUMOKAULO MUKATE. Lyonse ilyo tuleikala ku mulalilo wakwa Shikulu, ninshi tulelango kunakila, Luka 22:19. Takwaba mafunde ayaimikwa pamuland wa ici cibukisho; lelo cabe cikankala mu kubapo kwa lukuta ululefwaya ukwibukisha imfwa yakwa Yesu, pamo pene no kulumbanya Lesa pamulandu wa busuma bwakwe ubwakutuma Umwana wakwe.

Panshita imo ine tulalanga umumfwano wesu pamo nga batetekela, 1 Korinti 10:16. Twalisuminkana kuli Kristu kabili twalisuminkana kuli umo no mubiye pamulandu wa mulalilo, 1 Yohane 1:3. Pa mulandu akuti cilonganino caku Korinti calecita kapatulula pa bantu abakwete fyakulya na bantu abashakwete, Paulo alibasekele ukuti te mulalilo wakwa Shikulu balecita; lelo ni cimo pa mitebeto yabo, 1 Abena Korinti 11:20-22.

ISENGE (UMUMFWANO). Ili shiwi lyalola mu kutila fyonse mu mumfwano. Twalikwata ifintu ifingi ifyo tucitila mu mumfwano na babwananyina, Abena Efese 4:3-6. Abena Kristu balikwata umumfwano na Lesa kabili benda mu lubuto lwakwe. Panshita imo ine, abena Kristu balikwata mumfwano na babwananyina banabo abenda mu lubuto, Abena Efese 5:8, 1 Yohane 1:7. Ukwenda mu lubuto calola mu kukonka imipepele iyalungama pamo no kukwate mibele iyalungama.

Iinti tumokaula mukate umo pamo no kunwa mu lukombo lumo pa mulalilo wakwa Shikulu, tulanga umumfwano nelyo isenge na bena Kristu bambi. Ukusambilisha kwa Cipingo Cipya pamulandu wa ili senge



kwafika na kukucitila ifintu fimbi pamo. Pamo ngefyo ku Yerusalemu, abena Kristu baleakana ifyakulya pamo ne fikwatwa, Imilimo 2:44, 46; 4:32, 34. Na lintu abena fyalo abatetekele baumfwile pamulandu wa cipowe icali mu Yudea (Yerusalemu), batumine ca bupe kukwafwilisha, 2 Abena Korinti 8:4. Uku kwafwilisha kwitwa umumfwano nelyo isenge.

Paulo atashishe abena Filipi pamulandu wa mumfwano wabo pakuminkana pamo nao mu kubila kwa mbila nsuma, Abena Filipi 1:5.

Abena Kristu, ababa mu buntu bwakwa Lesa, tabominkana pamo na bashatetekela, 2 Abena Korinti 6:14. Tabalingile ukukwate senge nelyo kucita nabo ifintu fya bubifi, Abena Efese 5:11.

AMAPEPO. Mu nshila ilyo inkuta shatendeke, cali emwata wa bantu abatetekela ukulonganino kukukwata mapepo, Imilimo 1:14; 4:24; 12:12. Abasambi nabo, mu nshila yabo, bakabile nganshi ukusambilila ukupepa, Luka 11:1.

ULUKUTA LIBUMBA LYA MUSHILO. Imibele ya bena Kristu pa lukuta ilingile yapusana ne mibele ya bantu abashatetekela, Abena Filipi 2:15. Pamo nge fintu Paulo akalipile ulukuta ku Korinti ukupitila mu kubasokolwela icilubo cali mu fintu abashatetekela balecita; abebukishe fyo tacalungeme ku mwina Kristu pantu alipilibuka pamulandu wa kusumina muli Kristu, 1 Abena Korinti 6:11.

Mu kusokolola 3:5, 18; 19:8, tubelenga ukuti abamushilo balifwikwa ifyabuta. Ukubuta kwalola ku bulungami.

ULUKUTA LIBUMBA LYA KUTEMWA. Ukulungilila ukutemwa kwakwa Lesa ku bantu bambi, e cishibilo cimo pa fishibilo ifingi icilingile ukumoneka mu bantu abafyalwa cipya cipya no kubikwa mu lupwa lwakwa Lesa, Yohane 13:34-35; 1 Yohane 3:14; 5:2. Nga cakuti ulukuta lwakula mu kutemwa, abena Kristu balatendeka ukwisushiwamo no mwisulo wa buLesu uwaba e kutemwa Umwine, Abena Efese 3:17-19; 1 Yohane 4:16. Ukukula mu kutemwa kwaba mu fipimo. Tubalilapo ukwishiba ukuti Lesa alintemwa, elyo kuba ukumfwa bwino pali kulya kutemwa cibe ninshi ndesangalala pamulandu wa kwelelwa no kupokelelwa, Abena Roma 5:5. Icikonkapo nomba, Tulingile ukulanga uku temwa kuli umo no mubiye ukupitala mu kupokelela bantu bambi pamo nga fintu Kristu atupokelele, Abena Roma 15:7. Nomba abena Kristu bakalalanda ifishinka ifyakwafwilisha abashileenda bwino mu bwina Kristu, Abena Efese 4:15. Kabili bakalaelela bantu ababalufyanya, Abena Kolose 3:13

Bushe nibani balingile ukuba mu lukuta?

Bacilolo ebalolekesha pa musango wa bantu abalingile ukuba mu lukuta. Capusana na mucilonganino cakwa Kristu umo Lesa fye eulenga bantu kwingilamo. Umulimo wa bacilolo kucingililo mumfwano pamo no kusanguka kwa mweo ne mipepele ya batetekela.

Ifintu fibili ifingalenga umuntu ukuba mu lukuta nifi:

1. Ukuba abena Kristu abakwata ubunte bwa kupilibuka kwabo, Imilimo 9:26. Ici kuti camonekela mu mweo wabo panuma yakupilibuka.
2. Ukubatisiwa pamo nga fintu Yesu atukonkomeshe, Mateo 28:19; Marko 16:16.

Mu kulundapo, bacilolo balingile ukumona ukuti abantu abali mu lukuta nabapalana mufyo bacetekela, Abena Filipi 1:27. Tekuti ciwame ukonaulo lukuta kumasambilila yabufi ayengafulunganya no kulufya bena Kristu bamo, imilimo 20:29-30. Abena Kristu abakwete ububifi mu myeo yabo tabalingile ukuba mwi senge na bamushilo. Balingile ukufumishiwa mwi senge ukufika ku nshita bengayebelela

had been changed when they trusted in Christ, 1Cor 6:11.

In the book of Revelation, the saints are seen as being clothed in white garments, Rev 3:5,18; 19:8. White always speaks of righteousness.

The church is a community of love. The expression of God's love to others is one of the true signs of those who have been born again, adopted into God's family, John 13:34-35; 1John 3:14; 5:2. As a local church grows in love they begin to be filled with the fullness of God who is love, Eph 3:17-19; 1John 4:16. Growth in love follows in stages. We first come to know the fact that God loves me, then there is the experiencing of that love in our lives as we enjoy His forgiveness and acceptance, Romans 5:5. This then will be followed by us showing that love to one another by receiving others just as Christ has also accepted us, Rom 15:7. They will speak the truth in love to correct some who may have erred from the way, Eph 4:15. They will forgive others who have wronged them, Col 3:13.

Who should be members of the local church?

Unlike the Universal church where God is the one who places us there, membership of the local church is controlled by the overseers. Their work as God's stewards should be to protect the unity and purity of life and doctrine of the believers.

Two basic requirements would be that those who wish to join the fellowship should be real Christians who can testify to their conversion, Acts 9:26. This would be clear from the changed life which they now live. They should also be baptised as Jesus commanded us, Mat 28:19; Mark 16:16.

In addition the elders have the work of making sure that those who gather together have common beliefs and aims, Phil 1:27. They would not want to have the church upset by false teachings which might confuse some and lead them astray, Acts 20:29-30.

Those who live immoral or otherwise sinful lives have chosen to have no place in the fellowship of God's people, and may be removed until they amend their ways, 1Cor 5:11.

May God give us help to understand His plan for us in the church and may we live for His glory in holiness and love while we wait for our Lord to come and take us as His bride to be forever with Him in Heaven.

no kuleka imibele ya bubifi, 1 Abena Korinti 5:11.

Lesu atwafwe ukumfwa amapange yakwe pali ifwe mu lukuta kabili twikale kukuleta ubukata kuli Wene muli bumushilo pamo no kutemwa ilintu tucili tulelolola Shikulu ukwisatusenda nga na bwinga kukuba nankwe pe na pe mumulu.

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