

The Need For Christian Unity

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When the word “church” is used many people think of the building in which the church meets. The Bible never speaks of the church as a physical building. The church in the Bible is always people saved by the blood of Jesus. According to Acts 11:22 the church has ears. *“Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.”* Many view the “church” as a group made up of all denominations. A denomination is a religious group separated from others by a particular name and doctrine. Denominationalism is opposed to the will of God. Christians must speak the same thing. *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”* (1 Cor. 1:10).

In Eph. 4:4-6 the Bible teaches that there is one church. “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” This one church is the body of Christ. *“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”* (Eph. 1:22-23). Today there are hundreds of “churches” in the world. There is even much division among Churches of Christ those that claim that Jesus used multiple cups in the communion. You cannot be right in one thing and justify yourself that you are right to the rest as well.

What divided original Christianity?

Paul wrote to the Galatians to show that division was caused by men perverting the gospel of Christ. *“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”* (Gal. 1:6-9) The Devil is always busy trying to pervert God’s message. The Bible said that men would depart from or fall away from the faith. *“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.”* (1 Tim. 4:1). This departure from the faith would come because men would not endure sound doctrine. *“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they*

will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” (2 Tim. 4:3-4.) One thing that caused original Christianity to be divided was a departure from the “*one faith*” to other beliefs. (Ephesians 4:5)

What is a denomination?

A denomination is a named division. The command was that there “*be no divisions.*” (1 Corinthians 1:10) Yet, Christians in Corinth were denominating themselves by wearing the names of preachers who baptized them, thus dividing the church into “named divisions” or denominations. “*Now I say this, that each of you says, I am of Paul, or I am of Apollos, or I am of Cephas, or I am of Christ.*” (1 Cor. 1:12) But, denominating divides Christ’s spiritual body, the church. Such division is contrary to the will of God for His church.

What can be done about divisions?

The faith was given once for all to Christians. It must be “contended for” in every generation. “*Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*” (Jude 3). Our hope for unity rests in the original truth being preached; as it was before men turned away from it. “*Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*” (John 8:31-32). This truth which must be proclaimed with boldness is the word of God. “*Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.*” (John 17:17). We must restore the original unity of the church as it was before denominations divided it. This restoration can be accomplished only when the truth is proclaimed and truth must always be proclaimed in the correct spirit. (Eph. 4:15). Traditions of men often blind people to the truth of God. (Matt. 15:3). Restoration of true Christianity can be accomplished only with God’s word and with His help!

Were the early Christians in one Church?

The early Christians were in one church and Christians today should be in one church. Acts chapter eight gives the account of the conversion of a man from Ethiopia. “*Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized? Then Philip said, If you believe with all your heart, you may. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they*

came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.” (Acts 8:36-39). After his baptism he was a member of the church of Christ. You can be a member of the church of Christ and never be part of any denomination. The saved are added to the church. *“Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”* (Acts 2:47) The church is composed of those who have been freed from their sins. God’s love for mankind leads both to their salvation and to them being placed into Christ’s church or kingdom. *“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”* (1 Cor. 12:13).

Those who are saved are delivered by God into the kingdom or church. *“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”* (Col. 1:13). The church into which the Lord delivers people is His church. He has built only one church; but men have established many. *“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”* (Matt. 16:18) All who comply from the heart with the conditions set forth in the Bible become Christians, members of the Lord’s church. To become a Christian, you must believe (Mark 16:16), repent of sins (Acts 2:38), confess Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9-10), and be baptized into Christ. (Gal. 3:27, 1 Peter 3:21.) Those who obey the gospel are saved and added to the church. (Acts 2:47) Are you a part of the blood bought church of Christ.

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