



Udenominational Nature of the Church

January 13, 2019

Wear the Name of Christ: In Acts 11:26 Luke records "...the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." Saul of Tarsus was a, "...chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15). Paul was sent to the Gentiles to bear the name of Christ before them and the kings of the earth. Both Gentiles and the Jews were brought together in fellowship under one name, Christ Jesus, and a new name was given to them all, and it was the name "Christian."

Absolutely undenominational: Almost every denominational organization today will criticize the Church of Christ because it teaches that division is wrong, contrary to the Spirit of Truth. It is astonishing that the majority differ in so many ways, yet they are the very ones who condemn the church of Christ most for holding to one way. The Bible can and does only teach us one way. **The Bible teaches that Christianity is unable to "coexist" with denominationalism and religious division.**

1. **Jesus prayed for unity, not division:** "...21 that they all may be one..." (John 17:20-21).
2. **Paul's plea:** "*Let there be no divisions among you*" (1Cor 1:10)
3. **Christ is not divided, and neither is His Church:** "*Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?*" (1Cor 1:13)
4. **Division is a work of the flesh:** "*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*" (Gal 5:19-21)
5. **Division is destructive not constructive:** "...Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand." (Matt 12:25)

What makes division possible is having many heads instead of one and this leads to many accepted teachings, many accepted leaders, many accepted names. Yet, again according to the Bible no division or denominationalism exists.

1. **There is one head and one body, that is Christ's:**
 - a. "*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. 1:19-23)
 - b. "*And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*" (Col. 1:18)
 - c. "*I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*" (Eph. 4:1-6)
2. **There is one kingdom and one King** (Rev 1:5-6; Luke 22:29; Heb. 12:28)



"Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

Division stands against everything that the Spirit teaches, against the facts of one body, one spirit, one Lord; therefore, it is condemned by God as sin. Anyone who gives any endorsement or encouragement stands contrary to the revealed will of God.

Paul said: We must *“not to think beyond what is written”* for doing so causes division (1Cor 4:6). We must be of the same spirit (2Cor 4:13). The church of the New Testament, Christ’s Church respects the authority of the Lord (Matt 28:18) and word of the Lord as truth (John 17:17), which is opposed to religious division and denominationalism. The Lord’s Church has distinct identity clearly taught in the Bible and *“Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; 11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.”* (2John 9-11)

The church of Christ does not have human creeds: The Church of Christ must reject all of the doctrines and commandments of men and apply themselves only to the doctrine of Christ. Christians cannot teach anything apart from the doctrine of the Apostles of Christ without being accursed (Gal 1:6-8). *“If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; 11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.”* (2 John 10-11, see also Matt 15:7-9). The Bible the Word of God is the creed of every Christian, nothing more, nothing less.

No Earthly Head: The Lord’s church, *“churches of Christ”* (Rom. 16:16), that is the local congregations that belong to Him has no earthly head, no central governing party. Each congregation as is the pattern of the New Testament, is an independent body under its own elders that have no authority over any other body. The faithful members of the Lord’s church do not make alliances with human societies, missionary, benevolent, educational, or of any other kind and when they do are guilty of departing from the New Testament pattern, set in the Word of God and are guilty of the sin of denominationalism and division.

No Earthly Name: When the saints in Corinth claimed to be followers of Paul, he sharply criticized them saying, *“Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?”* (1Cor. 1:13). In this discourse, Paul teaches a powerful lesson on whose name we should wear. In order to wear the name, that person had to first be crucified for you. Was Luther crucified for his followers, was Calvin, Wesley, or John Smyth of the Baptist Church. Also, in order to wear the name, the candidate had to be baptized in the name of: Do we baptize in the name of Calvin, Wesley, or John Smyth. Paul had not died for them and neither had they been baptized into his name so why wear the name of Paul? So, the real question is who was crucified for you, and in whose name were you baptized? If you answer Christ why not wear the name of Christ, and why would you want the name of someone other than Christ on the building which He by His mercy allows us to enter on Sunday and worship.

- Even though, whatever we do in word or deed is all to be done in the name of the Lord (Col. 3:17). Yet still they are called Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Mormon, Catholic, and Nazarenes...
- The name of Christ is above every name (Phil. 2:9). Yet they wear the name Apostolic, Wesleyan, Grace, and The Chapel...St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Mary...

Human names cause division

Therefore, by no other name can God be pleased and by no other name is unity possible. *“9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”* (Phil 2:9-11).

We in the churches of Christ are not, and will never be ashamed, we will glorify God in this name: AMEN! *“Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter”* (1Peter 4:16).

In Love
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