

Christianity Denominationalism?

Without

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Can you have a church without it being a denomination? Yes! By following the Gospel pattern Jesus and His apostles taught, we can duplicate today the dynamic church found in the Book of Acts. The world had never heard of a denomination at that time.

A little investigation into the New Testament shows that the First Century churches were nothing like today's monstrous man-originated denominations. When Jesus promised, "...I will build my church..." (Matthew 16:13-18), He did not have in mind a group divided into small parts, teaching different doctrines and opposing each other. We know this because He prayed that all His followers would be "one" (John 17:20,21) and added all those saved to one church (Acts 2:47). He sent the Holy Spirit to further instruct that there would be "one body" (Ephesians 4:4), and reprimanded those who introduced divisive doctrines and practices (1 Corinthians 1:10).

Jesus proclaimed, "I am the way, the truth and the life..." (John 14:6). When we follow Jesus by imitating His love and obeying His commandments, there is no need for membership in any religious group founded and directed by mere men. What is the Lord's way? Jesus taught lost sinners to:

- Hear and believe His Gospel (John 6:44-45; Romans 10:17).

- Repent from all sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
- Confess Him before others (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:10).
- Be baptized in water for forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 10:48; 1 Peter 3:21; John 3:5; Titus 3:5).

Those who became disciples were simply called "Christians" (Isaiah 62:2; Acts 11:26). They were neither "ites," "ics," not "its," nor "Brand A, B, and C" Christians. They were added to the Lord's body, His church (Acts 2:40-47), and no one "voted on their membership." Such practices are foreign to the New Testament.

The New Testament church has no organization on earth larger than local congregations. Each was led by elders, served by deacons, preachers, and teachers. There was no governing body to hand down doctrine or to take dues. Jesus is "...the head of his body, the church..." (Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18). The headquarters of the Lord's church are in Heaven, where He resides at God's right hand (1 Peter 3:22), not in Rome, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Salt Lake City, Nashville, Memphis, nor Cleveland, Tennessee.

The churches of Christ have no creed but Christ, and no guidebook but the Bible. We plead for unity based on conformity to identical teaching. This unity is not simply an agreement to disagree, but a genuine willingness to "...speak as the oracles of God..." (1 Peter 4:11). We seek to "speak where the Bible speaks, to be silent where it is silent; to do Bible things in the Bible way, and to call Bible things by Bible names."

It will never work, you say? Come and see. The church of Christ welcomes your visits and investigation.