

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS NOT A DENOMINATION
(Matthew 16:18-19)

I. The church of Christ is the church found in the New Testament.

- A. The church of Christ is not a part of Judaism.
 - 1. The foundation of Judaism, the Mosaic Law, has been done away with.
 - 2. Romans 7:1-4; Colossians 2:14-17.
 - 3. This was just what was prophesied in that very law (Jeremiah 31:31-34).
- B. The church of Christ is not a Protestant denomination.
 - 1. All the denominations of our day had their beginnings long after the church found in the New Testament was established (Mark 9:1; Acts 2:47).
 - 2. The things we see in denominationalism are absent from the church of Christ (creed books, governing bodies, altars and many other things).
- C. The church of Christ is not the Catholic Church.
 - 1. The Catholic Church did not come into its completed state until 606 AD.
 - 2. Many of the doctrines of this group are nowhere near the doctrines found in the New Testament.
 - a. They have a perverted worship system.
 - b. They have a perverted system of church government.
 - c. They have a perverted doctrine of repentance just to name a few.
- D. The Greek word translated “church” means “the called out ones.”
 - 1. These people have been called out of the world by the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14) and have been obedient to the gospel (Romans 6:17).
 - 2. Jesus is the head of the church we read about in the New Testament (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18).
- E. The church found in the New Testament is singular in number.
 - 1. There is one fold (John 10:16) and the church is that fold (Acts 20:28).
 - 2. There is one body (Ephesians 4:4) and the church is that body (Ephesians 1:22-23).
 - 3. Jesus taught monogamy in marriage (Romans 7:1-4) and the church is His bride (Ephesians 5:22-33).
- F. That the church of Christ is the one church of the New Testament can be seen by the fact she has the same identifying marks:
 - 1. The church of the New Testament was called the church of Christ (Romans 16:16) as she is today.
 - 2. The church of the New Testament had elders, deacons, evangelists and members (Philippians 1:1) just as she does today.
 - 3. The church of the New Testament met on the first day of the week

(1 Corinthians 16:2) and worshiped with giving, praying, acapella singing, partaking of the Lord's Supper and preaching, just as she does today.

4. The church of the New Testament was guided by the apostles doctrine (Acts 2:42), just as she is today.
 5. The church of the New Testament had hearing, believing, repenting, confessing Christ and being baptized as her terms of entrance, just as she does today.
 6. The church of the New Testament had the mission of supporting the truth (1 Timothy 3:15), just as she does today.
- G. There are groups that have some of these markings, but none save the churches of Christ that have all.

II. Jesus was undenominational as His church should be.

- A. Jesus did not align Himself with any of the parties of His day.
- B. In fact, Jesus prayed for unity (John 17:20-21), which denominationalism hinders.
 1. He died for unity (Ephesians 2:16), which denominationalism hinders.
 2. His apostles pleaded for unity (1 Corinthians 1:10), which denominationalism hinders.
 3. His apostles planned for unity (Ephesians 4:1-6), which denominationalism hinders.
- C. These all show that Jesus was undenominational.

III. Contrasts between the church of Christ and denominationalism.

- A. The church is divine in origin (Matthew 16:18), while denominationalism is man-made.
- B. The church will last forever (Daniel 2:44) while denominationalism will be rooted up (Matthew 15:13).
- C. The church is called by biblical names (Romans 16:16) while denominations were the names of men or man-made names.
- D. The church originated in the 1st Century (Acts 2:47) while Catholicism began in the 7th and Protestantism in the 16th.
- E. The church has its headquarters in heaven (1 Peter 3:22) while denominations have earthly headquarters.
- F. The church follows the Bible only (Jude 3; Revelation 22:18-19) while denominations have creeds, conferences and such like.
- G. One is added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:42) while one must join a denomination.
- H. The church is essential to salvation (Ephesians 5:23) while one can be saved without being a part of a denomination.
- I. The church was purchased by Christ (Acts 20:28), while denominations were not purchased at all.
- J. One is added to the church by obeying the gospel, while there are many ways to enter various denominations.

IV. Cure for denominationalism.

- A. The cure for denominationalism is the same as the cure for any sin: the

- gospel.
- B. If anyone will simply use the New Testament as his/her objective guide, denominationalism will be left and the truth obeyed.
 - C. There must be a commitment to use the New Testament as the only standard of religious authority.
 - 1. If you and I have a disagreement over the rules of football we can go to the rule book and see what the rule is.
 - 2. If you and disagree about the TV schedule we can check the guide on our satellite or cable system.
 - 3. If you and I have a religious question we can go to the New Testament and get an answer.
 - D. If people would lay down their creed books and manuals and turn to the New Testament, we could have the unity for which Jesus prayed (John 17:20-21).
 - E. There must be a commitment to being nothing, called by nothing and saying nothing that is not found in the New Testament.
 - F. If we could do this we will have the unity of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:1-6).
 - G. Seed bears after its own kind (Genesis 1:12) and if the seed of the gospel is sown, only a Christian will be produced.

From an article by Wendell Winkler.