

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Is the Church of Christ a Denomination?

There are hundreds of denominations (religious bodies authorized by man's authority and governed by human wisdom) in the United States of America alone. They differ in name, doctrine and practice and yet all of them claim to be of God and that God is with them. Are these denominations authorized by the authority of God? Are they governed by God's wisdom? Is God the author of all this division and confusion? Are they really of God? Is God really with them? (See 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:1-6 and 1 Cor. 14:33.)

Many people say, "the church of Christ is just another denomination." There may be some religious bodies called "the church of Christ" which may be denominations but when people make that statement referring to those who are truly following the teaching of the New Testament, it is merely an assumption. If a person understands the teaching of Christ and is honest, he will not make such a statement. The church of Christ is not a denomination, nor any part of any denomination! Neither is any denomination any part of the body of Christ!"

Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). The pronoun "my" indicates that the church would be "of" or "belong to" Christ. The church that Christ built is "of" and "belongs to" Him! Did Jesus have any denomination in mind when He said, "I will build my church"?

Obviously not. Jesus did not promise to build a denomination! There is no evidence that Jesus ever built a single, solitary denomination!

To what denomination did the apostles, the three thousand Jews on Pentecost, the Samaritans, the eunuch, the jailor and the Corinthians belong (or were a part of) after they obeyed the Lord's will? (See Acts 2:1-47; 8; 16:25-34; 18:8; 1 Cor. 12:13.) Were they not Christians? Were they not citizens in the kingdom (Col. 1:13-14), and members of the body of Christ which is the church? (See Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 12.) But they were not "of" and did not "belong to" any denomination! To be a member of a denomination a person must meet the requirements set forth by that denomination. To be a Christian, to be in the body of Christ which is the church, one must meet the requirements set forth by the Lord.

In the first century, the Lord added the saved to the church which was purchased with his blood. (See Acts 2:47; 20:28 and Eph. 5:25.) What about now? If a sinner hears and believes the gospel (Rom. 10:17; Mk. 16:15-16), repents of sins (Acts 2:38), confesses faith in Christ (Rom. 10:9-10), and is baptized for remission of sins in order to get into Christ (Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:26-27) just like the 3,000 on Pentecost in Acts 2, the Samaritans in Acts 8:5-13, the eunuch in Acts 8:26-39, the jailor in Acts 16:22-34 and the Corinthians in Acts 18:8, will that make him a member of any denomination on earth? If so, why does it and which one? Please tell us to which denomination did the early Christians belong? Since Acts 2:47 tells us that the Lord added the saved to the church, do you think that God has changed His plan and today He adds the saved to various denominations?

All denominations exist without the authority of Christ. No denomination that exists today is the church of Christ or, in other words, the church of or that belongs to Christ. The church of Christ, i.e., the church that Jesus built, is not a denomination!

Since it is obvious from a study of the Scriptures that a person can be a Christian, live, work, worship and die in the Lord and be saved eternally

without joining or even hearing of a human denomination, every denomination on earth is a non-essential, useless, and worthless institution as far as man's salvation is concerned! So why should any person who is interested in going to heaven be in one? In Matthew 15:13 Jesus said, 'Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.'

Why not put your faith in Jesus Christ? Why not obey His gospel (2 Thess. 1:7-9) that you may be saved and added to His church? (See Acts 2:47.) If you are not in the church, Christ is not your eternal Savior? (See Eph. 5:23.)

- Carrol R. Sutton, Guardian of Truth, March 15, 1990

Who Built the Church?

In the New Testament one reads about the church. For example, Paul wrote that the house of God "is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). When reflecting on his personal unworthiness to be an apostle, Paul acknowledged, "I persecuted the church of God" (1 Cor. 15:9). Who built this church which is mentioned, described, and discussed on the pages of apostolic writings?

Neither Abraham Nor Moses

Abraham was a great and faithful man of God. Called of God to go into a strange land, he received special promises and became the head of the race that we commonly identify as the Messianic nation. Known as "the Friend of God," he did not build the church.

Moses was divinely commissioned to lead the Hebrew people out of Egypt. He was their lawgiver. He was the writer of the first five books of the Old Testament. He led the people during the trying years of wilderness wanderings. His was an illustrious career, but he did not build the church of the New Testament.

Neither Solomon Nor Elijah

Solomon was a famous king who expanded the kingdom of Israel into an empire. He built a fine palace for himself and his crowning achievement was the building of the temple in Jerusalem. However, Solomon did not build the church.

Elijah was a courageous prophet who lived during the divided kingdom. He rebuked the wicked king Ahab for troubling Israel. He is remembered especially for his contest with the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. He and Moses appeared with Christ on the mount of transfiguration, but Elijah did not build the church.

Not John the Baptist

Some religious people have argued that the church was established by John. Furthermore, some think that since John was called “the Baptist,” the church should be called “the Baptist Church.” John was called “the Baptist” because he baptized, not because he was “a” Baptist religiously. And John did not start the church. John was already dead, according to Matthew 14, when the building of the church was still future (Matt. 16:18). John’s mission was to prepare the way for the Messiah. He was not sent to build the church.

Not Martin Luther

There is a church that wears the name of Luther; however, that church is not revealed in the New Testament. Martin Luther was not born until A.D. 1483. That is more than fourteen hundred years too late for him to have been the founder of the New Testament church. No matter how much we may admire Luther for his sparking the great Reformation in Germany, we dare not exalt him unduly. The church described in the Bible existed for centuries before Luther nailed his ninety-five theses on the door of the Wittenberg Cathedral and broke away from Roman Catholicism. One may read about Christians in the New Testament but not about Lutherans.

Not John and Charles Wesley

The Methodist Church traces its origin back to the Wesley brothers, but they lived in the 18th century. Methodism had its roots in the Church of England. King Henry VIII had separated the English or Anglican Church from the control of the Pope of Rome in 1534. It was about two centuries later that the Wesleys organized societies that developed into the Methodist Church. The church of the New Testament was in existence in the first century. It was never referred to as the Methodist Church. The Wesleys could not have been the builders of the church of the Bible.

Not Alexander Campbell

Born in the late 18th century, Alexander Campbell was a 19th century religious reformer. His quest for truth led him from the Presbyterians into close union with Baptists and then to bitter controversies with Presbyterians, Baptists, and other denominational leaders. Campbell pleaded with people to return to the ancient order of things. He urged individuals and congregations to discard from their faith and practice everything that is not found written in the New Testament of the Lord and Savior. Some of his positions in later years did not measure up to his plea. Whatever one may think of Campbell and his efforts, he came on the scene much too late to be the builder of the New Testament church. He made no claim to being the founder of the church described in the Bible.

Jesus Christ

In Matthew 16:18, after Peter had confessed him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus said, “. . . And upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” This passage clearly identifies Jesus Christ as the builder of the New Testament church.

Jesus “purchased” the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). He paid the price that there might be a called out body of people, a redeemed race, a chosen generation. He “loved the church” and gave Himself for it (Eph. 5:25). The church belongs to Him. It does not belong to Abraham, Moses, Solomon, Elijah, John the Baptist, Luther, Wesley, Campbell, or any other man. The church is Christ’s own purchased possession; it is peculiarly His.

Jesus is “the head of the church” (Eph. 5:23). He became its head after being exalted to the right hand of the Father in heavenly places (Eph. 1:20-23). Since the church is the body of people belonging to Christ, He is “the head of the body, the church” (Col. 1:18).

It is the Lord who adds people to the church (Acts 2:47). Obedience to the gospel results in salvation, and the church is composed of the saved. Jesus taught that people must believe and be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:15-16). We are “baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13). Jesus Christ established the New Testament church through the preaching of the apostles. All who respond to the gospel by obeying from the heart are brought under His headship and become a part of the glorious body which is His church.

Men have built numerous religious bodies, but no man is capable of building what the Lord established. Man may build something and call it a “church.” However attractive it may be, no man-made church is equal to, a suitable substitute for, or as important as the church built by Christ.

- Irvin Himmel, Truth Magazine, May 18, 2000

*Elders: Gregg Needham,
Gordon Percell & Gary Smalley*

Evangelist: Gary Smalley

Sunday AM: 9:30 & 10:30

Sunday PM: 5:00

Wednesday PM: 7:00



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)