

IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST JUST ANOTHER DENOMINATION

Matt. 16:13-20

INTRODUCTION:

- A. one of the biggest problems we have today is trying to preserve the distinctiveness of the Lord's church; keeping people from thinking of it as Just like any other
- B. Article in paper about companies trying to protect their Trademarks; to keep them from becoming "generic"
- C. Denominate = "DE" - "NOMINATE" "de" = to remove from; "nominate" = to give a name to or designate
- D. Denominations involves the naming so as to differentiate between; its very nature suggests division as a result of differences or to make apparent the differences between.
- E. "CHURCH" = a called-out body of people
- F. "OF CHRIST" shows possession, that it belongs to Christ
- G. Consider: is the Lord's church, then a denomination?

DISCUSSION:

I. IT DOES HAVE SIMILARITIES TO DENOMINATIONS

- A. It is made up of people who meet together regularly
- B. Most meet in a building of similar appearance
- C. It has a doctrine which is taught and practiced
- D. It engages in a program of work and worship etc,
- E. Vast differences between church "of" Christ and den.

II. DOES THE CHURCH OF CHRIST HAVE EARTHLY HEADQUARTERS?

- A. What prompts this question? Denominations have earthly headquarters with legislative, judicial and executive authority vested in some man or group of men
- B. "Headquarters" is the place where the HEAD "quarters"
- C. Christ is the head of his church Eph 1:22,23; Col 1:18
 - 1. No man nor group of men have legislative right
 - 2. He has ALL authority Matt 28:18
 - 3. He never dies out of office Rom 6:9
 - 4. Reigns over kingdom till end Col 3:1, 1Cor 15:24
 - 5. For those who would legislate: see 2Thess 2:4,5
- D. Headquarters for the lord's church is in heaven

III. DOES CHURCH OF CHRIST HAVE DENOMINATIONAL ORGANIZATION?

- A. Modern denom, highly organized with each congregation being tied to each other by a man-made organization
 - 1. Baptist: Southern Baptist convention or American
 - 2. Christian church: National Convention of C. C.
 - 3. Jehovah's Wit. Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society
 - 4. Lutherans: church conventions
 - 5. Methodist: general conference meets every 4 years
 - 6. Presbyterian: General Assembly

- B. The church of Christ knows no such organizations
- C. Its organization is fashioned after the N.T. pattern
 - 1. Each congregation is a unit within itself
 - 2. No two cong. tied together by human organization
 - 3. Only "offices" are elders & deacons Phil 1:1; 1Tim 3:1 and are local offices: no brotherhood elders
 - 4. Each congregation had its own elders & deacons Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5
 - 5. No elder can function with authority in more than one congregation Acts 20:28; 1Pet 5:2,3

IV. DESIGNATIONS INDICATES SINGULARITY.

- A. The Lord's church accepts only such names as are found in the N. T. applied to church (Matt 16:18; Acts 2:47 "church") (Rom 16:16 = church of Christ) (Acts 20:28 and 1Cor 1:1,2 = church of God) (Ephesian elders to feed)
- B. Individual member of church wear only name Christian" 1Pet 4:16; Acts 11,26; 26:28; (Note Isa 62:2)

V. ITS DOCTRINE. WORK AND WORSHIP IS SCRIPTURAL

- A. Holds to Gospel as rule of faith and practice Gal 1:11,12; 2Jhn 1:9, 10
- B. Members do not join, but added Acts 2:47
- C. Den. members think they entered Christ by doing one thing and later joined a den. by different procedure
- D. N.T. teaches one becomes Christian and enters body of Christ by the same actions.' obeying the gospel Rom 1:16; 6:3 4; 1Cor 12:13; Gal 3:27
- E. Den. work through human societies and organizations
- F. They have introduced into worship things for which there is no Bible authority
- G. Some of the work den. do: (1) Manage political affairs (2) Provide recreation (3) Run business (4) Establish maintain and/or control secular institutions
- H. If those who wear scriptural names engage in these they too are a denomination.
- I. The true church of Christ adheres strictly to the Bible in its plan of work and worship Eph 4: 11,12
 - 1. All work is done through the local church
 - 2. No human institutions are supported by the church
 - 3. Nothing is used as an item of worship for which authority cannot be furnished Jhn 4:22-24

CONCLUSION.'

- A. Followers of Christ in N.T. times were not denominations Jesus and Paul pleaded for unity Jhn 17:20,21; 1Cor 1:10
- B. If we reproduce exact pattern of the church of which they were members; how can we be members of a denomination
- C. We must actively protect our distinctiveness, so the world will know that we are "of" Christ.