

# Is The Church Of Christ A Denomination?

## Bible Answers About The Church

Denominationalism is so prevalent that people usually find it hard to understand how there could be a church that is not a denomination. Therefore, they see the church of Christ in a context of numerous "churches" and they assume that it is simply another one among the many. This concept of modern denominationalism is foreign to the Bible.

A denomination is by definition a part of the whole, hence a party among parties. The theory of denominationalism is that one may be a Christian and a member of the universal and "invisible" church, but by choice may be also a member of a particular segment (party) of "Christianity." That segment or party will have certain features which distinguishes it from other "Christian" segments or parties. These distinguishing features are what denominate that segment or party, making it a denomination. By its nature, therefore, a denomination is not the church of the Bible. The true church is "one body" (Eph. 4:4), not a division of the body. That division is sinful is clearly seen by Paul's statement to the church in Corinth, "Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor 1:10 NAS).

The New Testament does not teach or approve of denominational Christianity. The Bible gives no sanction to the use of the word church in the denominational sense. The concept of a plurality of churches with many divergent doctrines, all of which are equally approved of God, is contrary to the Bible. Jesus spoke against division, sectarianism and traditions which make void the word of God (Matt. 12:25; 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13). Jesus prayed for unity based upon God's word (Jno. 17:20-21). The thousands of denominations today are a tragic response to His fervent prayer and a shameful rejection of His dying appeal.

Is the church of Christ a denomination? Ask yourself the following questions:

- **Were the apostles members of a denomination?** No, the apostles and all New Testament Christians were members of the same church because there were no denominations in New Testament times. No protestant denomination can trace its history back any further than the days of Martin Luther in 1517. There was no official pope until 607 A.D. when Boniface III assumed the title universal bishop, or pope. Therefore, protestant denominations and Catholic churches did not exist in the apostolic age.
- **Was the church Jesus established a denomination?** No, because all denominations were established by some human being long after Jesus died to establish His church. There were no segments or parties in New Testament times. The New Testament Christians all belonged to the church of the Lord and were united in their faith, worship and practice.

- **Is it possible to be a Christian today without belonging to any denomination?** If people were Christians in New Testament times without being in a denomination and if people can become Christians today, surely membership in a denomination is not essential. But does this mean that one can be saved without being in any church? No, membership in a denomination and membership in the Lord's church are two different things. Christ is the savior of the body (Eph. 5:23), which is the church (Eph. 1:22), and all reconciliation is in that one body (Eph. 2:16). From Pentecost, no person in the Bible ever was saved outside of Christ's church, and in the Bible no saved person was ever added by the Lord to any denomination.
- **Is it possible today to be a member of the church Jesus established?** Yes, every saved person is added by the Lord to the church (Acts 2:47). The Lord's undenominational church exists today wherever there are people who are living, serving, and worshipping according to New Testament teaching.

When the pure seed of God's kingdom (Luke 8:11) is sown in honest and good hearts anywhere in any century, it produces the same faith and church it did in the first century: the church of the Lord, the people of God who have been called out of the world and saved from sin by obedience to His gospel. They are in the body of baptized believers over which Jesus reigns as head, in which the Holy Spirit dwells, and that organism or body is not a denomination.

The Monte Vista church of Christ is identical to a church of Christ in New Testament times because we do not teach something less than the New Testament. We believe the Bible to be the inspired and infallible word of God and the New Testament to be our authority in all matters of faith, worship and practice.

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