

What Does the Bible Teach About Denominationalism?



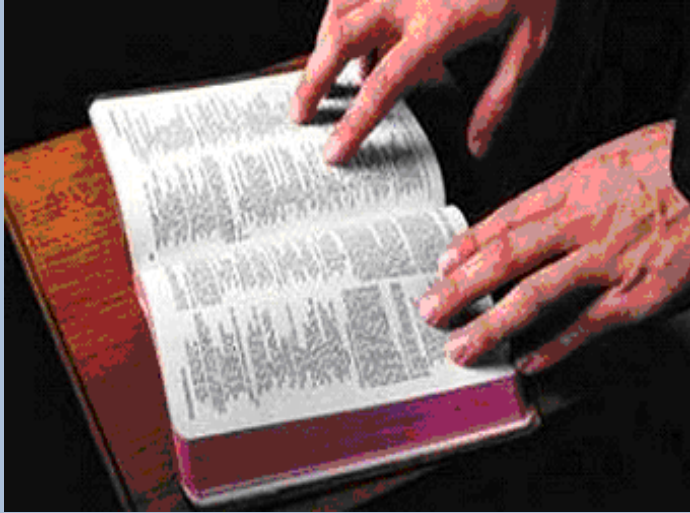
**#4: Identifying
the Lord's Church
for Others**

BEGIN WITH THE NAME

- ◆ If it is a denominational name, it is a denominational church, not the Lord's Church.
- ◆ If it is the Lord's Church, then the name must be an authorized name.
- ◆ There is really no single scriptural name for the Lord's Church in the New Testament.



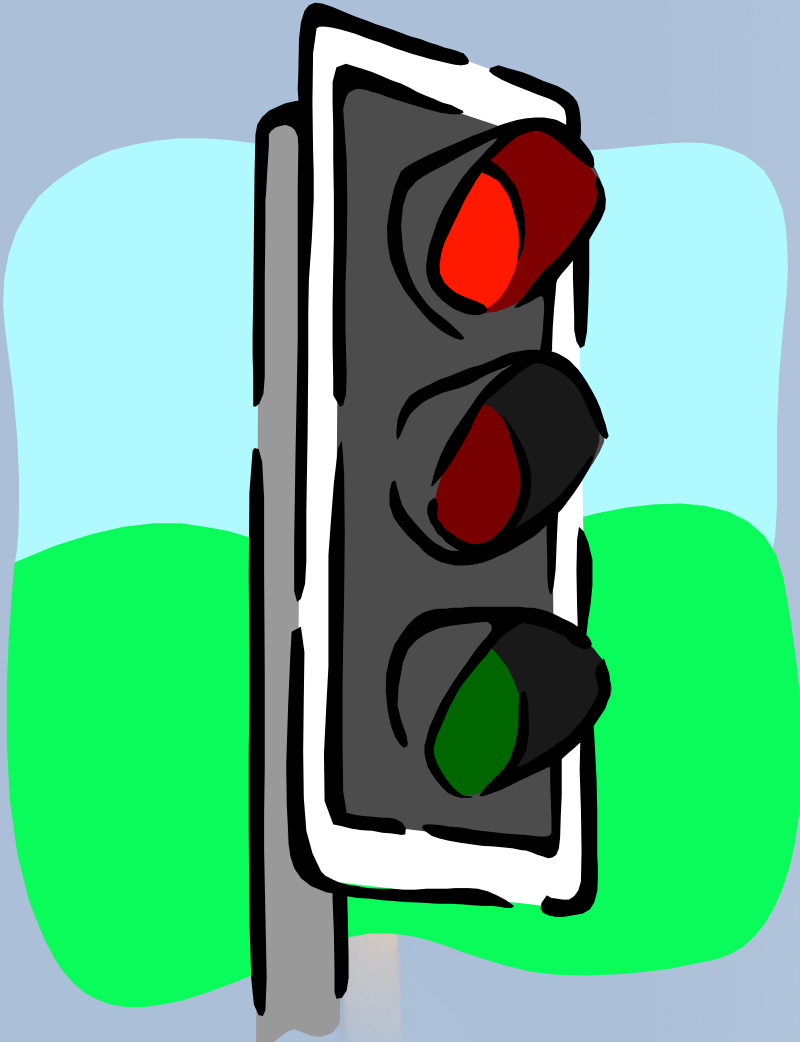
BEGIN WITH THE NAME



- ◆ Church of God - 1Cor. 1:2
- ◆ Churches of God - 1Thes. 2:14
- ◆ Churches of Christ - Rom. 16:16
- ◆ Body of Christ - Eph. 1:22-23
- ◆ Kingdom of God - Acts 28:31
- ◆ Bride of Christ - Rev. 21:9
- ◆ General assembly and church of the Firstborn - Heb. 12:23
- ◆ Church of the living God - 1Tim. 3:15



BEGIN WITH THE NAME



- ◆ However, the name alone is not a certain guide.
- ◆ There are over 200 separate denominations that use the name Church of God.

BEGIN WITH THE NAME

- ◆ There many organizations called Churches of Christ that are as denominational as any church of men.
- ◆ International Churches of Christ
- ◆ United Church of Christ
- ◆ Church of Christ (Disciples Movement)
- ◆ A number of branches of mainstream denominations have adopted the name Church of Christ in addition to a denominational identity:
 - Missionary and Primitive Baptists
 - Anglican and Episcopal subsets
 - House Church Movement and Community Bible Churches
 - Even some Catholic, Pentecostal, & conservative Presbyterians

Examine The Message Preached

◆ The Importance of the Message

- One is called through the gospel
 - 2Thes. 2:14 - “To which He called you by our gospel...”
- When one obeys the gospel, the Lord adds him to His church
 - Acts 2:41, 47 - “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 47 And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

Examine The Message Preached

- ◆ The Gospel must not be perverted in any way
 - Gal. 1:6-9 - “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”

Examine The Message Preached

- ◆ If the message is different by changing either the *facts or commands* of the gospel, then people are not being saved, and the Lord is not adding them to His church.
- ◆ A church with a perverted gospel may have the nicest people, but they are unsaved people.



Compare The Practice With The Pattern

- ◆ The New Testament presents a pattern for the worship, work, and organization of the church, by means of the apostles' doctrine.
 - Heb. 8:5 - "...as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."
 - 2Tim. 1:13 - "Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me..."
 - Acts 2:42 - "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Compare The Practice With The Pattern

- ◆ Their **worship** will be described in the New Testament:
 - Singing - Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19
 - Prayer - Col. 4:2
 - Preaching - Acts 20:7
 - Communion - 1Cor. 10:16-17, 11:23-29
 - Offering - 1Cor. 16:1-2
 - Their assemblies will be designed to edify and encourage each other to greater love and good works - Heb. 10:23-25

Compare The Practice With The Pattern

- ◆ Their **work** as a congregation will follow the pattern found in scripture
 - Equipping the saints for ministry (edification) - Eph. 4:11-16
 - Spreading the gospel by supplying and sending out evangelists (evangelism) - Phil. 4:15-16; 3John 5-8
 - Meeting the needs of the saints as problems arise (limited benevolence) - Rom. 15:25-26; 1Cor. 16:1-4; 2Cor. 8:1 - 9:15

Compare The Practice With The Pattern

- ◆ Their **organization** as a congregation will be that which is found in the New Testament - Phil. 1:1
 - With elders qualified to oversee and tend to the local congregation - Acts 14:23, 20:28; 1Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1Peter 5:1-4
 - With deacons also qualified to serve as they minister to the local congregation - 1Tim. 3:8-13
 - With saints (members) who live in this world with conduct that gives glory to God - 1Peter 2:9-12

- ◆ By carefully studying the pattern of the Lord's church as revealed in the New Testament, we can know when a congregation is faithfully observing the apostles' doctrine as authorized by Jesus Christ.
- ◆ John 17:20-23 - “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”

“Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted” (Matthew 15:13).

