

A TALE
Ed Smithson

The apostle Paul goes to Asia Minor to preach the gospel. He preaches that Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, gave his life, died an ignominious death on the cross to save them. People responded to the preaching and obeyed the gospel by being baptized for the remission of their sins. The church is established and continues to grow in spirit and number.

Then something happens that was not expected. The numbers began to drop, not as many are listening and obeying the gospel as before. What must they do? Something must be done to maintain the numbers.

Then someone comes up with the idea that they are losing young people. What is to be done to keep them from leaving? We must do something. Then a bright idea appears, "We should get someone to work with the young people. They are delicate, unlearned, so many things demand their attention. We must do something to keep them from leaving and that is to get someone to care for them." No one knows just what is wrong but something must be done. So they get someone.

After some time the church is beginning to age. They are not getting enough new people but no one seems to be able to explain why? Read the Bible where Jesus said "Go into all the world and preach the gospel." (Mark 16) "It would do no good," someone offers, "people will not listen anymore." But since the church is older now and the old people have no one to look after them, "we should look into getting a 'senior minister.'"

However, just to have someone with that title is not enough. We must do more. Now we should do something that will be of interest to the seniors. Let's have special trips, meals, and social gatherings so they will know someone cares.

So the "senior minister" becomes a "director of activities." So all of these things take place, yet, something is still lacking, we are still losing members.

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Five Links of Fellowship

1. Gathered TOGETHER (Matt. 18:20).
2. Knit TOGETHER (Col. 2:2).
3. Perfectly Joined TOGETHER (1 Cor. 1:10).
4. Striving TOGETHER (Phil. 1:27).
5. Caught Up TOGETHER (1 Thess. 4:17).

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church of Christ at Alisal

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*You are LOVED
and you are in our
prayers!*



Pearl d' Or

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. (John 1:1-5)

MEETING UPON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

Listen on AM Radio 880 KKMC in Salinas, California
2nd Friday of each month @ 1:30 pm

Bible Classes..... 9:00 A.M.
Assemblies..... 10:00 A.M. & 5:00 P.M.

<http://churchofchristalisal.com/>

WEDNESDAY

Bible Class, Singing, & Prayer..... 6:30 P.M.

Welcome

Good Morning Brothers and Sisters!

This Week's Sermon's

A.M. - What is Evangelism?

P.M. - Brother Jordan will preach



Jordan

The Nature of the Church

Trent Kennedy

Country, culture, society, even the entire world seems to devise new ways to divide ourselves up all the time. We divide over race, political affiliation, citizenship, economic status, social class, attractiveness, and more. Unfortunately, this is not a new phenomenon of humanity. The Bible describes how mankind has done this to ourselves for ages. John 4 is a prime example of racial tensions, gender status and norms, and misconceptions; Abraham was called a Hebrew; even God divided out Jew from Gentile in the Old Testament.

Considering this human and even divine tendency, it should be notable to the Bible student the strict lack of division in church revealed to us in the New Testament. God distinguishes this group as "the Way" (Acts 9:2, 19:23, 22:4, et al) which is singular in its very nature (cf. Matt. 7:13-14). God would describe His church as a body (Rom. 12:4-5, 1 Cor. 12:12-27, Eph. 1:22-23). Recall that Ephesians 2:13-16 shows that a divided body was conquered at the cross! Not only is the physical body singular in its nature, but the very idea of multiple physical bodies belonging to a singular human being is grotesque. God is very clear concerning the nature of this body; it is one and is as divided as the (one) Father, the (undivided) Son, or the (singular) Spirit (Eph. 4:4-6).

God's church is described as a singular kingdom (Matt. 16:18-19, Col. 1:13, Rev. 1:9, et al). Furthermore, Christ had a few words about the inability for a kingdom once divided to endure (Matt. 12:24-30). There is another description of God's church that is used: a bride or wife (John 3:28-31, Eph. 5:22-33, Rev. 22:17). Certainly, a singular bride will not be split into two or more pieces and remain that same bride. God's word is, in fact quite direct as to what picture God expects man to paint of marriage itself: one man with one woman for life (Matt. 19:1-9). God expects His body, His way, His kingdom, His bride to never be divided.

But man... whether by human tendency or just direct rebellion, man, in his own pride, has done the very thing which the physical world would call us not to do: divide the body of God. Man had done what which Jesus says cannot stand, attempt to divide His kingdom, His way. Man has done that which is unacceptable, made every stride to divide the precious bride of Christ. The early church attempted this (1 Cor. 1:10-13) and was

met with stiff rebuke. Man has attempted to denominate, divide with names, the church which belongs only to God.

But man...in pride and arrogance, under the banner of tolerance and union, has attempted to denominate, divide out using different names, doctrines, and practices the church which belongs to Jesus. It is here that those individuals and their followers deny one of the most basic principles of simple New Testament Christianity. Denominationalism of the Christian faith (the one faith - Eph. 4:5, Jude 3) is an attack on nature itself (one body), is an attack on the simple teachings of Jesus (the Way), is an attack on plain logic employed even by Abraham Lincoln (a kingdom divided cannot stand), and is an attack on God's institution of marriage.

Instead, the church belonging to and pertaining to Christ is united in love, mind, accord (Phil. 2:2). This body will speak the same thing no matter age, language, culture, gender, or anything else (1 Cor. 1:10, Gal. 1:6-9, 2 Tim. 2:2). This bride and body will follow our King on His way by holding to His pattern (John 12:48-50, 2 Thess. 2:15, 2 Tim. 1:13). When the church of Christ is maligned, attacked, and divided, Christ himself is under siege (Acts 9:5). Denominating the bride and body of Christ, perverting the Way, and dividing His kingdom is an assault on the Christ himself !



For the next few weeks...
Please bring your Bibles to class for our Wednesday night Bible Study -
Great and wonderful things will be studied from God's Word!

Announcements

1. Brother David will be giving the invitation this Wednesday evening.
2. Paul and Judy will be away until the beginning of April.

~ On the Prayer list

- Judy and Paul** - for safe travel and sharing the gospel with others.
- Norma Decker** - relief from her pain and COPD.
- Michael White** - for his education and helping others as he serves his time.
- The church at Alisal** - for growth, sowing the Word, and results from our Maya theater Advertisement.

Have a blessed week!