

The Voice of History

The record of the past 20 centuries reveals these facts concerning prominent religious sects:

Church	Time	Place	Founder
Roman Catholic	606 AD	Rome	Boniface III
Lutheran	1520 AD	Germany	Martin Luther
Episcopal	1534 AD	England	Henry VIII
Presbyterian	1536 AD	Switzerland	John Calvin
Congregational	1550 AD	England	Robert Browne
Baptist	1607 AD	Holland	John Smythe
Methodist	1739 AD	England	John Wesley
Mormon	1830 AD	America	Joseph Smith
7th Day Adventist	1860 AD	America	Ellen G. White
Christian Science	1866 AD	America	Mary Baker Eddy
Jehovah's Witness	1872 AD	America	Charles T. Russell

Examine these "churches" very carefully!

- ☛ **Were they established at the right time?**
- ☛ **Were they established in the right place?**
- ☛ **Were they founded by the right person?**
- ☛ **Are their members called by the right name?**

Whose Voice will we obey?

The Voice of History?

-or-

The Voice of God?

Words of Life is published by the **Westside Church of Christ** meeting at 1301 N. Enterprise, Bloomington, IN 47404

Times of Service: Bible Study, Sunday 9:30 AM and Wednesday 7:00 PM; Worship, Sunday 10:30 AM and 5:00 PM

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Words of Life

Westside
church of Christ

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



June 7,
2020

Vol. 12,
No. 15

The Church Jesus Built (Part 5): Foundation of Christ's Church

Craig Thomas

We've been emphasizing our need to study the Bible concerning Christ's church for only in the Bible does God reveal His mind (1 Cor. 2:9-13; Eph. 3:1-5; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Today let's examine God's word to determine the foundation and founder of Christ's church.

1) **Jesus is the foundation of His church.** A building's foundation is its underlying support structure upon which all the rest of the building depends.

"18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

—Matthew 16:18

Without a strong foundation a building is doomed to decay and destruction. To fully appreciate the foundation of Christ's church we need to be reminded that Christ's church consists of the "saved" (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23), those persons "reconciled" to God (Col. 1:19-23). Indeed, Christ's church consists of those

who will overcome death (1 Cor. 15:50-57) and receive eternal life (Rom. 6:23). His church is the "house of God" and the "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). Thus, by its very nature, Christ's church requires an exceedingly strong foundation. Jesus Himself provides that foundation! He alone qualifies as the foundation because He alone has conquered the power of death (Acts 2:24, 31-32). As a result, He alone is qualified to be "both Lord [master] and Christ [savior]" (Acts 2:36). In Matt. 16:16 Peter made this confession concerning Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This preeminent truth is the "rock" upon which Jesus built His church (Matt. 16:18). If Jesus were not "the Christ," if He were not "the Son of the living God," He would not be qualified to be either "Lord" or "Christ" (Acts 2:36; Matt. 28:18; Eph. 5:23). But, Paul affirms that Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4). Thus, Jesus' resurrection was God's final seal of approval that Jesus "has become the chief cornerstone" (Acts 4:11) "in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:21), and "there is

no other name under heaven given among me by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

2) **Jesus is the builder of His church.** Denominations were built by such men as Luther, Calvin, Smythe, Wesley and others. But not so with Christ's church. Jesus plainly stated, "...I will build My church" (Matt. 16:18). For others to build is folly, for "unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it" (Psa. 127:1). We do not seek to be unkind, but we must plainly teach that which is in God's book (1 Pet. 4:11). Jesus did not build a multiplicity of denominational churches, He simply built one church, He established only "one body" (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4). Thus, we must carefully ponder Jesus' stark statement, "Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." (Matt. 15:13) Dear friend, where will you be on "rootin' day"? A member of the Lord's "one body"? Or a member of a house built by another?

¹⁶ The churches of Christ salute you."
—Romans 16:16

The Church Jesus Built (Part 6): Singular Nature of Christ's Church

Craig Thomas

In previous articles we've been emphasizing our need to study the Bible concerning Christ's church. Examining God's word is the only way to identify Christ's true church. Today, let's consider the singular nature of Christ's church.

1) **Jesus built only one church.** If I were to say to you, "I will build my house" what are some necessary implications of that statement? First, that the house "I will build" would belong to me, it is "my house." Second, that "I" would be the builder of the house, not someone else. Third, that the building of "my house" was an act to be accomplished in the future. And, fourth, since "my" is singular, I plan on building only one house. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus makes a parallel statement concerning His church, "...upon this rock I will build My church..." Jesus' statement necessarily implies the same four points 1) the church He would build belongs to Him (cf. Acts 20:28), 2) He is the builder of the church (Eph. 2:20-21), not someone else, 3) the building of His church was an act to be accomplished sometime after the events recorded in Matthew 16 (see Acts 2), and 4) Jesus said He would build "My church" (singular); therefore, He would build only one.

2) **New Testament says there is only "one body."** Throughout the New Testament (NT), when describing the church, the analogy of the "body" is used. For example, in Colossians 1:18 Paul said, "...He [Jesus] is the head of the body, the church..." Thus, it is conclusive that the "church" and "the body" are synonyms referring to the same entity, those people "reconciled" to God (Col. 1:21-22) through obedience to the gospel (Acts 2:41, 47). In Ephesians 4 the inspired apostle tells us there is only "one

body" (v. 4); thus, all Christians are in the "same body" (Eph. 3:6). In the physical realm everyone knows that a normal head is attached to only one body. The same is true in the spiritual realm, Christ is the only "head of the body, the church" (Col. 1:18) and those in submission to Christ are only in the "one body" (Eph. 4:4, 15-16).

3) Denominationalism is contradictory to the New Testament.

¹⁰ Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. ¹¹ For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. ¹² Now I say this, that each of you says, 'I am of Paul,' or 'I am of Apollos,' or 'I am of Cephas,' or 'I am of Christ.' ¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"

—1 Corinthians 1:10-13

Denominationalism is diametrically opposed to plain Bible teaching. Denominationalism promotes "many bodies" not "one body" as stated in Eph. 4:4. Denominationalism has a multiplicity of heads (e.g., popes, presidents, councils, synods, conventions, etc.), whereas the NT says God

"gave Him [Jesus] to be head over all things to the church" (Eph. 1:22). Denominationalism also promotes various "faiths," but the NT says there is only "one faith" (Eph. 4:5). Are you a member of the "one body" that is in subjection to "the head of the body"? Are you of the "one faith" (Eph. 4:5)?

I Thought I Had Time

Larry Hafely

Our brother J.R. Peters recently related to me a poignantly, provoking soul stirring story. Some time ago, he was talking to a friend who had left the Lord. Quietly, without pressure, he encouraged his friend to return to his "first love." Brother Peters could tell he was making progress. "So," he said, "I thought I had time, and that it wouldn't be long before he repented and was restored."

But, then, suddenly, his dear friend died. "Larry," he said, "you need to tell people about this. We never know how long we may have. I thought I had time." The rich fool in Luke 12 thought he had time, too, but the Lord said, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee."

Is there an erring brother you need to approach? Is there a lost soul you need to talk to? Or, are you the one to whom someone is speaking? Are you one of those who needs to repent and return to the Lord? If so, do it now! Indeed, "now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). Do not let your endless wail in the pit of an eternal hell be, "I thought I had time."