

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?

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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



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**The Church Jesus Built (Part 15):
The Sin of Denominationalism (#3)**

Craig Thomas

In our last two articles we showed several principles from the New Testament (NT) that condemn denominationalism. An honest inquiry into the Holy Scriptures can come to only one conclusion: God does NOT approve! So, how do we achieve unity?

1) **Not Through Human Schemes.** Over the years many ecumenical movements have arisen based on human wisdom and plans. Such movements essentially boil down to, "We will agree to disagree." Such plans are doomed to failure because, "the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps." (Jer. 10:23) The only real way to achieve unity must be based on the simple principle of "If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). In other words, my opinion or your opinion do not matter. What matters is "what saith the scriptures" (Rom. 4:3). Everything we teach and practice must be according to God's word and in submission to its authority (Jn. 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Col. 3:17; Jude 3; 1 Cor. 4:6).

2) **Practical Examples.** First, let's look at an example pertaining to worship. In the NT the type of music Christians are to use in worship is specified as singing, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). All ten passages in the NT mentioning music limit it to singing, not playing an instrument (e.g., Col. 3:16, etc.). But, most denominations have "added" instrumental music. Recall the Bible says, "If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). If we are going to abide by that scriptural principle, will we "add" instrumental music to the worship? To "add" instrumental music is going beyond what is found in the "doctrine of Christ" and "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God." (2 Jn. 9) If one is truly interested in maintaining unity they will "abide in the doctrine of Christ"! When it comes to music in worship they will "speak as the oracles of God" rather than substituting human reasoning and opinions by "adding" instrumental music.

Let's consider another example concerning God's terms of forgiveness. Jesus

said, *"He who believes and is baptized will be saved..."* (Mk. 16:16) Many denominations teach that one does not have to be baptized in order to be saved. But, what did Jesus say? If one truly *"speaks as the oracles of God"* what will they teach concerning baptism and salvation? If one desires unity and to abide in *"the doctrine of Christ"* will they teach the opposite of what Jesus said? Surely the answers to these question are obvious to anyone truly respecting God's word.

The Shame of Nakedness

Ron Halbrook

Revelation 3:17-18 pictures a proud church like a poor, diseased man with inadequate clothes. If the church repented, Christ would supply every spiritual need, *"that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear."* This figurative use of inadequate clothing is based on the concept of the shame of nakedness and on the failure of some people to recognize this shame.

Nakedness may refer to nudity or to inadequate clothing. Adam and Eve were first nude but then partially clothed with *"aprons"* (girdle, loin-covering; Gen. 3:7). God replaced this inadequate clothing with *"coats,"* proper and adequate garments *"generally with sleeves, coming down to the knees"* (vs. 21; Gensenius, *Hebrew & Chaldee Lexicon*, p. 420). God replaced their shorts with garments covering from the shoulders down to the knees to cover the shame of their nakedness.

To uncover or see nakedness is a euphemism for sexual intercourse (Lev. 18:6; 20:17). Nakedness with its sexual appeal and implications is a blessing in marriage, but a curse and shame when displayed outside marriage. Therefore, in addition to outer robes, the priests wore pants reaching from the waist to the knees--*"breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach"* (Ex. 28:42). Even heathen women knew the embarrassment of lifting their skirts to cross a river--*"make bare the leg, uncover the thigh....Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen"* (Isa. 47:2-3). Exposing the thighs reveals the shame of nakedness.

God commanded women to *"adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works"* (1 Tim. 2:9-10). Shamefacedness or shamefastness is an innate sense of honor which *"shrinks from overpassing the limits of womanly reserve and modesty, as well as from the dishonor"* of such an act (Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, pp. 63-68). It is *"a sense of shame"* or *"modesty which is 'fast' or rooted in the character"* (Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, IV:17).

Modesty, shamefacedness, and sobriety deeply rooted in a woman's character cause her to shrink back from exposing the shame of her nakedness. This shame is exposed before men by her wearing skirts and shorts above the knees, miniskirts, low cut dresses and blouses (front or back), strapless or backless dresses, swimsuits, tube or tank tops, tight or formfitting attire (leotard, bicycle shorts, etc.), and the generally abbreviated uniforms worn

by majorettes, cheerleaders, and flag or drill teams. A man in shorts revealing his thighs and without a shirt exposes the shame of his nakedness to women.

The sin of exposed nakedness is fraught with dangers. It creates temptations for the opposite sex, sears the conscience, and refuses the truth of God's Word (Matt. 18:6-7; Jer. 6:15; Hos. 8:12). It weakens the home by causing parents to fail in their duty to their children or children to rebel against parental leadership (1 Sam. 3:13; Deut. 21:18-21). When Christians are guilty, they conform to the world, start down the road of apostasy, set the wrong example, and bring shame on Christ and his church (Rom. 12:2; Judg. 2:10; Matt. 5:13-16; Eph. 5:26-27). Souls will be lost over such sins (Gal. 5:19-21).

Christ can clothe us spiritually and teach us to dress properly when people in the world repent and are baptized to be forgiven through his blood, or when erring Christians repent and pray forgiveness (Acts 2:38; 8:22).

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Diligence

Larry Hafley

In the Bible, *"diligence"* refers to *"haste,"* (being quick to act), *"earnest care,"* being eager and desirous of achieving a goal or result. Thus, we are to *"study"* (give diligence) to show ourselves approved unto God (2 Tim. 2:15). Giving all diligence, we are to add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Christians must *"give diligence to make (their) calling and election sure"* (2 Pet. 1:10).

"Cursed be the one who does the Lord's work negligently"--that is, without diligence (Jer. 48:10)! *"Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently"* (Psa. 119:4). Of Hezekiah it was said, *"And in every work that he began in the service of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered"* (2 Chron. 31:21). The Lord rewards those *"who diligently seek him"* (Heb. 11:6). Therefore, *"whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men"* (Col. 3:23).

We earnestly endeavor to attain educational and career goals. We *"give diligence"* to succeed in athletics. Such diligence in the affairs of life is to be admired, commended, and imitated, for *"he becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand, but the hand of the diligent maketh rich"* (Prov. 10:4).

How many of us, though, display diligence in spiritual matters? Are we as eager to be on time at worship as we are to work or school? Are we as earnestly determined to develop ourselves in the grace and knowledge of the Lord as we are in the classroom or on the job?

One can aimlessly wander into hell with a lackadaisical attitude, but he cannot go to heaven without *"giving all diligence"* (Heb. 11:6; 2 Pet. 1:5-10). Which way are you headed?