

*From Where I Sit . . .*

## **“WHAT KIND OF CHRISTIAN ARE YOU?”**

The non-denominational aspect of the church raises a lot of questions in the minds of our religious friends. They think it strange to hear someone from the churches of Christ declare that we are not a denomination. Unfortunately, we are all victims of what religious history has brought upon us. Today our minds have difficulty thinking in any terms other than that of denominational doctrines and disciplines. Human experience makes us feel compelled to identify with one denomination or the other, based quite often on private interpretations, and sometimes based on the social side of religion.

I like to use an “island” approach in discussing the church in the Bible. If a person was stranded on a deserted island, and there found a Bible and began reading — if this person by some stretch of the imagination had never learned of Christ, the church (any church) or any other religious concepts, and had absolutely no preconceived notions or prejudices about any religion — and if he began reading intently and studying his Bible — if in the course of reading of the compassion of Christ and the offer of salvation — if in fact he could connect with just how sinful his sins had been and felt the need for salvation — if he were to search the Bible and do everything taught there in its right context — the Lord would certainly save him.

The question then comes to mind, “What kind of Christian would he be?” There is of course only one answer and that is he would be whatever kind of Christian they were back at the beginning of the church in **Acts Chapter Two**. He would be just a Christian and be just a member of the body of Christ. If he was then rescued and came back to our country, he would suddenly be faced with the mass confusion of "having to choose" a church. That's what concerns me. I just want to be a Christian. I don't want to have to choose one kind of religion over another. I want to be added by the Lord to His church and know that it is the same fellowship that the Apostles were a part of (**Acts 2:38-47**). That's what I'm searching for.

Our present divided state of religion is something the Lord didn't authorize, but in fact prayed that it not be so in **John 17: 20-21**, *“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 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.”* Jesus told the disciples that He would build (establish) His church (**Matt. 16:16-18**) and that the Apostles would bind on earth things that were being bound in heaven. They were then commissioned a few chapters later (**Matt. 28:18-20**) to go into all the world and preach, baptize and teach the people to observe all things "whatsoever I have commanded you."

In **John 8:32** Jesus proclaimed that we can know the truth, therefore I believe truth is attainable. Private interpretations may get in the way of His truth so I have to be willing to lay mine aside and search the Scriptures (**Acts 17:11**) whether things or so or not. We have to believe He has authored an intelligible book that can be understood by everyone the way He authored it. Jesus said we can “know the truth.” Otherwise, God is the author of confusion and division. If we all accept the Bible as the final authority in all religious matters, and if we all agree to compare everything the Lord has to say on the matter, we should all be able to arrive at the Lord’s answer to every relevant question. My answers may be wrong, and therefore I have to keep searching to find the Lord’s answers. Thus we must strive to eliminate “Private Interpretations.” The Bible is its own best interpreter.

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