

## Authority Series Introduction

It has been affirmed: “Followers of Jesus span the globe. But the global body of more than 2 billion Christians is separated into thousands of denominations. Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, Apostolic, Methodist — the list goes on. Estimations show there are more than 200 Christian denominations in the U.S. and a staggering 45,000 globally, according to the Center for the Study of Global Christianity” (Live Science).

It is difficult to confirm an exact number of religious groups in the United States: i.e., when adding those that are not associated with denominationalism.

Many groups spout the mantra of having a status of being non-denominational: while they, themselves, are part of a national conference, synod, or whatever else they call their denominational association.

Some who claim to be non-denominational are in fact inter-denominational: “occurring between or among or common to different religious denominations,” i.e., “The terms nondenominational and interdenominational are closely linked and are often used interchangeably. The subtle difference is that the nondenominational organization refuses affiliation with any particular Christian denomination while the interdenominational organization celebrates the strengths of many denominations.”

How do some nondenominational, and/or interdenominational, groups square their affirming position with their actual practice? Note: “Some weaknesses of an interdenominational church are its lack of oversight by a larger governing body and the lack of support in difficult times. Denominations can provide accountability that is often not present in interdenominational churches. However, wise pastors create boards and/or pastoral networks to which they regularly report in order to hold themselves accountable. Denominations can also come to

the rescue when a local body is going through challenging times, either financially, spiritually, or morally.” It has also been affirmed, according to “Diarmaid MacCulloch, professor emeritus of church history at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom. ‘There's never been a united Christianity,’ he told Live Science” (ibid, Live Science). He may be a professor at a university of prominence, but the statement is not consistent with scriptural reality, i.e., 1) “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need. And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved” (Acts 2:42-47); 2) “And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7).

Did division find an occasion of stumbling in the “church”? Yes, the apostle Paul said, “Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them that are of the household of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ” (1 Cor. 1:10-12). Although division existed, there is no

place in the scriptures where the apostles, the Holy Spirit, the Lord, or God gave the divisions a stamp of approval. When taken as a whole the presence of churches, denominations (or whatever else may be applicable), a wise man once said, “Remember that they came from us, we did not come from them.”

When the apostle Paul penned his letter to the Ephesians, he said, “I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all” (Eph. 4:1-6). Those that make up the “one body,” i.e., the church, and, as Paul also affirmed that Timothy was to, “Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 1:13).

Of those who deviate from the “pattern,” the apostle Paul says, “For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons. This testimony is true. For which cause reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.” (Titus 1:10-13).

Moses admonished the children of Israel, saying, “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you” (Deut. 4:2), and John closes the book of Revelation, saying, “I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18-19).

As one might pursue the web and make inquiry as to their “rule of faith,” what will be found are statements, such as, “The sole basis of our belief is the Bible. The Scripture in its entirety is composed of 66 books of the Old and New Testament, which originated with God, and was given through the work of many different God-inspired authors. Scripture is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice.” In “all matters of faith and practice.” The Question: How can those who differ in faith and practice” affirm that the Bible is their “final authority”? “for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints...” (1 Cor. 14:33). ret

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DEVICES	WARFARE	BLINDING
FRIENDS	WORK	CONFIDENT
CAPTIVITY	AIM	FLESH
MENTOR	LOVE	GOAL
JUDGMENT	SEAT	WILD GRAPES
CHILD	TOWER	VINEYARD
DOCTRINE	EXAMPLE	EYES
INTENT	VINE	GRAPES

“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance”  
(2 Peter 3:9)

Well, stated by the Psalmist, “Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground.” (Psa. 143:10)

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With Him is

Plenteous Redemption

Psalms 130:7

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Volume I		0000

Weekly Reading  
Matthew 16:13-20; 28:16-20  
1 Corinthians 4:1-17; Ephesians 1:1-23  
If you would like to receive future mailings, or have  
a question, text us @ 405-916-4723 with your mailing address.  
(Your personal name is not required).

That You Might Understand

Ephesians 3:3-4

Communication! is an essential part of man’s existence: whether it is communication among men, or communication between God and man, as it was when the apostle Paul communicated the mystery of Christ to the Ephesians (which “he” did by revelation).

Webster defines the word as, “The act of imparting, conferring, or delivering, from one to another; as the communication of knowledge, opinions or facts” (1828). 2. Intercourse by words, letters or messages; interchange of thoughts or opinions, by conference or other means. Let your communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay. Mat. v.” (1828).

Being able to communicate, via the written word is often hit and miss. As you read the following it is with utmost care that what is in the mind of the writer will be properly delivered to the reader.