

First Tuesday Class Series

Are There Christians In All The Denominations?

Can we obey the Lord from the heart in response to denominational teaching?

Does the same baptism put us into both Christ and a denomination?

Are those saved by Christ's blood added to His one body or distributed among many denominations?

Religious Tolerance Defines "Christian" As Used In The World:

"We define 'Christian' as including any group or individual who seriously, devoutly, prayerfully describes themselves as Christian. This is the same inclusive definition as public opinion pollsters use. Under this definition, **Roman Catholics**, Southern Baptists, **Jehovah's Witnesses**, **Mormons**, United Church members, even a few **Unitarian Universalists**, etc. are all considered to be Christian.

"Each group has their own definition of 'Christian' which agrees with their own initial assumptions about the nature of Jesus, God, church tradition, written text, evolved theology, etc. There appears to be no way to compromise on a single definition that is acceptable to all. One apparently cannot call on a higher power to resolve the problem, because there seems to be **no way to assess the will of God** on such matters. If there were such a method, then different definitions would have been harmonized centuries ago. People would simply have prayed to God and asked Him to define what a Christian is. Then, a consensus would exist today on the true meaning of the word 'Christian.'"

[From <http://www.religioustolerance.org>]

Buff Scott, Jr. [Quoted from <http://www.mindspring.com/~renewal/Church.html>]

So the question returns: To which of today's denominations is Jesus aligned? Is He a Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, Muslim, or Hindu? Is He affiliated with the Church of God, associated with the Evangelical Free Church, lined up with the Seventh Day Adventists, allied with the Assembly of God, a member of the non-instrumental music Church of Christ, united with the Christian Church, or linked to the Roman Catholic Church? *Which?* And I answer.... None of them! All of the above are religious parties, and Jesus is not a party man. He has children in most of the religious parties mentioned above, but He does not recognize the parties as such, nor endorse or condone their existence.

This Issue Has A History Among Brethren

Isaac Errett (1820 - 1888)

- Leading figure among Disciples more liberal element
- Preached for 10 years in frontier Michigan
 - ◆ Corresponding Secretary for A.C.M.S. during that time
- Founded & edited the *Christian Standard* (1866)
 - ◆ Despised debate & controversy found in leading papers of time - *Gospel Advocate & American Christian Review*
 - ◆ "Positive" paper with "wiser, sweeter, better advocacy"
 - ◆ Became powerful force towards apostasy later
- Often a forerunner of apostasy to Christian Church
 - ◆ Early supporter & officer in missionary society
 - ☞ Foreign Christian M.S. & Christian Woman's Board of Missions
 - ◆ Supported use of instrumental music in worship
 - ◆ First among Disciples to take title "Reverend"

Letter from Isaac Errett to R. Hawley

Dated Aug. 20, 1861 -- Published in *Millennial Harbinger*

"We are pleading for further reformation: our plea proceeds on the integrity of previous pleas -- it is a plea for the re-union of the scattered people of God. It does not recognize sects, on human bases, as divine -- but it recognizes a people of God among these sects, and seeks to call them out.... It will never do to unchristianize those on whose shoulders we are standing, and because of whose previous labors we are enabled to see some truths more clearly than they. Yet, while fully according to them the piety and Christian standing which they deserve, it is clear that they are in great error on the question of baptism--and we must be careful not to compromise the truth."

F. L. Lemley -- "Fact and Fiction" in *Mission Messenger* (Oct. 1972)

"Yes, the writer believes there are Christians in the denominations who, by the grace of God, will be saved even as we. Not all in the denominations are Christians just as not all in the Church of Christ are Christians."

Leroy Garrett -- "Our Brothers in the Denominations"

[*Restoration Review*: Vol. 32, No. 3; March 1990]

"'Brethren in all denominations.' All these years most of us in the Churches of Christ-Christian Churches have not allowed ourselves to talk like that. Even if we might think it, and most of us probably do, we do not say it. It is our unwritten creed that our sisters and brothers are all in what we call the Church of Christ. While we often refer to 'the denominations,' in contrast to 'the Lord's church' (meaning us!), we do not refer to our brethren in the denominations."

Rubel Shelly -- Preacher's forum in Centerville, TN (Mar. 1983)

"Surely there are individuals in practically all the denominations known today who've learned of Jesus, looked to him in sincere faith, turned away from their conscience rebellion against his will and embraced him as savior through immersion in his name. And their unfortunate entanglement in some denominational error or some other in no way alters the fact that they are Christians. They're God's children... There are sincere, knowledgeable, devout Christians scattered among all the various denominations. Yet, they are separated from one another by credal formulations, human names, cumbersome organization structures."

Stand (Aug. 15, 2001) -- Special Series of Studies at Glen Burnie, Maryland

Lynn Trapp, formerly the preacher at the Glen Burnie, Maryland, church of Christ and Floyd Chappellear, preacher at the Annandale, Virginia, church of Christ will be having an exchange of "papers" on Friday and Saturday, Nov. 16 and 17, 2001.

Each speaker will be given 30 minutes to present his material and then each speaker will be given an opportunity to respond to what was given. Additionally, questions from the audience of both speakers may be entertained.

The topics to be discussed will be "What is Denominationalism" on Friday night. On Saturday, at times not yet determined, the topics will be "Are There Christians in the Denominations?" and "Instrumental Music."

The first lesson of each speaker will have been prepared in advance so this will not be a debate in any sense of the word. Responses may, of course, be rebuttals of what the other speaker had to say but a strict debate format will not have been followed.

Lynn and Floyd are friends, having worked together in debate in the past, and will conduct themselves accordingly. Those who are suspect of exchanges on religious topics should find this brotherly exchange worthwhile.

Florida College Lectures (2/5/04) -- What One Should Say To Me

[Introduction of lecturer by Colly Caldwell: "Floyd Chappellear is with us. He's preached in Annandale, up near the Washington, D.C. area, for I guess over 30 years now, I think, Floyd, haven't you? He and Judy have been married 40 years. Floyd has been all over the world preaching the gospel. He's got such a good heart and he tries to take God's word to those who need it, everywhere. And the fact that he's been with that good church for as

long as he has says that he is dedicated, and they know that, and that he wants to teach the truth. What Floyd thinks is not always what everybody else thinks, but we've had him here anyway. [Audience laughter] And that's kind of dangerous these days, as you well know, and as I *well* know! [Audience laughter] But Floyd challenges our thinking. He calls us to search the Scriptures. He forces us to consider and to think about whatever it is he is speaking on and I am glad to introduce him to you. And with a topic like this, there's no telling what he will say. So here he is, Floyd Chapplear. Thanks for coming."

Floyd Chapplear: "Now I know what I'm about to say is going to disturb some brethren, but I'll say it anyway, Colly gave me permission. [Audience laughter] I'm asked all the time, 'Are there Christians in the denominations?' My answer is 'yes,' and it's our job to get them out. It's not our job to say, 'Well, there can't be,' and just leave them there. There are people in the denominations who have obeyed the Lord from the heart. They didn't hear about us; we need to find out about them and get them out!"

Bible Definition of the Term "Christian"

Word "Christian" Is Used In Three Passages

☉ **1 Peter 4:16**

- *"But if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name."*

☉ **Acts 11:26**

- *"The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."*

☉ **Acts 26:28**

- *"You almost persuade me to become a Christian."*

Let Us Examine Each Text... To Let the Scripture Answer... "Who Is A Christian?"

1 Peter 4:15-19

For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters; but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name. For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God: and if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator.

CHRISTIAN

- ☉ Wears name glorifying God
- ☉ Part of house of God
- ☉ Has obeyed the gospel
- ☉ "Righteous" - "Saved"
- ☉ Acts "according to the will of God"
- ☉ Involved in well-doing as defined by Creator

NOT A CHRISTIAN

- ☉ Wears name glorifying one other than God
- ☉ Not of house of God
- ☉ Not obeyed the gospel
- ☉ "Ungodly" - "Sinner"
- ☉ Acts contrary to the will of God
- ☉ Involved in well-doing as defined by man

Acts 11:21-26

And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned to the Lord. And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch: who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave to the Lord... and much people was added unto the Lord. And he went forth

to Tarsus to seek for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

CHRISTIAN

- ☉ Believer who has turned to the Lord
- ☉ Member of the same church as in N.T. time
- ☉ One who is added to the Lord
- ☉ A disciple of Christ

NOT A CHRISTIAN

- ☉ Unbeliever who has not turned to Lord
- ☉ Member of church not found in N.T. times
- ☉ One who is added to human organization
- ☉ A disciple of man

Acts 26:27-29

King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. And Agrippa said unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these bonds.

A Christian Is One Who...

- ☉ Believes the preaching about Jesus
- ☉ Is persuaded to become a follower of Christ
- ☉ Obeys the same gospel obeyed by Paul
 - *Acts 22:16*
 - *Romans 6:3-11*
 - *Acts 19:1-5*
 - *1 Corinthians 12:13*

Does A Denominationalist...

- ☉ Believe Bible preaching about Jesus in entering a denominational church?
- ☉ Become a follower (disciple) of Christ by "obeying" that practiced in denominations?
- ☉ Obey the same gospel obeyed by Paul?
- ☉ Become added to the Lord? I one saved and added to a denomination at the same time?
- ☉ Become member of the New Testament church?
- ☉ Wear only a name glorifying God as he identifies himself with a denomination?
- ☉ Act according to the will of God in following the teaching of a denomination?
- ☉ Become righteous and prepared for the coming of Christ in sectarian church?
- ☉ **If the answer to these questions is "Yes," why get them out?**

Bible Teaches That The Saved Are The Church Of Christ

- ☉ Christ is the savior of the body (Eph. 5:23)
- ☉ His body is the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col.1:18)
- ☉ Christ has only one body, church (Eph. 4:4)
- ☉ Reconciled to God only in one body (Eph. 2:16)
- ☉ Saved are added to the church (Acts 2:47)
- ☉ Christ's blood saves - His blood purchased His people, Christians (Rom. 5:9; 1 Pet. 1:18-19)
- ☉ Church purchased the church with His blood (Acts 20:28)
- ☉ New Testament baptism is to save (Mk. 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21)
- ☉ New Testament baptism is into the one body (1 Cor 12:13)
- ☉ We cannot be saved without being *in* the church of Christ because the saved *are* the church