

"Church of Christ Members"?

by Wayne Goff

As Christians, we regularly exhort one another to "Speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent. Call Bible things by Bible names, and do Bible things in Bible ways."

However, it should not be surprising to know that **the church of Christ** is changing quickly! Many churches are filled with Christians who have a denominational mind set. They view the Lord's church as *just another denomination*. They seek to have a loose-knit fellowship with mainline denominations, and some have even extended an olive branch of peace to them. And they certainly do not want denominations exposed for the religious error they teach and stand for. We need to be reminded of the words of Jesus: "*Then Jesus said to them, 'Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees'*" (Matt. 16:6). "Leaven" (false doctrine) permeates the entire *lump* until it is all infused!

Do not misunderstand me, dear readers. We must speak the truth **in love** (Eph. 4:15), and in all **humility** correct those in error that they might learn the truth (2 Tim. 2:25). But we cannot afford to *compromise* the truth for the sake of peace! The apostle Paul commanded us to "*Hold fast the pattern of **sound words** which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus*" (2 Tim. 1:13).

In short, true Christians cannot have a denominational mind set. Why not? Because Jesus commands true believers to be united, not divided (1 Cor. 1:10). Division of believers in the mind of God is a curse, not a blessing (Jn. 17:20-21). Thus, when we **endorse** denominationalism, we are acting contrary to the mind of Christ.

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So what is the problem with the phrase "*Church of Christ members*"? First, what does the New Testament call an *individual* member of the church of Christ? "**Christian.**" "*And the disciples were first called **Christians** in Antioch*" (Acts 11:26). They were not called "church of Christ-ers." They were not called "church of Christ members." They were called *Christians*.

The problem with denominationalism is that it adds *prefixes* to the name Christian. So they insert one of their denominational names in front of "Christian" and say, "Well, I'm a _____ Christian." That is the denominational mind set. They believe there are Christians in *every* denomination, and that denominations are *made* by men, and that we can *choose* the denomination of our choice and attend it. The New Testament teaches no such thing.

Now if you have this *divisive* mind set, you will refer to *individual members* of the church of Christ as "church of Christ members." It sounds strange to refer to them as "church of Christ Christians." And to simply call them "Christians" *without* any prefix is admitting too much truth! So you hear all kinds of phrases trying to get around the fact that there should be no divisions among us, but that we should believe and speak the same thing (1 Cor. 1:10).

The worst part of it all is that I recently read the phrase "church of Christ members" on a web site run by those who *profess* to be New Testament Christians! **Shame** on us when we begin to parody our denominational friends in an effort to become politically correct!

So when someone asks you what *kind* of Christian you are, or something along that line, just say "I am a Christian, Acts 11:26." Perhaps that will raise an eyebrow or two, but it also might get you into a worthwhile study of God's Word with your religious friends who have been taught that religious division is a good thing. God's Word can teach them better. Jesus wants us all to be one in Him that the world may believe that God sent Him into the world (Jn. 17:21).