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How Some Defend Denominationalism

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Many today try to justify or defend denominationalism. Man has tried throughout history to justify or defend their sins, but to no avail with God. Sin is sin. Whatever I may think or say, sin will still be sin. My friend, whatever YOU may think or say, sin will still be sin. The Scriptures plainly teach that denominationalism is sinful (Galatians 5:20; Romans 16:17)! God said it, I believe it, that settles it!

The parable of the vine and the branches recorded in John 15:1-8 has been used by some as authority for divisive religious organizations, that is, denominationalism. If you will notice in the text, Jesus said "*man*" not denominations. "*If a MAN (emp LS) abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered*" (John 15:6). The fruit-bearing branches are individual disciples of the Lord, not denominations. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:8).

Some trying to defend division or denominationalism say that **denominations are just different roads to heaven**. Notice what Jesus said, "*I am THE WAY (emp LS), the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*" (John 14:6). Any other way that man might choose is death, "*There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death*" (Proverbs 14:12). Consider this my friend, if man could devise a way to go to heaven, why then did Jesus Christ have to die? "*I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain*" (Galatians 2:21).

Some use the argument to justify denominationalism that **all denominations teach some truth**. Even if all denominations do teach some truth, what does that prove? The devil tells "some truth". Remember in Matthew 4:1-11 the devil even quoted Scripture to Jesus. Did that make the devil right? To say that denominations teach some truth is to say they teach some error! To teach any error is sinful (Galatians 1:8-9; Romans 16:17; 2 John 9)! Can you not see that my friend?

"There are good people in all churches." There are many good moral people who don't even go to church. So again, what does this prove? Mere human goodness without the blood of Jesus Christ and the Lord's church cannot save anyone! Remember the example of Cornelius in Acts 10:1ff? Was Cornelius a good man? YES! Was he saved before Peter came and taught him the truth of God's Word? No! If he was saved before Peter came, why then did Peter go and preach the Word of God to him?

"One church is just as good as another." One denomination started by man IS just as good as another denomination started by man. However, NO denomination started by man can ever be as good as the church that Jesus Christ built (Please read Hebrews 8:1-2).

Denominationalism verses the Lord's church: just as God's word is so far above the words of men (Isaiah 55:8-9), so is the church of Jesus Christ above any and all denominations started by men! The church of Jesus Christ is bought and paid for by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). Who bought and paid for denominations? It wasn't Jesus Christ! East Lauderdale News Anderson congregation

Women Preachers

Truman Smith

Some 15 years ago, I wrote an article for the Gospel Guardian under the above title. It was written then in an effort to alert brethren concerning a trend which I saw among some of our institutional brethren. I said in that article that I intended to keep my eye on the situation; and in the ensuing years since, I have kept up with the development of this matter.

At that time, I had seen a book advertised which was written by an elder of a "Church of Christ," in which it was argued that girls may word prayer in youth camp meetings, even in the presence of boys. Though I did not read the book, it claimed to successfully meet all the arguments that brethren have made through the years against such practices. Also, from the tone of at least one of the many bulletins which I received each week, some of our liberal brethren were apparently trying to get a movement going to allow women as public proclaimers of the gospel. In this particular bulletin, a series consisting of four installments on that issue was published in an effort to make their brethren aware of the problem. The first paragraph in the series went as follows:

"Every significant movement within society will eventually, to some degree, make itself felt in the church. The phenomenon of 'women's liberation is no exception. There are those within the church who are clamoring that women must throw off the yoke of male domination and claim their rightful place in the body of Christ. The approach to this issue has been two-fold. Some have adopted a completely infidelic attitude by suggesting that certain 'troubling passages' in the New Testament are merely the result of Pharisaic and rabbinic prejudices reflecting the backward ignorance of the first century. It is thus claimed that such are not authorized for today's church. Others, desiring to assume a more conservative stance, assert there is biblical support for women preachers, leaders, etc."

(Wayne Jackson in Brentwood News). The bulletin was published by the Brentwood Church of Christ in Fort Worth. As you know, over the past few years, the news media has reported concerning the battles that are raging by various religious denominations over the question of women taking positions of leadership in their churches. The frequency of such news items indicate that the matter has become a major problem with many nominations. This is understandable, since denominationalists have long ago abandoned the Scriptures as their complete and only guide. Thus, the dispute will be handled about like some kind of a political issue and settled in that same manner. Their hierarchy will simply vote on the matter. They will not let the Scriptures be the standard by which to settle such matters; for after all, "it is impossible for all to see the Bible alike," or "everyone has his own interpretation of the Scriptures." Many of these do not believe that the Bible is relevant to our modern times. Thus, it is understandable why the denominational world might allow women such "rights."

But, so have many of our brethren also abandoned the Bible as a complete guide. Considering the so-called "new hermeneutics," essentially, there is no difference between the two attitudes! When our institutional brethren say, "We do not have to have Bible authority for everything we do," are they not abandoning the Word of God as a complete guide? I still believe that it is because of "brotherhood loyalty," or the fact that they feel the brotherhood is just not ready for it yet, might be all that is keeping them from permitting the practice generally. In fact, it seems that the pressure is already on in some parts of the country and it might be sooner than we think.

In February, 1992, I ran across an article titled The Role of Women in the Church? by Bobby Duncan. In the first paragraph he said:

"I have in my file a 20-page document sent by the elders of a church in Alabama to the members of that church. This document was under date of January 1990, and it tells about plans to change what they refer to as 'traditional' roles for women. Among other things, they said they would appoint some deacons, and then the statement is made: 'Deacons will be male and female.' The document further states that the elders would 'initiate gradual change in the Sunday morning worship assembly.' Notice that word gradual. We can't do it all at once; it has to be done gradually. Those elders know that some of the members of that church, liberal as it is, would still rebel against what those elders were about to instigate if they did it all at once" (Vigil, Vol. 20, No. 2).

Brother Duncan also said,

"Another church in Alabama advertised in its bulletin a 'Community Enrichment Seminar,' with one of its members, a woman, speaking on 'Grief The Road to Recovery.' The bulletin urged the members to 'use this as an opportunity to invite a friend to visit the [Blank] church."

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