

WHERE ARE GOD'S PEOPLE

The ekklesia, or church of God referred to in the sacred scriptures is not a human organization, but a divine organism. It is not a sect nor is it composed of a combination or coalition of many sects. Sectarians are conceived in the opinions of men; the church, or called out ones, was created by the power of God. The church does not consist of separate denominations or congregations, the body of Christ has members who are born again individuals. Every saved person on this earth is in this spiritual body, the church, having been called out of sin and into the church of God, church of Christ, assembly of Christ, family of God, kingdom of God, there are other metaphors describing the same people!

We should only use the term 'church' in a universal sense to include all of God's children in the whole universe, and in a local sense to include all of God's children in a particular area. And to talk about "the Lord's church" as limited to a certain party, movement or sect is denominational in its thinking, and not according to scripture.

Parties and sects are regrettable because they divide God's family into rival camps, but they do no more harm than for any one of them to appropriate the title, "THE LORD'S CHURCH" and to arrogantly imply that those who do not belong to it, do not belong to the Lord. No person on earth knows the numerical strength of the Lord's assembly and no one can ascertain it. When churches publish their membership numbers, it only reveals which sects are increasing or decreasing. And that says nothing about the true growth of God's family.

We become members of the one body by acceptance of the great universal act of redemption and obediently trusting in Jesus the Christ as Lord of our life and savior of the body. We do become adherents of sects by emphasizing unduly peculiarities or distinctions within the framework of that particular organization. You can become a member of any church without being a child of God, some say no, but it is undeniable. That which makes one a Christian is relatively simple but now becoming a sectarian, one must engage in mental gymnastics and speculations. One becomes a child by adoption; a partisan by deduction of doctrine. True Christian stature is gauged only by faith in Jesus, partisan approval and attainment is measured by knowledge of the party platform.

Each new party that is spawned, makes it that much more difficult to be a Christian only and increases the probability that we will not be. The only label a Christian should wear is that of being of Christ only which is another way of saying be a "Generic Christian", or no label at all. Period! The real test for the non-partisan child of God lies in his ability to ignore all of the artificial walls and barriers that have been erected by men and to associate freely with all of God's children, where ever they may congregate. I don't even believe it's a sin to assemble with saints and sinners, in order to serve, worship and strive to bring those outside the ark of safety, into the fold. Many of our barriers can be seen through, when looked at through eyes of love and one can walk through them, if he sees them for what they really are, a figmire of an over-wrought imagination. Many are mere paper curtains hung up by editorial usurpers who labor under the mistaken view that their journals are the official decision makers for the kingdom of the Lord. Some barriers that hold men to a system of religion, sometimes are only self imposed. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Let us all cease to be confined and accept the liberty which we have in Christ, and begin to answer the prayer of Jesus for the unity of all believers in Him. The time is ripe for the slaves of all

the organizational clap-trap to be unshackled from the chains and fetters which we wear, and be truly free, free indeed! **"Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, I'm free at last!"**

Yours for Truth and Freedom..... Horace Hooper