

Why Is the Body of Christ Split Into 38,000 Parts?

✖ Many lessons will spring from Trayvon Martin's tragic death. It has opened up new discussions on **race relations** in America and served as a catalyst for a renewed emphasis on unity in the body of Christ.

Although I am grieved over Martin's death, I am grateful that the church is beginning to rise up and respond. Racism is a heart issue. Ultimately, we will only emerge victorious over this demon-inspired mindset when we attack it as a unified front in the name of Jesus. We overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21).

I'm nearly 42 years old ... too young to remember the evils of segregation but not too blind to notice that Sunday morning is still the most segregated day in America—and it's not just segregated by skin color or nationality, either. The body of Christ is splintered, with about 38,000 distinct Christian denominations preaching, praying and sometimes **prophesying** and **casting out devils** in the name of Jesus.

This is a bold statement and one that will probably anger many. But about seven years ago the Holy Spirit told me denominations were a tool the enemy uses to bring division in the church. I found out later that the very definition of *denomination* is "a division of part of a whole." *Selah*.

It's been said that Jesus didn't come to start a religion. Well, I don't believe Jesus meant for His body to be sliced and diced into 38,000 disagreeable parts, either.

Denominations breed a measure—and sometimes a large measure—of disunity because each denomination tends to think it adheres to the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help them God.

Many, if not most, believe other denominations are flowing in some sort of error, whether that's **speaking in tongues**, baptizing in the name of Jesus only rather than in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, how to receive salvation or the path to heaven, whether or not women can preach or some other doctrine. You know me. If there's major delusions going on, call it out. But there are some issues over which it's not worth making a mountain out of a molehill.

You don't see denominations in the book of Acts. There's no pattern for denominations in the Bible that I can find. Jesus never taught us to form sects based on the teachings of any bishop, apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher. Rather, Jesus prayed that believers may be one, even as Father, Son and Holy Ghost are one (John 17:10). Paul actually pled with the church at Corinth not to allow divisions.

"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, 'I am of Paul,' or 'I am of Apollos,' or 'I am of Cephas,' or 'I am of Christ.' Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. 1:10-13).

Of course, now we have denominations—some 38,000 of them. It's not likely that we will see the end to denominationalism until we see the other side of glory. And I don't expect this article to change that. What I would like to see, though, is a greater **unity** among those who call Jesus Lord. I saw the inklings of this in Sanford, Fla., last week when I attended a meeting of about 75 pastors, chaplains and spiritual leaders of various races, ethnicities and denominations. I saw a community of pastors committed to working together in the face of a citywide crisis.

Although I was encouraged by this, I was at the same time grieved that it took the death of a young man to breed this commitment to unity. Think about it for a minute. There are young men like **Trayvon Martin** being slain—and other atrocities—in our nation every day. There are rapes, robberies, poverty, disease and other works of the devil manifesting in our midst while we argue over whether to dunk or sprinkle. Brethren, these things ought not be so.

No, I don't expect the **body of Christ** to make a sweeping shift toward non-denominationalism. But I am challenging every apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher, bishop, deacon—every *believer*—to lay aside doctrinal differences and set out to impact your local communities in the name of Jesus and for the glory of God.

I am convinced that there is no single “denomination” that proclaims the inerrant truth. Jesus can set us all straight when we see Him. But I am also convinced that if we would focus on the common ground we do have—faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God—we could discover the unity that would be a witness to the world that Jesus is alive. After all, as it's been said, we all have the same boss. I don't know about you but I don't want to stand before Jesus and explain why people went to hell while I was arguing about a doctrine with another believer.

I beseech you by the mercies of God to dig deep within your spirit and find a way to reach across the aisle, so to speak, and work with the Lutheran pastor (or the Episcopal pastor, Free Will Baptist pastor, Southern Baptist pastor, Independent Baptist pastor, Anglican pastor, Presbyterian pastor, Anabaptist pastor, Methodist pastor, Church of God pastor, Church of God in Christ pastor, Assemblies of God pastor, Church of God of Prophecy pastor, Foursquare pastor, Vineyard pastor, Church of Christ pastor—you get the idea) and get about our Father's business in our local communities. Amen.

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