

PARK HEIGHTS CHURCH OF CHRIST

1300 E. Boynton St. • Hamilton • www.parkheightscoc.com

Thus Saith the Lord

BRANDS

By Jeff Sweeten

In *The Origin of Brands*, authors Al & Laura Ries point out one of the primary purposes and importances of “branding”: to “divide and conquer.” The idea of having a brand is to promote the preference and superiority of one certain product above another. Of course, this marketing tactic is more involved than the simplicity of ranchers putting brands on cattle to differentiate between one’s own stock and his neighbor’s. Nevertheless, over the course of time, the reputation of one brand could represent a certain quality of livestock, rendering it more desirable. There is no question about this fact, though: concerning cows, the brand is intended to divide one cow from another.

It has always been puzzling to me how such common sense principles, used every day by nearly every human on the planet, totally escapes religious application amongst those who feign a desire for unity but still insist on using “brands.” *“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?”* (1 Corinthians 1:12-13a).

Now there’s a rhetorical question. Well, friends? Is Christ divided? If not, why do religionists cling so tenaciously, defend so vociferously and, frankly, chafe with such discomfort when someone introduces the obvious. In fact, such a point is so obvious that the only retort most can muster is anger, since common sense makes the point “ungetoverable!” *“Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?”* (Galatians 4:16). For some folks, I guess the answer is a resounding “YES!” So... why?

We know “brands” are intended to divide and yet, religiously, so many mistaken and misguided souls, instead of giving up these divisive denominators, are encouraged to give their group names a group hug. Yet, the Bible would resolve at least this one glaring flaw in those claiming to seek the unity of which Christ prayed concerning those who sincerely seek God (cf. John 17:20-21): call yourself a Christian.

In Isaiah 62:2, the Messianic Prophet predicted that, when the Jews and Gentiles became one body through Christ, they would be called by a new name *“which the mouth of the Lord will name.”* Question: what was that name? *“And the disciples were called **Christians** first at Antioch”* (Acts 11:26). There is only one brand.

JOIN US ON SUNDAY AND WEDNESDAY!

SUNDAY: 9:30 a.m. Bible Study • 10:25 a.m. Morning Worship • 1:30 p.m. Bible Study

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 p.m. Bible Study • Contact the minister at 254-370-4130