



Jeff Sweeten

Thus Saith the Lord
is presented by the

Park Heights Church of Christ

1300 E. Boynton St.
Hamilton
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Schedule of Services

SUNDAY

9:30 a.m. Bible Class
10:25 a.m. Morning Worship
1:30 p.m. Afternoon Worship

WEDNESDAY

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

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NAMING NAMES

By Jeff Sweeten

Division in religion is unacceptable to God. So, Paul's fix was simple: "*speak the same thing*" (1 Corinthians 1:10). Now, I know that right off the bat, there will be nay-sayers that ridicule the idea that true unity can exist amongst religious people but such is not as far-fetched as one might think. In the first place, if Paul (by inspiration) demanded unity in Corinth, it can happen. (It would be ridiculous for God to require of His creation that which is impossible).

What is ironic is that in this very context, Paul addresses this problem with the Corinthian Christians' dividing by name. To "denominate" means "to give a name" (American Heritage Dictionary). We use a "denominator" in math to signify the parts into which something is divided. So, when religious people use the word "denomination," what they are saying is that they divide religiously by the names they wear.

"Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" 1 Corinthians 1:12-13 (KJV)

The religious name you wear matters to God and the question is: what name did He give? The Bible teaches clearly that the church government should be headed by "*overseers*" (episkopos, Philippians 1:1) or "*elders*" (presbyteros, Acts 11:30) but why be an Episcopalian or a resbyterian? The Bible teaches that all things should be done "*decently and in order*" (1 Corinthians 14:40), but why would the method by which we serve God make one a Methodist? The Bible teaches baptism (Acts 2:38) but does obeying God in baptism (Romans 6:3-4) make one a Baptist?

The *only* proper name for a disciple of Christ is "Christian" (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). Amazingly unifying, isn't it? However, when people insist on wearing their *brand* of "Christianity," separating, dividing, and excluding with unbiblical names, the result is inevitable: Division.

The feeble attempts in our day and time to feign "unity" by artificially unionizing is, in reality, the amalgamation of separate religious bodies, divided by their selected religious names. It is an embarrassment to anyone claiming to be Christian, an embarrassment because of the plea of Jesus' prayer for those who would follow Him. Hear the Savior:

"I do not pray for these along, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me." John 17:20-21

Christian unity will convince the world! Therefore, it seems obvious as to why there is so much godlessness in America; so many who claim to be "Christian" manifest such division in their religious names. How can we convert the world to Christ if we can't even get something so simple as the name straight?