

“I ORDAIN IN ALL THE CHURCHES”

Terry Wane Benton

There was no such thing as each church making up the rules for themselves. From the very beginning, they *“continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine”* (Acts 2:42), and when the apostles taught something, it was meant for *“all the churches”* to teach the same thing and practice the same body of teaching (1st Corinthians 7:17). If it was ordered in Galatia, *“even so must you [at Corinth] do”* (1st Corinthians 16:1-2).

There were no denominations with their own creeds, distinguishing names, and organizations. They were all churches belonging to Christ (Romans 16:16), and they were commanded to *“speak the same thing”* (1st Corinthians 1:10) and *“let there be no divisions among you.”* They were not allowed to preach a different doctrine (2nd John 9-10) or a different gospel (Galatians 1:6-10) lest God reject them.

The teaching could be planted in a new town, but the result would be the same. The Bible only would make Christians only every time. The Bible only would never make a Roman Catholic. You have to mix in new orders and doctrines of men to get a Roman Catholic Church. This evolution away from the original teaching began with small departures from the faith (1st Timothy 4:1-4) and, over time, would snowball into larger and larger differences from the original churches of Christ. If people wanted to discard all added human inventions, they would relinquish their hold on having popes, cardinals, prayers to Mary, icons, and numerous human doctrines and resort to following the Bible alone. They could return to the original standard of just being a Christian, a follower of Christ.

Later denominations of the Reformation movement also differed in names, doctrines, and practices. They were trying to reform the Roman Catholic Church instead of returning to just being Christians as in the first century. The Bible alone never made the variety of protestant churches. A little bit of the Bible mixed with a new doctrine of men will produce some hybrid denomination, but we are not pleasing God when we defend and support the various hybrid (part Bible and part human-originated doctrines) denominations. Suppose it is possible to plant the pure, unmixed word of God and go back to what the apostles ordained in all the early churches, and it is possible. In that case, it tells us to be determined to be nothing more or less than what those apostolic churches were in teaching and practice.

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LIMPING BETWEEN THE TWO

James Hahn

When Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel he also presented a challenge to the children of Israel. He said, *“How long go ye limping between the two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him”* (1st Kings 18:21). God has always expected His people to declare themselves. This same challenge needs to be presented to those who would identify themselves as the people of God today. If we are going to serve Jehovah then let’s do so. There is no room in the kingdom of God for half-hearted, lukewarm service (Revelation 3:14-19). To those members of the body of Christ who are not faithful in their service to the Lord, we ask, *“How long go ye limping between the two sides?”*

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That is what we must be determined to do. *“As I teach everywhere in every church”* (1st Corinthians 4:17) must be the goal and determination. Christians only! Nothing more, nothing less, nothing different than what we read in the Bible.

Three Facts to Remember:

1. What was taught by the apostles in any one church was taught in all the churches. Departures evolved later.
2. What was *“acceptable to the Lord”* (Romans 12:1-3) in one church was acceptable to the Lord in every church.
3. It was acceptable to the Lord for the disciples to come together on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7). It was acceptable for all the churches to meet on the first day of the week to break bread and to give for the common cause (I Corinthians 16:1-2).

Therefore, it is acceptable for all the churches today to meet for breaking bread (Lord’s Supper) every first day of the week and to give to the needs of the local church and other needs that arise that are in harmony with apostolic example and principle. The first day of the week for all the churches was not an arbitrarily selected day to meet but was designated to all the churches because that was the precedent set by the apostles in all the churches. If we copy that first-century, God-approved precedent, we know this is acceptable to the Lord.

Let us all limit ourselves to what was ordained in all the early churches.

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

**Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.**

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

PROVERBS 25:11

"If Christian men can regurgitate weekend box scores, pontificate political punditry, or exegete finer points of the MCU or Star Wars from 'canonized' material, then they have **zero** excuse for being Bible illiterate."

– Jeff Wiesner

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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DO WHAT MAKES YOU HOLY

Bryan Matthew Dockens

"Do What Makes You Happy" is a slogan seen all over these days and it defines the lives of many. It's wrong, though.

Wise King Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes to document his search for the meaning of life: *"I said in my heart, 'Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure; but surely, this also was vanity. I said of laughter — 'Madness!'; and of mirth, 'What does it accomplish?'"* (Ecclesiastes 2:1-3). Pleasure, mirth, and laughter as pursuits unto their own ends were evaluated thoughtfully, yet ultimately discarded as wasteful and even insane.

Eventually, the Preacher settled on a purpose for human existence, writing, *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil"* (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). Reverence and obedience prepare a soul for the final judgment. Pleasures are lacking in this regard.

Jesus warned that *"pleasures of this life"* are *"thorns"* that *"choke"* out the seed that is the word of God (Luke 8:11-14). Don't do what makes you happy; do what makes you holy. *"For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever"* (1st John 2:16-17).

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