

ERRORS OF PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONALISM

John Edwards

According to World Religions in America, about 60 percent of Americans are Protestants. Among them, 19 percent are Baptists, 9 percent Methodists, 5 percent Lutherans, 3 percent Presbyterians and the other 25 percent are divided among many other groups. This writing explores and exposes some faults and flaws of Protestant denominationalism in general.

BEGAN AT THE WRONG TIME. The New Testament church had its beginning in the first century, on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ from the dead, as predicted by the prophets of old (Is. 2:2-3), and is recorded in Acts 2. There were no Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, or Presbyterian churches until the fifteenth century! All Protestant denominations began too late to be the church revealed on the pages of the New Testament!

BEGAN AT THE WRONG PLACE. The Lord's house, which is the Lord's church (1 Tim. 3:15), would be established in Jerusalem (Is. 2:2-3; Zech. 1:16). As well, the

foundation was to be laid in Zion (Is. 28:16). The church built by Christ (Mt. 16:18) was formed and founded in Jerusalem as Acts 2 shows. Any church, therefore, that did not originate in Jerusalem is not the Lord's house and rests upon an unsure foundation! Do you know where the church of which you are a member originated? The Baptist and Methodist churches began in London, England; the Lutheran church in Ausburg, Germany; and the Presbyterian church in Switzerland!

HAVE THE WRONG BUILDER. The Psalmist declared, *“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it”* (Ps. 127:1). Jesus promised, *“I will build my church”* (Mt. 16:18). The Bible church was built by Christ. The Baptist church was founded by John Smyth, the Methodist church by John Wesley, the Lutheran church by Martin Luther, and the Presbyterian church by John Calvin!

WEAR THE WRONG NAME. Paul said, *“The churches of Christ salute you”* (Rom. 16:16). May I kindly ask, where, in the Bible, do you find mention of Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, or Presbyterian churches? Disciples, in the first century, were called *“Christians”* (Acts 11:26). They were not called

Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans or Presbyterians; nor were they Baptist-Christians, Methodist-Christians, Lutheran-Christians, Presbyterian-Christians or any other hyphenated Christians!

TEACH THE WRONG DOCTRINE. The first church *“continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine”* (Acts 2:42). The Protestant denominations claim to teach the Bible, but interpret it through creeds (formal statements of faith). They also supplement these creeds with documents from the Reformation era. For Lutherans, this means the Ausburg Confession. For Episcopalians, the Thirty-Nine Articles. For Presbyterians, the Westminster Confession, and so on. To see that it is the creeds of men, and not the Bible, that produce Protestant denominations, one has but to recognize that no Protestant denomination can renounce its own peculiar creed, submit to that of another, and thenceforth maintain its own separate existence. And no Protestant denomination can leave behind its creed, accept the Bible as its only rule of faith, and remain as it now is. *“Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”* renders worship vain (Mt. 15:9).

GIVE FOLKS A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY. Salvation is *“of the Lord”* (Jonah 2:9) and *“in”* the Lord (2 Tim. 2:10).

Since the church is “*the fulness of*” Christ (Eph. 1:22-23), one cannot be in the Lord and out of His church. There is one body (Eph. 4:4), “*which is the church*” (Col. 1:24). Christ is “*the savior of the body*” (Eph. 5:32), and the saved are in the church (Acts 2:47). Upon being “*baptized into Christ*” (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27), we are reconciled “*unto God in one body*” (Eph. 2:16; 1 Cor. 12:13).

Protestant denominationalism makes a mockery of the Lord’s prayer (Jn. 17:20-21) and goes against the apostles’ plea (1 Cor. 1:10). We plead with you to break the bands of denominational error and embrace the truth that sets men free (Jn. 8:32).

**“BY WHAT AUTHORITY
DOEST THOU THESE
THINGS?” #1**

John Edwards

As Jesus was teaching in the temple, the question was raised, “*By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?*” (Mt.

21:23). We are putting forth this same question today. By what authority dost thou...

WEAR A NAME RELIGIOUSLY THAT MEMBERS OF THE FIRST CHURCH WERE NOT GIVEN AND DID NOT WEAR? They were identified individually as “*disciples*” (Acts 6:1), “*brethren*” (Acts 6:3), “*saints*” (Acts 9:13), and “*Christians*” (Acts 11:26). Collectively, they were called “*the church*” (Acts 8:1), “*the church of God*” (1 Cor. 1:2), and “*the churches of Christ*” (Rom. 16:16). By what authority dost thou call thyself a Baptist, Catholic, Episcopalian, Methodist, Presbyterian, Holiness, etc., or speak of the church as the Baptist church, Catholic church, Episcopalian church, Methodist church, Presbyterian church, Holiness church, etc.? We are pleading with you to renounce and repudiate all human, divisive and unscriptural names and take on “*a name which is above every name*” (Phil. 2:9).

HAVE ECCLESIASTICAL FORMS OF GOVERNMENT? The New Testament church is a monarchy. Christ is the supreme

Head and Ruler (Eph. 1:22-23), with “*all power in heaven and in earth*” (Mt. 28:18). He is the “*one lawgiver*” (Jas. 4:12). No man on earth has the authority to modify or nullify the laws of the lawgiver! Elders, also called bishops and pastors, were ordained in every church (Acts 14:23), with responsibility beginning and ending with the flock among them (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-2). Elders do not have the right to enact or repeal laws; they simply enforce Christ’s law. Deacons were appointed as servants of the local church (1 Tim. 3:8-13). We have a picture of the local church fully developed and organized after the New Testament pattern in Philippians 1:1 as Paul addressed the letter “*to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.*” The local church is independent, self-governing and self-regulated. There is no larger grouping of churches together. By what authority dost thou have offices and officers which the church of the New Testament did not have, and speak of “*synods,*” “*councils,*” “*conventions,*” “*conferences*” and the like? Let’s do all “*in the name of the Lord*” (Col. 3:17).

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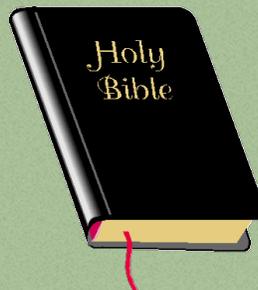
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