

Why CofC pt.2 – The proper Name & Organization
1 Cor 1:11-15
By Russell Earl

Intro:

What is the Importance of a name?

1. The idea that there is nothing in a name is a prevalent and popular doctrine, BUT this idea is not in keeping with Scripture nor reason.
2. there is nothing in a name, why did Paul condemn divisive names in **1 Corinthians 1:11-15**?
3. If there is nothing in a name why not give your child a name that is commonly used for animals, like buster?

I. What does the N.T. call the church?

- A. “My church” (**Mt. 16:18**). Jesus said this, therefore it is Christ’s church.
- B. “The church” (**Acts 8:1**), meaning a group of called out people, and the Lord has but one such group.
- C. “Church of God” (**1 Cor. 1:2**). This shows ownership.
- D. “Churches of Christ” (**Rom. 16:16**).
 1. Here Paul speaks of various local congregations.
 2. This designates them as belonging to Christ.
- E. “The body of Christ” (**Eph. 4:12**). The body belonging to Christ.
- F. “The church of the living God” (**1 Tim. 3:15**).
- G. “Church of the firstborn” (**Heb. 12:23**). The church made up of the firstborn, Christians.
- H. The members of the church of Christ speak of the church in Scriptural terms.
 1. What about other religious groups?
 2. It is strange that people who claim to belong to Christ will be a member of a religious group whose name is foreign to the Bible.

II. The autonomy of the church

- A. In speaking of the autonomy of the church we mean the autonomy of the local church or congregation (**1 Cor 1:1-2, 1 Pt 5:1**).
 1. Autonomy is defined as “right of self-government; a self-governing state; an independent body”
 2. Each congregation was free and independent, under the teaching of Jesus and the apostles, to govern itself, carry on its own work, and manage its own affairs.
 3. All congregations had the same head, foundation, and mission; each preached the same gospel, and constituted one body.
 4. BUT each was independent to direct its own work.
- B. This simple, organization, however, failed to satisfy many.
 1. Thus, they made changes that go against the pattern of the N.T.
 2. History records that the first great departure from the truth came in the system of church government

III. Church Government (**Eph 5:23**)

A. You look around in the denominational world today and you will see nothing resembling scriptural church government (**Phil 1:1**).

1. The Bible clearly states that the church is to be governed by the elders of the local church.

2. Deacons are to help and serve in this work

B. The Bible teaches very plainly that elders are to be ordained in every church- Titus 1:5

1. These men are also spoken of as bishops, overseers, shepherds, and pastors.

2. It is the duty of the elders to:

a) Take heed unto themselves and the church, and to feed the church (**Acts 20:28**)

b) They are to fulfill all the commands pertaining to them within the N.T.

3. When these duties are performed the church will prosper, but when they are not performed the church suffers.

a. In all of this it is a must to remember that the elders DO NOT have the authority to change God's laws (James 4:12a - one "law giver" which is Christ), but to enforce them.

C. The Bible also plainly teaches that a local congregation should have deacons.

1. The qualifications of a deacon are found in **1 Timothy 3:8-13**.

2. Deacons are to be servants, they are not mini elders, and do not have the authority of elders.

Concl:

1. If we are not following the example of the N.T. church as found within God's word then we are in error.

2. If we are worshipping somewhere that isn't follow the N.T. pattern for the Lord's church then we should not be there!

3. Why attend a church not found in the Bible? Why follow leadership not identified in the Bible?

4. Invitation