

Why So Many Churches?

1 Cor. 12:20

Introduction:

- A. It is clear that the Bible speaks of one body or church (cf. Eph. 4:4; 1:22,23).
- B. It is also clear that we see many churches in our neighborhoods – Why?
- C. To help us understand why, we need to make some observations:

Discussion:

I. How it Was.

- A. The singular nature of the New Testament Church.
 - 1. “Church” – singular (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47; Eph. 1:22, 3:10,21; 5:23-32).
 - 2. “One body” (Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-13,20; Eph. 2:16; 4:4).
- B. The plural form of “church” did not signify different kinds of churches as it does today.
 - 1. “Churches” – plural (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 14:33; Rev. 1:4,11,20).
 - 2. Local churches with same doctrine and structure (Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17).

II. How it Became.

- A. Seeds of apostasy sown by end of first century. (Cf. 2 Thess 2:3-7).
- B. The development and dominance of Catholicism over the next 1400 years.
 - 1. The subtle beginnings (cf. Civilizations: Past and Present p. 230).
 - 2. The development into a world-wide religious and political power.
 - 3. The divisions between the east and west (about 1000 A.D).
- C. The development of the Protestant movement – result many churches and creeds.
 - 1. 1500's - Lutheran, Presbyterian (Knox), Episcopal)
 - 2. 1600's - Baptists.
 - 3. 1700's - Methodists
 - 4. 1800's - Adventists, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses
 - 5. Present day proliferation.

III. How it Can Be.

- A. Accept Scriptures as sole authority. (2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:3).
- B. Word of God is seed of kingdom (Lk. 8:11).
 - 1. Endures forever (Matt 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:25), thus kingdom never destroyed (Dan 2:44).
 - 2. Produces Christians in same church as first century. (Cf. Acts 2:38, 47)
 - 3. Produces local churches just like first century.

Conclusion:

- A. Why so many churches? Man corrupted first one.
- B. Can there be one church today? Just preach and practice the word.