

The Singularity of Jesus' Church...

(by Bob Pulliam)

How could there be only one church (Eph 1:22f; 4:4), but there be churches in Jerusalem, Ephesus, Damascus, etc...? This lesson will seek to clarify material presented in our lesson on [Denominationalism](#).

Review of Pertinent Material...

We have already studied material which is important to this study. The word church is used in two senses.

Universal sense (all saints upon the earth): Mt 16:18; Eph 5:25.

Local sense (the saints working together in a locality): Acts 13:1; I Cor 1:2.

The local church is the only manifestation of the universal. The universal church never attains any semblance of organization in the New Testament. But the local church is always organized according to a pattern. We have also seen that denominationalism is built on division that must name it's individual parts. But the Lord's church has a pattern and scheme of authority that must be followed to be His church.

Establishment of a Local Church...

What is *not* involved in establishing a local church?...

Application to regional or district office for sanction.

Commitment to pay dues to regional office.

Appointment of delegates to conventions or conferences.

What is involved is the use of God's Word, as the Seed of the Kingdom. The parable of the sower (Lk 8:5ff) provides a picture of God's word as seed (v11) that is scattered in the hearts of men. This seed produces fruit, each individual allowing it to take hold, or not, giving the result of disciples, or Christians. The same word of God contains a pattern for the church in several aspects (e.g. it's organization, worship, work, etc...). If we plant that same seed in the hearts of men, it produces Christians of the same genre as those found in the New Testament... If we follow it's pattern for the church, it will do no less!

Any time a group of people do things as God's word dictates, they establish, *not* another church, but the original church. It's building materials are: Jesus' blood; truth; and righteousness. These materials never change, only the people dwelling in the result of them. If the church is of Human origin, then it is bound in time to human lineage. If it is of divine origin, then it is not bound by time. It is producible any time the specifications of the divine will are followed.

Conclusion...

There is only one church. And every assembly that follows the pattern left in God's word are the local manifestation of that church. Although many congregations may exist in the land; their adherence to the original pattern makes each the one church that Jesus built.

