

Hyperdenominationalism

Before getting into today's lesson I want to apologize for missing last week. My daughter and I have both been sick. We are doing better now.

Now, as we continue this look at the need for a new reformation within the church I want to take a few moments to talk about denominations and what I would like to refer to as hyperdenominationalism. In looking at this let's stop for just a few moments to discuss where denominations have generally come from and how this has contributed to what we have today.

Going back to the reformation we find that the church in the western world was Roman Catholic. As people began to realize that there were areas where the church had strayed from Scripture division arose. New denominations rose in protest to the Roman Catholic church, thus the name Protestant.

One of the cornerstones of the Reformation was the ability of the people to read the Bible for themselves. You see, the reformers believed that if the people could read for themselves then the Church would remain true to the Word.

Indeed, people did begin to read for themselves. There was one problem with this, however. In order to understand Scripture we must take it all into context. 2 Timothy 2:15 says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." It would seem, then, that the Word could be wrongly divided, and this seems to be what began to happen. People began to read particular Scriptures and come to their own conclusions, excluding other Scriptures. They began teaching this Scripture, causing others to focus on those same Scriptures. Suddenly you have a group of likeminded people and a new split arises in the Church. This group becomes a new denomination.

Often splits in churches are not cordial. When Paul and Barnabas split there was great contention between them, but they do not appear to have tried to tear each other down. It seems, though, that people began to get so caught up in their doctrines that they could not fellowship with people who may differ in some viewpoints. This is what I am calling hyperdenominationalism.

Today there are so many different denominations, and even denominations within denominations, that it would be impossible to keep track of them. On top of this a new type of hyperdenominationalism has arisen amongst some non-denominational churches in that they are so opposed to denominations that they become just as unwelcoming.

Once a church is established it seems like the hyperdenominational sensitivity grows. I think that this gets back to the root of the problem. You see, during the reformation people began to read their Bibles, and the denominations began to form. Today it seems that because the Bible has become so readily available most people don't give it a second thought. I've been to some churches where people didn't even take their Bibles to church, and were even discouraged from doing so. I think that this causes people to think like the preacher thinks because they're only exposed to those thoughts.

In our next lesson I will begin to look at some specific doctrines over which there are great divisions. This ministry is all about getting Into the Word, so I want us to look at the Word and try to put it all together to come to an understanding of the Truth. Most of all, though, I want us to understand that a house divided against itself cannot stand (Matthew 12:25) and that he that is not against us is on our side (Luke 9:50)

Yours in Christ,

Bro. John Rich