

What kind of Church are you?



Personal Favoritism

Hypocritical Church Names and Affiliations!

How personal favoritism (**personal grace**) is dividing, not uniting Christians, and reveals a deeper problem of hypocrisy within Christian churches and brotherhoods. How to overcome personal favorites and become the “one body” (Eph 4:4), the one church which God favors.

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What type of church are you, Pentecostal, Baptist, Catholic, or what?

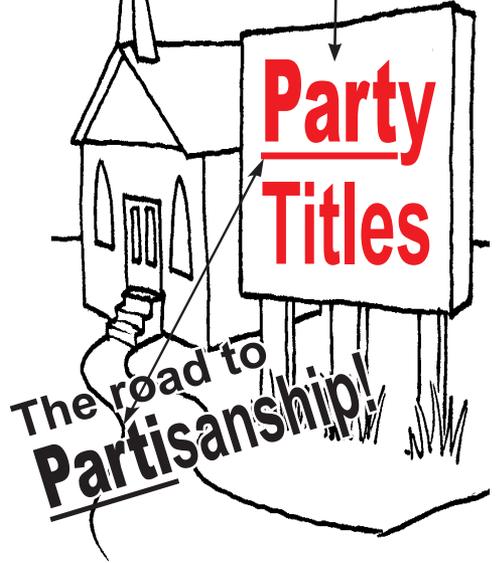
Personal Favoritism (personal grace), Is Dividing, Not Uniting Christians!

Many Christians are following the road to partisanship! For the kingdom of God is filled with "personal favoritism" (James 2:1), also called the "sin" of "partiality" (James 2:9), partisanship, and it shows in church "names" and "affiliations". This habit of personal favoritism (personal grace), not God's grace, is dividing, not uniting Christians! Even more, as you should see in this Bible study, it indicates or reveals a deeper problem of hypocrisy within Christian churches and brotherhoods.

Yet, it seems only natural for us to ask each other, "What kind of church are you? To whom are you affiliated? Is it Pentecostal, Baptist, Catholic, or some other church? Which one? What "flavor" of Christianity are you, vanilla, chocolate, or what? Do we Christians not love to answer these kinds of questions? It is easy for us to do so, is it not?

However, in your answer, you are likely sinning in partiality (personal favoritism). "What kind of church are you?" "Where do you go to church?" "Of what church are you a member". Are your answers to these questions a form of partiality, personal favoritism? Are you unwittingly revealing to others, and to our impartial God, that you are a partisan? Do you not yet understand the difference between clinging to personal grace (favoritism) instead of to God's grace? Personal favoritism is not God's grace, though it hypocritically acts like it! It pretends to be God's grace!

"If you show **partiality** [personal **favoritism** / **grace**] you are committing sin" James 2:9



"Now I mean this, each one of you is saying, 'I am of Paul,' and 'I of Apollos,' and 'I of Cephas and 'I of Christ.' Has Christ been **divided**? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor 1:12, 13). "And I, brethren, could **not** speak to you as to **spiritual men**, but as to **men of flesh**, as to **infants** in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for **you are still fleshly**. For since there is jealousy and strife among you [**in showing partiality / personal favoritism towards the names of religious men**], are you not **fleshly**, and are you not walking like mere men?" (1 Cor 3:1-3). "Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may **learn not to exceed what is written**, so that no one of you will **become arrogant** in behalf of **one against the other**" (1 Cor 4:6).

Therefore, I urge you to listen up!

Open the eyes of your spiritual heart! Pay attention like you never did before! Christian, you need to hear this lesson! And then you need to do something about it! Church! You need to hear this lesson. Then you need to do something about it. Brotherhood! You ought to pay attention! You need to hear this lesson. For in partiality, many brotherhoods are wrong and deceiving themselves. In the kingdom of God, many of you, most of you are sinning in this! By the will and power and grace of our God, I will show you your sin of partiality.

There is only one church!

Now, “**There is one body”** (Ephesians 4:4), meaning one “**You have dishonored the poor man” James 2:6** church body. So, according to the Christian faith, there is supposed to be only “**one**” kind of church, meaning like the churches in the New Testament, the New Testament church, the church of the New Covenant (**but this is not its name!**). **Then, what is its name?** That is a good question! You need to ask that question, everyone of you. Then, complete this study because it points out to you the Scriptures (or the Scriptural pattern or example of the churches) in answer to it! You need to find the correct answer to this question.

“What is its name?”

Now, I want to show you and teach you its true “name”. Therefore, in this

study, I want you to aim with me to somehow achieve “**the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**” (Eph 4:6), in regards to the “**one body**,” the one church of the New Testament, specifically on how to “name” it. Because how we name it can reveal personal favoritism (partiality, partisanship), which is sin, and is divisive. You must learn what is the sin of partiality, in all of its forms, even in how it shows up in most church names and ministries.

What is the sin of partiality?

The word “**partiality**” means favoritism, personal favoritism. It means that someone or something likes or prefers one thing over another. With God, he personally favors (is partial to), all of us who truly believe the good things about his Son, Jesus Christ. This is not a sin. No! This

kind of favoritism is blessed, is it not? It is called God’s grace. Husband, when you favor your wife over all other women, and resort to her only in the flesh, to become one in flesh, is this not a blessed form of favoritism? Are you not partial to your own wife? Likewise, a wife is partial to her husband.

But, when the word “partial” or “partiality” is introduced into another context or a different subject in the Scriptures (not the subject of the grace of God, that is whom God favors and saves, not wraths), it can indicate serious sin. It can indicate hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is “**condemned**” (Galatians 2:11, 13) and “**vain... worship**” (Matthew 15:7, 9), meaning useless to perform.



Sinful forms of personal grace (favor), that is partiality, meaning personal favoritism (grace)

James charged his Christian brethren with the sin of showing "**partiality**," for he called it "**personal favoritism**" (READ the full context in James 2:1-13). They were elevating rich Christian worshippers over poor ones. For example during church they were giving the best seats to the rich brethren, and the worst seats to the poor ones. Therefore, James rightly rebuked both their judgment, their practice, and their hearts, telling them that they had "**become judges with evil motives**" (Ja 2:4). They "thought" in their heart of hearts that they were doing the right thing in the sight of men and God, but God did not think so! For He judges the motives of the heart, what motivates us to do certain things, especially while in **His** house, during our worship of Him! For it says, "**The LORD our God will have no part in... partiality [personal favoritism]**" (2 Chron 19:7). God is not "with us" in our show of partiality! Indeed, He opposes it 100%!

What is the real reason why we show partiality? No doubt, it is from "**evil motives**". Evil motivates us to sin against each other! For partiality is sin. "**If you show partiality you are committing sin**" (James 2:9). In how you name yourselves as a church, are you showing partiality for or against others?

Notes: Consider another example of personal favoritism. Peter and Barnabas showed favoritism towards Jewish Christians over Gentile Christians (Read Galatians 2:11-14), and received a public rebuke for it by another apostle of Christ! In another example, men favor the opinions of men over the commands of God (Read Matthew 15:1-9). Jesus rebuked them for it! As these passages state that this is hypocrisy!

Now, to be very clear, the sin of partiality is simply improper discrimination, for all discrimination is not improper. For we can be discriminate in choosing a spouse, a home, an employee, etc. Yet, sinful partiality happens when

"The LORD our God will have no part in... partiality [personal grace]" 2 Chron 19:7

one thing is lifted up over another thing of equal worth, calling, or authority (for example, giving rich Christians a better seat in church than poor Christians). It is "**personal favoritism**" (Ja 2:1).

It happens when a distinction or division is made between two or more things that should not be distinct or divided (Ja 2:4). It happens when "**special attention**" (Ja 2:3) is given to one thing over another thing of equal value or worth or calling. It honors the one and dishonors the other (**SEE** Ja 2:6). It makes the ones who are showing partiality "**become judges with evil motives**" (Ja 2:4), not good or impartial ones. This is a weighty subject! For "personal grace" is not **God's** grace!

Imitate the impartiality of the "one" church!

"**You, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus**" (1 Thess 2:14). Especially in regards to your church "name," are you certain that you are imitating the impartiality of the "one" church in the New Testament? Is your church "name" even used as a "name" in the Bible? Has the "one" church even been named? Or have you yourselves, in a show of partiality, named it? Are you a New Testament church? Are you one of the churches in the New Testament? Can we find your

The Church of Partiality

Min. Dr. John Doe
Worship with us!
9 AM

church in the Bible, in its church directory, so to speak? Which church are you imitating? The church of partiality? The church of personal grace (favor), not God's grace (favor)?

Many churches, even brotherhoods who boldly claim from the heart to actually be the New Testament church (to be more perfectly imitating it than all others), are not truly one of them! Instead, in one very important way, they are hypocrites, pretenders! For they are not imitating the churches in New Testament. Instead, **they have become copycats or imitators of personal favoritism** (grace). And it shows in their personal favorite church phrase! For they name themselves after it, after what they personally favor over all other phrases!

Yet, the New Testament churches did not do this! They did not show favoritism to phrases, especially in how they "affiliated" or "named" themselves in distinction from other Christian churches. Even more, when they started to show personal favoritism towards names, religious mens names (1 Cor 1:12), when they started to affiliate themselves in a partial or partisan divisive way, Paul severely rebuked them for it for four chapters (1 Cor 1 thru chapters 4:7). So, it is fitting to rebuke hypocrisy related to "church names and affiliations".

Yet, today, is it not true that men would rather have their partial name than to have the truth, to practice the truth? How many of you will stop practicing partiality in how you name yourselves? 5

So, in this study, in one very important way, I will show you how to become the New Testament church, the Lord's church. I will show you how to overcome favoritism towards certain church phrases or names or affiliations. Instead, I will show you how to become "**imitators of the churches**" (1 Thess 2:14) in the New Covenant. They were impartially divided or "named" in distinction from one another.

As Paul said to the church in Thessalonica, "**You, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus**" (1 Thess 2:14). I urge you to do the same in how you name or affiliate yourselves. Then, in one very, very important way, you can truly say that you are the New Testament church. For in this study you should easily see that favoritism, even this kind of church name favoritism, is sin. It is hypocrisy!

Worshippers are not only partial to certain religious teachers!

For there are at least five evident ways in which Christians show personal favoritism towards church names or affiliations (not only towards the names of religious men, as they were doing in the Church in Corinth). So, in the next part of this study, I point them out to you. Then, you and your church will have a much needed chance to discern its sin of partiality, and repent of it, fully, so that you will not be guilty before God, as James said, of doing "**evil**" (James 2:4). Partiality is evil!

Now, in this study you will learn how to repent of certain shows of personal grace (favoritism). **Do you know how to impartially divide, name, or affiliate Christian worshippers** (individual churches) without showing one of the five sinful forms of favoritism towards names? Is your church impartially divided, or have you joined up with a show of partiality (personal favoritism)? Next, as you will see, in one way or another, nearly every Christian and Christian church has done so.

Five Ways Worshipers Show Partiality (PERSONAL Favoritism) Towards Church Names

The Partial (Party) Church

Like the nations who create separate political **parties** (such as the Republicans and Democrats in America), **partial** worshipers divide disciples into many differently named **parties**. [In the world's

governments, and in the kingdom of God, we know that this leads to a divisive party spirit, a partisan spirit, more specifically a partial/favorite spirit.] These religious parties, or forms of **partiality**, fall into five categories. Next, carefully consider all five and learn how to overcome everyone of them!

But first beware! Friends, do not deceive yourselves regarding a show of partiality that you and your church may be committing regarding how you are naming yourselves. There are at least five key reasons you need to be contrite about this and make a fitting change regarding it. First, it could be a form of idolatry, such as naming yourselves after a man, woman, or angel; all of whom are creatures. Likewise, if you name yourselves after, let us say, the Sabbath, then you are also putting the Sabbath on the throne. It has become your idol over God. Second, James said that **"If you show partiality [personal favoritism], you are committing sin" (Ja 2:9)**. And so it is a sin for you to do so, especially in how you name yourselves as a church. For this kind of partiality is a BIG show of it, which spreads throughout a whole church or brotherhood; every member. Third, God has said **"I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another" (Isa 42:8)**. It takes away from the glory which is due God alone, for example, to name a church after a creature, a man, or anything else of lesser value, such as a doctrine like the Sabbath. So, God does not appreciate it at all when worshipers do this. Fourth, God has said, **"I will have no part [membership] in... partiality [personal favoritism]" (2 Chron**

19:7). So He will refrain from participating in it fully with you or your church. He is not a partisan, a party official, or a man of the party! Fifth, and finally, God seeks worshipers who will worship Him in spirit and truth, not in sensuality and error (Jn 4:23). And partiality towards names is not an example of either of those two key elements of true worship.

"If you show partiality [favoritism], you are committing sin" (Ja 2:9)

1. By Names of Men or Angels (created beings)

This happens when partial men create churches named after those whom, for some reason, they esteem, like the Mennonites who name themselves after Menno Simons, the Lutherans, who

The Lutheran Church

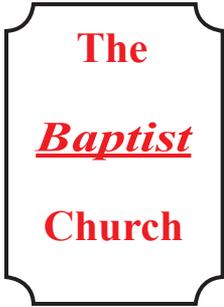
name themselves after Martin Luther, etc. This type of favoritism toward names was specifically categorized by Paul as **"fleshly"** (1 Cor 3:3). We must not divide after names of men. Besides being a sinful show of partiality, it is a form of idolatry. Naming a church after a man, a creature, is a serious form of idol worship. The ones who do this are creaturites! It is condemnable. But someone has said, "That's what the world calls us, Mennonites." Oh yeah? Then why do you put that name on your church sign and other literature? Why do you yourself call yourself a Mennonite? Friend, stop lying against the truth!

Examples of Churches Who Show Favoritism Towards Names of Creatures (Men, Women, or Angels)

- David's Church (King David)
- Mennonite Church (Menno Simons)
- Mary's (the mother of Jesus)
- Amish (Jacob Amman)
- Wesleyan (John Wesley; Methodist)
- Lutheran (Martin Luther)
- Saint Luke's (Luke the apostle)
- Saint Francis

- Margaret
- Joan of Arc
- Michael (the angel)
- Jacob's (as in Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob)
- Mormon (named after the so called angel Moroni)
- Gabriel's (an angel in the Bible)
- Etc.

2. By Doctrine [teaching]



This happens when partial men name disciples by a teaching, which for some reason they prefer, like baptism, holiness, the Sabbath [Seventh Day / Saturday], etc. Now, in the gospel of Christ, if there is a teaching in it, we

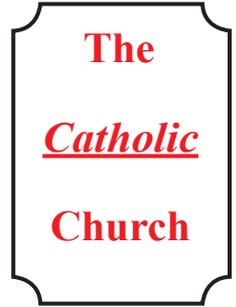
are to learn it, not name our church after it! Perhaps even some divide by a teaching that is not even in the New Testament. This would be a tradition of men, not God.

Examples of Churches Showing Partiality Towards Teachings/Doctrines

- Holiness Church (separation from sin)
- Evangelical Church (announcing the gospel)
- Baptist Church (water baptism/immersion)
- Catholic (the "universality" of the church)
- Methodist (doing things in an orderly way)
- Orthodox
- Fundamental
- Charity (love)
- Pentecostal (an O.T. Feast in Acts 2)
- Unitarian
- Seventh Day Adventist (Sabbath keepers)
- Salvation Army
- Apostolic
- Missionary
- Hope
- Faith
- Grace
- Unity
- Congregational
- Church of the Immaculate Conception
- Episcopal (bishop/overseer church)
- Presbyterian (older men church)
- Etc.

3. By Religious Sounding Words

This happens when partial men group disciples by words that are not found in the gospel, but they sound religious or "spiritual," like chapel, trinity, etc. We should not divide disciples by religious sounding words.



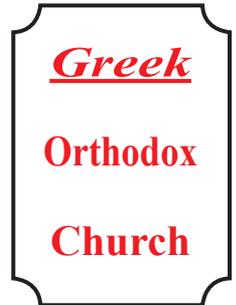
Note: Some of the examples below may be in both the doctrine and religious sounding word categories.

Examples of Churches Showing Favoritism Towards Religious Sounding Words

- Chapel
- Trinity
- Catholic
- Missionary
- Alliance
- First
- Our Lady of Lords
- Community
- Reformed
- Reorganized
- Free Will (Baptist) Church
- Evangelical Free Church
- Etc.

4. By Nationality

This happens when churches show favoritism toward the nation from which they come, their national background, such as **German** National Brethren, **Roman**



Catholic, etc. These are broad based location types of divisions, but may or may not be located in that particular nation. We should not divide or name a church by nationality.

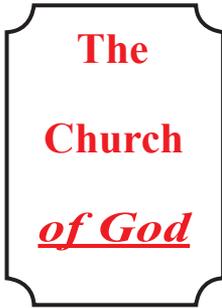
Examples of Churches Showing Favoritism Towards a Nationality

- Greek Orthodox Church
- Roman Catholic Church

- Russian Orthodox
- Messianic Jews
- German Baptist Brethren
- Polish National Catholic Church
- African Methodist Episcopal
- Greek Catholic
- Syrian Orthodox
- Etc.

5. By Elevating Bible Words or Phrases

This happens when partial men take a word or combination of words (or variations of them) in the gospel and use them to create a brotherhood, a party, a title, a name, like "church of God", New Life, etc. This type of partiality may seem accurate or harmless, yet it elevates one word or phrase over another of equal value or worth and calling. This is a form of partiality, especially when grouping and dividing worshipers in distinction from other worshipers.



Examples of Churches Showing Favoritism Towards Bible Words or Phrases

- Disciples of Christ
- Church of God
- Christian (the Christian church)
- Church of Christ
- Fellowship
- Brethren
- Brethren in Christ
- Abundant life church
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- New Life Fellowship
- Church of the Brother
- Agape Fellowship
- New Testament Church
- Bible (Scriptures) Church
- New Life Church
- Servant, church of
- New Covenant church
- Emmanuel's church
- Zion Church
- Tabernacle Church
- Friends Church, Etc.

Now, do you think that God had intended for men to divide worshipers in the ways I have just described to you?

Do you realize how many sectarian divisions, brotherhoods, and parties have been created and will be created by these **partial** methods? Do you now understand why Christianity is so divided? Have you begun to see or realize how utterly divisive Christians have become, by the sin of partiality [personal favoritism] towards names? **Next learn the solution to this problem.**

This is the solution to the sin of partiality! It is the same in any situation!

Do the proper thing to equalize, not elevate, one thing over the other. Quit honoring one thing over the other, dishonoring the other. You need to completely de-elevate whatever you have lifted up. You need to quit giving special attention to it by your words or deeds. You need to take it off of your personal and affectionate "favorites" list. You must stop making discriminatory distinctions between two or more equivocal things. You must become an **impartial** judge of the matter at hand, not a partial one.

"I can see how names have divided the church

without us knowing it. There is so much division in the church without our realizing it. I thought there was nothing wrong in the names of denominations, but I have realized that it is the root cause of the division in the church. I wonder where the church is heading to? May God help us." **Joseph, Nigeria**

"I never thought that a simple thing like a name could cause such great division amongst God's people. It will surely help me to worship God in the way He designed me to; in spirit and in truth, to lift his name and glorify him alone." **Sandra, South Africa**

"I learned about the names of different churches. **How self centered we are.** I need to make sure that I worship the way God wants me to." **Alice, Oregon, USA**

The Impartial Way That God and the Scriptures “Name” (that is, Divide) Worshipers

He Names Them by Location

In the New Testament, one thing cannot or should not be disputed: **Christians were consistently divided (named or affiliated) by where they met or gathered for worship (a location).** By location is the way that God “names” the churches. They were not divided by (1) a man’s name, (2) a doctrine, (3) a religious sounding word, (4) a nationality, or (5) a combination of Bible words or phrases.

Yes, disciples were divided (named), but they were named in distinction from other churches by the specific location in which they met for worship, not some other group or brotherhood moniker. **In this there is no partiality towards names.**

So, do we have to call ourselves something? No! We do not have to call ourselves something (even though many others have done so). We can simply divide (name) Christians by the location in which they gather for worship. In doing so, there is no naming of disciples involved. This solves the partiality towards names problem and every sensual, boastful, divisive, and opinionated thing which results from it.

Note: And so, even though churches in the New Testament were sometimes addressed inconsistently in other ways, along with their location (such as the saints, or the church of God, or beloved of God, etc.), these salutations were not given to them, or used or adopted by them, for or as a preferential party title or brotherhood name (like so many are doing today!). Even more, they did not in any way create a whole sect or brotherhood of churches based on these things to differentiate themselves from another group of churches, for it was not God’s intent for them to do so.

Naming disciples by location is the only consistent pattern we can find in the New Covenant!

For example, Jesus divided (named) the seven churches in Asia by location only. He said:

“To the angel of **the church in Ephesus**” (Re 2:1).

“To the angel of **the church in Smyrna**” (Re 2:8).

“To the angel of **the church in Pergamum**” (Re 2:12).

“To the angel of the church in Thyatira” (Re 2:18).

“To the angel of the church in Sardis” (Re 3:1).

“To the angel of the church in Philadelphia” (Re 3:7).

“To the angel of the church in Laodicea” (Re 3:14).

Additionally, even John, an apostle of Christ, directed the words of Jesus: “**to the seven churches that are in Asia**” (Re 1:4). Paul, when writing to the churches of Galatia, addressed them by location, saying, “**To the churches of Galatia**” (Ga 1:2).

Some were “named” after the home in which they met for worship!

For example, some Christians were divided (named) by the home in which they met for worship, such as in Aquila and Prisca’s home, and Paul greeted them as such: “**The**

**The
Church
in
Ephesus**

church that is **in their house**"

(Ro 16:3-5). Some met for worship in Philemon's home and were addressed by Paul as such:

"The church **in your house**" (Phile 1, 2).

Some met for worship on a regular basis in Gaius' home,

and Paul addressed them as such: "**Gaius, host to me and to the whole church**" (Ro 16:23).



Note: These churches in the home were not called "The Aquil-**ite** Church," or "The Gai-**ish** Church," or the "Philemon-**ite** Church". They simply met in these hospitable people's homes, and it was specifically stated as such in the Scriptures. They were a location based division of Christ, divided by the home in which they met for worship, not by names of men. They were not creaturites!

Conclusion

So, Jesus and the apostles, they all consistently divided the churches by where they resided and/or assembled, even if they met in someone's home, not a public building.

Christians are supposed to be governed by a city/town location.

For example, "**Appoint elders in every city as I directed you**" (Titus 1:5). This verse shows that Christians are to be divided by city or town, and also governed by qualified older Christian men from that city. This further exemplifies the idea that Christian churches are supposed to be divided by the location in which they meet for worship. This is the pattern we find in the New Testament, not any other.

The Partiality of Prefixes, Suffixes, and Amendments!

While many churches today divide themselves and their affiliates by location, they still err by adding prefixes or suffixes to it, such as a name of men or angels, a doctrine, a religious sounding word, a nationality, or a Bible word or phrase. It is the "in addition to's" that set disciples up to show partiality and so become boldly divisive.

Partiality repeats itself in massive proportions!

For example, Jesus wrote: "**To the angel of the church in Ephesus**" (Re 2:1). But, if the church in Ephesus decided to make disciples in other cities, would it be right for them to divide these new disciples after themselves? If some Christians in Ephesus went to the cities of Smyrna and Philadelphia to establish disciples there, should they call or address them as: "The Smyrna **Ephesian** Church", and "The Philadelphia **Ephesian** Church"?

Certainly not! God would not do so! But, today churches do this. Consider the Hill Country Bible Church, which is north of Austin, Texas. This church was named after what the inhabitants of the area designated the land area to be, the Hill Country.

In or around the year 2001, they wanted to expand their efforts. So, they determined to start another church in a town near them, the town of Round Rock. Even though Round Rock was not in the Hill Country area, **what "name" do you think they called the church?** They called it **Hill Country** Round Rock. That was the label they gave to it. They assigned their original starter location as a prefix to their second location. This is another show of partiality!

Important Note!

Some governments might require churches to register with them. This tempts Christians to adopt or create a name that is partial. Yet, governments might let each individual congregation divide (name) itself by its specific location only (for even governments, hotels, and other businesses are divided by location only). Try to do so.

For example, the Mbeya hotel, in Mbeya Tanzania, is named after the town or location in which it resides. But, if it was named after the street on which it was located, that would be a solution as well. Do you want to be responsible for being divisive towards Christ? Do you want to be guilty of showing favoritism? Favoritism is a very serious sin (Ja 2:9). Remember you are a Christian, not to conform to the world or its systems which violate the truth. To this you were called.



Are you a Christian?

Do you belong to Christ? Or are you a this-**er** or that-**er group-er**, a this-**er** or that-**er doctrin-er**, a this-**er** or that-**er nam-er**, etc.? As one woman gladly said to me when I asked her what church she attended: "I'm a Free Will Baptist. My daddy was a Free Will Baptist. My mommy was a Free Will Baptist, and my granddaddy was a Free Will Baptist. I'll always be a Free Will Baptist." Yet she never said that they were Christians! She simply and gladly defined herself and all her relatives in a such a partisan way, after the name of a doctrine, one's will, and whether or not it was free; personal grace.

Conclusion

When speaking to a group of partial worshipers in Corinth, who were showing favoritism towards names, Paul asked them: "**Has Christ been divided?**" (1 Cor 1:13). Yes, in a sense, Christ (and Christianity) has been divided by disciples like those in Corinth who favor party titles and brotherhood names or affiliations.

But, one way that impartial disciples can correct the problem is to divide or name each individual congregation by the specific gathering location in which they meet for worship, without prefixes or suffixes, without any other affiliation. In this way they do not show favoritism toward party or brotherhood titles or names, and they avoid this kind of divisive affiliation-**ism**. ¹¹

Where do you worship or attend church?

Is it at **(1)** a location or **(2)** a partisan title? What show of favoritism is on your church sign and church literature? How do you register yourselves? Is your religion the Christian religion or has your show of partiality led you and others among you to say, "Baptist," or "Church of Christ," or Church of God," or "Lutheran," and so on and so forth? (*When I have asked disciples what is their religion, for example, in my online Bible study registration form, many of them have said these things to me, yes even that their religion was "Church of Christ"!*) Partisan titles (personal graces, not God's graces) have led and empowered the members of these brotherhoods to say these things.

Of what church are you a member?

When someone asks you, "Are you a member of the Church of God?," what do you say? "No! I am a member of the Church of Christ!," or "I'm a member of another church!"?

You foolish fellow! Don't you know that if you are in the church of God, you are in the church of Christ? In the sight of God, if you are in God, you are in Christ. Therefore, you are in the church which belongs to God and the church which belongs to Christ, and so on and so forth. Do you now see how partiality towards church names has caused disciples to talk and act fleshly, ungodly, and divisively in the sight of God?

Conclusion: On Misunderstanding to Whom We Belong!

The way that Christian churches divide themselves in distinction from other churches (that is, they way that they "name" or "affiliate" themselves), can truly indicate the hypocritical nature of the group or brotherhood. For example, when Christians in Corinth began to show partiality [that is, personal favoritism] towards names, religious men's names [SEE 1 Cor 1:10 thru chpts. 4:7], Paul severely rebuked them for it because he knew that this was not of the Spirit but of the flesh. It was divisive. For example, Paul said:

"Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **that you all agree, that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete** in the same mind and same judgment. For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, 'I am of Paul,' and 'I of Apollos,' and 'I of Cephas and 'I of Christ.' Has Christ been **divided**? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor 1:10-13). And, "Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may **learn not to exceed what is written**, so that no one of you will **become arrogant** in behalf of **one against the other**" (1 Cor 4:6).

So, in showing partiality (personal favoritism) towards names, they went beyond what was commanded and exemplified in the Scriptures for them to do or imitate. This excess led them to become "divided" and "arrogant" against each other. It made them not "complete," but immature.

Even more, Paul said that the ones who were doing this were "not... spiritual men," but "men of flesh," "infants," "still fleshly," and again he said they were "fleshly". Indeed, men who are fleshly in their thinking (without the Spirit) are dividing, not unifying Christians in Christ. "These are the ones who cause **divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit**" (Jude 19).

Partial worshipers divide Christ and Christians, they do not unite them. They are divisive. They are without the Spirit of God on this subject. They are "worldly minded," not godly minded. They have no command from Christ to do this, they have no example or pattern in the New Covenant to do so. It is not what the "one" church did or practiced. Neither should we. "For you, brethren, became **imitators** of the churches of God in Christ Jesus (1 Thess 2:14). **Have you? Or are you imitating partiality, personal grace, not Gods grace?**

Is the fear of God upon you?

"Now then let the fear of the LORD be upon you; be **very careful** what you do, for the LORD our God will have **no part in... partiality** [personal favoritism]" (2 Chron 19:7).

Is the fear of God upon you? God will not join up with or become a member (part) of a show of favoritism (partiality, personal grace). What about you? Will you join up with or become a member of personal grace? Will "the fear of the Lord be upon you" and will you be "very careful" in "what you do"?

True worshipers will remain impartial by not showing favoritism towards church names. Yet, as Jesus said about the day when He will return, will He find faith on the earth, even in regard to this matter of impartiality? Will He find any group of worshipers who are impartial? Do you reverence God or personal favoritism (self-made grace-ism)?

Become “imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus”

1 Thess 2:14

Church, It Is Decision Time!

In what will you be “diligent to preserve” (Eph 4:3), maintain, or imitate? Will it be a show of personal grace-ism towards names, or will it instead be what God favors? Will you imitate the impartiality of the “one body” (Eph 4:4) in the New Testament? When it comes to how you name or affiliate your church, will you imitate the churches in the gospel? Like the church in Thessalonica, will it be said of your church, that you “became **imitators of the churches of God in Christ**” (1 Thess 2:14)? For at that time, they were “imitating” the other churches of God, and Paul was praising them for it! He rejoiced, saying, “You, brethren, became **imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus**” (1 Thess 2:14).

Notice that they were the church of God and of Christ, among other things. They did not exclusively become the church of Christ alone. They did not only become exclusively the church of God. They did not become the COGI (pronounced Co-Gee) church (church of God in Christ). For these are all names of proud brotherhoods today. Men have shown personal favoritism to these phrases and made them their brotherhood name. Every church in these brotherhoods must have, favor, or pander to these phrases.

But, the church in Thessalonica did not do that. They were divided by the location in which they assembled for worship, as were the other churches in the New Covenant. In doing so, they could be what God wanted them to be, that is they could be the church of Christ, the church of God, the church of God in



Christ Jesus, and so on and so forth. And Paul could address them as such. They were not one or the other, one against the other. Indeed, they could be all of the things that God wanted them to be. For they belonged to God (the church of God), they also belonged to Christ (the church of Christ), and so on and so forth.

Yet, as we clearly know, men who show favoritism to church names cannot be all of these things. They can only belong to one thing, not all things. Their favorite phrase forces them to behave this way. Do you see what personal favoritism can do? Nevertheless, let us become like the churches in the New Covenant.

Understand to whom we belong!

We belong to Christ, to God, to one another, to the kingdom of God, to the first born, and so on and so forth. But, we do not belong to baptism, faith, reformed, and so on and so forth. Nor do we belong to Christ alone, but also to God the Father. Nor do we belong to God the Father alone, but also to Christ. Therefore, let us divide or “name” ourselves by location so that we can think clearly about ourselves and all other churches, without arrogance. Now, in one very important way, an impartial way, this is how to become a New Testament church, the Lord’s church.

Someone will say, "But, we use a Bible name!"

I ask you who say this, "In this Bible study, did you not yet learn any truth about a show of **personal favoritism** towards 'names' "? Some brotherhoods have said about their own form of brotherhood favoritism, **"We use a Bible name."** No, you are simply misusing one of the many forms and varieties of address and salutations used by the apostles and prophets in regards to the churches.

Let me ask you a few questions about this. Which church used one of these forms of address or salutations as their party title? Which one of them created a separate brotherhood from it? Which apostle or prophet used them to create separate and different brotherhoods? Ask yourselves this question? **"Have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? But if you show partiality [personal favoritism], you are committing sin"** (Ja 2:4, 9). Are you not demonstrating personal favoritism? But you say, "We are the Lord's church!". I say, "The church that belongs to the Lord does not show favoritism towards names!".

Important Examples and Notes

In Kenya, I heard another conclude thus: "We are disciples of Christ, **because that is what the Bible says that we are.**" And so, because of this, they add that three word preferential phrase to all of their affiliated churches all over Kenya.

In America, a leading man of the party of the "Church of God" had visited my in-laws to convert them to his favorite way of thinking! They happened to be worshiping impartially with others in their home, and this "man of the party" wanted to grow the partiality! He said, "We are the Church of God, because **that phrase is listed sixteen times in the New Testament!** You should use it too!" They declined that partial offer. Yet the "Church of God" affixes that three word phrase to every church around the world which so

desires to be affiliated to them. It must be on their signs and literature in some way, as all partial groups insist!

Yet, in another place and time in America, it has been related to me by an elder brother in a certain brotherhood, that some of their men concluded thus: **"No one is using the phrase Church of Christ,** so let us use that one for our churches." And so, they adopted that "orphans" phrase as their authorized party title, and have affixed it to all of their churches, and still do so today, and insist upon it. However, the Bible does not use that specific combination of words to describe the church. Instead it uses the plural, but never the singular: **"All the churches of Christ greet you"** (Ro 16:16).

Think about it. When have men decided to use these forms of address and salutations as party titles? Is it fair to say that they did so hundreds and even well over a thousand years or more after the Bible was fully written? For example, when did men adopt the phrase "Church of God" as their party title?

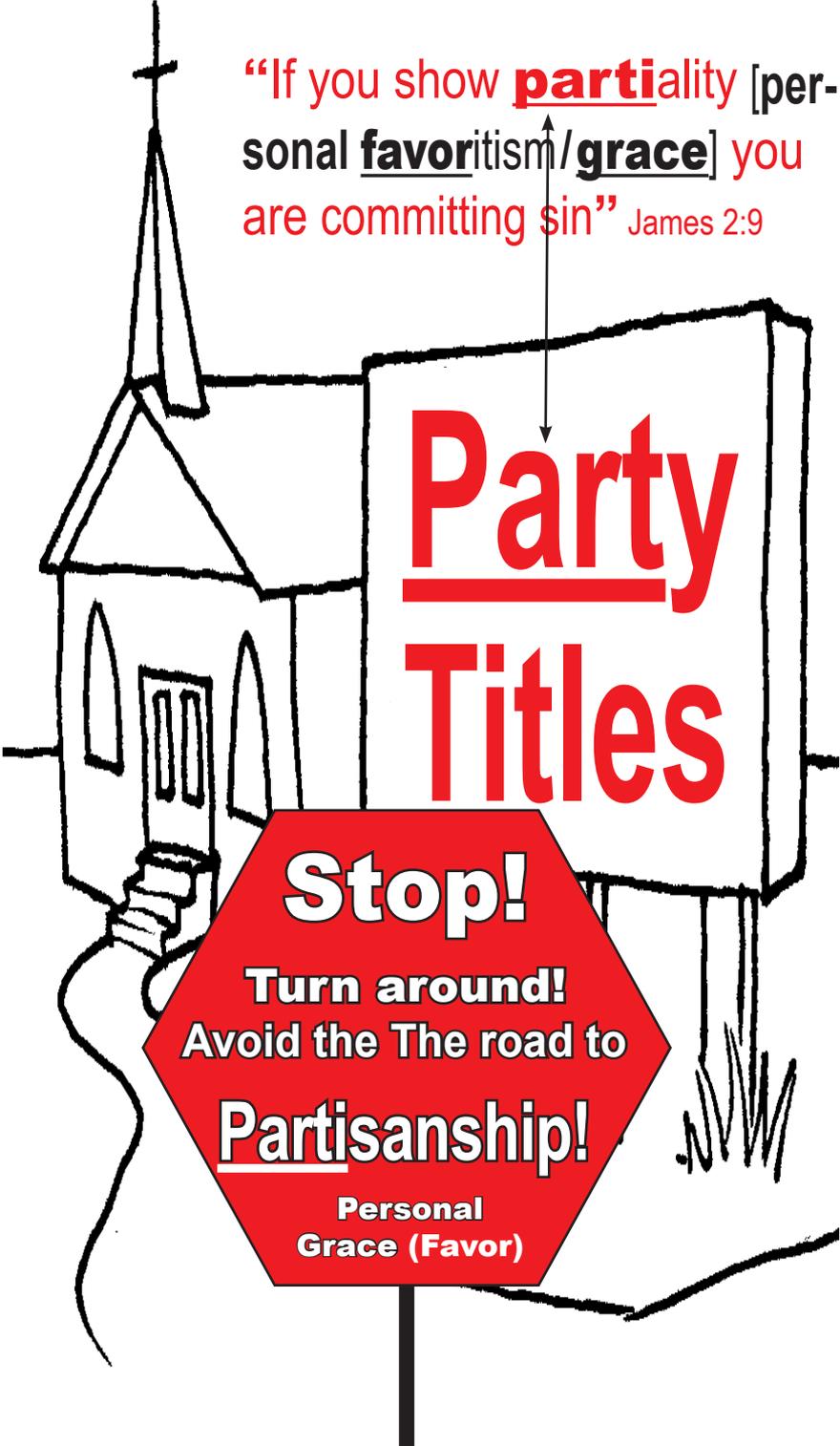
What about the Church of Christ? Wasn't that party born out of the American restoration movement in the 1800's? At that time, which men made the decision to show favoritism towards those words, to use them exclusively and repetitively as the one party title of the church, to be affixed and endorsed as the one name to use on everything?

The reality is this: men created or authorized that party title, division, or phrase sometime around the late 1800's to early 1900's. It amazes me that these disciples in the "Church of Christ" write tracts to expose exactly when the many so called "denominations" were started and by whom, along with the date, but they never list themselves in that chronology! This is self-deception! Remember, partiality leads to boasting, because Paul said it exceeds what is written (1 Cor 4:6), and exceeding what is written gives worshippers a superiority complex. But, Paul questioned those showing partiality towards names, saying, **"Who regards you as superior?"** (1 Cor 4:7). Do you realize that your partiality is in question?

Do you realize how many sectarian divisions and parties have been created and will be created by these methods of naming churches or brotherhoods? Do you honestly think that God had intended for Christians to act this way against one another?

One thing is for certain, God did not show partiality in dividing (naming) churches. Likewise, those in the New Testament, including the authoritative apostles, did not set that example. Are you greater than they? Or is it simply that the fear of the Lord is not upon you as it was on them? Do you like to exceed what is written? If you do, then you are simply being arrogant and fleshly, not "Biblical". In regards to partisanship, you must become judges without evil motives, for favoritism has at its roots **"evil motives"** (SEE Ja 2:4). Become impartial in how you name or divide your individual church from other churches. This may cause a partial brotherhood to have angst against you. But this will cause God to have joy over you and your church. Whom will you please? You decide. **Be a man of the truth, not a man of the party!**

“If you show **partiality** [personal **favoritism** / **grace**] you are committing sin” James 2:9



Party Titles

Stop!
Turn around!
Avoid the The road to
Partisanship!
Personal
Grace (**Favor**)