

"I AM JUST A CHRISTIAN"

Whenever I say, "I am just a Christian," I get rebuttals. Usually someone defines *denomination* so as to include me in one. But, it seems to me, that misses the point. Shift the focus from the definition of *denomination* to the definition of *church* (or *ekklesia*, the Bible word translated *church*). By Bible definition, *church* is a word for the redeemed.

The Lord adds the saved to his church, the redeemed to his kingdom, his newly born children to his family. Biblically, those are three ways of saying the same thing.

The saved are the church; the church is the saved. God does the adding and God does the saving. He makes no mistakes; so no one is saved who is not in the church and no one is in the church except those who have been saved.

Obviously, that means the only correct roll is the one God keeps in heaven, but surely we understand that. If we "call Bible things by Bible names," then when we speak *of church* we mean "all the redeemed."

When people talk about Church of Christ preachers, or say "I'm Church of Christ," or, as one lady said, "I'm a member of the Church of Christ Church," I conclude that they think they are in a denomination. Perhaps they are, but I am not.

Many years ago I heard the lovely story of Christ Jesus. I trusted his sacrifice for my atonement, and I was baptized because he said, "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." Brother E. W. McMillan, who baptized me, often said he did not represent any denomination and was not inviting anyone to join one. Since that time, I have done nothing that would put me in one.

I give lordship over my faith to no man, creed, council or paper; only to Christ and the Bible. I suspect that I think some things are true that are false and that I think some things are false that are true. Obviously I do not know what they are, but the odds are in favor of that being true. I continue to study Scripture, however, striving to have a mind open to any new truth I learn from Scripture.

When I obeyed the gospel, the Lord, according to his promise, added me to his church. I have made a very deliberate attempt though the rest of my life never to join anything else. I am a Christian. When I say "church of Christ," unless I am speaking of a specific local church, I mean all of the redeemed, even though I do not know who all of them are.

One more word of clarification. I am not a member of the church of Christ because it does this or teaches that. I am a member because, when I was saved, God added me to it. From that time on, I have striven to follow the Scriptures and to do and teach, to the best of my ability, what they reveal as the will of God for us. I am certain I do not do it all right; so I am trusting the blood of Jesus to cleanse me while I strive to walk in the light.

In the meantime if I have inadvertently joined a denomination, please accept this as my resignation.

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