

JAMA'AT AL_MASIH (A church of the Christ)

CONFUSION CONFRONTS THE MUSLIM ENQUIRER

We have had many enquiries from Muslims. One thing that struck us forcibly was how confusing it is for someone searching for the truth and expecting to find it in Jesus, to then be confronted with over 300 conflicting sects. This is especially so for a Muslim who leaves behind over 80 brands of Islam expecting to find unity in Christ.

This distressing situation turns many away from Jesus. We who claim to follow the Christ, ought to feel very guilty about this, particularly when the one we claim to love and emulate, in the very night in which he was betrayed, prayed earnestly for our oneness.

"I request also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their (i.e. the apostles) message, that all of them might be one, in Us so that the world might believe that You did send Me" (John 17:20,21).

Division is worldly and the insistence on clinging to divisive names betrays that this worldly spirit really exists and is not just imagined.

You are still self-indulgent, because as there is envy and wrangling among you, are you not being self-indulgent and are you not earthly-minded? for every time anyone says, "I'm Paul's (convert/disciple)," and another, "I'm Apollos' (convert/disciple)," are you not earthly? (I Cor.3:3-4).

Admittedly removing the names alone will not do away with the divisiveness. The humanly instituted sects must be dissolved or withdrawn from.¹ We must return to the church of God of which the Lord Jesus is the supreme and sole head² and of which He is the builder.³ Otherwise we are wasting our time.⁴

PURITY AT THE SOURCE OF CHRISTIANITY

At the beginning, those who believed that the crucified, risen and ascended Jesus, was the Christ the Son of the living God,⁵ were added by the Lord Jesus to His church⁶ after they had repented and had been buried⁷ in water by baptism for their sins to be forgiven.⁸ This was not a temporary arrangement but was intended for all time and for every one who heard and responded to the call of the Gospel.⁹ This accorded completely with the Lord's final instructions to His envoys (apostles) before leaving them.¹⁰

Groups of such immersed believers gathered weekly to remember Jesus in the breaking of the loaf.¹¹ The places where they met had no particular significance,¹² but the people who met together had great significance.¹³ Paul had such groups in mind when he used the phrase "*the churches of the Christ*".¹⁴ This, like other terms used in the New Testament for the church, was not divisive. Also it gave glory to the head, He whose precious blood had purchased it.¹⁵

God has not authorised any change in these arrangements.¹⁶ Perversions are not to be countenanced, however imposing the "authority" that perpetuates them.¹⁷ All worship must be both sincere and based on

revealed truth.¹⁸ Alternative dogma formulated by human beings is spurious.¹⁹

It is then, evident from the New Testament that if a person believes in the Lord Jesus, repents and is buried in baptism for their sins to be forgiven, that person is added by the Lord to His church. He or she does not become a member of a sect but simply a member of the Lord's body. Groups of such people meeting together to remember Jesus and to strengthen each other will be simply churches of the Christ.

There are throughout the world unaffiliated groups of such people, owning Jesus as their only head and their only Lord. They regard themselves simply as Christians only and not any particular 'brand' of Christian, churches of the Christ only and not a sect or branch of the church of Christ. They do not claim to have monopoly of the truth but refraining from formulating creeds or articles of faith, they endeavour to follow the Bible only, in all matters of faith and practice.

JAMA'AT AL-MASIH

Muslims understand this phrase. We believe that it expresses in Arabic as nearly as it is possible to do so, the connotations of the New Testament Greek for "a church of the Christ". The word "jama'at" like "church" (Greek: **ἐκκλησία**) signifies a group of people with a common purpose and interest.

Jama'at al_Masih conveys the idea of there being a company of people who gather together for worship, to encourage each other in doing good and who belong to and are devoted to the Messiah - the Christ.

A group of people who are:-

Not a brand of Christian but just Christians, Not a denomination, Not THE Church of Christ, Not even an interdenominational organisation but simply, a church of the Christ.

We pray that the Lord will enable us to be just that and wholly that. We appeal to all who love the Lord to endeavour to do the same so as to achieve the unity The Lord Jesus prayed for, in the very night when he was betrayed, so "*that the world might believe that*" the Father "*did send*" the Lord Jesus, the Christ.²⁰

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References:-

- 1 Matt. 15:12,13
- 2 Col. 1:18
- 3 Matt. 16:18
- 4 Psalm 127:1
- 5 Acts 18:37 and 2:36,37
- 6 Acts 2:47
- 7 Rom. 6:4
- 8 Acts 2:38,41
- 9 Acts 2:40 and I.Thess. 2:14
- 10 Matt. 28:18 - 20
- 11 Acts 20:7
- 12 Acts 17:24
- 13 I.Peter 2:4,5
- 14 Romans 16:16
- 15 Acts 20:28
- 16 Jude 3
- 17 Gal. 1:6-10
- 18 John 4:24 and 17:17
- 19 Matt. 15:9
- 20 John 17:21

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We appeal to all churches to return to simple New Testament principles, to abandon creeds, articles of faith, denominations, alliances, to adopt the Bible only as their authority in matters of faith and practice and to be simply independent churches of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jama'at
Al Masih

If you would like more information, or have any questions, please address enquiries to:-

We will not try to contact you unless you ask us to.

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