**It’s not a Sect**

A Newark Ohio man would not stop calling our local church “a denomination” and the Jews would not stop calling “the Way” a sect. So if I am to think and speak like the apostle Paul, I will not give in to it. We must stop thinking denominationally, for Paul refused this idea outright. The Jews had three or four main denominations, sects (Sadducees, Pharisees, Essences, Zealots). Paul refused to call “the Way” a sect. He adamantly defended the idea the church should be one church, this is God’s dream, God’s idea, God’s word.

Do you find yourself resisting the idea of being a denomination, a sect? Then you are in good company (1Corinthians 1:10-17). Do you find yourself opposing denominational speaking? Good for you! Let us stop the division. The Apostle Paul said, “But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets” (Acts 24:14). Cannot I serve God the same way Paul did? Cannot I belong to the same church Paul did?

There is but one church, says Paul. “There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism (Ephesians 4:4-6). We must think “one”. Paul at times used the words “body” and “church” interchangeably. The Father gave Jesus, “as head over all things to the church, which is His body” (Eph. 1:22-23). Jesus is the head of the church (Eph. 5:22-33). Jesus has one body, the church. The Father didn’t give “churches” or “bodies” to Jesus, but rather the “church” which is his body.
Paul taught one faith, everywhere in every church. For all local churches were to conform to what the apostles taught. Timothy, “will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church” (1Cor. 4:17). How wonderful! One faith, one baptism, one body/church. I want to be apart of that same one. The local assembly was called “church of God” or one of the “churches of Christ” (1Corinthians 1:2, Romans 16:16). These are not names, but descriptions. They both describe the same local congregation. We are striving to be the church of God, the church of Christ, the church of the firstborn ones (1Cor. 1:2, Rom. 16:16, Heb. 12:23). These describe the same church. Jesus dreamed of unity, prayed for unity. Being united to Jesus is being united to his teaching and character. After all, Jesus is the head and has but one body. Let us obey him as our own physical body obeys our head. So let me be so closely connected to Jesus! Amen! Dan Peters