

NINTH ANNUAL
"LABOURERS TOGETHER WITH GOD"
LECTURESHIP, 2001

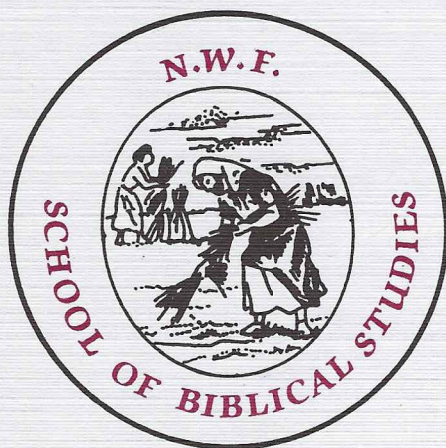
The Church of Christ Is Not A Denomination

NORTHWEST FLORIDA SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL STUDIES
Training Laborers for ...

THE HARVEST

"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest."

(Luke 10:2)



Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies offers a great opportunity for those who desire to be better trained laborers in God's field of harvest. Tuition Free!

**NINTH ANNUAL
"LABOURERS TOGETHER WITH GOD"
LECTURESHIP**

September 16-20, 2001

THEME:

**The Church of Christ
Is Not A Denomination**

**Editor:
Kenneth Burleson**

Location of Lectureship:
Ensley Church of Christ
Home of Northwest Florida School Of Biblical Studies
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FORWARD

This book contains 28 lesson outlines of the 9th Annual "Labourers together with God" Lectureship, which was held at the Ensley church of Christ, home of "Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies" in Pensacola, Florida.

There are many people who do not know the difference between the Lord's church and a Denomination. This is the reason many congregations have gone into apostasy. It is very important that individuals be educated on this matter.

I also realize that some do not want to know the difference. They are satisfied and do not want to be made to feel uncomfortable. The problem is that some just do not care one way or the other. One can be sure that on the judgment day they will care, but it will be too late to change.

We have selected 28 subjects under the theme "The Church of Christ Is Not A Denomination" to help men, women, boys and girls understand the difference so they can make the right decision. The decisions we make in this life will determine where we live in eternity. We have also selected 28 men we believe capable of preparing and delivering these messages.

It is our hope these lessons will cause all to have a greater appreciation for the Lord's church.

You may purchase audio and/or video tapes.

*Kenneth Burleson
September, 2001*

Printed by:

Bates Printing & Binding

Hwy 6 North / P.O. Box 97

Nettleton, MS 38858

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www.eastcorinth.org/books.htm

A Tribute To Brother Doyle Gough

Brother Gough passed from this life January 16th, 2001.

He was a Christian gentleman with great Bible knowledge and ability. Brother Gough loved the Lord and the Lord's church. He had tremendous love for his family and desired their faithfulness to the Lord.

Brother Gough was a lover of truth and supported congregations, men and schools that love and teach the truth. He was a great supporter of Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies. Young men were encouraged by him to attend the school. Some have followed up on the encouragement they received from him. One has graduated and another attending now. He financially supported the school and students and encouraged congregations and individuals to do the same. His good wife, Barbara, jointly supported and encouraged with brother Gough. His family has and continues to do the same.

Brother Gough was loved by multitudes of faithful brethren. When a stand needed to be taken for truth one could always depend on brother Doyle taking that stand.

His efforts will live on in many. To name some: Brethren Gilbert Gough, Rick Knoll, Jared Knoll and Scott Klaft. We have lost a friend and brother but his memory will live on.

ELDERS

Ervin Brantley
Don Orr
Homer Thompson
David Wells

DIRECTOR

Kenneth Burleson

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What Is The Church Of Christ?

Guy F. Hester

1. I believe this is a question of fundamental importance because there is a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding in the religious world today as to just what the church of Christ or the New Testament church is.
 - a. We shall be using these two terms interchangeably or synonymously throughout this lesson because the church of Christ is the only church that is even mentioned in the New Testament.
 1. We have become so accustomed to thinking of the church in denominational terms that is nearly impossible to separate, or disassociate these terms in our minds.
 2. No one supposes Paul or Peter, or any of the other apostles, belonged to a denomination.
 - b. We have thousands of cases of conversion recorded in the book of Acts of the Apostles, and of all the conversions recorded in the book of Acts there is not a single hint that anyone ever joined a human institution of any kind. All Christians in apostolic times belonged to the church.
2. In the New Testament, there are many allusions to the body of people who make up or compose the church of Christ.
 - a. Church is alluded to as the Lord's "vineyard" (Matt. 20:1).
 - b. The church is also alluded to as a "sheepfold" (John 10:1).
 - c. The church is alluded to as "God's temple" (Eph. 2:21).
 - d. The church is also spoken of in the New Testament as "God's elect" (2 Tim. 2:10).
3. We should not confuse these allusions with the terms which are specially used to designate the church.
 - a. Since the church is unlike any other institution, it has been presented to us by some very striking pictures in order that we might better understand and appreciate it.
 - b. It depends altogether on the angle from which we look upon the church as to which of these pictures we use.

DISCUSSION:

I. IT IS THE CHURCH!

- A. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).
 1. From the second chapter of the book of Acts we learn that Jesus did exactly what He said He would do on the first Pentecost following His resurrection.
 2. From that time on, the church was spoken of as a reality, or something that was already in existence.
- B. The term "church" is from the Greek word "*ekklesia*" and means "a called out congregation." (*ek* meaning out and

kaleo meaning called)

1. According to the definition it may be applied to any gathering.
 2. The ancient Greeks used the term primarily to designate a political body.
 3. Stephen spoke of the Israelites in Moses' time as "*the church in the wilderness*" (Acts 7:38).
- C. While the term "church" signifies no more than "a called out congregation," the church of Christ has a much more important meaning than simply a called out group or assembly.
1. The Bible teaches that the church of our Lord is composed of immersed believers in Christ, who have been called out from the world, and who associate themselves together to worship God "in spirit and in truth."
 2. It is a Spiritual house over which Christ reigns as head, and in which the Holy Spirit dwells.

II. THE CHURCH IS PICTURED AS THE KINGDOM.

- A. Whether we speak of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ, or the kingdom of heaven, we have in mind the same institution (John 17:10).
1. The kingdom of Christ is the kingdom of God; and the kingdom of God is the kingdom of Christ.
 2. It is often spoken of as the kingdom of heaven because it is from heaven and not of this world (John 18:36).
- B. Biblically speaking, the church and the kingdom signify one and the same institution.
1. Matt. 16:18-19, The church and the kingdom are spoken of in this passage in practically the same breath and are used interchangeably.
 2. Jesus was speaking of the same institution when he used these two terms.
 3. When Peter used "the keys of the kingdom" on the first Pentecost to make known the terms of entrance into it, he made known the terms of entrance into the church at the same time.
- C. In Luke 22:17-30 we have a very significant statement regarding the establishment of the kingdom and the observance of the Lord's supper.
1. Jesus instituted His supper to be observed in His kingdom, which was soon to be set up.
 2. Then a short time later we find the apostles and early Christians observing the Lord's supper in the church.
- D. "*And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers*" (Acts 2:42). The breaking of bread refers to the observance of the Lord's supper.

- E. *"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight"* (Acts 20:7).
1. This passage shows that it was the practice of the church to assemble on the first day of the week to commemorate the Lord's death by communing at His Table in the assembly, or the church.
- F. It is evident that the church and the kingdom are one and the same institution.
1. If not, then the Lord's supper, which was to be observed in the kingdom, was never really put there, as Jesus declared it was; or else someone is guilty of stealing it out of the kingdom and placing it in the church, where it never should have been.

III. THE CHURCH IS GOD'S BUILDING (1 Cor. 3:9).

- A. "Spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5; Eph. 2:19-21).
- B. While this divine institution, the church, which Christ came into the world to establish is sometimes called a "building," let us not suppose it is a material building.
1. If we speak of the meeting house as the church, we mean, of course, the place where the church meets to engage in worship.
 2. The church is not made up or composed of wood, shingles, nails, bricks, and mortar.
- C. The church of Christ, is a spiritual building or as Peter calls it, a "spiritual house" made up of individual Christians, who have been born into the "family of God."

IV. THE CHURCH IS THE FAMILY OF GOD (1 Tim. 3:14-15).

- A. The term "house" signifies "household," "family."
1. Hezekiah – "Set thine house in order" (2 Kings 20:1).
 2. Twenty six times the Old Testament speaks of the "House of David" – his family.
 3. Cornelius "feared God with all his house" (Acts 10:2).
 4. Paul and Silas told the Philippian Jailer to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all thy house" (Acts 16:31-33).
 5. These references were to their families, not a literal house or building in which they lived.
- B. In the process of conversion, man is pictured as "being born again" (John 3:3).
1. The figure most commonly used to express our relationship to God after conversion is that of a "son" or "child" (Gal. 3:26-27; 1 John 3:1-2).
- C. By the new birth, man becomes a child of God, and by the same process becomes a member of God's household or

family.

1. It is possible for one to join a denomination, but the...
2. Only way one can enter the family or household of God is by a new birth.

V. THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST.

- A. Christ is the head of the body, the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).
 1. These and many other passages make it very clear that when the New Testament speaks of the body of Christ, it is speaking about the spiritual body or His church (1 Cor. 12:12-13).
 2. Baptized believers in Christ, make up or compose the spiritual body of Christ, His church.
- B. It is very important for us to observe that all Christians are in Christ (Gal. 3:26-28; 2 Cor. 5:17). One cannot be a new creature, or a child of God out of Christ.
- C. The Bible further teaches that all who are in Christ are in His body (Rom. 12:5; Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).
 1. To be a Christian is to be in Christ, and to be in Christ is to be in His body, and His body and the church are one and the same thing.
 2. Therefore, it follows that all Christians are in Christ's church.
- D. The same process that saves one, makes him a member of the church of Christ (Acts 2:47). Therefore, in answer to the question, "What is the church of Christ?" It is the only institution in the world composed entirely of ALL who have been saved through obedience to the Gospel of Christ.

CONCLUSION:

1. When we look at the church from all the angles presented in the New Testament, we get a beautiful picture of it.
2. If when we think of the church, we have in mind a group of Christians who have been called out of the world, and who associate themselves together to worship God, then it is a church.
3. If we think of Christ as our King and all His disciples as His subjects, then it is a kingdom.
4. If every Christian is thought of as a necessary part of a great structure, then it is a building.
5. If we have in mind the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, then it is a family.
6. If we look at it as an organization over which Christ reigns as head and in which all Christians are members, then it is a body.
7. But all these different pictures are used to set forth the same institution.

8. Jesus came into this world to establish one and only one Institution through which to save all mankind. So in order that we might get a better conception of it, and appreciate more fully what the church of Christ is, and what it means to us, all these different figures have been used to represent it.

What Is Denominationalism?

Jimmy W. Bates

1. You and I were born into a "denominational world" of religious division:
 - a. A multiplicity of different religious groups founded by different individuals at different places and times.
 - b. Denominations that adhere to different human creeds, that teach different and conflicting doctrines.
 - c. Wear different names; having different and ecclesiastical organizations, and worship in different ways.
 - d. Yet, all claim to be a part of Christianity!
2. Denominationalism is so common that most people have never questioned its scriptural validity, nor do they have a true concept of what denominationalism is!
3. Many who claim membership in **THE CHURCH** (Acts 2:47; Eph. 1:22,23; 4:4; Col. 1:18; Rom. 16:16), have never been truly converted from denominationalism:
 - a. Many are still "sympathetic" to denominationalism.
 - b. Hold to denominational concepts and terminology.
 - c. The root cause of much of the Liberalism in the church today.
4. Our study seeks to show what denominationalism is and why it must be rejected and opposed by all those who seek to please God. (Gal. 1:6-12)

DISCUSSION:

I. DEFINITION OF TERMS:

A. NEW WORLD DICTIONARY Second College Edition.

1. **DENOMINATE** – "to give a specified name to: to designate a number that represents a unit..." Thus a part or division of a unit.
2. **DENOMINATION** – "the act of denominating..." Thus the act of dividing. "...a particular religious sect or body, with a specific name, organization, etc."
3. **DENOMINATIONAL** – "...sponsored by, or under the control of, a religious denomination; sectarian..."
4. **DENOMINATIONALISM** – "1) denominational principles; 2) a denominational system; 3) acceptance or

support of such principles or system; 4) division into denominations."

B. Non-religious denominations:

1. Math – common denominator
2. Money – one dollar, five dollars, ten dollars, etc.
3. Political system – Republican party, Democratic party, Independent party, etc
4. **Denomination** signifies a part, a division, or a segment.

C. In the religious sense, a "sect" or "party".

1. **Sect** – "...party, faction...a religious denomination..." (New World Dictionary).

2. **Sect** (Heresy) from Gr. *hairesis* – "denotes (a) a choosing, choice...; then, that which is chosen, and hence, an opinion, especially a self-willed opinion, which is substituted for submission to the power of truth, and leads to division and the formation of sects... (b) a sect; ...the dominating significance in the N.T., Acts 5:17; 15:5; 24:5, 14; 26:5; 28:22;..." (Vine, p. 217).

3. 1 Cor. 11:19; Gal. 5:20; 2 Peter 2:1; Titus 3:10

D. A denomination is one of many religious bodies with a name, some type of organizational structure, and an identifiable set of beliefs and practices, of human origin, and which views itself as a part of the church universal.

II. DENOMINATIONALISM IS NOT THE CHURCH!

A. The Church of the Bible is from *ekklesia*, "the called out."

1. Called **OUT OF** the world and **INTO** the Lord's Kingdom (church): Acts 2:38-47; Col. 1:13).
2. Called by the Gospel (2 Thess. 2:14).
3. The Lord's "**called out**" are those who have answered the "**gospel call**."
 - a. They have obeyed the Gospel (2 Thess. 1:7-9).
 - b. The Lord has added them to His church (Acts 2:47).
4. There is but ONE (*ekklesia*) church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22,23; 4:4; Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 12:13).

B. Denominationalism is **NOT**:

1. God's *ekklesia* – "the called out."
2. **NOT** called **OUT OF** the world.
3. **NOT** called **INTO** the Lord's Kingdom.
4. Have **NOT** answered the "gospel call."
 - a. Have **NOT** obeyed the Gospel.
 - b. Lord has **NOT** added them to His church.

C. Why refer to a denomination as a **church**?

1. The modern idea of the church as a denomination is not found in the N.T.
2. **CHURCH** in the N.T. refers to the Lord's church – the ONE church.

3. Denominations are HUMAN ORGANIZATIONS!

III. DENOMINATIONALISM IS A PHILOSOPHY OR ATTITUDE THAT:

- A. Ignores the Lord's petition for religious UNITY and argues for UNITY (Union) IN DIVERSITY, thereby promoting DIVISION! John 17:20,21; John 10:16; 11:52; Phil. 2:1-4; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; Gal. 5:20; Rom. 16:17; Eph. 4:1-6
- B. Disregards the DIVINE ORIGIN of the CHURCH and its DISTINCTIVE nature. Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:4; Col. 1:18; Rom. 16:16.
 1. Psalm 127:1; Matt. 15:13 – Yet denominationalism says:
 - a. "Join the church of your choice"
 - b. "We're all headed to the same place"
 - c. "One church is as good as another"
- C. Rejects the New Testament Scriptures as being the sole authority in religious matters. (2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16,17; 1 Thess. 5:21; 2 John 9-11; Jude 3).
 1. Denies the necessity of Biblical Authority (1 Peter 4:11; Col. 3:17; 2 Cor. 5:7).
 2. Denies that the New Testament is a PATTERN that we must follow (2 Tim. 1:13; Heb. 8:5).
 3. Promotes human creeds and exalts man's opinion in the place of divine law (Matt. 15:9).
 4. Such matters as the plan of salvation, church organization and work, worship, religious names, etc. are not determined by what the Scriptures authorize, but rather, by councils and human dogma whereby every man does that which is right in his own eyes. (Judges 17:6)
- D. Creates a spirit of relativism which says that all that matters is sincerity or how one feels. (Acts 23:1; Compare Matt. 7:21-23; Heb. 5:8,9)

CONCLUSION:

1. Denominationalism is one of the greatest tools in the hand of Satan to lead blind and deceived souls to eternal destruction (2 Cor. 4:3,4; 2 Thess. 2:10-12).
2. Let us never compromise with or become sympathetic toward denominationalism; but rather, oppose it and expose it for the hideous sin it is.
3. Let us do all we can to lead lost souls out of denominationalism. Many of us (in the church today) were once VICTIMS of denominationalism. We are indebted to those who lead us to the TRUTH!

Biblical Authority

Victor M. Eskew

1. Christianity is a religion of Bible authority.
 - a. Two implications of this statement:
 - 1) It is absolutely essential to have authority for what is done in religion. The Jew understood this (Matt. 21:23; Col. 3:17)
 - 2) The Scriptures are the standard of Bible authority, 1 Cor. 4:6; 2 John 9.
 - b. These two implications raise a question: "How does one determine what is authorized by the Bible?"
 - 1) Tremendous confusion is found in this area of study.
 - 2) Two primary reasons:
 - a. This is an involved area of study. There are many spheres to investigate.
 - 1) The basics of Bible distinctions.
 - 2) Pattern theology, inference, logic, and accounts of action.
 - 3) Option versus obligation, culture versus command, restrictions versus freedom.
 - 4) Objectivism versus subjectivism.
 - b. The stir created by liberal brethren has complicated this subject.
 - 1) The Bible is not a pattern, or blueprint, but only a love-letter from God.
 - 2) The silence of the Scriptures allows freedom.
 - 3) Logic and reasoning are extremely harmful in the proper interpretation of the Bible.
 - 4) Implication is not binding.
 - 5) One cannot really know when an account of action is really binding.
 - 6) Many of our age-old practices are human traditions.
2. This topic has a direct bearing on many aspects of our spiritual lives.
 - a. Instrumental music in worship.
 - b. The Lord's supper.
 - c. Women taking a public role in worship.
 - d. Fellowship with denominational bodies.
3. In this lesson we want to briefly examine the topic of "Bible Authority." We will only touch the hem of the garment. Perhaps your appetite will be tempted enough to study the matter in greater detail.

DISCUSSION:

I. IMPROPER METHODS OF ASCERTAINING BIBLE AUTHORITY.

- A. The New Hermeneutic.
1. This method seems to have only one primary motive, to do away with inductive reasoning and logic.
 2. Once this has been done, nothing is offered in its place.
 3. The method leaves each student to his own imagination (Judges 17:6; 21:25)
- B. The Christian Church Concept.
1. Taught by Martin Luther in the 1500s.
 2. The basic premise is that whatever is not expressly forbidden is authorized.
 3. Instrumental music was the main emphasis of those who stressed this method in the late 1800s.
 4. Two problems with this method:
 - a. It runs contrary to the Bible (2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:17).
 - b. This method of interpretation opens the flood-gates to any innovation not expressly forbidden by God's word (i.e., kissing the pope's toe, infant baptism, casino gambling).
- C. Christocentricity.
1. A method that is promoted heavily by Rubel Shelly and his cohorts.
 - a. *The Second Incarnation*, by Rubel Shelly and Randal Harris. "Our beginning point is the general principle of Christ-centeredness, Christocentricity. The first question we must always ask in the process of the application of Scripture takes something of the following form: *Is the activity or methodology under contemplation consistent with the person and work of Jesus Christ? If we do this, will the people who see it think we reveal Christ? Will we be doing what people would expect to see Christ doing in this situation?*" (pp.28,29).
 - b. *Wineskins*, edited by Rubel Shelly and Mike Cope. "So there is a pattern for the church in Acts, but the pattern is not rooted in the practice of the early church. The pattern is that established by Jesus. Quite simply the early church does what Jesus did and what Jesus commanded it to do" ("On Second Look, Maybe There Is A Pattern," Mark Black, p. 13).
 2. This method is based upon pure subjectivism.
 - a. If an individual wishes to do something, and he believes Christ would have done it, then it can be done.
 - b. Even brethren Shelly and Harris admit this method

has broad ramifications. On page 29 of *The Second Incarnation*, they write: "This principle has broad consequences for ecclesiology. It says for example, that the church need not have either explicit mandate or permission for everything it wishes to do."

II. THE BIBLE MUST BE RIGHTLY DIVIDED.

A. 2 Tim. 2:15

B. Distinctions to be made.

1. Old and New Testaments.

a. The Old Testament is no longer a law to be practiced.

b. Rom. 7:6-7; Col. 2:14; Gal. 3:23-25

2. The three Bible dispensations: Patriarchal Age, Mosaic Age, and Christian Age.

3. Generic authority and specific authority (i.e., Noah in Gen. 6).

a. Build an ark — the type of tools to be used involves generic authority for he is not told exactly which ones must be used.

b. Of gopher wood — this is specific authority; no other woods could be used to construct the ark with God's approval.

4. Temporary and permanent (i.e., miracles, 1 Cor. 13:9, 10).

5. Faith and opinion (i.e., Nicodemus coming to Jesus by night, John 3:1,2).

a. Faith, Nicodemus came to Jesus by night.

b. Opinion, why he came by night.

6. Circumstances and conditions (i.e., the upper chamber and lights while partaking the Lord's supper, Acts 20:7).

7. Incidentals and essentials (i.e., Paul's going to Macedonia was essential, but how he got there was an incidental, Acts 16:9,10).

8. Means and principles (i.e., decency and order was the principle and the regulation of spiritual gifts was the means, 1 Cor. 14:40).

9. Customs and laws (i.e., footwashing, John 13:3-17).

10. Expediency and additions (i.e., in the singing of spiritual songs, a songbook is needed to expedite the command, but the instrument of music is an addition, Col. 3:16).

11. Accounts of action versus examples to be followed (i.e., Ananias and Sapphira's actions are not to be followed, but Peter's rebuking of sin is an example to us, Acts 5:1-11).

III. BIBLE AUTHORITY AND DIRECT STATEMENTS.

A. Most of the time, we refer to the statements of the Bible by

the general term "commands."

- B. In reality, there are eight different types of statements the Bible uses to authorize.
- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Declarations | (Mark 16:16) | a statement of fact |
| 2. Interrogatives | (1 Cor. 1:13) | the use of questions |
| 3. Prohibition | (1 Tim. 1:12) | forbidding an action |
| 4. Deliberation | (Rom. 8:31) | makes reader think |
| 5. Mandatory | (Acts 2:38) | command |
| 6. Optative | (Rom. 6:1) | strong wish or desire |
| 7. Conditional | (Col. 3:1) | conditional term used |
| 8. Hortatory | (Heb. 6:1) | exhortation "let us" |

IV. BIBLE AUTHORITY AND IMPLICATION.

- A. Definition.
1. Things that are learned from the Biblical text without the Bible specifically stating it.
 2. Deductions drawn from given information.
- B. Examples.
1. The conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch.
 - a. Philip preached Jesus (Acts 8:35).
 - b. The eunuch desired to be baptized (Acts 8:36).
 - c. Implication: To preach Jesus, one must preach about the necessity of baptism).
 2. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus.
 - a. The Bible nowhere specifically states that Saul repented of his sins. Do we know that he did this?
 - b. Yes, due to the statement of Acts 17:30, it is implied.
- C. Any implication is binding. It is binding because the Bible implies it, not because the student infers it.

V. BIBLE AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTS OF ACTION.

- A. The question is: "When is an account of action binding?"
- B. There are six different types of accounts of action found in the Bible.
1. Sinful then and sinful now (Judas' betrayal of Jesus, Ananias' and Sapphira's lying to the Holy Spirit).
 2. Right then and wrong now (the Gospel not being preached to the Gentiles immediately after Pentecost).
 3. Temporary and obligatory (desiring earnestly spiritual gifts).
 4. Temporary and optional (circumcision after the death of Jesus on Calvary; Timothy was, but Titus was not).
 5. Permanent and optional (the giving of the Macedonians).
 6. Permanent and obligatory (the Lord's supper).
- C. From this list, we can now determine when it is right to imitate an example. There are three primary criteria:
1. The action must be right within itself. It cannot be

sinful.

2. The action must either be optional or obligatory. Optional actions do not have to be done, but can be. Obligatory actions are a must.
3. The action must be related to a permanent element of Christianity. The temporary actions were just that, temporary. No longer do they apply to us today.

VI. SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES DOES NOT AUTHORIZE.

- A. We must operate by what the Bible says, and not by what it does not say.
- B. Passages of Scripture that emphasize the need of Scripture to authorize: Matt. 28:20; 1 Peter 4:11
- C. Example: Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1,2).
 1. The command of God did not specifically forbid the fire they used.
 2. It was their going beyond what was authorized that brought death.

CONCLUSION:

1. Christianity is a religion of Bible authority.
2. All things said and done must have authority in Scripture in order to be approved by God.
3. If it is not authorized, it is sinful. The end of those who practice such things will be liken unto the end of Nadab and Abihu (1 Thess. 1:7-9).

The Origin Of Denominationalism

Tom House

1. There has been no plague or disaster of any proportion which has inflicted greater harm upon man than that of religious denominationalism.
2. While the disasters imposed on humanity have taken the lives of countless legions, the numbers of those who have perished in such disasters pale in comparison to those who have fallen prey to the devil's dogma of denominationalism.
3. The devil knows that he stands no chance of success when the forces of God are united.
 1. He must, therefore, initiate a method to divide the forces; while at the same time, in certain areas, making it seem as though there is no division.
 2. This he has successfully done with the assistance of willing,

or possibly unwitting, accomplices in the ranks of supposed religionists, in the implementation of religious denomination-
alism.

4. In discussing the origin of denominationalism, it is important that the terms of the discussion be defined.
 1. The word "origin," is defined: a) The beginning of the existence of anything. b) A primary source; cause. c) Parentage; ancestry.
 2. The word "denomination" is defined: a) The act of naming or calling by name; b) Any named class or group of things or people. c) A religious group or sect.
 3. "Denominational" is defined: "Of pertaining to, or supported by a religious denomination or sect; sectarian."
 4. "Denominationalism" is defined as: "A disposition to divide into or form denominations."
5. It is of supreme importance that one recognize that the word "denomination," or any derivative thereof, is not found in the Scriptures.
 1. This fact needs notice by those who advocate sectarian philosophies as being Scriptural, and therefore, valid.
 2. As noted in the definition of "denominationalism," this practice is the manifestation of a particular "spirit," or "disposition" of mind. 2 Thess. 2: 7;2
 - a. Hence, the very concept of denominationalism is initiated by a divisive spirit.
 - b. This disposition derives from an unwillingness to conform to the standard established by divine authority, and violates the very spirit of that for which the Lord prayed. John 17
 3. Furthermore, God has never sanctioned division among His people unless it was to separate themselves from evil among their ranks. 2 Cor. 6:17
6. Obviously, denominationalism has its ancestry, and it is to this end this discussion is set.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **THE DIVISION WHICH EXISTED AMONG THE JEWS.**
 - A. The people of Israel were not content with God's chosen method of leadership; namely, the judges.
 1. Consequently, the people called for a king to lead them. 1 Sam. 8:5,19
 2. There would be three kings to rule over a united Israel.
 3. At the death of Solomon, Rehoboam becomes king and promptly puts the nation in turmoil when he increases the burden on the people. 1 Sam. 11:43; 12:14
 4. Jeroboam, having returned from Egypt, leads the ten unsatisfied tribes to the north, and established a sepa-

rate nation. 1 Kings 12:19-24

5. Jeroboam took it upon himself to establish a different form and place of worship than that which had been authorized by God. 1 Sam. 12:25-33
 6. The influence of Jeroboam's evil remained even until the Lord's day. John 4:20-22
- B. Then there is the division which exists between Pharisee and Sadducee.
1. These two Jewish sects came into existence, primarily as a result of a political struggle.
 2. During the Lord's day, the majority of the Sanhedrin was composed of Sadducees and Herodians, both of whom were more closely allied with Rome.
 - a) This fact brought the Pharisees into a closer alliance with the common Jew, and therefore made them more popular among the people.
 - b) It is because of this separation in the Jewish ranks that they would become known as "Pharisees," or "separatists."
 3. However, it is likely that the most familiar source of division known to exist among the Jewish sects, centered around the question of the resurrection.
 - a) The Sadducees were staunchly opposed to the possibility of any such event, and took opportunity to use the doctrine as a means to trap the Lord in His teachings, by asking questions which would, in their estimation, illustrate it as an absurdity. Matt. 22:23
 - b) However, the best example to illustrate the division between Pharisee and Sadducee, regarding the resurrection, is the occasion when Paul is brought before the Jewish council to answer to charges involving his teaching. Acts 23:1-11

II. THE EARLY ELEMENTS OF DIVISION IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

- A. Paul addressed the problem of secularization in the church in Corinth. 1 Cor. 1:11
1. The report had been that there were "contentions" among the brethren there.
 2. The secularization was identified by the names which some of the brethren had aligned themselves; after Paul, after Apollos, after Cephas, etc. v.12
- B. Paul would also deal with the errors of Hymenaeus, Philetus, and Alexander. 1 Tim. 1:19,20; 2 Tim. 2:17
1. These men were evidently quite successful with their error concerning the "resurrection having past already," 2 Tim. 2:18, for they had caused the faith of many to

- become "shipwreck."
2. Paul characterized their teaching as "profane and vain babblings," which;
 - a. "Will increase unto more ungodliness," and;
 - b. "Will eat as doth a canker."
 3. He will also describe them as having "blasphemed," and "concerning the truth have erred."
 - a. These men were evidently Christian converts but had been influenced by elements of Gnosticism (which rejects the idea that the soul will not reunite with the body which they perceived to be the seat of all evil).
 - b. Their idea of the resurrection was that there was a point, (likely considered to be at their baptism), that the soul awakes from sin.
 - c. In their estimation, this had already occurred with them, hence would be no future resurrection.
 4. These men and their followers were among those of whom were clearly admonished by Paul to "depart from iniquity." 2 Tim. 2:19
 5. It is likely that it is of these false teachers, and others like them, of whom Paul had warned the Ephesian elders would enter among them. Acts 20:29
- C. Paul would also speak prophetically of those who would "in the latter times," "depart from the faith." 1 Tim. 4:1-3
1. The warning offered by Paul in this text sets forth some of the very elements of doctrine and practice which correspond to the teachings found in Catholicism.
 2. It is my estimation that the statements found in 2 Thess. 2:1-12 refer to this very same system of doctrine, which Paul mentions was an "iniquity" already in the works.
 3. Additionally, Paul will prophetically announce to Timothy that the underlying elements of denominationalism would come when some "would not endure sound doctrine." 2 Tim. 4:2-4
 4. The apostle Peter will also warn of the rising denominational spirit. 2 Peter 2:1,2
- D. The apostle would spend much of his time in addressing the problems created by the Judaizers who were a strong divisive force in the first century. Titus 1:10; Gal. 5:4
- E. The apostle John would make note to the "elect lady," concerning those whom he referred to as "antichrists," 2 John, who were denying the deity of Christ.
- F. The Lord, in the Revelation to John, mentioned the divisive force of Nicolaitan doctrine being either practiced or tolerated by some of the Asian congregations. Rev. 2

IV. DENOMINATIONALISM IN THE POST-APOSTOLIC PERIOD.

- A. The forces of division which began to assert themselves in the first century, in the centuries following, now begin to take their hideous form.
- B. As one might expect, denominationalism would manifest itself as a result of the lack of attention given to God's design and pattern for church governance.
- C. As elders were appointed to lead autonomous congregations of the Lord's church, late in the first century and early in the second, there was a distinction made between bishops and presbyters; the former being elevated above the others.
 - 1. While some smaller congregations did not have proper supervision (no elders/bishops), then those who were over the larger congregations lent their supervision to the smaller.
 - 2. Eventually, the elevated bishops of particular areas would assemble to discuss problems which each faced.
 - a. One of the earliest was held in Asia Minor in A.D. 160, to address the problem of Montanism. (The teachings of Montanus of Phrygia, who opposed the elevation of some bishops over others for purpose of assuming power.)
 - b. Other councils would ultimately lead to the establishment of creeds.
 - 3. These assemblies would later issue their consultations and their decisions as authoritative.
 - 4. J. W. Sheperd, in his work *"The Church, The Falling Away, and The Restoration,"* states: "That when the custom of holding these councils had extended over the Christian world, and the Church had acquired the form of a vast republic composed of many lesser ones, certain head men were placed over it in different parts of the world; hence came the patriarchs, and ultimately a prince of patriarchs, the Roman pontiff." (p.57)
- D. It is debated as to who was the first "pope."
 - 1. Some argue that Leo the Great, bishop of Rome from 440 to 461, was the first.
 - 2. Others have argued that Gregory the Great, bishop of Rome from 590 to 604, was the first.
- E. These so called "pontiffs" were alleged to be the apostolic successors of Peter, who in the ridiculous estimation of some, was the first pope.
- F. From hence the divisions abound; in matters of the organization of the church, to the discussions of worship, to the discussion of the nature of Christ, to teaching on salvation, and the list goes on and on.

CONCLUSION:

1. As stated at the outset, the nature and existence of denominationalism begins with a particular disposition; a spirit of division.
2. The conclusion: man is the origin of denominationalism!
3. Denominationalism represents sanctimonious confusion, to which God has no part. 1 Cor. 14:33
4. Hence, those responsible for its existence should be "marked" and "avoided" by the faithful, for these who have advanced denominationalism will be held accountable for their evil in Judgement. Rom. 16:17; 2 John 9-10

The Church Of Christ In The Eternal Purpose Of God

Tom W. Snyder

1. Read Luke 12:16-23.
 - a. The only reason life is more than just food and raiment is because of an eternal soul;
 - b. The only way we can know this is through God;
 - c. God has revealed to us our never-dying soul and has made great provisions for it;
 - d. The church is part of those great provisions from eternity in view of eternity.
2. Let us consider the nature of the church—the church in the eternal purpose.

DISCUSSION:**I. THE CHURCH INVOLVES ETERNAL CONCERNS.****A. The concern of sin.**

1. Man concerns himself with so many things—few of which have to do with things eternal: Work; Play; Fun, fun, fun.
2. While there is nothing wrong with these things, many, like the rich farmer, neglect spiritual things.
3. One of the things we ought to be concerned with is sin.
4. Sin causes the greatest of losses:
 - a. The Garden of Eden shows a loss — life;
 - b. The Flood shows a loss due to sin — life;
 - c. The kingdom of Israel's loss due to sin — blessings and land;
 - d. The dynasty of David's loss due to sin—kingdom.
5. Isaiah spoke of this great problem as a separation from

God, Isa 59:1-2.

6. It would appear sin had the upper hand —
 - a. However, amidst this ruin a plan was already in action;
 - b. Bits and pieces were being revealed through the law and prophets.

B. To early man, God shows a concern for redemption.

1. Promises are made of a victory to come, Gen 3:15.
2. Law is given to show sin for what it is and the need of a savior, Gal 3:19; Rom 7:7
3. Redemption was foreshadowed in: Priesthood; Sacrifices; Tabernacle/temple.
4. Prophecy revealed great things to come:
 - a. While the kingdom was shrinking, promises of a restoration grew;
 - b. Sin had finally cut off the seed of David as king—but one day the seed of David would come in great world-ruling power, Jer. 22:29-30.

C. The prophets concerned themselves with the eternal kingdom:

1. Isaiah — eternal peace — Isa. 2:1-4;
2. Jeremiah — eternal covenant — Jer. 31:31-30;
3. Ezekiel — eternal temple — Ezek. 40-48;
4. Daniel — eternal kingdom — Daniel 2:44-45; 7:14,27.

D. There was the great hope developed by the prophets of God for the people.

1. As sin brought loss, pain, anguish, captivity, death —
2. God was producing hope—hope was given in things to come;
3. Always something better;
4. From our vantage point of the NT, we know it was Christ and His eternal kingdom;
5. Here in the mind of God is the church that was to come and with it a victory over the problem of sin.

II. THE CHURCH IS FROM ETERNAL COMPONENTS.

A. **Eternal God.**

1. This is the divine source, Acts 20:28
2. All things made of men are temporal
3. Only God can make something eternal, 2 Cor. 5:1

B. **Eternal Word.**

1. This is the agency, 1 Peter 1:23-25
2. Fleshly seed is temporal, John 3:6

C. **Eternal Son.**

1. Here is the executor of this plan;
2. Only He could qualify. He is the eternal sacrifice (Rev. 13:8), priest (Heb. 7:25-28), King (Heb. 1:8), prophet

(Acts 3:22-26).

D. **Eternal Results:** Redemption (Heb. 9:12), Inheritance (Heb. 9:15; 1 Peter 1:4), Crown of Glory (1 Peter 5:4).

E. **Eternal Purpose.**

1. This speaks of planning, planning that was not spur of the moment—as we look, it goes far back even before time. Gal. 3:8; 4:4; Rom. 8:28-30; 2 Tim. 1:8-10; Eph. 3:8-11
2. The church is not an afterthought but a forethought of God.

III. THE CHURCH CLAIMS TO BE ETERNAL.

A. Christ claimed the church to be in this eternal plan. Consider the church He was to build, Matt. 16:18,19

1. **Preparation** — *Upon this rock*

- a. Not upon Peter, but upon Christ the eternal Rock. Most do not understand the magnitude of this statement.
- b. Like most foundations there had to be great foresight and forethought for the foundation to be sufficient.
- c. No other foundation could stand, 1 Cor 3:11.

2. **Promise** — *I will build*

- a. We should make only promises we can keep. He could
- b. Jesus began by preaching the kingdom of God is at hand, Matt. 4:17
- c. He spent His earthly time teaching things pertaining to the kingdom, John 18:36; Matt. 13:31
- d. His exemplary life showed He had the *integrity* to keep a promise.
- e. His many miracles proved that He had the *power* to keep a promise.
- f. Acts two onward shows He did fulfill His word

3. **Possession** — *My church* — God's people.

- a. Being God's people is very important:
 - 1) "Not my people" is seen in the words of Christ to the Jews, Matt. 23:37-38
 - 2) "Now my people" is the promise fulfilled in the church of Christ, 2 Cor 6:13-18
- b. The church is the "called out" belonging to Christ, Rom 16:16

4. **Permanence** — *Gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

- a. Since the fall of man, death had been victorious, keeping its victims in its clutches
- b. Christ promises a new hope, 1 Cor 15:50-58
- c. This is realized in the resurrection of the last day, 1 Cor. 15:24-26

B. Consider the eternal purpose as presented by Paul, Eph. 3:1-11

1. The purpose is **revealed**
 - a. To all, v.2
 - b. By revelation, v.3
 - c. Through agency of inspiration, v.5
 - d. Passed on by the method of preaching, v.8
2. The purpose is **recorded**
 - a. By means of words, v.3
 - b. And the spoken word, v.8
3. The purpose is **understandable**
 - a. We can understand what Paul understood, v.4
 - b. We can perceive, v.9
 - c. We can know, v.10
4. The purpose had been **concealed**
 - a. Was a mystery, v.3
 - b. In other ages not known, v.5
 - c. It was hid in God, v.9
 - d. Note that the plan existed, but only in the mind of God.
5. The purpose is of **eternal origin**
 - a. Eternal purpose, v.11
 - b. It is through Christ, v.11

C. There are not many plans, only one.

1. Sometimes we might leave the impression that God has had several plans: one for the patriarchs, one for the mosaic age, one for the Christian age.
2. While it is true there are diverse covenants God has made through the ages, there is only one plan; From Genesis one and onward, this plan was there and working to bring us unto Christ—which must include the church.

IV. THOSE WHO CONTEND AGAINST THE ETERNITY OF THE CHURCH.

A. Premillennialism.

1. Affirms the church is only an afterthought of God.
2. That the church is a parenthesis and temporary.

B. Materialism.

1. Professing materialists: atheist, evolutionist, humanist.
2. Passive materialists:
 - a. These might profess things eternal but live for the world.
 - b. Many Christians can fall into this.
 - c. These spend more time, effort, money on the flesh than the spirit.

C. Denominationalism.

1. Destroys the church
 - a. Says it is non-important
 - b. Fragments it into a thousand pieces
2. Man has always taken the plans of God and made revisions.
 - a. Adam & Eve changed the commands of God.
 - b. Sodom and Gomorrah changed the morals of God.
 - c. Nadab & Abihu changed the worship of God.
 - d. The Gentiles changed the nature of God, Rom. 1:23-25
3. Denominationalism perverts God's plan to this day.
4. It destroys not the plan of God, but it does cause man to be lost because it keeps man from that saving plan.
5. With all that has been and will be against God's plan, one fact stands clear: God's plan has NEVER BEEN DESTROYED NOR WILL IT, Matt. 15:13.

V. THE CHURCH INVOLVES ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES.

- A. The Bible speaks of only a few things that are eternal—
 1. Things pertaining to God:
 - a. Eternal power and Godhead, Rom. 1:20
 - b. Eternal King, 1 Tim. 1:17
 - c. Eternal Spirit, Heb. 9:14
 - d. Eternal kingdom, Psalm 145:13
 - e. Eternal judgment, Heb. 6:2
 2. Things pertaining to the godless:
 - a. Eternal fire, Jude 7
 - b. Eternal damnation, Mark 3:29
 - c. Eternal punishment, Matt. 25:46
 3. Things pertaining to the godly:
 - a. Eternal life—used some 30 times
 - b. Eternal glory, 2 Tim. 2:10
 - c. Eternal salvation, Heb. 5:9
 - d. Eternal redemption, Heb. 9:12
 - e. Eternal inheritance, Heb. 9:15
- B. How then is the church eternal?
 1. Eternal by **who** she is—
 - a. The soul is eternal but it will face the eternal judgment either saved or unsaved.
 - b. She is made up of the saved, Acts 2
 - 1) The church isn't for the saved, the church is the saved.
 - 2) The church is the called out of God—out of the world into Christ.
 2. Eternal by **what** she is—
 - a. The church is the *body* of Christ, Eph. 5:23
 - b. The church is the *bride* of Christ, Eph. 5:27; 2 Cor.

11:2

- c. The church is the *kingdom* of Christ, Col. 1:12-13;
2 Peter 1:11

CONCLUSION:

1. Things eternal are so important to us.
2. One day two great separations will take place —
 - a. The first separation will be between things temporal and things eternal, 2 Peter 3:10
 - b. The second separation will be that of the godly from the ungodly, Matt. 25:46
3. God had made provision that we should not be among the ones that perish, 1 John 2:17
4. God has made great plans: somewhere we will fit in.
5. None has, nor ever will thwart the plans of God.
6. We need to submit to Him that we might benefit from His plan.

The Church Of Christ Was Established At The Right Time And Place

Lenard Hogan

1. The time and place is important.
2. The time and place were named by Jehovah.
3. Man must abide by what God has named.
4. If the time and place were unimportant God would not have so stated.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE TIME.

- A. Isaiah prophesied it would begin in the last days, Isa. 2:2, when the word of the Lord would come from Jerusalem.
- B. Peter referred to the things happening on the first Pentecost Sunday as the prophecy according to Joel, Acts 2:16-20
- C. Daniel chapter 2 states the kingdom of God would be established during the fourth world wide empire.
 1. Israelites in Babylonian captivity.
 - a. Daniel, Hananiah (Shadrach), Mishael (Meshach) and Azariah (Abednego) among the captives. They refused to eat the king's ration.
 - b. King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed and forgot his dream.
 1. When the wise men of Babylon could not tell him

- his dream, they were sentenced to die.
2. The wise men of Babylon demanded that Daniel and his friends be executed with them.
 3. Daniel went to the king. I will give you the dream and interpretation if you will give me a little time.
 4. Daniel returned to his friends. All of them requested that God have mercy on them.
 5. God gave Daniel the dream and the interpretation in a night vision.
 6. Daniel went to Arioch, then to the king.
 7. He informed the king that only Jehovah could show the dream and the interpretation.
 8. The king's dream was a great statue which represented four world powers. Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon was the first world power, followed by the Medo-Persian, Grecian and the Roman Empire.
 9. The God of Heaven would set up a kingdom (the church) sometime during the fourth world power and it would stand forever (Dan. 2:44)

II. THE PLACE.

- A. The mountain of the Lord's house, Isa. 2:2-3.
 1. Out of Zion shall go forth the law.
 2. The word of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem.
- D. God's word would come from Jerusalem, the beginning place. Isaiah established the place some 700 years prior to the establishment of the church.
- E. Joel prophesied that Jerusalem would be the place, Joel 2:32
- F. The word of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem, Micah 4:1-2
- G. Jesus said He would suffer and rise from the dead, Luke 24:46, in order for repentance and remission of sins to be preached in His name beginning at Jerusalem, Luke 24:47
- H. Jesus promised to build His church, Matt. 16:18. Jesus could also name the place where His church would have its beginning.
- I. When Jesus met with the apostles, Acts 1:4
 1. He told them not to leave Jerusalem, but wait for the promise.
 2. By obeying his command, they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit shortly, Acts 1:5
 3. Jesus promised the eleven they would receive power after the Holy Spirit came upon them, Acts 1:9
- J. Jesus
- K. The apostles returned to Jerusalem.

1. The eleven were together in an upper room, Acts 1:13
2. Peter said it is time to name an apostle to replace Judas Iscariot, Acts 1:16
 - a. There were only two who were eligible, Acts 1:23
 - b. Matthias was numbered with the eleven, Acts 1:26
- L. Acts 2 begins by the twelve being baptized with the Holy Spirit. In verses 1-4 the use of "they" and "them" refers to the twelve. Peter stood up with the eleven, Acts 2:14. The apostles were the only ones baptized with the Holy Spirit.
- M. As they were preaching they said that God has made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ, Acts 2:36
 1. The people asked, what shall we do?
 2. Peter used the keys that Christ gave him in Matt. 16:19. The answer he gave the people was to *repent and be baptized* for the remission of sins Acts 2:38. Note: Repentance preceded baptism, therefore repentance must come before one can be scripturally baptized into Christ.
 3. If a person is worshipping with a denomination and desires to be baptized and it is said I baptize you for the remission of sins and he/she returns to the denomination, they did not repent, therefore the baptism would not be valid.

CONCLUSION:

1. The TIME for the Lord's church (the church of Christ) was during the fourth world wide kingdom which was the Roman Empire as foretold by Daniel in chapter 2:44. The prophecies concerning the place for the church to start was during the fourth world wide kingdom, namely the Roman Empire.
2. Any religious group that started at any other time or place than during the reign of the Roman Empire and in the city of Jerusalem cannot be the church of the New Testament (the church of Christ).

The Church Of Christ Has The Right Foundation

Paul Jay Seese

1. There are many religious groups in the world today.
2. Many of which lay claim to Jesus Christ as their "foundation."
3. But unfortunately, man and his doctrines are the foundation for their denominations.

DISCUSSION:**I. THE MEANING OF THE WORD: "FOUNDATION"**

- A. Strong's Concordance # 2310 "*Themelios*"
 1. Laid down as a foundation, the foundation (of a building, wall, city)
 2. Metaph. the foundations, beginnings, first principles of an institution or system of faith.
- B. Webster's Dictionary
 1. The basis upon which something stands or is supported
 2. Masonry structure of a building, a prepared base or support.
- C. New Unger's Bible Dictionary
 1. The lowest part of a building, and on which it rests.
 2. (Figurative) Expression used to illustrate Christ. Isa. 28:16; 1 Cor. 3:11

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SOLID FOUNDATION, Matt. 7:21-27; Luke 6:48;49

- A. The common ground of the Wise man and the Foolish man
 1. Both heard the words of the master
 2. Both saw the necessity of building houses
 3. Both built their homes
- B. Lesson learned from the Wise man
 1. He heard the words of the master and obeyed!
 2. Thus laying the solid foundation for his home
 3. End result: his home stood against the storm.
- C. Lesson learned from the Foolish man
 1. He only heard the words, but found it unnecessary to comply
 2. Thus laying his foundation upon the sand.
 3. End result: his house came to ruin.
- D. Application to our lesson
 1. Each one should ask himself where am I building my house
 2. Is it being built upon truth or error, upon Christ or man?
 3. Let us follow the example of the wise man, being ready to hear and to obey words of the master.
 4. We can be lost for an eternity if our foundation isn't laid in Christ.

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF A RIGHT FOUNDATION IN CHRIST, Matt. 16:13-19

- A. The difference between speculation and revelation
 1. "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?"
 2. Answer: "John the baptist, Jeremiah, Elijah, or one of the other prophets."
 3. "But whom do ye say that I am?"

4. Answer: "Thou art the Christ; the Son of the Living God..."

B. The difference between "*petros*," and "*petra*"

1. Peter — *petros* — small stone or pebble
2. "Upon this rock..." — *petra* — solid ledge of rock.
3. A stone might be too small for a foundation, but a ledge of rock furnished sufficient foundation for the greatest superstructure

IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF ONLY ONE FOUNDATION, 1 Cor. 3:10,11

A. Paul as the wise master builder.

1. He desired new territory to lay the foundation of Christ
2. Using the Gospel of Christ to lay down the right foundation, Rom. 1:16
3. Later, others would build upon the foundation that he laid, which meant others would follow after Paul and continue the teaching there.

B. Only One Foundation

1. "*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*"
2. In the religious world, man has laid many different types of foundations other than Jesus Christ.
3. Their "plant shall be rooted up," Matt. 15:13
4. Their false doctrines which were used to lay the wrong foundation will be destroyed.

C. Jesus Christ, the only chief cornerstone

1. Prophecy.... Psalm 118:22
2. Applied to Christ.... Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11;12; 1 Peter 2:6,7
3. Even today many reject Christ, the chief cornerstone
4. Christians are lively stones that make up the walls of the spiritual house, 1 Peter 2:5
5. Jew and Gentile alike "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets..." Eph. 2:20

V. THE FOUNDATION OF THE LORD'S CHURCH.

A. Its founder — Jesus Christ

1. He is the "purchaser," Acts 20:28
2. He is the "builder," Matt. 16:18
3. He is the "Head," Eph. 5:23
4. He is the "Lawgiver," Acts 2:36

B. Its foundation — The Son of God

1. He is the "laid foundation," 1 Cor. 3:11
2. He is the "tried foundation," Isaiah 28:16
3. He is the "Rock, large stone," Matt. 16:18

VI. THE VOICE OF HISTORY.

A. Founder and Foundation of other prominent religious bodies

Religious group:	Time:	Place:	Founder:
Roman Catholic	606 A.D.	Rome	Boniface III
Lutheran	1520 A.D.	Germany	Martin Luther
Baptist	1607 A.D.	Holland	John Smythe
Methodist	1739 A.D.	England	John Wesley
Mormons	1830 A.D.	America	Joseph Smith
Jehovah's Witnesses	1872 A.D.	America	Charles Russell

CONCLUSION:

1. Just as important as the foundation to a physical building so is having the right and solid foundation for the house of God, the church of the Living God.
2. Let us all consider those that are lost in denominations and teach them these vital lessons concerning the true Lord's church.
3. The church of Christ has Jesus Christ and him alone as their foundation.

New Unger's Bible Dictionary, p.443

Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, p.330

Gospel Advocate Commentary (Matt.) by H. Leo Boles

Gospel Advocate Commentary (I Cor.) by David Lipscomb and J. W. Shepherd

The Baptist Denomination Is Not The Church Of Christ

Ferrell Hester

1. My subject is, The Baptist Denomination Is Not The Church Of Christ.
2. It is not our intention to be unkind nor ugly spirited toward our friends who are members of the Baptist denomination.
3. I have many friends and relatives who are Baptists. In fact, my grandfather, who preached the Gospel for nearly fifty years until his death in 1982, left the Baptist religion in the 1930s and much of the material I will use in this lesson came from him.

DISCUSSION:

1. **THE BAPTIST RELIGION, OR DENOMINATION, CANNOT BE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BECAUSE IT IS FOUNDED UPON THE WRONG FOUNDATION.**

- A. Although there are differences among the Baptists, many claim that John the Baptist was the first Baptist. That would make John the Baptist the foundation of that religion.
- B. Actually the Baptist religion was founded by a man named John Smyth, a former "clergy man" of the church of England, in the year 1607. (David Benedict, *History of Baptists*, p.304). The Baptist Encyclopedia says that Roger Williams was publicly baptized, immersed, some time in the month of March, 1693; thus what is commonly regarded as the oldest Baptist church in America was founded at that time. (Baptist Encyclopedia, Vol. II, p.1262).
- C. But what does the Bible say?
 - 1. The New Testament shows CHRIST IS THE FOUNDATION OF HIS CHURCH. (Matt. 16:13-18).
 - 2. Matthew 14 says John was already dead, beheaded by Herod. Therefore John could not be the foundation of the church.
 - 3. The church of Christ could not have had its beginning with Mr. Smyth nor Mr. Williams, since it had been in existence centuries before they were even born.
- D. The church is built upon Christ Himself.
 - 1. "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 3:10-11)
 - 2. Paul declares he had laid the foundation for the church in Corinth.
- E. If John the Baptist was the foundation as some claim he was, how did Paul lay the foundation? He did it by preaching Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:1-2; Acts 4:11).

II. **THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION IS NOT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BECAUSE IT WAS BUILT BY THE WRONG BUILDER—CHRIST IS THE BUILDER OF HIS CHURCH.**

- A. Did Christ build a Baptist church? Absolutely not! After Peter had confessed that "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" Jesus said, "*Upon this rock I will build my church*" (Matt. 16:18).
- B. The church is of divine origin, being founded by the Son of God himself. There is not a lodge, club or denomination upon the face of the earth that can make such a claim. It is absurd to suppose that membership in any institution founded by man is as good as membership in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION IS NOT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BECAUSE THERE IS NO SALVATION IN IT — THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT CHRIST IS THE SAVIOR OF THE CHURCH.

- A. Even Baptists teach that salvation is not in the Baptist church. They say that one is saved before being baptized and then by being immersed in water may join the Baptist church (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23).
- B. Since He is the saviour of the body, and since the body and the church are the same, it follows that he is the savior of the church. He is not the savior of any human institution, He has made no provision for any institution except the one He founded; and offers no promise to any except those who are in his body, which is His church.
- C. The idea that one can be saved outside the church as well as one can be saved in it is foreign to the teaching of the New Testament. It is true that one can be saved as well outside of any denomination as one can within a denomination. As a matter of fact it is much easier to be saved outside of any denomination than it is in one.
- D. All who were saved for centuries after the death of Christ were saved outside of a denomination. It was hundreds of years after the establishment of the church before any of the denominations sprang up.
- E. Denominationalism has served only to keep God's people divided and hide the truth of God. Yes, Christ is very closely related to the church, but He never had anything to do with denominationalism. Any religious crusade, or movement that does not exalt the church above all the institutions of men is a fake.

IV. THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION IS NOT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BECAUSE CHRIST PURCHASED HIS CHURCH.

- A. He did not purchase a denomination, be it Baptist or any other (Acts 20:28).
- B. Everyone who claims to believe the New Testament will agree that man must be saved by the blood of Christ, but it seems that it has never occurred to some to ask how, and where his blood is reached. Suppose we reason like this. If I pay five dollars for an article, and if I ever expect to get any of the benefits from the five dollars, naturally I must get it out of the article for which I spent the five dollars.
- C. Paul plainly states that Jesus purchased the church "with his own blood." This being true, naturally if we expect to ever get any of the benefits of HIS BLOOD, we must get into the church which was purchased with His blood.

- D. Jesus never purchased any lodge, any civic institution, nor any denomination with His blood. If a man is saved outside the church, then he is saved without the blood of Christ, since his blood is invested in the church.
- E. Some think we are selfish, and narrow and claim that some particular little denomination is the church of Christ, and think we have a monopoly on it, but that is not true. The church of Christ is not a denomination in any sense. The church of Christ, existed centuries before the Baptist or any denomination came into existence. To contend that any denomination is the church of Christ is absurd, and false.
- F. Christ is the purchaser of the church, hence it belongs to Him, having bought and paid for it with his precious blood.

V. THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION IS NOT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BECAUSE CHRIST HAS ONE BRIDE, HIS CHURCH.

- A. The church is married to Christ (Rom. 7:4; Eph. 5:22,23). Christ does not have more than one wife. If so, then he is guilty of adultery, which He himself condemned very severely.
- B. Since the church is married to Christ, and is His bride, it ought always to be true to Him, and wear only His name, as a faithful wife wears her husband's name. My name doesn't mean very much, but I certainly expect my wife to honor me as her husband by wearing it.
- C. Since the apostle Paul speaks of the relationship of Christ and his church under the figure of a husband and wife, naturally it follows that as the husband is the head of the wife, Christ is the head of the church. It is his bride.

VI. THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION IS NOT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BECAUSE CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH, HIS BODY.

- A. Christ is not the head of the Baptist denomination, but THE church, His church! (Eph. 1:22-23). As long as they all take their order from the same head, there is never any trouble among the members of our body; on the other hand if they should all take their orders from different heads, there would be as much trouble among them as among the various nations of the earth today.
- B. Christ was not made the head of his church until after he was raised from the dead, and when he was raised from the dead was to die no more (Rom. 6:9). Therefore he can never die out of his office. His headship can never be relinquished to someone else. He is head over his church forever, just as he is both king and priest forever. Therefore, we do not look

to any man or group of men anywhere on this earth as the head of the church.

- C. The Baptist denomination has an annual convention. At this convention they elect a president to preside over the denomination.
- D. Christ is our one and only head, and our headquarters are at the right hand of God, in glory. Any institution of which some man, or woman is the head is not and cannot be the church of our Lord. We need no other institution in which to glorify God. Any other institution started for this purpose is a counterfeit (Col. 2:10).
- E. If we are complete in Him, and since to be in him is to in his body or church, what need do we have for a Baptist denomination or any other denomination or organization? The truth of the matter is, anything more than the church, or anything in addition to it is too much. Since the church is the fullness of Christ, "Who filleth all in all," there is no room for anything more in the realm of religion.

VII. THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION IS NOT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BECAUSE THE CHURCH IS HIS KINGDOM AND HE IS KING OVER IT.

- A. Most Baptists, not all, but most, believe and teach that the kingdom of Christ is future.
- B. When Jesus came forth from the grave, he said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). Jesus was not made king in name only, but a real king (Eph. 1:20-22; 1 Cor. 15:25). He tells us (v.26), "*The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*"
- C. According to the New Testament Scripture, Jesus is now King over his kingdom. He is ruling now with all the power of heaven and earth; and this power he exercises from His throne at the right hand of God, to which position he was exalted after his resurrection, and he will continue to reign until all His enemies have been destroyed (Phil. 2:9-11). When we consider such passages as this, and others that we have mentioned, we can understand why Paul and John spoke of him as "Lord of Lords and King of Kings."

VIII. THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION IS NOT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BECAUSE OF ITS NAME.

- A. The name Baptist is found 14 times in the New Testament and every time it refers to John the Baptist and not to the church. John was "The Baptist" referring to his work of baptizing. He was not "A Baptist." Charles Spurgeon, perhaps the most renowned Baptist preacher of all time, said, "I look forward with pleasure to the day when there

will not be a Baptist living! I hope the Baptist name will soon perish, but let Christ's name last forever." (Spurgeon Memorial Library, Vol. 1, p. 168).

- B. There is no salvation in the name Baptist. There is salvation in the name of Christ (Acts 4:12).
- C. It is Christ's church and therefore should be called only by His name.

IX. THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION IS NOT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BECAUSE OF ITS WORSHIP.

- A. Baptists, except for the Primitive Baptist, sing with instrumental music which is unauthorized by the Word of God. Christians are commanded to sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Where is the passage authorizing the use of mechanical instruments of music? It is not to be found in the New Testament.
- B. Baptists partake of the Lord's supper less frequently than on the first day of each week. Some observe it quarterly, some semiannually and some annually. The Bible commands Christians to eat the Lord's supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). If the Lord's supper could be observed less frequently than the first day of every week, then we would be told what first day to observe it.

X. THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION CANNOT BE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BECAUSE BAPTIST'S TEACH THE WRONG PLAN OF SALVATION.

- A. Baptists teach that one is saved before being baptized and require those who request membership in the Baptist church to confess before being baptized, "I believe that God for Christ's sake has pardoned my sins."
- B. When the church began on the day of Pentecost, Peter said in answer to the question, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*" (Acts 2:38). "*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*" (Acts 2:42, 47). "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*" (Mark 16:16).
- C. The Eunuch of Ethiopia said, "*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*" (Acts 8:36-38). If one confesses before baptism, "I believe that God for Christ sake has pardoned my sins," he has not made the good confession and has not been baptized "for the remission of sins." Therefore, his baptism is not valid and has not been added by the Lord to

His church.

- D. Christ's simple plan of salvation is to believe in Him (Mark 16:16), Repent of sins (Luke 13:3), Confess Him before men (Matt. 10:32-33), and be "baptized for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Doing this will make one a Christian and a member of the church of Christ (Acts 2:47). Doing something else will make one a Baptist but it will not save him.

CONCLUSION:

1. Are you a member of this divine institution of which Christ is the foundation, of which He is the builder, of which He is the Saviour, of which he is the purchaser, of which He is the bridegroom, and which is he is the head?
2. If you are not, then you have no connection with Christ.
3. Just as my hand or foot must be connected with my body in order to be connected with my head; one must be in the body of Christ which is His church to be connected with Christ who is it's head.
4. Just as surely as the Bible is true those who are out of Christ are lost, because Peter declare in Acts 4:12 that salvation is only in Him, and in none other.

Young Members Are Part Of The Church Today And The Future

Eccl. 12:1; 1 Tim. 4:12

Kenneth Burluson

1. We often hear it said, "the young people are the church of tomorrow." But, if they are faithful members of the church, they are a part of the church today.
2. If they mean by the statement above, that they will be the leaders in the church tomorrow, they are right.
 - a. The young men can become elders, deacons, preachers, Bible class teachers and be involved in other Christian duties.
 - b. The young ladies can become the wives of elders, deacons or preachers. They can be faithful Bible class teachers and be involved in other Christian duties.

DISCUSSION:

- I. "REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH." Eccl. 12:1
 - A. Young people are encouraged to begin early in life to serve the Lord.

- B. *"While the evil days come not."* One can practice evil habits for a long time and they will become fixed and permanent. It is more difficult to shake them.
- C. *"Nor the years draw nigh."* Don't wait until you are old. They will come unless death prevents it from happening.
- D. *"When thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."* The exhortation is, before the years of regret come. If one spends his younger years in pleasure then the day will come that he will be filled with regret.
- E. Note: Eccl. 11:9

II. **"LET NO MAN DESPISE THY YOUTH BUT BE THOU AN EXAMPLE OF THE BELIEVERS, IN WORD, IN CONVERSATION, IN CHARITY, IN SPIRIT, IN FAITH, IN PURITY."** 1 Tim. 4:12

- A. *"In word."* Our speech.
 - 1. This really lets people know what is in our heart. Matt. 12:34
 - 2. Young people as well as the older people must watch their speech. Col. 4:6; Eph. 4:29
 - 3. We should have the attitude of David. Psa. 19:14
- B. *"In conversation."* In manner of life. This is our behavior.
 - 1. The way we live every day wields a great influence over others.
 - 2. You are being watched by your peers and older people.
 - 3. More importantly, some younger than you are trying to walk in your steps.
- C. *"In love."*
 - 1. To God and neighbors. Matt. 22: 36-39; Rom. 13:10
 - 2. To brethren. 1 Peter 1:22; Heb. 13:1; John 13:35; Rom. 12:10
- D. *"In spirit."* This means devotion.
 - 1. Our whole person should be devoted to God.
 - 2. He is to be first in our lives. Matt. 6:33; Luke 10:27
- E. *"In faith."* The point here is faithfulness. James 2:18; Rom. 2:10
- F. *"In purity."* Matt. 5:8. Christians must be pure in speech, thought, and life.

III. **PROBLEMS OUR YOUNG PEOPLE FACE.**

- A. Adults.
 - 1. Adults who are not Christians.
 - a. They influence Christian youth to forsake the Lord.
 - b. Some young people see the success of the non-Christian and want to be like them.
 - c. Young people, please consider the **WHOLE**, not the **PART**.

- 1) Read Luke 2:52 and compare Luke 12:16-21.
 - 2) Also compare Luke 16:19-31.
2. Christian adults.
 - a. Many Christian adults act no different from those in the world.
 - b. Some attend services but do not teach the lost, edify the saved, visit, and give as they have been prospered.
 - c. Others attend all services, teach the lost, visit and give, but are continually fussing and fighting.
 - d. Many young people are fed up with the hypocrisy, inactivity, and unloving adults.
 - e. Young people, please do not allow an adult that is in sin to influence you to forsake God.
 3. Parents
 - a. Parents must train their children.
 - b. Mere telling is not training.
 - c. Training requires discipline.
 - d. Training requires an example.
 - 1) It requires being a Christian.
 - 2) Inconsistencies will not get the job done
 - a) Whip a child for cheating — cheat yourself.
 - b) Whip a child for smoking — smoke yourself.
 - c) Whip a child for drinking — drink yourself.
 - 3) When they see a double standard, we have lost and the youth suffer the consequences.
 - e. There are some areas in which parents are not training their children. The organization of the home.
 - a) Husband is the head. Eph. 5:23
 - b) Wife is to be submissive. Eph. 5:24; 1 Peter 3:6
 - c) Children are to obey parents. Eph. 6:1
- B. Moral living.
1. Parents need to make sure their children know the importance of keeping themselves pure.
 2. Be sure about their friends. 1 Cor. 15:33
- C. Modesty.
1. They must be taught to dress modestly.
 2. Clothing stores today are advertising provocative clothing for pre-teens.
 3. They use sex to sell clothing to our youth.
 4. The importance of worship. John 4:24
 - a. Some send their children to worship.
 - b. It is more important to see that children worship than it is to see that they eat, bathe, or go to school.
 - c. Parents must set the proper example in worship.
 5. Do not provide proper entertainment.
 6. Do not spend time with their children.

7. Speak against and contradict the preacher or elders in the presence of the children.
8. By not teaching them the word of God in the home.

IV. MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE.

- A. The rule is no divorce. Matt. 19:6
- B. One exception to the rule, fornication. Matt. 19:9

V. TOBACCO.

- A. Health problems: lung cancer, maternal problems, heart disease, strokes, emphysema.
- B. Hurts one's influence.
- C. Harms others.
- D. Causes others to stumble.
- E. It is sin.

VI. DRUGS.

- A. Young man killed by drunk driver. Pensacola.
- B. Young man killed his best friend while drinking vodka and smoking Marijuana.
- C. Young man in another state hangs himself in a jail cell, leaving behind a young wife and a one year old son. Drug addiction.
- D. Another young man killed his ex-wife and then killed himself.

CONCLUSION:

1. Yes, Young Christians are a part of the church today and the future.
2. We as adults must set the proper example before them so we will not be a hindrance to them.
3. We have a tremendous responsibility to help keep them faithful to the Lord and His church.

The Elderly Members are Still A Part of the Church

Freddie Clayton

Joshua 14:6-14

1. A problem that the church faces in every generation is allowing some to "fall through the cracks."
 - a. By that I mean that proper attention is often not shown to an essential element in the church, the elderly.

- b. Sadly, there are those who choose to "fall through the tracks" as they become elderly.
2. While many of these brethren may feel as though they have left out of the picture, in Joshua 14 we are given a picture of an ideal old fellow, happy, vigorous, and devout in his old age.
3. How could this be? How could that come about?

DISCUSSION:

I. RESTS ON GOD'S PROMISES.

- A. Based on the words the Lord had spoken (5 times).
 1. To Moses concerning Joshua and Caleb, Josh. 14:6
 2. God let him live, 14:10 (twice)
 3. Concerning victory over the enemies, 14:12 (2 times)
 4. Faith to lay hold on God's promises for myself.
- B. Hid the word in his heart, Psa. 119:11
 1. For 45 years he thought about it and believed it
 2. Cherished the progress made toward the fulfillment
 - a. No hint of impatience or doubt along the way
 - b. No long weary delays in eyes of faithful – God's time
- C. Two promises – long life + possession of the land
 1. Daily fulfillment of one fed faith in the other, 14:10
 2. Great hopefulness to the very end of life
 - a. When feast is over, appetite dulled, earthly hopes wear thin and burn dim, the brighter hope is clearer.
 - b. A hope incomprehensible drawing us closer to "home."

II. MAKES THE PAST WORTH REMEMBERING.

- A. Never regret faithfulness to God
 1. He stood against cowardly mo, 14:8; Num. 13:25-14:10
 - a. He spoke the truth in his heart, 14:7
 - b. He followed the Lord fully, 14:8
 2. Remembers the commendation, 14:9; Matt. 25:21
- B. Imagine the sad reflections of some
 1. Life given to self: the world, passion, covetousness
 2. Only one pursuit counts, Matt. 16:24-26

III. DEMONSTRATES THE SECRET OF REAL LIVING.

- A. The energy and confidence was there, 14:11
- B. Lived a life of service to God
 1. Exercising self-restraint
 - a. Be chaste, temperate, care for body, Titus 2:4-8
 - b. Since young are strong then, 1 John 2:14-17
 2. Imparts hope, undimmed interest in God's cause
 3. Freedom from anxieties and cares plaguing mankind
 - a. Casting all cares on Him, 1 Peter 5:7
 - b. Can dwell securely in the Lord, Deut. 31:6; Heb.

13:5b

- C. Most of life lies before all of us.
 - 1. Great characteristic of youth looking to future
 - 2. Same is true for the Christian, i.e. eternity
 - 3. So carry the best of each preceding stage to the next

IV. A PERSISTENT READINESS TO PRESS ONWARD.

- A. Learned to rely on the Lord's help, 14:11,12
 - 1. Not looking for the easy way all the time – selfish
 - 2. Willing to place self into conflict and dangers, 1 Tim. 6:12
- B. None can stand against us when we fight for God.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. We are more than conquerors when we live a life of faithfulness as did Caleb.
- 2. We are victors over death and Satan, Rom. 8:27; 1 Cor. 15:57

The Methodist Denomination Is Not The New Testament Church

Charles W. Leonard

- 1. There used to be a clear distinction between the Lord's church and denominationalism, but not so today.
- 2. The union and unity meetings have blurred the vision of many in the religious world.
- 3. Real students of the Bible know that the Methodist church is not the Lord's church.
- 4. The distinctive differences between the Methodist church and the New Testament church are many.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **THE METHODIST CHURCH BEGAN AT THE WRONG TIME, AT THE WRONG PLACE AND WITH THE WRONG PEOPLE TO BE THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.**
 - A. The Methodist church had its beginning in 1739 in Oxford, England with a group of university students with John Wesley as the leader.
 - B. The New Testament church began in the "last days", according to prophecy.
 - 1. Isaiah indicated that it would come to pass in the last days (Isaiah 2:2).
 - 2. The events on the day of Pentecost were a fulfillment of

Joel's prophecy (Acts 2:16-17).

3. These prophecies were fulfilled on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ.
 - a. Some alive would see the kingdom come with power (Mark 9:1).
 - b. They were to wait in Jerusalem to be endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49).
 - c. The power was to come with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).
 - d. The Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4).
4. Prophecy was fulfilled and people were added to the church for the first time (Acts 2:41,47).
- C. The New Testament church began on the day of Pentecost, about 33 A.D., in the city of Jerusalem with Jewish people who had come to observe the Feast of Pentecost.
- D. Any church which had its beginning at any other time, in any other place with any other people cannot be the New Testament church.

II. THE METHODIST CHURCH CANNOT BE THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH BECAUSE IT HAD THE WRONG BUILDER.

- A. John Wesley and some university students were the builders of the Methodist Church.
- B. John Wesley and the university students did not have authority to build the New Testament church.
- C. Christ promised to build his church and had authority to build it (Matt. 16:18; 28:18).
- D. Man-made churches are not acceptable to the Lord because he had nothing to do with their beginning (Matt. 15:13; Psalm 127:1).

III. THE METHODIST CHURCH CANNOT BE THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH BECAUSE IT WEARS THE WRONG NAME.

- A. The name we wear is important because salvation is in the name of Christ (Acts 4:11-12).
- B. The name worn by the Methodists honors their methods of Bible study and way of doing things.
- C. The terms used in the Bible referring to the church honors God and Christ.
 1. Names used in a universal sense.
 - a. Church of God (Acts 20:28).
 - b. House of God (1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 2:19).
 - c. General assembly and church of the first born (Heb. 12:23).

2. Names used in a local sense (Rev. 1:11; Rom. 16:16; Phil. 1:1).

D. Why would anyone prefer to honor a man, practice or doctrine rather than God and Christ?

E. The wearing of party names is condemned in the scriptures (1 Cor. 1:10-13).

IV. THE METHODIST CHURCH IS NOT THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH BECAUSE IT APPEALS TO THE WRONG SOURCE OF AUTHORITY.

A. While they claim to go by the Bible, their real source of authority is a human book, the Methodist Discipline.

B. The New Testament church respects Christ as the authority in all religious matters (Matt. 28:18; 17:5; Acts 3:23).

C. All truth was revealed to the apostles (John 16:13; 14:26).

D. The apostles were given authority when they were given the keys of the kingdom (Matt. 16:19; 18:18).

E. Since the death of the apostles, our authority is the scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3).

F. Christians must hold on to the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11).

G. All will be judged by the doctrine of Christ and not by the commandments of men (John 12:48; Matt. 15:8-9).

V. THE METHODIST CHURCH IS NOT THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH BECAUSE IT TEACHES FALSE DOCTRINE.

A. The Methodist Church teaches the false doctrine of "faith only."

1. They appeal to article nine in the Methodist Discipline for this teaching.

2. Faith only is salvation without the power of the gospel (Rom. 1:16).

3. Faith without works is a dead faith (James 2:17).

4. Salvation without works is an imperfect faith (James 2:14,22).

5. Faith without works does not avail (Gal. 5:6).

6. Faith only eliminates the new birth (John 3:5).

7. Salvation at the point of faith will keep one from coming to God (Heb. 11:6).

8. The Bible teaches that one cannot be saved by "faith only" (James 2:24).

9. Faith must work by love (Gal. 5:6).

B. The Methodist Church teaches false doctrine on the subject of baptism.

1. Infant baptism is practiced, but the Bible teaches that believers are to be baptized (Mark 16:16).

2. Baptism by sprinkling, pouring and immersion is practiced while the Bible teaches that it is a burial in water (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; Acts 8:38-39).
 3. They teach that baptism is not necessary for one to be saved, while the Bible teaches that it is (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21).
 4. Baptism puts the saved in Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 12:13; 2 Cor. 5:17).
- C. The Methodist Church teaches that instrumental music in worship is alright.
1. It is interesting that they offer no valid Bible proof.
 2. God's people are obligated to do what God authorizes us to do (Col. 3:17).
 3. The Bible authorizes singing, but not playing an instrument (Matt. 26:30; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; James 5:13).
- D. The Methodist Church has the Lord's Supper once a month.
1. The early disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7).
 2. Paul instructed the Corinthians to give of their means on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:2).
 3. They give each first day of the week, but not commune. The expressions are identical in Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2.
 4. We should be content to do what the Lord says at the time he says.
- E. The Methodist Church requires that preachers have a license to preach and they call him "Reverend."
1. The early disciples did not know that they had to have a license (Acts 8:4).
 2. The word "Reverend" appears once in the Bible and it has reference to God (Psalm 111:9).
 3. King Herod lost his life because he did not give God the glory (Acts 12:21-23).
 4. Where is the scripture for their practices?

CONCLUSION:

1. The Methodist Church is not the New Testament church because it does not follow the teachings of the New Testament.
2. The New Testament church follows the teaching of the New Testament while the Methodist Church follows the creeds of men.

The Church Of Christ Is The Only Church

Jeffery L. Orr

1. Whenever the Bible refers to God's dealings with man, it always sets forth that He is straightforward in regard to His expectations.
 - a. Adam and Eve were not given a multiple choice question as to the decision required of them in the Garden of Eden to partake of the "knowledge of good and evil" or not to partake was their choice (Gen. 2:17). The decision made doomed mankind to the misery of physical deterioration and death (Gen. 3:22-24; Rom. 5:12; 2 Cor. 4:16).
 - b. The choice of Abraham boiled down to "go" or "stay" (Gen. 12:1-3). Blessings followed the going, whereas staying in Ur may have vexed the soul of this man of God.
 - c. In pointing out to the children of Israel the blessings that would attend faithfulness to His will, God, through Moses, stated, "*Hear, O Israel, the LORD thy God is one.*" In contrast, He commanded Israel not to go "*after other gods, of the gods of the people round about you*" (Deut. 6:4,14-15).
2. God has always been an exclusive God, limiting His promises of blessings to those who do His bidding, whether there are eight souls involved (Gen. 6-9; 1 Peter 3:20), or a nation of people whose reception of Divine favor was based upon promises made to forefathers (Deut. 7:6-8), as in the case of Israel.
 - a. His love and concern for mankind is evident in the Scriptures (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9), even showing mercy toward those steeped in idolatry who were willing to repent (Jonah 4:2).
 - b. His justice, however demands that punishment is due those who are His enemies (Nahum 1:1-3) and not willing to change their ways.
3. Man seems to think of God in terms of inclusiveness and, as a result, seeks to approach Him in his own way, rather than observing the terms laid down in His revelation to mankind.
 - a. The God of the Old Testament, for example, is depicted by many religionists to be vengeful and hateful, relishing in the demise of His creation.
 - b. The God of the New Testament, however, is thought by these same individuals to be about peace and love and to be open-minded enough to allow man to subjectively make his way to heaven.
 - c. Positions such as this evidence a lack of knowledge of God's Word and a desire to do one's own bidding rather than that of his Maker.
4. In this lesson, we will consider the contrast set forth in Scrip-

ture between the objectiveness and simplicity of God's dealings with mankind, and the strife and confusion which arises from man's desire to follow a spiritual course of his own making (cf. James 3:13-16).

5. In doing so, we will point out the exclusiveness of the church of Christ as the only church established by Christ (Matt. 16:18), in opposition to the motivation and ungodly principles which fuel the fires of denominationalism.

DISCUSSION:

In considering this contrast, let us note...

I. MAN'S WAY — ITS DIVISIVENESS AND DESTRUCTION.

- A. The concept of "one" or "exclusiveness" seems to be foreign to the thinking of mankind in terms of spirituality, and history bears out this fact.
- B. Idolatry
 1. In Romans 1:18ff, Paul points out that idolatry is the natural path of digression for those who "refuse to have God in their knowledge."
 2. Biblical history reveals this tendency on man's part.
 - a. Man was made upright, but "sought after many inventions" (Eccl. 7:29).
 - b. Laban, Rebekah's brother, had household gods (Gen. 31:19,30). He sought them feverishly even after God appeared to him in a dream, commanding him not to speak to Jacob good or bad ("...the God of your fathers spake unto me yesternight..." Laban to Jacob).
 - c. Exodus 32:1-6, the children of Israel were greatly influenced by the idolatry of Egypt.
 - d. Joshua and his household chose the service of God over that of gods/idols (Joshua 24:15).
 - e. Gideon destroyed his father's altars to Baal and the grove, as God had commanded. The men of the city desired to kill him, but Joash replied that Baal should plead for himself (Judges 6:25-32).
 - f. When Saul fell out of favor with God, instead of repenting and turning back to God, he sought the services of the witch of Endor (1 Sam. 28:7-14), whose surprise indicated the deception of her craft.
 - g. Even Solomon, who built the temple, allowed his heart to be turned away from God by his unwise choices in brides and political alliances (1 Kings 11:1ff.).
 - h. Jeroboam, whom God had handpicked to lead the northern kingdom, erected golden calves in Dan and Bethel to prevent Israelites from going to Jerusalem (1 Kings 12:27-30).

- i. Ahab's marriage to Jezebel further steeped Israel into idolatrous digression as Baal worship seemed to replace the worship of God (1 Kings 16:29-33)
 - j. Both Israel and Judah continued to adopt the idolatrous practices of other nations and eventually were punished by God with captivity (2 Kings 15:27-17:23; 23:34-25:30).
- C. Sects of the Jewish Religion.
1. During the era known as the Inter-biblical Period, divisions within the Jewish Religion arose.
 - a. The unity demonstrated by the returned captives initially resulted in repentance and reform (Neh. 9:1-13:31) — it arose from the attentiveness to and understanding of God's word (chapter 8:1-8).
 - b. By the time of Malachi, however, this zeal for God had cooled down to a profane complacency and disrespect (1:6-13), unfaithfulness, mixed marriages and adultery (Chapter 2), spiritual robbery and an air of arrogance (Chapter 3).
 - c. History reveals that God's people once again became captive, this time to the Greeks, and were greatly affected by their thinking and culture.
 2. When they came under great persecution by Antiochus Epiphanies in 175 B.C., they once felt their spirituality and nation was worth defending.
 - a. In a rebellion against Antiochus, known as the "Maccabean Rebellion," they vigorously purged Jerusalem of paganism and repaired the temple, which had been destroyed and desecrated by their Grecian foe.
 - b. The temple was rededicated in 165 B.C., and the Feast of Dedication was established to recognize this day of Jewish freedom (cf. John 10:22).
 3. During this time of relative independence, division once again arose among the Jews in the form of the Hellenists, Hasidim and the Maccabeans.
 - a. It should be noted that these divisions were not due to any allegiance to God's word, but were the result of the influences of politics and paganism.
 - b. From these initial divisions came the sects that were in existence during the time of Jesus: the Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, Essenes, Herodians, Zadokites, etc.
 - c. These divisions were fueled by motives ranging from observance of traditions (Pharisees) to political anarchy and terrorism (Zealots), and had very little, if any, to do with the observance of the laws of God.
 - d. The general rejection of Jesus by the Jewish people

was, in part, led by these groups, each having their own reasons for denying the chief cornerstone (1 Peter 2:6-8).

- e. Paul used the division in religious thought that existed between the Sanhedrin members (Pharisees and Sadducees) to show that their front was certainly not united enough to be authoritative in deciding what should be done to him (Acts 23:1-10) the Scribes were more reasonable in their approach to the matter (v.9).
- D. Divisions within the early church were attributed to...
1. False teaching (Rom. 16:17-18; Eph. 4:14; Col. 2:8; 2 Tim. 4:3),
 2. Sinful attitudes (Phil. 2:3), and
 3. Weakness of disposition (carnality; 1 Cor. 1:10ff.; 3:1-4; Heb. 5:12-14).
- E. Having dealt with the fact that division and strife is the product of man, let us consider...

II. GOD'S WAY — UNITY.

- A. Throughout history, God has always applied the same principle in regard to His dealings with man — faith and obedience have always pleased Him, unfaithfulness and disobedience have always displeased Him.
- B. There has been no inconsistency in this principle, although there has been changes in regard to specific laws and expectations.
1. This is evident in Paul's use of the example of Abraham's faithfulness in Romans 4-5 he was blessed because he was faithful to God; the Romans could be blessed by following in his steps.
 2. The example of the children of Israel in 1 Corinthians 10:1ff. and Hebrews 3:12-19 is used to set forth God's intolerance of unbelief and His punishment of such.
- C. Just as God has been consistent in regard to what He expects of man, He also demands that mankind be united one with another based on His revelation to him.
1. If Israel had kept the commands of God and not followed after idolatry, the divisions which resulted from such would not have taken place (Deut. 6:13-19).
 2. In prophesying of the approaching captivity of Israel, Hosea stated, "*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*" (Hosea 4:6).
 3. Ignorance of God's will leads to division and destruction; a knowledge of such leads to unity and peace (Psalm 133:1).
 4. As we have already considered, this situation was

always short-lived among God's people of old, simply because they allowed earthly influences to come between them and God (cf. Matt. 6:24; 1 John 2:15-17).

- C. This desire and source of the unity of His people is set forth in the New Testament.
 - 1. Jesus promised to build His church (Matt. 16:18).
 - 2. Jesus prayed for the "unity" and "oneness" of those that would believe on Him through the inspired teaching of the apostles (John 17:20-22).
 - 3. Luke records that the early disciples were of "one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32).
 - 4. This unity makes it possible for a plurality of individual Christians to be members of "one" body (Rom. 12:4-5) and to "be of the same mind one toward another" (v.16).
 - 5. Paul expected the Corinthians to "*speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*" (1 Cor. 1:10).
 - 6. The Ephesians were commanded to "*keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*" As an example of such, Paul sets forth the unity involved in the Christian system of faith (Eph. 4:3-6) — the seven "ones."
 - 7. The purpose of the miraculous gifts was to bring about and confirm the revelation of God's will. It resulted in "*the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God...*" (Eph. 4:13,16). Knowledge and unity go hand in hand; the one brings about the other, just as ignorance (purposeful or not) leads to division.
 - 8. It was Paul's expectation and desire that the Philippian brethren "*stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel*" (Phil. 1:27); "*be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind*" (2:3); and "*walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing*" (3:16).
- D. These facts should be sufficient to indicate that unity is not only a possibility, but is the expectation that God has for His people. This is only attainable through obedience to His commands.
- E. Having considered that man's way brings divisiveness and that God's way brings about unity, let us make the observation that...

III. DENOMINATIONALISM IS OF MAN.

- A. By its very definition, denominationalism is the naming or categorizing of something (in this case, religious groups) based upon observable differences.
- B. When a religious group names itself for the purpose of being

distinguished from other religious groups, is this not divisive and carnal?

- C. If one religious group teaches differently from another group, and therefore differentiates itself from the other, is this not opposed to the very teaching of Scripture concerning unity?
- D. Doesn't the fact that God's word promotes and demands the unity of its adherents prove, in and of itself, that denominationalism is of man? Of course, it does.
- E. The truth is, unity does not exist in denominationalism and never will; because it is, by its very nature, divisive.
- F. It is because of the division that exists, and the opportunity that it affords the spiritually misguided man to pick and choose the one of his choice that makes it so appealing, but also so deadly.
- G. It may give man what he wants, but certainly not what he needs.
- H. This simplistic observation is sufficient to show that denominationalism is not of God, but is of man. It is therefore flawed and doomed to destruction.
- I. Having considered that denominationalism is of man, let us conclude by observing that...

IV. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS THE ONLY CHURCH.

- A. Having previously defined denominationalism in terms of its very nature, let us consider the "church of Christ" in the same way.
- B. The church of Christ defined
 - 1. Church: *ekklesia*, meaning "called out," implying a reason for such.
 - 2. Of Christ: *christou*, literally, belonging to, or possessed of Christ (genitive case).
- C. This term is used in the New Testament to set forth the relationship of her members to Christ.
- D. The church of Christ...
 - 1. Is that which Jesus promised to build, and hence, it is His church, which He purchased with His own blood (Rom. 16:16; Acts 20:28).
 - 2. Is described in the New Testament as His body (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18), His bride (Eph. 5:33) and His kingdom (Matt. 16:19; Col. 1:13-14), among other designations.
 - 3. Is the subject of Old Testament prophecy (Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-2;).
 - 4. Is the subject of many of Jesus' parables (Matt. 13, "the kingdom of heaven is likened unto...").
 - 5. Is the culmination of God's scheme of redemption, His

plan of reconciling man back to Himself (2 Cor. 5:20-21; Eph. 1:3-7; 3:10-11).

6. Is made up of those who have obeyed the Gospel by believing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), by repenting of past sins (Acts 2:38; 3:19), by confessing that Jesus is the Son of God (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10), and by being buried with Christ in baptism for the remission of sins (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27).

E. The church of Christ is the only church that can be read about in the Word of God — the only institution in which salvation can be found (2 Tim. 2:10).

CONCLUSION:

1. In this lesson, we have considered that...
 - a. Man's way brings about division and destruction,
 - b. God's way brings about unity,
 - c. Denominationalism is of man, and
 - d. The church of Christ is the only church.
2. In 2 Corinthians 11:3-4, Paul emphasized "the simplicity which is in Christ" in contrast to false teachers who would corrupt minds by preaching another Jesus and another gospel.
3. Denominationalism preaches a Jesus other than that which is found in the Scriptures — one who encourages division and subjectivism.
4. Jesus promised to build His church, and the New Testament plainly reveals that He kept His promise.

Denominationalism Mocks God

Don W. Tate

1. If denominationalism mocks God, then we need to find out what the word mock means.
 - a. The Oxford American Dictionary states that the word mock means, "to make fun or by imitating, to mimic."
 - b. Webster's New World Thesaurus states that the word mock is a synonym for the words, "counterfeit, sham, pretended; see false, unreal."
2. Some people are determined to mock God by living in a make believe world, which is nothing more than a counterfeit world. Some individuals have never grown up to the point of accepting truth and reality.
 - a. One good example would be those who continue to desire God to work miracles as He did in the first century. They have

failed to accept the truth of why those miracles were needed and that was so God's word could be confirmed (Mark 16:20).

- 1) We know today that the word of God has been confirmed (Heb. 2:3), so we don't need God to work in the same way He once did.
- 2) Paul told the brethren at Corinth that it was time to mature and move on from infancy for the perfect was coming (1 Cor. 13:8-13). We know that God's word is perfect (complete, what brings about maturity) (2 Tim. 3:16-17; James 1:25). It was time for them to grow into maturity in accepting three wonderful gifts called, "faith, hope, and charity." They were lacking in each one of the three.
 - b. If a person is determined to live in a pretend world, then that would mock God and His most holy word.
3. The church is not a denomination, for if she were, then she wouldn't be the church. One needs to be wise enough to realize that every congregation that wears the name, "church of Christ," is not the church.
 - a. Some people have formed a denomination while wearing the name, "church of Christ."
 - b. The church belongs to Christ (Matt. 16:18). Any congregation that does not belong to Christ is a denomination, whether the people call themselves, "independent, separate, or nondenominational."
 - c. The whole concept of a denomination goes against the holiness of God. A denomination is nothing more than a part, which is a division. You cannot divide God's church and expect to have His approval (1 Cor. 1:10).
4. May we consider some ways in which denominationalism mocks God.

DISCUSSION:

1. DENOMINATIONALISM MOCKS GOD BY HIDING THE TRUTH.

- A. When Jesus was delivered into the common hall for the preparation to be crucified, the people mocked our Saviour. They stripped Him of His clothing and placed a scarlet robe on Him. They were mocking Him by declaring that He was a false king (Matt. 27:27-31). Why wouldn't they just accept truth rather than trying to mock it and hide it?
- B. When you talk to people about obeying the Gospel and allowing the Lord to add them to the church (Acts 2:38-47), they will boldly proclaim, "any church will do for they are all the same."
 1. Some people will try to quieten you down by declaring, "You folks believe you are the only ones going to

heaven."

2. Whether you realize it or not, when someone makes that statement to you, they are mocking you! Why not ask them, "How many churches did Jesus build? Was it one, one hundred, one thousand, or one million?" Ask them to turn to Matt. 16:18 and then Eph. 4:4.
- C. Denominations often refer to John 8:32, "*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*"
 1. Truth does set one free but will denominations accept the truth?
 2. For what did Jesus pray in John 17:20-21? Did Jesus pray to divide His people into different groups or did He pray for unity?
- D. Denominationalism has a way of hiding the true church as seen prevalent in many places today.
 1. If you took a gallon of pure water and asked your audience, "what is it?" They would say, "water!" If you added a package of Kool-Aid and then asked them the same question what do you think they would say? They would probably say, "Kool-Aid."
 2. When you have the pure church of our Lord and you add denominationalism; you don't come out with the pure church, but a denomination!
 3. When good Christian people desire to travel around the country; they are forced to call ahead to find a sound congregation. Many of the congregations of our Lord have allowed denominationalism to come in to the point that the truth cannot be found. When the truth cannot be found, then the Lord's church ceases to exist.

II. DENOMINATIONALISM MOCKS GOD BY DECLARING THAT HIS SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS ARE FOUND OUTSIDE OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH.

- A. According to the Bible, where are all spiritual blessings found? The Bible says, "in Christ" (Eph. 1:3-5).
 1. The spiritual blessings can only belong to you if you have a relationship with the Lord.
 2. Those out of Christ do not have the relationship with Christ that they need to have the blessings.
 3. If one could have the spiritual blessings out of Christ, then why become part of Him?
- B. Christ died for the church, and He was so determined for the church to come, that He stated, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Nothing would be able to stop the church from being established.
- C. Paul stated that greetings were being sent from one congregation to another and those congregations were

called, "churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16). That terminology simply was identifying the called out group of people that were in different locations who were following Christ.

- D. The church is Christ's body, for if you are in Christ, then you are in the church and in His body. If you are not in the church; His body; then you are not in Christ (Eph. 1:18-23).
- E. God has chosen the church in showing the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. 3:10).
- F. The world is entirely different than the church! The world is a representation of sin. The church is a representation of leaving sin (Acts 2:47).
 - 1. One is to leave sin and his former life for unity with Christ. Paul spoke about this important subject in making a comparison with marriage where one leaves his former life and unites in marriage (Eph. 5:31-33). In the church you are united with Christ. Out of the church, you are united with the world and sin.
- G. We know that Jesus died for everyone (John 3:16), but not everyone will be saved, for only those who obey the Gospel will have the hope of eternal life (2 Thess. 1:7-9). Jesus never died so Christians could continue to live in sin (Rom. 6:1). One enters Christ for a different life with spiritual blessings from the Lord.

III. DENOMINATIONALISM MOCKS GOD BY TRYING TO TAKE AWAY THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH.

- A. Paul wrote to Timothy in proclaiming that the church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15).
 - 1. What does a pillar do? Doesn't it support?
 - 2. What does the ground do? Isn't it the foundation? Without a foundation and something to support a building, then a building would fall.
 - 3. Without the church, then don't expect the truth to continue. In many locations you cannot find the truth because the church is not there.
- B. Some people have a problem in accepting the reality of how important the church is in preserving the truth.
 - 1. There is a lot in the book of Revelation that is hard to understand. The apostle John does help us out a great deal in showing the importance of the church. He stated that the churches were candlesticks (Rev. 1:20).
 - a. A candlestick would support light or another way of saying it, a candlestick would support truth. That means that the church must support the truth.
 - b. The world will never support truth for the devil is in power there.

c. If the candlestick is removed, then who will support the light of truth?

C. Many Christians are confused into thinking that our public schools are to be the pillar and ground of the truth. They expect the public school system to teach the truth to their children about the Lord.

1. It is possible that perhaps one day religion will take over the public schools, but it will be denominational doctrine and not the pure doctrine of Christ.
2. The church, which is made up of Christian parents, should teach their own children the truth (Eph. 6:1-4).
3. The church, as a body of obedient believers, should help as needed in teaching the children the truth. Bible classes serve a very useful purpose. Wouldn't you trust a Bible class in your local congregation more than the public school system to teach your children about the Lord?

CONCLUSION:

1. Denominationalism goes against the whole concept of what God desires. You, as a member of the Lord's church are to shine as a light in the world of denominationalism.
2. People need to be able to view the church for whom Jesus died.
3. May you never be guilty of mocking God!

Denominationalism Has Caused Great Harm In The World

Jared Knoll

1. The theme of this lectureship indicates the problem that is set forth in the title of this lesson.
2. The fact that we must defend the church against denominationalism is an indication of the harm it has caused in the world.
3. With the affirmation given in the title of this sermon, we are given this time to bear the burden of proof and show the great harm that has been done and continues to be done.
 - a. When something is gradual, it is often not recognized for quite some time.
 - b. Often there is a tendency for the harm to be overshadowed by the supposed good a thing is doing.
4. We will be building upon the argument which follows:
 - a. All disrespect for Bible authority is harmful to spiritual well-being.

- b. All denominationalism is a disrespect for Bible authority.
- c. Therefore, all denominationalism is harmful to spiritual well-being.

I. ALL DISRESPECT FOR BIBLICAL AUTHORITY IS HARMFUL TO SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING.

- A. Scripture was given to be regarded as authoritative.
 - 1. It originated in the mind of God and was revealed to man (1 Cor. 2; 2 Peter 1:3).
 - 2. It commands, instructs, reproves (2 Tim. 3:16).
 - 3. It will judge us in the last day (John 12:48).
- B. The power ascribed to the Word of God indicates the harm of disregarding its authority.
 - 1. It gives life (Luke 4:4; John 6:63)
 - 2. It sanctifies (John 17:17)
 - 3. It saves the soul (James 1:21)
 - 4. It purifies (1 Peter 1:22)
 - 5. It makes us perfect and complete (2 Tim. 3:16,17)
 - 6. It can keep us from sinning if it dwells in our hearts (Psalm 119:11; 1 John 3:9).
- C. Disregarding the authority of the Scriptures is harmful to the spiritual well-being (1 Tim 6:3; Titus 2:1; 2 Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:9).

II. ALL DENOMINATIONALISM IS A DISREGARD FOR BIBLICAL AUTHORITY.

- A. Denomination is nothing more than division; it has evolved from division over doctrinal teaching which goes against the divine authority of God's word.
 - 1. Yet the Bible teaches clearly that there is to be unity of doctrine in Christ
 - 2. 1 Cor. 1:10; John 17:20,21; Eph. 4:1-6; Acts 2:41-42
- B. What brings about the division over doctrinal matters?
 - 1. Division results from the teaching of the traditions of men rather than of the scriptures (Matt. 15:1-9)
 - 2. Division results from the carnality which prevails over the spirituality in the lives of humanity (1 Cor. 3:1-3)
 - 3. Division results from the desire for earthly wisdom above the wisdom which is from above (James 3:13-18)
 - 4. Division results from the improper, deceitful handling of God's word rather than rightly dividing (2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Peter 3:15-16; 2 Cor. 2:17).
- C. Denominationalism is a complete disregard for Biblical authority, which places man's desires, thoughts and ways above the ways of God (cf. Isaiah 55:8)

III. THEREFORE ALL DENOMINATIONALISM IS HARMFUL TO SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING.

- A. If the argument is valid and the premises are true, the argument is sound and the conclusion is true.
 - 1. We have proven the premises true and the validity was tested
 - 2. Our conclusion holds true
- B. Anytime we disregard the authority of God's word we cause great harm to our spiritual well-being and jeopardize our eternal reward. Psalm 119 extols the word of God but tells also of the harm which is done by disregard for it.
 - 1. Hearts become fat as grease (v.70) – this is the idea of becoming indifferent to what is right and wrong.
 - 2. Dig pits for the soul (v.85) – pitfalls abound those who do not respect God's word (there are those neck deep in false teaching such as "grace only" or "faith only" and cannot climb out because they have no respect for God's word.
 - 3. Removes the safe haven (vs117,118) – the Lord will lift us up, comfort us and help us if we respect His word. Take away the respect and there is no where to turn.
 - 4. Breeds darkness in the world (v.130) – we fail to walk in the Light when we reject God's word.
 - 5. Salvation is far removed (v.155) – the wicked do not seek the truth, therefore salvation is not theirs.
- C. Teaching the Gospel has become more difficult than it was fifty years ago because people have become indifferent, callused, confused, angered etc. as a result of all the denominationalism that saturates our nation and world.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Perhaps the greatest harm that comes from denominationalism is the generation reared in the church today that has been overwhelmed with its concepts and practices.
- 2. Whether in the church or in the world as a whole, until people begin to respect the authority of the word of God the great harm that has already been done will only escalate.
- 3. When you don't take steps to cure the wound, it will eventually lead to death, and so many will be separated from God eternally because of an incurable wound (Micah 1:9; Jer. 30:12).

The Mormon Denomination Is Not The Lord's Church

Terry Joe Kee

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is more commonly known as the Mormons. The Latter Day Saints have had a stormy history as a religious body in the United States. They suffered being attacked by mobs and were once invaded by U. S. Army troops. In the midst of this they built a religious community and have established themselves as a powerful religious group in the United States. Their movement is commonly a grassroots movement, with "laymen" being the movers and shakers among them. The Mormon Church began and is rooted in the visions of Joseph Smith, sometimes called "Peep-Stone Joe," because he claimed to have found this stone while looking for water with his father. The stone supposedly has miraculous powers and gave him the ability to "peep" into the future.

Joseph Smith, a native of Vermont, organized his movement with six members beginning in Fayette, New York on April 6, 1830. Prior to this Smith had claimed to have experienced a series of heavenly visitations informing him that all existing churches were in error and that the time had come to restore the truth and the true church on earth. Smith claimed that three and a half years after his first vision, at the age of eighteen, he had another vision instructing him concerning the second coming of Christ and his relationship to that coming. Smith claimed that at that time an angel appeared to him and told him where some plates (tablets) were buried with the fullness of the everlasting gospel. Along with the plates were the Urim and Thummin, the use of which would allow one to see into the future and give the ability to translate the plates. Smith then said he went to the place and found the plates, but was at that time forbidden to take them. He said he was instructed to come again to this place on a corresponding date each year. Finally, on September 22, 1827, the first anniversary of his twenty-first birthday, he was given the plates which he translated to Oliver Cowdery, who wrote all these things down. This work was completed in the summer of 1829 and sent to the printer in August of that year.

Smith and Cowdery claimed that in May 1829 an angel, who was John the Baptist, appeared to them and conferred upon them the priesthood of Aaron and instructed them to baptize by immersion. Later they said Peter, James and John conferred upon them the priesthood of Melchizedek and gave to them the keys of apostleship. After this they determined to organize the Mormon Church. Supposedly Smith was allowed to keep the plates from 1827 until 1838, at which time the angel came and took them back.

Opposition caused them to move from New York to Ohio in 1831. As they gained strength they established headquarters in Kirkland, Ohio. But troubles caused them to move again, this time to Missouri, where another larger center of Mormonism developed at Independence, Missouri. Here they planned to build their ideal community with a temple at the center of everything. In the winter of 1838-1839 they were expelled from the state of Missouri. Smith and about 15,000 of his followers moved to Illinois and eventually founded the city of Nauvoo. But here violence broke out as Smith and his brother, Hyrum were arrested and charged with treason. While in jail at Carthage, Illinois a mob broke into the jail and shot the two brothers on June 27, 1844.

After Smith's death, the Mormons split into several divisions: James J. Strang led some into Wisconsin; Sidney Rigdon organized a group around Green Oak, Pennsylvania; but most followed the leadership of Brigham Young to Utah in 1848. In the valley of the Great Salt Lake they finally found safety and there built their famous tabernacle and temple at the heart of their community. This community grew until finally they acquired statehood in 1896.

The missionary efforts of Mormons is among the most vigorous and consistent among any religious groups in the United States. Each year more than 4000 young Mormons go out two by two to do mission work. They give at least one year and commonly two to the work of spreading their doctrine from door to door. Commonly they work without compensation from the church. Each member is expected to give one tenth of his income to the church.

The life span of the average Mormon is longer than the national average. This is not unusual seeing that they believe and practice total abstinence from both tobacco and alcohol. Their members are taught to get plenty of sleep, eat only good and healthy foods. They must not drink any beverages with caffeine, such as tea, coffee or colas.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE MORMONS HOLD TO SOME TRUTH.

- A. They believe man will be punished for his individual sins and not for the sins of Adam.
- B. They believe salvation only comes through acceptance of the atonement of Christ and obedience to His laws and ordinances in the Gospel.
- C. Mormons teach faith, repentance and baptism for the remission of sins.
- D. They observe the Lord's supper every Lord's Day.
- E. They have a "word of wisdom" which is actually a health code which they encourage every member to follow which consists in part of good food, plenty of sleep, no alcohol, tobacco, tea or coffee (Some may object to their ban of coffee

and tea, but certainly not in their health code generally).

F. They believe that every member must be a missionary.

II. MORMONS TEACH MUCH THAT IS CONTRARY TO THE BIBLE?

A. Concerning God, Mormons teach:

1. There are many gods, having bodies of bones and flesh and that the gods have sex and marry and bear children. They say these children come into the world to get human bodies. Adam is God the Father of the race and that God is an exalted man who was once as we are and that our hope is to become like him (*Doctrines and Covenants* 139:19,20). Here, Smith also reveals to us that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob became gods (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 139:37). Joseph Smith made the following "revelation" in an April conference of the Mormon religion at a funeral service, "God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret" (as quoted by John H. O'Neal, *Some Modern Cults, Sects, Movements And World Religions*, 1981 Spiritual Sword Lectureship Book). Further, Mormons say, "When our father Adam came into the Garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him ... He is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do" (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 1, p.50).
2. Moses said, "God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent" (Num. 23:19). Adam was created from the dust of the ground by God (Gen. 2:7). The Bible teaches there is only one God, with three in the Godhead (Gen 1:26; Exodus 20:1-3; Matt. 28:19,20; John 1:1-3; 16:7-10). God is omnipotent (Gen. 1:1; Psa. 19:1); omnipresent (Psa.139:7-12); omniscient (Prov. 15:3; Job 34:21); and a Spirit (John 4:24). God's only marriage was to Israel (Jer. 3:14); The only marriage relationship Christ engages in is with the church (Eph. 5:22-33). Adam is not God (Gen. 1:27); Man is a created being (Gen. 2:7).

B. Concerning Christ, Mormons teach:

1. That Adam is God and that Christ is his natural son by means of natural generation and that Jesus was a polygamist (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 1, p.50).
2. The Bible teaches that Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-23) and that he is the husband of the church (Eph. 5:22-33).

C. Concerning the Bible, Mormons teach:

1. They say the Bible is not all the Word of God but that the *Book of Mormon*, the *Doctrine and Covenants*, and the *Pearl of Great Price* are on a par with the Bible. They say the Bible cannot be followed alone because through the years it has become so polluted by man that every verse is corrupted (*Book of Mormon*, II Nephi 29:3-14).
2. The Bible is complete and all-sufficient. It must not be added to (Prov. 30:5,6; Rev. 22:18,19; Deut. 4:2; 2 Tim 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:3,4). Did Jesus lie? He told the apostles they would be guided into all truth (John 16:13). Did Peter lie? He told those "that have obtained like precious faith" that God has given to us "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3,4).

D. Concerning Salvation, Mormons teach:

1. That the remission of sins came five hundred years before Christ ever died on Calvary. "And the Lord God hath sent his holy prophets among all the children of men, to declare these things to every kindred, nation, and tongue, that thereby whosoever should believe that Christ should come, the same might receive the remission of their sins, and rejoice with exceeding great joy, even as though he had already come among them" (*Book of Mormon*, Mosiah 3:13).
2. The Bible teaches that remission of sins should be preached beginning at Jerusalem, after the death on the cross and the resurrection (Luke 24:46,47). Man is not cleansed from his sins until he is washed in the blood of Christ (Rev. 1:5). How can one receive remission of sins when the blood has not yet been shed (Heb. 9:22)?

E. Concerning the church, Mormons teach:

1. That the only way to have the church today is by having living apostles and prophets.
2. The Bible teaches that the church is founded upon the Divine teaching of the apostles and prophets (2 Peter 1:20,21; 2 Peter 3:1-3). All apostles had to be eye-witnesses of the resurrection (Acts 1:1-3,19-22) and since no one today is an eyewitness of the resurrection, we cannot have apostles today—therefore according to their teaching we could not have the church. Paul said that Jesus was seen "last of all" by me (1 Cor. 15:8). Was Paul the last eyewitness of Jesus or not? Mormons will not allow their apostles to be tried and proven. We should do with them as the church in Ephesus did and try "*them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars*" (Rev. 2:2). John also tells us where liars will go (Rev. 21:8).

F. Concerning Prophets, Mormons teach:

1. That Joseph Smith was a prophet and that belief in him is essential to salvation (*Doctrine and Covenants*, sec. 28:2; 35:17).
 2. The Bible teaches that true prophecy has been given (1 Cor. 13:8; Gal. 1:8-9; Rev. 22:18,19) and also many false prophets did come and will come (Matt. 7:15; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1). Moses gives us instruction as to how we can tell if a prophet is from God or not (Deut. 18:20-22). Joseph Smith is only a prophet if what he has said comes to pass. Therefore, this man is a false prophet and not one who speaks for God.
- G. Concerning Marriage, Mormons teach:
1. That there are two kinds of marriage: celestial and earthly (*The Seer*, Vol. 1, p.37). The earthly marriage bond has as its purpose to have as many wives of child-bearing age as possible to insure a great kingdom in heaven. The celestial bond is to seal a man to as many wives as possible in order that he might have enough wives in eternity. Joseph Smith practiced polygamy, having had as many as fifty wives himself. He did this even though the writings of Joseph Smith condemned multiple wives (cf. Jacob 2:24,27,28; Ether 10:5; *Doctrine and Covenants* 101:4).
 2. The Bible teaches that child-bearing was to replenish the earth (Gen. 1:28). In heaven there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage (Matt. 12:35) and that when a man dies, his wife is free to marry another (1 Cor. 7:39; Rom. 7:1-4).
- H. Concerning Sin, Mormons teach:
1. That Adam's sin was both necessary and good (*Book of Mormon*, II Nephi 2:11-13,23).
 2. The Bible teaches that nothing is good about sin. Adam engaged in a good work before sin entered the world, he was to dress and keep the garden (Gen. 2:15-17).
- I. There are many differences between the Book of Mormon and the Bible concerning Jesus:
1. They say the darkness continued three days at the crucifixion (Helaman 14:20), but see Luke 23:44.
 2. They have the place of Jesus's birth as Jerusalem (Alma 7:10) but the Bible says Bethlehem (Matt. 2:5).
 3. They have the church established 147 years before Christ (Mosiah 18:17) but the Bible says the church was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:14-47; Acts 11:26).
 4. They say Jesus is both the Father and the Son (Mosiah 15:2-4) but note that the Bible says the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three distinct persons (Matt. 3:14-17;

Matt. 28:19,20).

III. HOW MUCH ERROR DOES ONE NEED TO TEACH TO BE REJECTED?

- A. Whenever a book contradicts the Bible and even itself repeatedly it should be avoided, rejected and exposed.
- B. Whenever a man places himself in the stead of God, he should be avoided, rejected and exposed.
- C. Whenever men place themselves up as apostles they should be avoided, rejected and exposed.
- D. James warns us that to do all and offend in one point will cause us to be guilty of all. Shall we not reject anything that is so foreign to the Gospel of Christ lest we should be guilty of all?

The Christian Church Is Not The Lord's Church

Gilbert Gough

To identify the New Testament church, which is the church of Christ, is not difficult when one looks into the pages of God's Word.

1. Jesus built His church and laid the foundation of the church upon Himself (Matt: 16:18,19; 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20).
2. Jesus' church was established in Jerusalem after His resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:1-4).
 - a. Birthplace (Isa. 2:2, 3; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).
 - b. Birthday (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,41,47).
3. Jesus' church (collectively) belongs to Him by right of purchase (Acts 20:28) and by name gives honor to God and Christ.
 - a. "The church of God" (1 Cor. 1:2; Acts 20:28).
 - b. "The church of the living God" (1 Tim. 3:15).
 - c. "The churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16).
 - d. Jesus said the church was "my church" (Matt. 16:18).
4. Jesus' church has as its rule of faith and practice the all-sufficient and authoritative Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:3; Acts 20:32).
5. Jesus' church has the work of evangelism (Matt. 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16), of edification (Rom. 14:19; 15:2; 1 Thess. 5:11), and of benevolence (Acts 6:1-6; Gal. 6:10; James 1:27) to do.
6. Jesus' church teaches and practices God's plan of salvation by hearing the Word (Rom. 10:17), by believing the Gospel (Mark 16:16), by repentance (Acts 2:38), by confession of faith in

Christ (Rom. 10:10), and by being baptized for the remission of sins and to be added to Christ's church (Acts 2:38,41,47).

7. Jesus' church worships God the Father "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).
 - a. Lord's supper (Acts 20:7; Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:20-29).
 - b. Congregational singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).
 - c. Praying (Acts 2:42; Luke 18:1; 1 Thess. 5:17).
 - d. Giving as we have prospered (1 Cor. 16:1,2; 2 Cor. 9:6-9).
 - e. Studying God's Word through preaching and teaching (Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 2:15; 4:2).
8. Jesus' church has the correct organization.
 - a. Jesus is the Head (Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18) meaning He has all authority (Matt. 28:18; Rev. 17:14).
 - b. Each local congregation is autonomous under qualified men called elders (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-11; Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-3).
 - c. Qualified deacons serve in each congregation as special servants of the Lord (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13).
 - d. The members submit themselves to Christ and His elders (1 Thess. 5:12,13; Heb. 13:17).
9. In contrast, the Christian Church (sometimes called "Church of Christ" or "Disciples of Christ") has perverted every identification mark of the New Testament church, the church of Christ. The Christian Church is a denomination because:
 - a. There is only one church, "one body" (Eph. 4:4) and the saved are added to it (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23), but the Christian Church is another body, not identifying itself with the Lord's church.
 1. The Head, Christ, has only one body.
 2. The King, Christ, has only one kingdom.
 3. The Bridegroom, Christ, has only one bride.
 - b. Religious division is wrong and sinful, yet the Christian Church went out from among God's people (1 Cor. 1:10; 3:3; 1 John 2:19).
 1. Even though history records the division was brewing in the 1800s over the mechanical instrument of music being added to the worship of God, the official date of recognition of a separate entity is 1906, thus they denominationalized themselves.
 2. An even more liberal group divided from the Conservative Christian Church (if you can call them conservative), calling themselves the Disciples of Christ, in the 1940s and 1950s.
 3. The Lord prayed for unity (John 17:20,21), but the Christian Church violated the Lord's prayer for unity by dividing the church asunder.
 - a. Unity implies oneness, but the Christian Church is

not one with Christ's church.

- b. Unity is based upon truth (John 8:32; 17:17), and when unity is disrupted, truth is violated by one side or the other or both; in this case, the Christian Church violated the truth, the unity, by their addition of man-devised innovations like mechanical instruments of music introduced into the worship.
- 4. The Lord's church promotes the salvation of souls through truth and unity "that the world might believe" (John 17:21), but the Christian Church has added to the mass confusion of skepticism and doubt in the religious world today.
- 5. There is no doubt the Christian Church has set themselves up as a denomination among the many denominations.

I. THE MANY ERRORS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

- A. Some have ignorantly concluded that there is not much difference between the Christian Church and the church of Christ.
 - 1. Many think the only difference between us and them is they use mechanical instruments of music in their worship and we do not.
 - 2. However, the issue goes much deeper than the mechanical instrument in worship.
- B. The basic difference is our attitudes toward God's Word.
 - 1. When the mechanical instrument of music was introduced among brethren in the 1800s, the real issue was not the instrument, but it was the horse upon which the real issue rode.
 - 2. The real issue was in the answer to the question: What is the proper attitude toward Bible authority?
 - a. The Christian Church affirmed that the church can do anything and everything not specifically, explicitly and directly forbidden and condemned in the Bible.
 - b. The Lord's church affirmed that the church can only do that which God's standard, the Bible, authorizes (Col. 3:17).
 - c. The issue is as easy to understand as a mother gives her son a ten dollar bill and sends him to the store to buy bread and milk.
 - 1) She authorized the purchasing of bread and milk.
 - 2) She did not have to specifically, explicitly and directly state, "Don't buy candy." "Don't buy potato chips." "Don't buy...Don't buy..."
 - 3) The son was to only buy bread and milk, and if he had bought a candy bar, he would have violated

- his mother's explicit command.
- d. With the Christian Church having such an attitude toward Bible authority, it has opened the door for every innovation of man where God has not explicitly spoken for they deny the Bible's authority through implication.
- C. With such a loose attitude toward Bible authority, it is no wonder other unauthorized practices and doctrines have emerged in the Christian Church.
1. They have set up constitutions and by-laws for their churches.
 - a. Constitutions and by-laws are creeds in addition to the Word of God (Rev. 22:18,19).
 - b. These are condemned in the Bible (Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Cor. 4:6).
 - c. The Bible is all that is needed (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:3).
 2. They have board meetings with elders, deacons, and in some places deaconesses voting together on the business of the church.
 - a. There is no authority for such since elders have the oversight of the congregation (1 Peter 5:1-4) and members are told to submit to the elders (Heb. 13:17).
 - b. There is no such "office" for deaconesses in the Bible.
 - c. When the word "deaconess" is used, it describes a worker and not an office.
 - d. In some Christian Churches, women have been ordained to the eldership, but how can they qualify when they cannot be "the husband of one wife" (1 Tim. 3:2)?
 3. They have congregational voting.
 - a. Again, there is no authority for this practice. No congregational voting existed in the New Testament church.
 - b. The congregations in the New Testament were governed in matters of obligation by the Word of God.
 - c. After all, it is the Word of God which shall judge us (John 12:48).
 - d. In matters of expediency, the elders have the oversight (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
 - e. The church is not a democracy in which all members vote in order to settle issues.
 - f. The church is a monarchy, or theocracy, with Christ as its head (Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18).
 - g. But in the Christian Church, they have voted for election of elders, deacons, deaconesses, for a new preacher, to buy property, to make a change in the

- constitution and by-laws, to change the time of the services of the church, etc.
4. They employ women as ministers of education, music and/or evangelism.
 - a. There is not one New Testament example that the early church had offices, as such, for women.
 - b. There is no scriptural support available (1 Tim. 2:11, 12; 1 Cor. 14:34).
 5. They believe that church growth and programs that are initiated should be the minister's job.
 - a. Instead of the elders leading and directing the congregation, they have relegated their work upon the preacher.
 - b. They have adopted the denominational "pastor system."
 6. They provide an entertainment atmosphere, instead of one conducive to worship of God in the proper spirit, to entice the people of the community to come.
 - a. People like this atmosphere and they will fill buildings to be entertained by some special service, a give-away prize, a movie, a musical performance, a skit or dramatization, etc.
 - b. Where is the authority for these gimmicks to draw people? (Remember, if the church can do anything God has not specifically forbidden, then the church can do whatever it desires and asking for authority is a moot point.)
 7. They observe special services such as choir cantatas, candlelight services, Father's Day, Mother's Day, baby dedication day, etc.
 8. They observe special days like Christmas, Easter (plus Lent), 4th of July, Thanksgiving, etc.
 - a. Can one be pleasing to God and use these "weak and beggarly elements" (Gal. 4:9) in the worship service of God today?
 - b. Paul said he would not be under bondage to the rudiments of the world (Col. 2:8).
 - c. Paul also stated in Col. 2:20-22: *"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?"*
 - d. Being dead with Christ excludes worldly ordinances.
 - e. We must rely on the power of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16).
 9. They accept into their fellowship those who have been baptized into other denominations even though they

profess to believe the true plan of salvation. [More on this point later.]

10. They fellowship denominations, thus an open fellowship that is more open than God allows.
 - a. They have exchange of pulpits with preachers of denominational churches. (However, cf. Eph. 5:11)
 - b. They would have one to believe that as long as you are sincere in your religion, that one way to heaven is as good as another. (However, cf. John 14:6)
11. They use mechanical instruments of music in their worship services.
 - a. Every kind of futile effort for justification of the instrument's use in worship has been espoused, only to be shot down with Scripture.
 - b. In debate after debate, the Lord's church has been victorious showing that we must have authority for all we do in the worship, work and lives of Christians (Col. 3:17).
 - c. Using musical instruments in worship cannot be done "in truth" (John 4:24) or "in faith" (Rom. 14:23; 10:17).
 - d. There simply is no authority for their use.
 - e. The arguments are numerous:
 - 1) The "Psallo" argument (Eph. 5:19).
 - 2) The "in Heaven" argument (Rev. 5:8; 14:2).
 - 3) The "David Used It" argument.
 - 4) The "Psalms" argument.
 - 5) The "Temple" argument.
 - 6) The "Popularity" argument.
 - 7) The "I Like It" argument.
 - 8) The "Home" argument.
 - 9) The "Natural Talent" argument.
 - 10) The "Does Not Say Don't Use It" argument.
 - 11) The "Aid" argument.
 - 12) The "Expedient" argument.
 - 13) The "But It Draws a Crowd" argument.
 - f. These arguments go from the mundane to the ridiculous.

II. ARE MEMBERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OUR BRETHREN?

- A. Be aware that there is division among members of the church of Christ as to the answer to this question.
 1. We should not be interested in the views of men, but only in the view of God as to how this question should be answered.
 2. God does not answer this question in two different ways.

3. It is this writer's firm conviction that the answer to this question is NO! People who are in the Christian Church are not our brethren.
 4. The only possible way they could be our brethren is for them to have been once a member of the church of Christ, the body for which Jesus bled and died, to be added to the church by being baptized for the remission of sins, in the name of Jesus Christ; and then they apostatize from the Lord's church and enter into the fellowship of the denomination called the Christian Church.
- B. It is understood that the Christian Church says they believe in the Bible plan of salvation.
1. They contend that they believe, repent, confess, and baptize just like we do in the churches of Christ.
 2. I adamantly deny their claim.
 - a. They do not believe the same things we believe about Christ and His body.
 - b. They do not believe the same things about the Bible that we believe.
 - c. They do not repent as God would have them repent of their denominational mentality.
 - d. They do not confess their allegiance to Jesus Christ and His body like we believe when they join themselves with a denominational body.
 - e. It would be impossible for their baptisms to be valid and scriptural if their beliefs are incorrect, their repentance is unacceptable to God, and their confession is not pledging their allegiance to Christ.
 - f. Their plan of salvation cannot be by the authority of Jesus Christ.
- C. Concerning their baptism, many contend since "they say" they are baptized for the remission of sins, they are added to the Lord's church.
1. Some will argue that if they obey the simple plan of salvation of hearing, believing, repentance, confession, and baptism they have been added to the Lord's church.
 2. Obviously, that statement, taken at face value, I cannot deny.
 3. But the problem is (as already pointed out), their belief, repentance and confession are not by the authority of Jesus Christ.
 4. **Therefore, it would be impossible for them to taught wrong and be baptized right, and be added to the Lord's church. THIS IS SCRIPTURALLY IMPOSSIBLE.**
 5. An example may be found in Acts 19:1-7.

- a. We read of twelve men at Ephesus whom Paul had asked, "Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye have believed?"
 - b. Their reply was, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit."
 - c. Paul immediately responds and says, "Unto what then were you baptized?"
 - d. They said, "Unto John's baptism."
 - e. After Paul instructed them, they were "re-baptized" or baptized scripturally in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - f. What we must understand is:
 - 1) These twelve men were baptized with the right design or action (immersion). John's baptism was a baptism of immersion like New Testament baptism.
 - 2) They were baptized with the right motive, sincerely; to obey God.
 - 3) They were baptized for the right purpose because John's baptism was "for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4).
 - g. But, their baptism was invalid and was not scriptural or authorized because it was not baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - h. Please see that here were twelve men who sincerely thought they were obeying God with the right motive, right design, and the right purpose, but their baptism was unauthorized and wrong. Why? Because their belief was wrong, their repentance could not have been accepted (wrong fruit), and their confession was a confession of their sins, not of faith in Christ.
 - i. From this passage we can point out some very important truths.
 - 1) It is possible for a man to be baptized with the right action, the right motive, and the right purpose and be sincerely wrong.
 - 2) An unauthorized baptism, not prepared for by the authority of Jesus Christ, is not permissible and acceptable baptism by the Lord, and does not add one to the Lord's body.
- D. We recognize the Christian Church says by their own admission that they baptize just like the church of Christ. Yes, their baptism does consist of the right design, the right motive, and the right purpose but my contention is that their baptism is invalid and unauthorized because their belief in Christ and His authority is wrong, their repentance is based on a wrong belief, and their confession is not

an allegiance to the truthfulness of Christ's scripture.

- E. No baptism of any person in the Bible ever added them to a denomination.
 - 1. No person who was ever "born again" was added to anything but "the kingdom of heaven" (John 3:3,5).
 - 2. No person was ever baptized with the intention of being added to a denomination and was baptized correctly. This is an impossibility.
 - 3. The fact is, people who are not baptized for the correct reason based upon the right belief, repentance and confession are not members of the Lord's church.
 - 4. The Christian Church is not the Lord's church. They are a denomination.
 - a. Defining a denomination: It is any group of people gathered together without the authorization of the Word of God. It is a body of people that exist separate and apart from the church of Christ without authority to exist.
 - b. How many churches does the Lord claim to have as His own? (Matt. 16:18,19; Eph. 1:22,23; 4:4). He claims to have but one!
 - 5. Unless one is willing to claim that the Christian Church is not one body with the church of Christ, then that person has no right to tell a person that he needs to come out of it.
 - 6. The Lord has only one church and it can be identified in the New Testament. The Christian church cannot identify itself as a New Testament church.
 - a. Its worship has been perverted; its organization has been perverted; its view of the authority of the Bible (our rule of faith and practice) has been perverted.
 - b. It cannot identify itself as the New Testament church in many other ways.
- F. If anyone of the identification marks of the New Testament church is wrong it cannot claim to be the New Testament church.
 - 1. The church of Christ is the one true church of the Bible.
 - 2. Is the Christian church the one true church? No, because it cannot be identified in the Bible.
 - 3. If the church of Christ is the one true church, then the Christian Church cannot be.
 - 4. Christ is the head of the church of Christ (Eph. 5:23). Is Christ the head of the Christian Church? No, He is not.
 - a. He is not the head of two differing bodies.
 - b. It would be a monstrous being that would have one head and two bodies.
 - c. The Bible always refers to the body of Christ in the

singular.

5. The church of Christ is the bride of Christ. Is the Christian Church the bride of Christ? No, it cannot be.
 - a. Christ is not a spiritual bigamist.
 - b. He has only one bride which He loves and died for.
 6. The church of Christ is the family of God. Is the Christian Church the family of God? No! Does the Bible teach that God the Father has more than one family? NO!
 7. Since, the forgoing is true, it becomes obvious that the Christian Church is a sinful denominational institution made by man and not authorized by Christ!
- G. Now, can one be baptized in a denominational context with the right design, right motive, right purpose and be saved in that denominational context? NO!
1. Can one become a member of the church without knowing it?
 2. There is no biblical example of anyone who obeyed the Gospel of Jesus Christ and did not know they were a part of the kingdom of God (e.g. Acts 8:12).
 3. Can one become a member of the Lord's church without intending to become a member of the Lord's church?
 4. Will God add a man to the church who has no intention of being a part of the church?
 5. God will not add anyone to the body of His Son if they intend not to do so whether they are ignorant or knowledgeable (2 Thess. 1:8).
 6. If a penitent believer is baptized for the remission of sins with the intention of becoming a Seventh-day Adventist, or a Mormon, or a Baptist, or a Catholic, or a Oneness Holiness Pentecostal, will Christ add him to the church of Christ? No!
 7. If a penitent believer is baptized for the remission of sins with the intention of becoming a member of kingdom of heaven, the church of Christ, will Christ add that person to the church? Yes! He knows unto what he is being added.
 8. Can a Christian Church preacher baptize a man in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins into the Christian church? NO!
 9. Can a Gospel preacher baptize a man in the name of the Lord for the remission of sins into the church of Christ? Yes!
 - a. The Gospel preacher will let the one baptized know exactly what he is being baptized into, the church of Christ, the body of the saved.
 - b. The Gospel preacher acted by the authority of Jesus Christ.

- c. A challenge: Can anyone find one scriptural example, one scriptural implication where anyone who was baptized in the Bible who did not know about the Lord's church? It cannot be found.
10. The person who was baptized had to know what he needed to repent of before he could become a member of the Lord's church.
 - a. Jews had to repent of their Judaism in order to be scripturally baptized.
 - b. Gentiles had to come out of their heathen practices before they could become New Testament Christians.
 - c. No one could remain in his/her former religion.
- H. Those twelve in Ephesus of Acts 19 recognized they were not scripturally baptized.
 1. They did not remain as John's followers.
 2. They did not denominationalize themselves from the body of Christ but they became a member of the body of Christ by being baptized scripturally.
- I. The Bible, the Word of God, is a seed (Luke 8:11).
 1. The seed is the means by which God uses to bring forth children.
 2. The seed will only bear fruit after its own kind.
 - a. If you plant wheat seed, you reap wheat.
 - b. If you plant the human seed of man in a woman, she bears a human child.
 - c. If you plant the seed of the Word of God into the heart of man, and when the seed germinates and grows, when the child is born, then he has entered into the kingdom of heaven. He does not enter into a denominational church.
 3. They, the ones who have been born, know and have no intention of being added unto anything but the church of Christ.
 - a. The Bible teaches nothing about the Christian Church.
 - b. Many men and women, ignorantly thinking they have obeyed the gospel (when in fact they have not), enter into denominational churches (whether Christian Church or Baptist, or any other; it makes no difference).
 4. A Christian Church preacher will not teach them to be added unto the church of Christ.
 - a. He intends to teach them to be added to the Christian Church.
 - b. Now, they may think they are a part of the church, and even profess that they are, but they are not because the constituent elements that makes the

church of Christ "the church of Christ" are not to be found in its completeness in the denomination.

5. The Christian Church was not built by Jesus Christ. Jesus only built His church, which He purchased with His own blood.
6. Christ is not the foundation of the Christian Church. For Jesus Himself is the foundation of His church.
7. The birthplace of the Christian Church was not in Jerusalem but was here in the United States.
8. The birthday of the church was around the year A.D. 33 and the Christian Church was founded not over 100 years ago.

Divisions In The Church Are Condemned By Christ

Jimmy Young

1. Having prayed for Himself, Jesus also prayed for the unity (oneness) of all His disciples, John 17:11,20-22.
 - a. Unity and division diametrically oppose each other.
 - 1) Unity: "State of being united; oneness. Being in agreement."
 - 2) Division: "Acts or instance of dividing."
 - b. God and Christ demand unity in the church. Unity at all cost? NO! Only the unity based upon the Word of God.
2. Jesus prayed that all who would believe on Him be as He and God are one (John 17:8, 14, 20-22).
 - a. Jesus did not pray for unity and then go out and establish or follow religious error. Had He done so, He would be the author of a differing Gospel which would promote division.
 - b. Paul reminds all that Christ is not divided (1 Cor.1:13). Nor is there but one Gospel (Gal. 1:6-10).
3. Christ built (established) only one church. Matt. 16:18
 - a. These is only one spiritual body (Eph. 4:4; 1 Cor. 12:20).
 - b. Division is therefore condemned by Christ (1 Cor. 1:10; 12:20; Rom. 12:16; 15:5).
4. Without unity, it is difficult to persuade sinners the importance of doctrine and its oneness.
 - a. Jesus had already emphasized the importance of abiding in His Word (John 8:31).
 - b. Jesus emphasizes the power of unity among His disciples to convince an unbelieving world (John 17:23).
 - c. What a powerful message we have to share with the world!

DISCUSSION:

I. HOW IS DIVISION AVOIDED?

- A. It requires a oneness of heart (mind!)
 - 1. The early church was of one heart — it can be done!
 - 2. The church or kingdom is called a kingdom of peace (Rom. 14:7). They were to follow things which make for peace (Rom. 14:19). At Jerusalem all that believed were together (unified) (Acts 2:44). They were of one heart and one soul (Acts 4:32).
- B. Jesus made unity possible.
 - 1. We think and reason with the heart (mind) (Matt. 9:4; Mark 2:8).
 - a. If it was possible for the early Christians, it is possible for us too.
 - b. They were united by their thinking and reasoning based upon the Word of God.
 - c. If we honestly and truly have the desire for a Bible based unity, we will.
 - 2. With the heart (mind) we get our understanding (Prov. 8:5; Matt. 13:15).
 - 3. With the heart (mind) man is able to believe (Rom. 10:10).
 - a. We avoid division by being united in faith (Acts 4:32; Phil. 1:27; Eph. 4:5).
 - b. It is easy to see why Jesus condemns division in the church.
 - 4. With the heart (mind) man purposes (Dan. 1:8; 2 Cor. 9:7).
 - a. We can be united as one!
 - b. If we are united Scripturally, we will be united in purpose.
 - 5. With the heart (mind) man loves (Matt. 22:37; 1 Peter 1:22).
 - a. Division is avoided when we are of one heart.
 - b. Jesus made unity possible through proper love (John 14:15; 15:14).

II. THE BIBLE TEACHES (IN MOST CASES) DIVISION IS SINFUL.

- A. To obey and follow Scripture guarantees no division.
- B. Note Scriptures emphasizing the importance of unity:
 - 1. Jesus prayed for unity (John 17:20-21).
 - 2. Jesus warned against division (Matt. 12:25).
 - 3. The elders at Ephesus was warned (Acts 20:30).
 - 4. The church at Corinth was warned (1 Cor. 11:18-19).
 - 5. God through the Scripture condemns division (1 Cor. 1:10).

6. Christians are commanded to endeavor to keep unity (Eph. 4:3).
 7. Division is carnally minded (1 Cor. 3:3)
 8. God hates division (Prov. 6:19).
- C. The exceptions must be obeyed.
1. Sadly, many are willing to accept "anything" in the name of "unity."
 2. There are some commands from the Word of God which will allow some unity.
 - a. Those who cause division by rejecting the doctrine — they have become "ungodly" such cannot be fellow-shipped (Rom. 16:17-18).
 - b. The church cannot be united with worldliness (1 Cor. 5).

III. WHAT UNITY REQUIRES OF CHRISTIANS (THE CHURCH).

- A. It requires agreement with the Godhead (Col. 2:9).
 1. We must agree with God (Heb. 10:7).
 2. We must agree with Christ (John 12:48-50).
 3. We must agree with the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51).
- B. It requires agreement with the elders (if they are faithful to God's Word) (Heb. 13:17).
 1. Know them, not just a mere acquaintance (1 Thess. 5:12-13).
 2. Remember them and obey them (Heb. 13:17).
- C. It requires being in agreement with each other based upon what the Scriptures teach.
 1. It is a pleasant thing (Psa. 133:1).
 2. We will have to be of one accord Scripturally speaking (Phil. 2:2-4).
 3. Means of agreement:
 - a. Be in agreement with God (Amos 3:3).
 - b. It requires reconciliation (Matt. 18:15-17; Luke 17:3-4).
 - c. It requires doing what we know is right before God (James 4:17).

IV. THE RESULTS OF DIVISION — CONDEMNATION!

- A. Sadly, some in the church give little or no thought as to what division does.
 1. It fails to glorify God (Rom. 15:4-6).
 2. Many will never obey the Gospel thinking that "unity and diversity" is okay (John 20:30-31).
 3. The Lord's kingdom (church) will be divided (Matt. 12:25).
- B. Beware:

1. We cannot unite with those who have forsaken the Lord or those who have never obeyed the Gospel. (Attending "their" services to get them to "ours." The ministerial alliance, etc.)
2. We cannot unite with the modernists — they do not teach the doctrine of Christ.
3. Jesus prayed for the unity of believers and not for the union of saints and sinners.

CONCLUSION:

1. Since Jesus attained unity through His death, our task is to maintain it by:
 - a. Following the doctrine of Christ as communicated through His apostles.
 - b. Displaying the mind of Christ as we interact with one another in the local congregations.
 - c. Honoring the New Testament pattern for church organization, which is designed to stop the growth of religious division whenever or wherever it may occur.
 - d. It is not always possible to avoid religious division (cf. 1 Cor. 11:19), but may we do all we can to preserve the unity we enjoy in Christ and the unity He so desires of all.
 - e. Jesus died for the unity described in the Scripture...it is up to you and I to make sure we do not violate it in any way.
2. God be with us as we strive together in keeping Scriptural unity as commanded (Phil. 1:27).

Christ Designed The Plan For Entrance Into His Church

Melvin Schexnayder

1. Some people apparently don't see the need for following directions when it comes to entering the church.
2. Christ stated in (John 10:1), *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."*
3. Solomon said (Prov. 14:12), *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."* Though Christ designed only one entrance into the church, there are certain steps one must follow to obtain that entrance and those steps are found in the plan of salvation.

DISCUSSION:**I. THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS THE ENTRANCE — HEARING:**

A. Why hearing?

B. Hearing means to "give attention to."

1. Hearing shows how one obtains faith. Rom. 10:17, "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" The problem is that most people today would rather hear the words of men over the word of God.
2. On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:22), Peter say's, "*Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.*" Peter say's "pay attention to what I'm about to tell you." v.37 reads "*Now when they heard...*" meaning they paid attention to Peter's words.

II. THE SECOND STEP — BELIEF.

A. Believing in the Gospel.

B. Believing in the Lord.

1. Mark 16:16, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*"
2. John 8:24, this is the Lord speaking, "*I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*"
 - a. A lot is taken away from the plan of salvation when so many religious organizations think and teach that all one has to do to be saved is believe.
 - b. They say "just believe in the Lord and you will be saved." They want the man but not the plan. True belief is more than just a knowledge of knowing that Jesus is the Son of God; the devils have that knowledge, but that doesn't mean they're looking for the entrance to the church.
 - c. To gain entrance into the church, every step in the plan has to be followed, otherwise you won't make it in. Just as there was only one entrance into the Ark for people to be saved (Gen. 6:16), there's only one entrance into the church.

III. THE THIRD STEP FOR ENTRANCE INTO THE CHURCH — REPENTANCE:

A. Definition — *metanoeo*, lit., "to perceive afterwards" (*meta*, "after," implying "change," *noeo*, "to perceive;" *nous*, "the mind, the seat of moral reflection"), to change one's mind or purpose, a change for the better; of repentance from sin. (from *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*).

- B. Holman Bible Dictionary say's, "A feeling of regret, a changing of the mind, or a turning from sin to God."
1. Knowing what repentance is and why one must repent should be enough to make one feel guilty, but still many refuse to repent.
 2. To turn to God means that they will have to give up their sinful pleasures.
 - a. On the day of Pentecost after the people heard Peter's words, they asked Peter and the other apostles *"Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..."* (Acts 2:37,38).
 - b. Christ said (Luke 13:3,5), *"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."*
 - c. The expression "for the remission of sins" in (Acts 2:38), is the same as the expression found in Matt. 26:28. There, Christ said *"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."*
 - d. Only through the blood of Christ can one receive remission or forgiveness of sins because God doesn't want any of us to perish.
 - e. 2 Peter 3:9, *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*
 - f. The Gospel of Christ calls people to repent — to turn from sin and turn to the living God. To the Athenians, Paul the apostle declared, *"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent"* (Acts 17:30).

IV. THE FOURTH STEP — CONFESSION:

- A. Matt. 10:32-33, Jesus said, *"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."*
- B. The apostle Paul stated (Rom.10:9-10), *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*
 1. To confess Jesus is to make him the object of our faith; it is to honor and declare him as our Savior. Those who do

this, Christ say's He will do the same for them before the Father in heaven.

2. Confession of the mouth should lead to a confession by actions and life. Words mean nothing if they are not enforced by action; in other words, put up or shut up.
3. A good example of confession by mouth is the Eunuch (Acts 8:28-37). First, he needed to understand what he was reading. Second, he had the desire to be taught the truth. Philip started in book of Isaiah and taught him about Christ. He brought him to the entrance into the church.

V. The Fifth and Final Step — BAPTISM:

A. What is Baptism?

B. What does It do?

1. Baptism, like the four preceding steps, is an act of obedience.
 - a. Heb. 5:8-9, *"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."*
 - b. It is also a command (Matt. 28:19-20).
 - c. It is the answer of a good conscience toward God (1 Peter 3:21).
 - d. It is a burial (Rom. 6:4).
2. Baptism saves (1 Peter 3:21; Mark 16:16).
 - a. It puts us into Christ and his death (Rom. 6:3).
 - b. It allows one to put on Christ (Gal. 3:27).
 - c. It washes away our sins (Acts 22:16; 2:38).
3. The eunuch, after he was baptized, went on his way rejoicing because he had gained entrance into the church.
 - a. When a person is baptized, all his or her sins are washed away.
 - b. He or she is then raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4; 2 Cor. 5:17).
 - c. Then they are added to the church where the saved are (Acts 2:47).

VI. The Plan For Entrance Into The Church:

A. Hear — *akouo*, Rom. 10:17.

B. Believe — *pisteuo*, John 8:24; Mark 16:16.

C. Repent — *metanoeo*, Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38.

D. Confess — *honnologeio*, Matt. 10:32-33; Rom.10:9-10.

E. Baptism — *baptisma*, Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21.

F. All of these steps must be followed for one to enter into the church. Failure to do so means you have failed to find the

entrance which Christ designed.

CONCLUSION:

1. Deut. 30:19, the Scripture reads, *"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."*
2. I have now set before you this day the plan which Christ designed for one to enter His church, follow them and you will find the entrance.

Christ Designated The Worship In Which The Members Of His Church Are To Participate

Tim Hester

1. This is a very important because many members of the church today have lost sight of the fact that only worship authorized by the Holy Scriptures and offered in the exact way that the Scriptures authorize is acceptable to God. It is not unusual at all to hear of some preachers and churches holding "joint worship service with denominational churches."
 - a. This is absolutely sinful and any preacher or congregation that does so should be marked and avoided by faithful Christians every where.
 - b. The word "worship" is found 108 times, "worshipped" 70 times, and "worshipping" 5 times, for a total of 183 times.
 - c. God has never required man to worship without giving him specific, explicit and definite instruction relative to how He wants to be worshipped.
 - d. It has never been left up to man as to how he wants to worship.
 - e. However it seems that some of our own brethren have come to that exact conclusion.
2. I believe we would do well to look at the Old Testament example of Cain and Abel and the manner in which these two brothers offered their worship to God (Gen. 4:3-5).
 - a. Evidently Cain reasoned that it made no difference what was offered as a sacrifice just so something was offered.
 - b. A little bit of deductive reasoning we can learn that God had commanded a certain kind of offering: Heb. 11:4, *"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by*

which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." Rom. 10:17, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

- 1) Abel heard God; Cain refused to listen to God.
 - 2) God was pleased with Abel's offering, but was not pleased with the offering of Cain and He refused to accept it.
 - 3) Neither will He accept any unauthorized worship today.
3. We have now come to the crux of the whole matter of Christian worship.
- a. We have a guidebook and that book is the New Testament.
 - b. In the New Testament, Christ has designated the worship in which members of His church are to participate.
 - c. If we are to worship God acceptably today, we must adhere strictly, without any change, subtraction, addition or substitution to Christ's instructions, which are plainly designated in this book.
4. I believe that a negative approach, showing why many members of the church are not worshipping God acceptably, will help in understanding how we must worship in order to please Him
- a. Too many members are trying to get by on the very minimum. "How much must I do?" Instead of "how much can I do" (How many services must I attend? How much do I have to give?) When we have done all that we can we are still "unprofitable servants" (Luke 17:10).
 - b. Others unacceptably because worship is not according to truth. They worship outside the truth (John 4:24; Matt. 15:8-9).

DISCUSSION:

- I. **CHRIST HAS DESIGNATED THAT CHRISTIANS ARE TO SING AS WORSHIP TO GOD** (1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Rom. 15:9).
 - A. This is what the early church did and for our worship to be acceptable we must do the same.
 - B. The New Testament does not teach Christians to play on a mechanical instrument of music in worship.
 1. There is not one syllable of authority for the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship in the New Testament.
 2. The use of it is an addition of man, it is a part of the doctrines and commandments of men.
 3. Therefore, the lack of authority demands we not use it, and that we oppose its use, among others.
- II. **PRAYER IS A DESIGNATED ITEM OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.**
 - A. Jesus taught his disciples to pray (Luke 18:1; 1 Cor. 14:15;

1 Thess. 5:17-18).

- B. The New Testament requires, not only, that we always pray, when we come together for worship, but also that we show reverence and respect for God in our prayers. The flippant attitude that many seem to have in prayer, and the street language that is becoming common place, and the lack of reverence in addressing God, our heavenly Father, shows a woeful lack of reverence toward God, among many.

III. ANOTHER ITEM OF WORSHIP DESIGNATED BY CHRIST IS GIVING.

- A. Not that we just give, but that we give as the New Testament of Christ directs (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; 2 Cor. 8:7).
- B. We must be good stewards when it comes to the use of our money.
- C. One might as well add meat and potatoes to the Lord's supper, or instrumental music to worship, as to have yard sales, pie sales or any other method of raising money to carry on the work of the church. Such is not authorized and is sin!

IV. THE LORD'S SUPPER IS AN ITEM OF WORSHIP IS DESIGNATED BY CHRIST.

- A. The Lord's supper was instituted by Christ Himself to be observed in His kingdom, the church (Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:23-27).
- B. The Lord's supper must be observed at the proper time and in the right way (Acts 20:7).
 - 1. The approved example is the observance of the Lord's supper upon the first day of the week. Every week has a first day, therefore, the Lord's supper is to be observed upon the first day of every week.
 - 2. The designation of the "the first day of the week" forbids its observance on any other day or occasion such as weddings as many are doing.
- C. One may be faithful to eat the supper every Lord's Day but still not worship acceptably because he does not observe it in the right way.
 - 1. The manner of eating is just as important as the eating. Paul told the Corinthians that some of them were eating and drinking damnation to themselves because they were doing so but "not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor. 11:27-29).
 - 2. If our minds are upon anything other than the Lord and His suffering in our behalf, then we are "not discerning the Lord's body." Therefore, we must be faithful to follow

the designated manner of observing the Lord's supper.

V. THE FINAL ITEM OF WORSHIP IS THE PREACHING AND TEACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD.

- A. The very first thing we read about the people who obeyed the Gospel on the day of Pentecost is that "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).
- B. Entirely too many things that are not a part of the "apostles' doctrine" are being taught in our brotherhood today. Faithful Christians will not tolerate such. If we tolerate it, we are as guilty as the false teacher or preacher (2 John 9-11).
- C. The one who falls short of "the apostles' doctrine" will fall short of heaven unless he does something about it.

CONCLUSION:

1. Many are worshipping God but are worshipping Him in vain.
2. Some are not sincere in their worship; hence, they are not worshipping God "in spirit" (John 4:24).
 - a. The worship must not only be according to truth, and it must be in the right spirit.
 - b. Much worship this day is valueless, because it is not according to the truth of God.
3. On the other hand much worship falls into the same category, because the worshipers are not in earnest. This is where many of our own brethren are guilty.
4. Worshipping God is a serious matter and should be treated seriously. When we are asleep during the hour of worship, whispering, laughing, visiting, playing with babies, and such like, our worship is not acceptable to God because we are not worshipping in "spirit" or sincerely (1 Cor. 14:15).
5. Others are worshipping unacceptably because they have not put a bridle on their tongues (James 1:26).
6. Worship is rendered worthless if you have ought against a brother (Matt. 5:23-24).
7. We have a great problem existing among our brethren because so many "worship their work — work at their play and play at their worship!"
8. Does this describe you? If so, there needs to be a change made in your life (2 Cor. 13:5).
9. Why not set about right now to worship God acceptable unto Him?

The Cure For Denominationalism

Melvin Sapp

1. It has been established that Denominationalism is contrary to God's Will (John 17:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:10-13).
2. Unity is possible and pleasant when pursued according to God's Design (Amos 3:3; Psalm 133:1; Eph. 4:3-6).
3. Denominationalism is a departure from God's arrangement (1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 4:1-4; Acts 20:28-32).
4. Despite the travesty of religious division, there is available a cure for Denominationalism.

DISCUSSION:

I. RESTORING THE SPIRIT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.

- A. Having respect for the authority of God, Christ, Holy Spirit and the Word.
 1. God has supreme authority over all (1 Cor. 11:3; 15:24-28).
 2. All authority has been delegated unto Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18-20; Heb. 1:1-3).
 3. The Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all truth (John 16:13; 14:26; 2 Peter 1:20-21).
 4. The Scriptures regulates every doctrine and practice (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Col. 3:17).
 5. Human authority is behind denominational practices and doctrines (Col. 2:8, 21-22)
 6. Marking and avoiding those who teach contrary to the doctrine (Rom. 16:17-18).
 7. Not fellowshiping those who fellowship false teachers (2 John 9-11 Eph. 5:11).
- B. Possessing love for the truth that will not tolerate error.
 1. Jesus is the source of saving truth (John 1:17; 14:6).
 2. Only the truth can make one free (John 8:32).
 3. Christians rejoice in the truth (1 Cor. 13:6).
 4. Paul stood in defense of the Gospel (Phil 1:7,17,27; Gal. 2:5).
 5. Those who don't love the truth risk receiving strong delusions (2 Thess. 2:10-12).
 6. The church is established on the truth (1 Tim. 3:15).
 7. The truth must be kept pure (1 John 2:21).
- C. Willing to be different from the world in faith and in practice.
 1. They were strongly determined to obey God rather than men (Acts 4:13-21).
 2. To love God is to hate the world (2 John 2:15-17; James 4:4).

3. It takes a renewed mind to appreciate the ways of God (Rom. 12:1-2).
 4. To refuse to live in pleasure and to accept the ridicule of peers (1 Peter 4:1-5)
 5. Denominationalism seeks to make us conform to what others are doing.
 6. Being opposed to that which is popular to men takes courage (Exodus 23:2).
 7. One must possess courage to obey the truth when loved ones object (Matt. 10:34-38).
 8. Be willing to stand for truth even if you stand alone (2 Tim. 4:16-18).
- D. Willing to suffer persecution as a part of being a faithful servant.
1. They had rather die for the Lord than to deny Him and live (Rev. 12:11).
 2. Moses chose to suffer rather than to live in pleasures (Heb. 11:24-27).
 3. The apostles spoke of the Lord when threatened not to (Acts 5:25-29).
 4. It was an honor to suffer for preaching Christ (Acts 5:40-42).
 5. It is the normal tendency to avoid all suffering and to see the easy way.
 6. If more people had real conviction, Denominationalism would cease to exist.

II. REFOCUSING ON THE FUNDAMENTAL TEACHINGS OF CHRISTIANITY.

- A. One plan of salvation promotes unity and will cure division.
1. The Gospel is universally in its scope and application (Mark 16:15-16; Rom. 1:14-16).
 2. Only the uncorrupted Gospel can save the soul of sinful man (1 Peter 1:22-25).
 3. Any perversions of the Gospel will damn the teacher and pupil (Gal. 1:6-10).
- B. Demanding true and acceptable worship will promote unity.
1. Abiding in the apostle's doctrine will lay the foundation for true worship (Acts 2:42; Matt. 15:8-9).
 2. Observing the Lord's supper on every Sunday (Acts 2:42, 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:26).
 3. Praying to the Father in Jesus' name (Acts 2:42; Eph. 5:20; 1 Thess. 5:17).
 4. Giving as God prospered us on the 1st day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7).
 5. Singing without the addition of mechanical instruments, humming, whistling or clapping (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16-17;

Matt. 28:20, Acts 20:20,27; Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6).

- C. Understanding the nature of the first church.
 - 1. The universal church consist of all the saved, world-wide, with Christ a its Head (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23; 1 Cor. 12:12-13).
 - 2. Each local congregation is independent, but is joined together by common faith and fellowship as they walk in the light (7 churches of Asia; 1 John 1:5-9).
 - 3. Any organization smaller than the universal church but larger than the local church is foreign to the Bible (Matt. 15:13; Rom. 10:1-3).
 - 4. Denominations are smaller than the universal church but larger than the local church.
- D. Respecting the organizational structure of the New Testament church.
 - 1. The leadership role of the male (1 Cor. 11:35 1 Tim. 2:9-15; 1 Cor. 14:33-35).
 - 2. Having a plurality of elders in the local congregation (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:2).
 - 3. Deacons as official servants under the oversight of elders (1 Tim. 3:8-13; Phil. 1:1).
 - 4. Ministers, preachers or evangelist who proclaim the Gospel publicly and privately (2 Tim. 4:2; Mark. 16:15-16; 2 Cor. 3:6).
 - 5. Members who labor together, using talents given by God to His glory and honor (Rom. 12:4-13).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Despite the seemingly hopeless division in the religious world, God has a cure for division.
- 2. A greater love and devotion to truth would eradicate Denominationalism from the world.
- 3. A return to the truth occurs one person at a time (Mat. 11:28-30)

Denominational Doctrines Embraced By Some Congregations Of The Church Of Christ

Virgil L. Hale

- 1. The Lord's church is not a denomination nor a part of a denomination.
- 2. What is taught and what is practiced is different and must

continue to be different from that taught and practiced in the denominational world. God's Word does not change with the times.

3. Men have always had a lack of respect for God and His will.
 - a. Cain (Gen. 4)
 - b. The children of Israel while Moses was on Sinai (Exodus 32)
 - c. Jeroboam (1 Kings 12)
 - d. Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10)
4. Some today are more concerned about being popular than being right. They want to follow the crowd. Please note Exodus 23:2.
5. God has given us His will and we must not deviate from it.
 - a. Inspired men were guided into "all truth" (John 16:13).
 - b. We have "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3).
 - c. God's Word is able to build us up and give us "an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).
 - d. We have what we need to save our souls (James 1:21).
 - e. Note: 1 Cor. 2:9-13; 16; Eph. 3:1-4
 - f. What we teach and practice must be by the authority of Christ (Col. 3:17).
6. The early church followed the Lord's pattern (Acts 2:42).
7. We cannot do more nor less than what is authorized (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 John 9-11; Rev. 22:18-19)
8. We are told how to worship (John 4:24; 1 Cor. 14:40).
9. Anything else makes worship "vain" (Matt. 15:9).
10. We must be faithful in attendance as well (Heb. 10:23-31).

DISCUSSION:

I. LET US NOTE SOME THINGS FOR WHICH THERE IS NO AUTHORITY.

A. Children's church

1. Some try to justify this practice by saying that children are not Christians, therefore have no responsibility as far as worship is concerned.
2. What about the adults who are supervising, teaching them? They are not in the assembly (Heb. 10:25). The church is to assemble—come together—in one place (1 Cor. 11:17-18; 20; 34)

B. Women taking a leading role.

1. One place—gradually faze women in—women could do everything except be elders, and they were studying that.
2. Note the qualifications (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1; 1 Tim. 2:2,4,8, 11-12) This was not just the custom of the day.

C. Raising hands, clapping, etc.

1. If there is to be any applause, God is the one to do it, not us.

- a. God is the audience—we are participants.
- b. I've heard of clapping when one is baptized.
- b. A misuse of (1 Tim. 2:8). Note: (Psa. 24:4)
2. At Jubilee, Marvin Phillips taught that worship is a celebration
3. A gentleman that I knew years ago took Heb. 12:12 literally. Raised his hands and feet to help him physically. This is healthy—but not what the passage is talking about.
4. Some have reached the point that swing and sway (dance).
- D. Instrumental music, vocal bands, solos, choruses, etc.
 1. Years ago, an instrument was used to "get the pitch." Look at what followed.
 2. Then they made the "*psallo*" argument. This was taken away.
 3. Today, have "group leaders" with mikes consisting of men and women.
 4. All are to sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).
- E. Singing during the Lord's supper and sometimes during the contribution.
 1. There is no authority for two acts of worship at the same time.
- F. Baby dedication services.
 1. Children are a blessing (Psa. 127:3-5).
 2. Are to rear and train them (Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4).
 3. Catholics have gone so far as to have a blessing the animals service.
- G. Mother's Day and Father's Day services.
 1. We are to meet to worship God, not to honor parents, as great a blessing as they are (John 4:24).
- H. Some have what they call a "Holy Hug Line."
 1. Where is the authority for this? Note: (Luke 6:46; Matt. 7:21; Heb. 5:9).
 2. Feelings, to some, are more important than obedience.
- I. Some take the Lord's supper any time they please.
 1. Weddings, baptisms, etc.
 2. Our authority is the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).
- J. Testimonials
 1. Tell how they were saved, how the Lord has blessed them, what God has done for them.
- K. Humming
 1. How can you teach and admonish by humming? (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19)
- L. Turning out the lights—holding hands—chain prayers with girls participating.
 1. These things are usually done away from the "old folks."

- They realize the "old folks" know better. To change the church—they must begin with the young.
2. Much damage is done at "Youth Rallies" with false teachers and their false teaching. Example: "WINTER-FEST" with Jeff Walling.
- M. Direct operation of the Holy Spirit.
1. The Holy Spirit works through the Word and only through the Word.
 2. They are denying the all-sufficiency of the Scripture (Psa. 119:11; 2 Peter 1:3; Acts 20:32; James 1:21; 1 Thess. 2:13)
- N. Some advocate a "New Hermeneutic."
1. This allows them to interpret the Scripture as they please.
 2. They don't like the old way of interpretation.
- O. The idea of "once in fellowship always in fellowship."
1. This is as false as "one in grace always in grace."
 2. If such teaching is true, we must be in fellowship with the Catholic Church and the Christian Church. If not, why not? They were a part of the Lord's church at one time.
- P. Fellowship anyone and everyone who believes in Christ.
1. Who can we fellowship? Anyone who is in fellowship with God (1 John 1:7).
 2. We cannot fellowship error (Eph. 5:11; Rom. 16:17; 2 John 9-11).
- Q. Unauthorized organizations to do the work of the church.
1. Organizations comparable to the Missionary Society doing mission work.
 2. Organizations doing the benevolent work of the church.
 3. It may sound good, and they may do some good work, but are they Scriptural? This is the question that must be answered.
 4. The church is sufficient to do what the Lord wants it to do.

CONCLUSION:

1. Let us be content to do what God said for us to do in the way that He said for us to do it. This will please Him, and it should please us.
2. Let us do what we can to stem the tide of digression that is sweeping through the church of our Lord, and let us do it NOW!

The Moslem Religion Is Not The Religion Of The New Testament

Garland M. Robinson

1. It is good that we study about "other" religions.
 - a. Obviously, any religious activity different from that which is revealed in the New Testament is "another religion."
 - b. The Lord would have us examine and prove what we accept and do not accept — believe and not believe. 1 John 4:1; Matt. 7:15-16; 24:4-5,11,23-26; Eph. 4:14, 1 Thess. 5:21; Heb. 13:9; 2 Peter 2:1
2. This lesson is to examine the Moslem religion known as Islam (Mohammedism). Islam means "submission."
 - a. Its members are commonly known as Moslems (Muslims).
 - b. According to 60 Minutes, ABC News, and USA Today, Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. Boasting a worldwide membership of 1.6 to 1.8 billion people.
 - c. According to TIME Magazine, Newsday and the New York Times, Islam is the fastest growing religion in North America as well as the United States. Approximately 8-10 million people are said to espouse Mohammedism in the USA.
 - d. Only 18% of Moslems live in the Arab world.
 - e. "Mohammed is the most successful of all Prophets and religious personalities." (*Encyclopedia Britannica*)
 - f. Hillary Rodham Clinton said, "Islam is the fastest-growing religion in America, a guide and pillar of stability for many of our people..." (*Los Angeles Times*, May 31, 1996, p.3). What a shame!
3. Americans commonly view Islam as a foreign religion connected with extremists in the middle east.
 - a. However, the religion of Islam is a thriving and prosperous religion — a growing threat to Truth and Righteousness.
 - b. It is worth our time and study to know and learn about it.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **A LOOK AT ISLAM'S BEGINNING AND HISTORY.**
 - A. Mohammed is the founder of Islam or Mohammedism (the name Mohammedism is never used by them).
 1. Born in April 570 A.D. in the city of Mecca, Arabia.
 - a. His father died before he was born and his mother died when he was six.
 - b. For the next two years he lived with his grandfather, at whose death, he was given to an uncle.
 2. His uncle was a merchant and took Mohammed on

- caravans and taught him his trade.
- a. When he was 25 he became the chief merchant and camel driver for a rich widow named Khadija.
 - b. In time, Khadija fell in love with him and proposed marriage.
3. After he was married, Mohammed spent a great deal of time in meditation in a cave near Mecca.
- a. It was in this cave that he claimed to have received visions from Allah (God) through the angel Gabriel.
 - b. At first, his wife did not believe him but later became a convert.
 - c. At 38, he returned to the cave for two years.
 - d. At 40, he assumed the title, apostle of God. His only converts at first were his wife, a freed slave and a nephew named Ali.
- B. It was not until he was 44 that he began to tell people his supposed experiences and how he had received the Koran.
1. He proclaimed that God is one and that he was his prophet.
 2. He opposed idolatry (very prevalent in his day). This caused people to try to kill him.
 3. After announcing plans to overthrow the 360 idols of Mecca, he and about 80 men and 7 women fled to Medina.
 - a. This journey is known as the Hejira (Hegira) and took place on July 16, 622.
 - b. This marks the beginning date of the Moslem calendar of events.
- C. At Medina, he converted the whole city (except the Jews) and became its dictator.
1. He set forth a plan that had six rules:
 - a. We will not worship any but the one God.
 - b. We will not steal.
 - c. We will not commit adultery.
 - d. We will not kill our children.
 - e. We will not slander.
 - f. We will not disobey the prophet in anything that is right.
 2. Articles of their faith include: (listed by Wayne Jackson)
 - a. That there is one God, whom they name Allah, the word being of common origin with the similar Hebrew word "Elohim."
 - b. That all events whether good or evil have been foreordained by God, consequently in every act they are carrying out God's will.
 - c. That there are multitudes of angels, good and bad, invisible yet constantly dealing with men.

- d. That God has given his revelation in the Koran, a series of messages communicated to Mohammed through the Angel Gábriel, though they were not collected until after the prophet's death.
 - e. That God has sent inspired prophets to men, of whom the four greatest have been Adam, Moses, Jesus and, above all others, Mohammed.
 - f. All the biblical prophets, the Christian apostles, and the saints who lived before Mohammed having been recognized and adopted as their own.
 - g. That in the hereafter there will be a final resurrection, judgment, and heaven or hell for every man.
- D. Mohammed initiated conquests in which he sought to bring all men under his system.
1. Each land or tribe was given an alternative to convert to Islam, pay tribute or die. Men were put to death, women were placed in harems of their captors and children were raised in the Moslem faith.
 2. He taught that anyone who died fighting in his cause would have a place in paradise. Needless to say, men fought with great courage because death was a passport to heaven.
 3. In 630 A.D. he marched against Mecca with 10,000 men but they became converts to Islam and the city was taken with very little bloodshed.
 4. A vast empire was gained within 100 years of Mohammed's death that spread through Arabia, Egypt, northern Africa and Spain.
 5. Their advance was largely stopped in southern France by Charles Martel in the battle of Tours in 732 A.D. If it were not for this battle, Mohammedism would have likely spread throughout Europe.
- E. Mohammedism enjoyed great success in the oriental world.
1. Its early believers were fierce, warlike Arabs, who followed their prophet with an undying faith. They believed they were doing the will of God and were taught that everyone who fell in battle would enter an immediate heaven of sensual delight.
 2. Their foe was largely Asiatic Greeks who were submissive by nature. They often surrendered their lands to conquerors rather than fight for their liberty.
 3. The perverted form of "Christianity" of the day was no match against the united forces of a people who believed God was on their side.

II. SOME OF ISLAM'S TEACHINGS COMPARED TO THE BIBLE.

A. Claim of Divine Authority.

1. Islam teaches that the **Koran** (*Qur'an*) is from God and is the most sacred book. The Koran is their Bible.
 - a. Koran means "thing read" — it is a collection of speeches, statements and prayers of Mohammed.
 - b. It was supposedly revealed to Mohammed in pieces over a period of 23 years (from age 40-63). Its original language was Arabic.
 - c. It recognizes Adam (the chosen of Allah), Noah (the preacher of Allah), Abraham (the friend of Allah), Ishmael, Isaac, Joseph, Job, Moses (the speaker of Allah), Aaron, David, Solomon, Elias, Jonah, John the Baptist and Jesus (the word and spirit of Allah) as prophets but thinks of Mohammed (the seal of the prophets) as the greatest prophet of all.
 - 1) They recognize Jesus as a prophet but believe it is blasphemy to call Him the Son of God. This is refuted in Matt. 1:23, 3:17, 17:5, 26:63-64, 27:43, 54, Mark 1:1, 3:11, Luke 1:32-35, 8:28, John 8:24.
 - 2) They claim Jesus is not equal with God because Allah can have no partner or offspring. This contrary to Phil. 2:5-8, John 8:24.
 - d. They claim that:
 - 1) Mohammed is a direct descendant of Abraham through his first born son Ishmael.
 - 2) Mohammed is prophesied of in the Bible in several places, including Deut. 18:18 and John 14:16.
 - 3) Mohammed stands as the last messenger and crowning glory of the foundation of prophethood.
 - 4) The Koran is the only authentic and complete book of Allah (God) in existence today.
 - 5) The Koran contains no scientific fallacies or internal contradictions.
 - 6) The Koran has been preserved just as it was revealed to Mohammed through the angel Gabriel in its pristine, pure form.
 - e. They also have a second source of law called the *Sunnah*. Its major difference from the Koran has to do with its form.
 - 1) They say the Sunnah was inspired by Allah but the wording and actions are Mohammed's.
 - 2) They claim both sources are indispensable and that one cannot practice Islam without consulting both.
 - f. It is said the average Moslem knows little of the

contents of the Koran apart from a few commonly recited verses. On the other hand, some Moslems memorize the entire Koran.

2. The Bible is the True book of God. It is inspired from beginning to end. It forbids any other book as being the Word of God. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21

B. Heaven.

1. Their picture of heaven is a continuation of earth with all its sensual pleasures except for the absence of evil.
 - a. Marriage and childbirth will continue in heaven.
 - b. Each faithful man will have a harem of women.
2. The Bible shows that heaven is not a continuation of earth. 1 Cor. 15:42-44,50; 1 John 3:2; Matt. 22:30

C. The day of worship.

1. Friday is the day of public worship with every faithful Moslem acting as his own priest. A strict moral code prohibits gambling and wine. The Islamic house of worship is a mosque.
2. The Bible reveals that the first day of the week is the day on which God is to be worshipped. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10

D. Primary Belief.

1. They teach the "unity and supreme sovereignty of Allah, the Almighty, the Ever-present, the Everlasting, the All-knowing." "Islam fulfills all the needs of the human nature in such a way that by following the path of Islam, a person can attain a state of perfection that is close to divinity." (<http://islamicweb.com/beliefs/main.htm>)
2. The Bible teaches that Jesus and his New Testament Law is the only way to happiness on this earth and heaven in the by and by. John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 2:38; 1 Cor. 6:11; Phil. 2:10

E. Prayer.

1. Faithful Moslems will stop whatever they are doing and bow down to pray. It is taught that prayer should be made five times a day while facing Mecca in Saudi Arabia. They often travel with a "prayer rug" because it is important the surface they pray on is clean.
2. The Bible teaches that Christians pray to God the Father through Jesus Christ the Son. John 16:23
 - a. Prayer is to be made without ceasing. 1 Thess. 5:17
 - b. Prayer is from honest and sincere lives. 1 Tim. 2:8; 2 Tim. 2:22; James 4:8 There is no physical posture or direction that one must face.
 - c. Prayer is offered for enemies. Matt. 5:44
 - d. Prayer is heard when we obey God's commandments. 1 John 3:22

F. Miscellaneous beliefs of Islam.

1. The Holy Spirit is the highly esteemed angel Gabriel.
Answered in Luke 1:19,26.
2. The Bible is accepted but has been tampered with by mankind. It should only be believed in as far as it is confirmed by the Koran. It is to be generally respected except in those parts that oppose the Koran.
Answered in 2 Tim. 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21.
3. Jesus was not forsaken to the Jews to be abused and killed, but was "made to appear so to them." He did not die but was raised up into heaven by God.
Answered in Mark 15:44-45, John 19:33-37, 38-42
4. Jesus will return to earth just before the final day of judgment. He will establish peace and justice on earth and call all humanity to Islam.
Answered in 1 Thess. 4:13-18, John 18:36, 14:6, Acts 4:12
5. There are no intermediaries between man and God.
Answered in 1 Tim. 2:5, John 14:6, Heb. 2:9-13, 7:15, 8:6, 9:15,24, 1 John 2:1
6. Faith in God, belief in his messengers and obedience of his commands erase and cancel man's evil deeds.
Answered in John 3:16, 8:24, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, 8:37, 22:16, Rom. 10:9-10, Rev. 2:10

III. THE RELIGION OF ISLAM DOES NOT BEAR THE MARKS OF IDENTITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.

A. Islam has the wrong founder and head: Mohammed.

1. Jesus is the Christ, the only begotten Son of God. John 1:1-3,14, 3:16, Eph. 2:20
2. Jesus is the head of the church, the eternal kingdom of God. Eph. 1:22-23, 4:15,23, Col. 1:18, 1 Peter 2:7
3. Jesus is the savior of the world. Luke 2:11, John 4:42, Acts 13:23, Eph. 5:23, Phil. 3:20, 2 Tim. 1:10

B. Islam began at the wrong place: Mecca, Arabia.

1. Jerusalem was prophesied as the beginning place of the Lord's eternal kingdom. Isa. 2:2-4, Micah 4:1-3
2. Jerusalem was the beginning place. Matt. 16:21, Luke 24:49-53, Acts 1:4,8,12, 2:1-5

C. Islam began at the wrong time: 622 A.D.

1. The eternal kingdom (the church of Christ) was prophesied to begin during the days of the Roman Empire. Dan. 2:44
2. It began as was prophesied in the days of the Roman kings, 33 A.D. Mark 9:1, Acts 2:1-4, Col. 1:13

D. Islam has the wrong law: Koran.

1. The word of the Lord, the Bible, the New Testament

- governs the Lord's people. Matt. 5:17-20, 2 Tim. 3:16-17
- 2. The New Testament will be used to judge the world. John 12:48, Acts 17:31, Rev. 20:11-12

E. Islam has the wrong ancestry: Ishmael (son of Abraham and Hagar).

- 1. Isaac was the child of promise, not Ishmael. Gen. 17:18-21
- 2. Gal. 4:21-31 makes clear that Christians are children of Abraham through Isaac.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. We certainly wish no ill-will to those who espouse Islam. However, we wish to honestly examine the Scriptures and put to the test the evidence and see which is right. 1 John 4:1
- 2. Mohammedism has been weighed in the balance and found wanting.
 - a. It is not supported by the Scriptures.
 - b. It is a plant that will be rooted up in the last day. Matt. 15:13

The Plea Of The Churches Of Christ

Rom. 16:16
Clifford Dixon

DISCUSSION:

I. CALLING BIBLE THINGS BY BIBLE NAMES.

- A. "Churches of Christ," Rom. 16:16; Acts 4:12; James 2:7; Eph. 3:15
- B. Lord adds the saved to the church, Acts 2:47.
- C. Sunday is the "Lord's Day," Rev. 1:10; Acts 20:7; Mark 16:9.
- D. Lord's supper, 1 Cor. 11:20.

II. DOING BIBLE THINGS IN BIBLE WAYS.

- A. Baptism both a burial and necessary to be saved, Rom. 6:4; Mark 16:16.
- B. Breaking bread on the first day of the week, Acts 20:7.
- C. Singing and making melody in the heart, Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19.
- D. Coming together in one place for worship, 1 Cor. 11:20; 14:23.

III. IN MATTERS OF FAITH UNITY.

- A. Faith comes by the word of God, Rom. 10:17

- B. Commands of the Gospel
- C. Approved examples of the Gospel.

IV. IN MATTERS OF OPINION LIBERTY, Rom. 14,15.

- A. Be sure not to be a stumbling block.
- B. We will all be judged by Christ.

V. IN ALL THINGS LOVE

- A. Love the truth, 2 Thess. 2:10.
- B. Speak the truth in love, Eph. 4:15.
- C. Showing the characteristics of love, 1 Cor. 13:4-8.

The Essentiality Of The Church Of Christ

Walter W. Pigg

1. "Essentiality" defined. Webster's definition: "absolutely necessary, indispensable."
2. By "the church of Christ," we mean:
 - a. The church predicted by the prophets (Isa. 2:2-3; Dan. 2:44; et al.).
 - b. The church which Christ said he would build (Matt. 16:18).
 - c. "The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).
3. Christ's church is essential, that is, "absolutely necessary, indispensable," with regard to salvation. Salvation includes forgiveness of sins here and now, and a place in the eternal home of the soul in the world to come.
4. In view of the above, nothing should be of so great concern to God-fearing people as "The Essentiality of the church of Christ."
5. This means we should give the utmost attention to two important things especially.
 - a. The essentiality of Christ's church is clearly set forth in God's word.
 - b. We must be ever on guard against things which would render the church unessential. That is, the Gospel can be perverted and the church rejected (Gal. 1:6-10).
 - c. When Christ's church is moved away from the divine pattern by error, it can become unessential to salvation.

DISCUSSION:

- I. THE ESSENTIALITY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST CLEARLY REVEALED.

- A. The church was in God's mind eternally.
1. Eph. 3:10-11: *"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."*
 - a. God's wisdom is evidenced by the glorious church in that it serves His purpose in making salvation possible through Christ and His church.
 - b. To deny the essentiality of the church would be to contend that God's "manifold wisdom" displayed by the church was of no value, or that God lacked wisdom.
 2. The first reference to the church in God's revelation is found in Genesis 3:15.
 - a. The "seed" of woman would bruise the head of the serpent (Satan) and his "seed" would bruise the heel of the seed of woman.
 - b. The "seed" of woman is Christ (Gal. 3:16).
- B. From Genesis 3:15 and onward, God's plan for man's salvation points to Christ and his church.
1. God's promise to Abraham was, *"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed"* (Gen. 12:3).
 2. When Abraham offered his son, Isaac, God's promise to him was renewed: *"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou has obeyed my voice"* (Gen. 22:18).
 3. The promise to Abraham would be carried forth by Abraham's great grandson, Judah.
 - a. Genesis 49:10: *"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."*
 - b. Christ, to be an offspring of Judah, was described as "Shiloh," (bearer of peace).
- C. The prophets predict the establishment of the church.
1. Isaiah: *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. ... For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem"* (Isa. 2:2-3). The "Lord's house" has reference to the church (1 Tim. 3:15).
 2. Daniel: *"And in the days of these kings [Roman kings] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall*

never be destroyed..." (Dan. 2:44). This "kingdom which shall never be destroyed" is the church (Heb. 12:28).

3. Jeremiah foretells the coming of the church and a new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13) There are other prophecies which foretell the coming of the church.
- D. In harmony with the promises made to Abraham and verified by the prophets we note:
1. Christ says, *"I will build my church"* (Matt. 16:18).
 2. From Acts 2, where the birthday of the church is recorded, we see it in existence. People were "added" to the church on that day (Acts 2:47).
 3. The purchase price of the church was the blood of God's Son (Acts 20:28).
 4. There is no mention in God's word of any plan to build more than the "one" church. The prophecies concerning the church or kingdom always speak in the singular. The only time a plurality of churches is mentioned a number of congregations are referred to, such as "the seven churches of Asia."
- E. Evidence of the "one church" is sufficient to remove all doubt as to its singularity.
1. Christ said he would build "one" (Matt. 16:18).
 2. The blood of Christ purchased only "one" (Acts 20:28).
 3. The prophets foretold only "one" church or kingdom (Isa. 2:2-3; Dan. 2:44, et al.).
 4. There is "one body" and the "body" is the church. *"And he is the head of the body, the church..."* (Col. 1:18). *"There is one body, and one Spirit"* (Eph. 4:4).
- F. Salvation is found only in that "one church" (Eph. 5:23).
1. *"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body"* (Eph. 5:23).
 2. Therefore, to be saved, one must be in that which Christ will save, the "body" or "church." Paul speaks of the condition of the Ephesians before they were Christians, a part of the church. *"That at that time ye were without Christ...having no hope, and without God in the world"* (Eph. 2:12). People who are today "without Christ" have "no hope," just as the Ephesians were.

II. WHY HAVE WE REVIEWED THE FOREGOING MATERIAL?

- A. God's revealed plans concerning the church signifies something of great importance.
1. It is true that God's thoughts are "higher" than our "thoughts" (Isa. 55:9). Even so, we can understand that God would not have given as much thought to something

unimportant as He gave to the church. There is no subject discussed in God's word which ranks in importance equal to man and his salvation. The center of that subject is Christ and His church.

2. God's word points to Christ and His church and the salvation which is found therein.

B. If Christ's church is not essential to salvation, How do we explain the following:

1. That Christ's church is a display of God's wisdom, "*According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Eph. 3:10-11). Why did God have the church in mind even before man sinned?

2. That reference was made in Genesis 3:15 to salvation which would come through Christ, made possible by the blood by which the church was purchased.

3. That attention was given to the salvation which would come through the seed of Abraham.

4. That many prophecies were made relative to the coming of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom or church (Isa. 2:2-3; Dan. 2:44, et al.).

5. That John, Christ and others preached that "the kingdom is at hand." What would be the importance of this if it didn't involve the salvation in Christ?

6. That Christ declared, "*...I will build my church*" (Matt. 16:18).

7. That the purchase price of Christ's church was his own blood (Acts 20:28). Why would Christ die for that which is not essential?

8. That people were told to be baptized for remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Those baptized were added to the church (Acts 2:47). Those who were "baptized into Christ...put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). To "put on Christ" is to be in the body of Christ, which is the church (Col. 1:18).

9. That Christ is the "head of the church" and also "savior of the body" (Eph. 5:23).

10. That people are "translated" into the "kingdom of his dear Son" where "redemption" and "forgiveness of sins" are found (Col. 1:13-14). Why be "translated" into the kingdom [church] if not essential?

11. That there is only "one" blood-bought, Christ-built church (Acts 20:28; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4). If man-made churches are the same as the one true church, why aren't they mentioned in an approved way in God's word, rather than being condemned? (Matt. 15:9)

C. To deny the essentiality of the church of Christ is to deny God's clearly spoken word.

1. Many warnings of departure from God's truth are given

- in the New Testament. The truth concerning the essentiality of Christ's church is widely rejected.
2. The "doctrines of men" are much more widely accepted than the truth of God.
 3. The danger of accepting such doctrines is great, even within the church.

III. THINGS WHICH MAY RENDER THE CHURCH OF CHRIST NON-ESSENTIAL.

- A. By rendering the church of Christ non-essential, we mean the acceptance of error which changes it, rendering it unacceptable to Christ.
 1. Christ's true church will always be essential, but the church can be rejected because of error.
 2. The church at Laodicea is a good example (Rev. 3:14-17). It was totally unacceptable in its present condition. Unless there was repentance, Christ would "spew" [vomit] it out of his mouth (v.16). The church at Laodicea, in its condition, was not essential. Are there churches today like Laodicea? Of course there are! If Christ would reject a church in the first century He will reject one today.
- B. We must be aware of the danger which is now rampant, not only in the world but also in the church.
 1. Our greatest danger today is not from without, but from within our Lord's church.
 2. We must not allow the congregation of which we are a part to become non-essential due to the espousal of error. This is happening on an increasing basis, even with the larger congregations. The error which is now being espoused is so extensive that we cannot begin to deal with the many forms. We shall note only a few.
 3. The prevailing attitude of indifference has plagued so many brethren that the danger is the greatest we've ever seen.
- C. Some examples of error considered.
 1. The acceptance of denominationalism. It is a matter of fact that such men as: Lynn Anderson, Rick Atchley, Joe Beam, Buddy Bell, J. Wayne Kilpatrick, Max Lucado, Randy Mayeux, Rubel Shelly, F. LaGard Smith, Jeff Walling, and a host of others are friends of denominational religion. These brethren are denominational in different degrees. Some are out-rightly upholding and bidding "God speed" to denominations. Fellowship with denominations is occurring with increased frequency, including fellowship with the Catholic Church. When brethren uphold denominational religion, they are

"enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3:18). It was on the cross of Christ that the true church was purchased. To accept a manmade church is to reject that which Christ purchased.

2. The disregard of God's law on fellowship. It is a common thing now to see announcements of activities in which some of our brethren are in fellowship with denominations. God's law on fellowship is quite clear. cf. Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9-11, 2 Thess. 3:6, Titus 3:10. A new doctrine has arisen which practically annihilates God's law on fellowship. This new doctrine would classify those who respect God's law on fellowship as "Neo-Sectarians." I didn't know I was one of them until reading about this new doctrine. A writer in one of our periodicals uses some of the most vituperative language to describe brethren like me, and most other faithful brethren. A handful of brethren are in cahoots with this strange teaching. I didn't know I was in fellowship with Woodmont Hills. But since Jesus Christ has not made a pronouncement to me about Woodmont Hills, I guess I must be, at least according to one writer. But come to think of it, Christ has made a pronouncement in his word as to what I can fellowship. I'll trust Him! The liberal-minded brethren among us must feel good when some of our brethren deny we can obey God's law on fellowship for the good of the church.
3. God's law on worship is being cast aside. God's law on worship is clearly set forth: "*God is a Spirit: and they that worship must worship him in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:24). Instead of offering up praise with great reverence and respect, it is often the case now that brethren are offering that which pleases the people, that is, things which entertain. Will not the offering up of "vain worship" render a church non-essential? If not, how far amiss can a church go and still be essential?

D. The danger of unauthorized works of the church.

1. To my knowledge no one has shown that the Scriptures justify works of the church in other than the three categories accepted by faithful brethren: Evangelism, Edification, and Benevolence.
2. Yet, in our day a wide variety of things are being done which don't fall in either of these categories. How many unauthorized works can the church engage in and still be acceptable?

CONCLUSION:

1. God-fearing and Bible-believing people should have no difficulty

in seeing The Essentiality of The Church of Christ. The many warnings in the New Testament of false teachers should be heeded, lest one be misled as to the true church of our Lord.

2. God's word clearly teaches that salvation can be found only in that one true blood-bought church.
3. God's plan of salvation points only to Christ's church, no other.
4. As a part of that glorious church we must "*Fight the good fight of faith*" if we are to "*lay hold on eternal life*" (1 Tim. 6:12).

Christ Designed The Work Of The Church Of Christ

Ed Floyd

1. It would seem that many in the Lord's church have forgotten what the work of the church really consist of.
2. I am sure there are some who have never known what the work of the church is.
3. To find out, we cannot go to man, for he will tell you all kinds of things.
4. We must go to God's word for our information.
5. He speaks to us today through his Son. Heb. 1:1-2
6. The words of Christ are powerful words. They can save the soul of man. Rom. 1:16
7. God has given us all we need to make us complete. 2 Tim. 3:16-17
8. His word is final and we must heed what it says. Col. 3:17
9. We must learn there are things that are works of the church and there are things which man does and calls works which are not.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **EVERY MEMBER OF THE CHURCH HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THE WORK OF THE CHURCH.**
 - A. Elders must work. 1 Pet. 5:3
 - B. Deacons must work. Acts 6:1-3
 - C. Preachers must work. 2 Tim. 2:15; 4:5
 - D. All members must work. Matt. 25:14-30
- II. **TO BE PLEASING TO GOD WE MUST BE ACTIVE IN THE WORK SET BEFORE US.**
 - A. We must abound in the work of the Lord. 1 Cor 15:58
 - B. We must make proper preparations for our work. 2 Tim. 2:21

- C. We were created to do good works. Eph 2:10
- D. We are to excel in our work. Matt. 5:20
- E. We must be steadfast in our work. Phi. 1:27
- F. We must realize the importance of our work. 2 Tim. 4:2
- G. We must never look away from our work. Luke 9:57-62
- H. We prove our faith by our works. James 2:18

III. THERE ARE THINGS GOD HAS NOT AUTHORIZED AS A WORK OF THE CHURCH.

- A. It is not a work of the church to raise our children.
 - 1. Many parents would like to see the church raise their children.
 - 2. Providing day care for parents is not a work of the church.
 - 3. God has given the parents the job of raising their children. Eph. 6:4
 - 4. When children go astray many times the church is blamed, but it is the parents responsibility.
 - 5. The church can be a big help in this area, but it is not a work of the church to raise children.
- B. It is not a work of the church to be in the entertainment business.
 - 1. The church has never been in the entertainment business.
 - 2. Some don't seem to understand this, they come to worship to be entertained.
 - 3. They have forgotten the purpose for worship. We assemble to worship God. John 4:24
 - 4. They build their new life centers, basketball courts, swimming pools and gyms for the purpose of entertainment.
 - 5. I like good moral entertainment like everyone else, but the church is not the place for it.
 - 6. Not one Scripture authorizes us to be in the entertainment business.
- C. It is not a work of the church to become a social club.
 - 1. Some seem to think we need to become a social club.
 - 2. They want to sit in Bible class with donuts and coffee, watching Andy Griffin.
 - 3. Class time is taken up discussing social events or planning some party.
 - 4. They want their bake sales, car washes and yard sales.
 - 5. We need the same old Jerusalem Gospel that they had in the first century. The Lord's church does not need to change. Acts 2:47
- D. It is not a work of the church to solve all the problems in our society.

1. Some seem to think instead of Gospel Preaching, we need seminars on politics, finances, physical health, and bereavement.
2. What they want is a social Gospel.
3. Seminars, with man's thoughts and ideals will not solve the world problems.
4. There is little to no Bible in the lesson they present.
5. Man turning to God's word and obeying it is the only true solutions to our problems.

IV. THERE ARE THINGS GOD HAS AUTHORIZED AS WORKS OF THE CHURCH.

- A. Evangelism is a work of the church.
 1. Involved in evangelism we have:
 - a. Preaching the Gospel. Acts 5:42; 8:4; Rom. 10:14; Eph. 3:10; 2 Tim. 4:2
 - a. Teaching. Matt. 28:18-20; John 6:45; 2 Tim. 2:2
 - c. Worship. John 4:24; Eph. 5:19; 1 Cor. 14:23
 - d. Living faithful life. 1 Tim. 4:16; 1 Thess. 4:11-13; 1 Peter 3:1.
 2. We must be willing to seek first the kingdom of God.
 3. Everything we do in evangelism must be done with the interest of saving the souls of man.
- B. Edification is a work of the church.
 1. The Lord expects us to grow individually as well as congregationally.
 2. There are a number of ways we accomplish this work.
 - a. We build up through studying God's word. 2 Tim. 2:15; Eph. 4:12-16
 - b. The things we do are to be done unto edification. 1 Cor. 14:26
 - c. We are to provoke each other. Heb. 10:24-25
 - d. We are to edify each other. 1 Thess. 5:11
 - e. We are to persuade men. 2 Cor. 5:10
 - f. We are to follow things which will edify others. Rom. 14:19
- C. Benevolence is a work of the church.
 1. God's people are to be benevolent people.
 2. We are not to be selfish and self-centered.
 3. There are a number of things we are to do in this work.
 - a. We are to remember the poor. Gal. 2:10
 - b. We are to remember the widows and orphans. James 1:27
 - c. We are to give to those in need. Eph. 4:28
 - d. We are to do good to all men, especially our brethren. Gal. 6:10
 - e. The parable of the Good Samaritan is a good example

to follow. Luke 10:25-37

CONCLUSION:

1. Let us always be mindful that Scriptural works are only what God has commanded us to do. Matt. 7:21
2. We must be willing to do God's will. John 4:34
3. Let's let the church be the church, the government be the government and the home be the home.
4. When each of these function as God intended they will enjoy success.
5. We must realize it takes every member doing his part to make the church what the Lord wants it to be.
6. We must decide to be what God wants us to be and do the work He wants us to do, if we are to please Him.

The Pentecostal Denomination Is Not The New Testament Church

First Timothy 6:20, 21; Matthew 15:8-9,13

Max R. Miller

Part One: Origins Of Pentecostalism

1. Background for today's pentecostal confusion.
2. Methodism of the eighteenth and nineteenth century.
3. Emergence of the pentecostal churches out of the Methodist church 1880-1885
4. Neo-pentecostalism, a presumption of pentecostalism, whether new or old

Part Two: Presumptions and Heresies of Pentecostalism

1. Seed bed of pentecostalism is the misinterpretation of Acts chapter two
2. Pentecostal claims of miraculous powers are presumptions against God
3. Pentecostalism presumes against God's role for women in Christian service
4. Some heretical teachings of pentecostalism, 1 John 3:4
5. Refutation of all error by positive declaration of truth

Part One: Origins of Pentecostalism

1. Pentecostalism rampages, crosses all denominational lines
 - a. Some Lutherans reject their heritage and feel the charismatic movement is the true Reformation in contrast with the original movement of the 16th century

- b. Methodism wholly for ecumenism, charismatics, burying past religious issues
- c. A Baptist minister: "American Protestantism is drowning in a sea of religious subjectivism"
- d. Hundreds of thousands of both Protestants and Catholics are involved in Pentecostalism
2. Paul Tillich fifty years ago said, "The Protestant era has come to a close"
3. Pentecostalism has cracked the sacred walls of Zion
 - a. Influential men in high places have gone wholly after the error
 - b. Churches are divided, some are disturbed, many are confused
 - c. Subjective religion has replaced objective faith with many brethren
4. Neo-Pentecostalism, or New-Pentecostalism
 - a. Nothing new about Pentecostal doctrines and people
 - b. A new up-surge of Pentecostal charismatic movements reaching to almost every place
5. What is this thing — Pentecostalism — that we might recognize its dangers and doctrines?
 - a. Origin and history
 - b. Some of its false doctrines

DISCUSSION:

- I. **BACKGROUND FOR TODAY'S PENTECOSTAL CONFUSION**
 - A. Strangely, the Holiness-Pentecostal movement grew out of Methodism of the nineteenth century
 1. Old church different from latter times (Sanctified, shouting subjective experiences)
 2. John Wesley (1703-1791), the father of Methodism, also father of Pentecostalism
 - B. Wesley's religious doctrines: Conversion (first experience), Sanctification (second experience)
 1. Moravian Pietist influenced him to believe saving faith brings dominion over sin and peace of mind with both holiness and happiness
 2. Conversion: Aldersgate, London, May 24, 1738, heart "waxed strangely warm...."
 3. Sanctification: Jan. 1, 1739 "...the power of God came mightily upon us, inasmuch that many cried out for exceeding joy and many fell to the ground...we broke out with one voice, we praise thee, O God: we acknowledge thee to be the Lord" (*Works of John Wesley*, 1:170).
 - C. His doctrine further explained
 1. First "experience," Conversion or Justification: Here one receives forgiveness of sins, becomes a Christian but still

retaining a residue of Adam's sin which can be taken care of only in the second blessing

2. Second "experience," or "second blessing," Sanctification, bringing perfection or holiness
3. Sanctification (holiness) became chief doctrine of Methodist Church, thus it is the first "holiness" church
4. In fairness to Wesley, he preached sanctification but did never claim to have attained a state of perfection

II. METHODISM OF THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURY

- A. Late 18th century Methodism was a reaction against creedal rigidity, inflexible institutional worship
- B. Methodist *perfectionalism*, a swing toward warmth, feeling, experience, morality, heart religion; away from head religion and formal worship
- C. Methodist revivals were antecedents of the frontier revivals of early 1800s
 1. Logan, and Christian County, Ky., 1800, Mason and Bourbon County Ky., 1801
 2. Holy Spirit convulsed: "godly hysteria," "Methodist fits," seizures, jerks, barking, swooning, "treeing the devil"
- D. Methodist Church largest in the United States by 1850
- E. A Methodist woman introduces doctrine of "instant sanctification"
 1. Mrs. Phoebe Palmer, Allen Street Methodist Church New York City, 1839
 2. Her Tuesday Ladies Class was for the promotion of holiness
 3. She devised the short way to holiness – achieving perfection and ecstasy by placing "all on the altar." Thus one could be instantly sanctified by baptism of the Holy Ghost
- F. Holiness Movement subsided in the late 1850s and the Civil War period
- G. Revival of Holiness Movement in the Methodist Church, 1867 (and in other Protestant Churches)
 1. A called camp ground meeting at Vineland, NJ, July 17-26, 1867
 2. Fifty-two-national camp ground meetings from 1867-83 to promote
 3. Holiness Movement within Methodist Church dominant the religious scene by 1880-1885

III. EMERGENCE OF PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES OUT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH, 1880-1885

- A. Staid Methodism become offended by the Movement

1. (Early terms of identity: holiness church, holy rollers, later Pentecostal–Holiness, Pentecostal)
2. Loyalty to the *Discipline* caused the second blessing doctrine to be questioned
3. Too much "holiness" in preachers, periodicals, camps, Association, piqued organized, formal Methodism
4. Controversy rages
 - a. Holiness people become more loyal to holiness doctrine, less to the Methodist Church
 - b. Defenders of the Methodist Church become less loyal to holiness doctrine
 - c. Into two camps: Shouting Methodist and Chicken-eating Methodist
- B. The "Come-outism" movement by the sect
 1. Denounce coldness, formality of Methodism, worldliness, manner of dress, styles (hair, jewelry)
 2. Call for a separation of the spirited holiness party from low-key, sedate Methodism
- C. Efforts by Methodist to "exterminate" the Holiness party
 1. Effort to isolate its leaders only give strength to the opposition
 2. Major turning point, the General Conference of Methodist Episcopal Church, 1894
 "Religious experience is represented as if it consisted of only two steps, the first step out of condemnation into peace and the next step into Christian perfection. The effect is to disparage the new birth, and all stages of spiritual growth from the blade to the full grown corn in the ear. . . . We deplore their teaching and methods in so far as they claim a monopoly of the experience, practice, and advocacy of holiness, and separate themselves from the body of ministers and disciples" (*Journal*, Methodist Episcopal Church South, 1894, p. 25f).
- D. "Come-outism" and "Extermination" resulted in Holiness Churches
 1. Church of God, Anderson, Indiana 1880
 2. Christian and Missionary Alliance, New York City 1887
 3. The Church of the Nazarene, Los Angeles 1895
 4. Pilgrim Holiness Church 1897, Cincinnati
 5. Fire Baptized Holiness Church, Iowa 1895, South Carolina 1898
 6. More than 20 holiness sects spring up from 1895-1905
- E. The Fire Baptized Holiness Church became the guide on for Pentecostal Churches: Holy Ghost Baptism, "unknown" tongues, miraculous healing, testimonies of holiness and perfection
- F. Pentecostal holiness first prevalent among uneducated,

poor, deprived

- G. Pentecostal Holiness a sect that championed ignorance as a spiritual quality of life and worship

IV. NEO-PENTECOSTALISM

- A. New surge of Pentecostalism began about 1960 among Protestants; 1967 Catholics
B. Movement among other denominational bodies
C. Emphasis: Spirit-filled experiences, subjective religion, Holy Ghost baptism, leading, indwelling, tongues, miracles, same things old Pentecostalism emphasized.

PART TWO: HERESIES OF PENTECOSTALISM

I. SEED BED OF PENTECOSTALISM IS THE MISINTERPRETATION OF ACTS CHAPTER TWO.

- A. Pentecostals claim the Holy Spirit came upon the many at Jerusalem, and does so today in a like manner.
B. Purpose of the Holy Spirit coming only to the apostles as stated by Jesus, was to be to them a Comforter, a teacher and a guide in the place of Jesus.
1. To abide in them and be in them, John 14:17
2. To teach them all things, John 14:26
3. To guide them into all truth, John 16:13
4. To "reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment," John 16:8
C. Arguments that only the apostles received the baptism of the Holy spirit on the Day of Pentecost:
1. From rules of grammar, Acts 1:26–2:4
a. The antecedent of the pronouns "they" of vs.1,2 and "them" of v.3 is identified in 1:26 as *apostles*
b. Therefore, rules of grammar point to apostles as the only recipients of the Holy Spirit.
c. "One hundred and twenty" of 1:15 is not the antecedent.
2. From the two groups mentioned in Acts 2, *viz.*, the apostles and the multitude.
a. The multitude was not present when the Holy Spirit came v.6
b. Multitude from many nationalities, but those who *spoke with other tongues* were all Galileans v.7
c. Therefore, only the apostles received the Spirit and spoke with other tongues, or languages.
3. Based on Peter's defense of those charged as being drunk 2:13,14.
a. Only those who were speaking in other tongues were charged with drunkenness.
b. Peter only defended the apostles who had received

the Spirit.

- D. Only the apostles were empowered by the Holy Spirit to perform miraculous works.
1. Acts 4:33, *"And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus..."*
 2. Acts 5:15,16, Multitudes were brought out into the streets and laid on couches and beds in hopes that even the shadow of the apostle Peter may fall on them and they are healed. Everyone was healed. Only the apostles were charged and arrested for creating such a sensational event to magnify the cause of Jesus Christ whom they hated. Acts 5:17,18, Why only apostles arrested if a multitude of others had power to heal?
 - a. Had others performed works by the power of the Spirit, would not Luke have said so?
 - b. The silence of the Scriptures must be observed. Assumption has no authority to bind itself on Holy Scripture.
 3. Just who were the apostles if 3,000, then more than 5,000, and then the multitude of believers multiplied, if all of these thousands of Holy Spirit gifted people performed works of the Holy Spirit? If the multitudes performed miracles the apostles would merely have been just one of the crowd. Acts 2:41; 4:4,32, The apostles were an exclusive group of men 5:11-13.
- E. The "about three thousand" who received "the gift of the Holy Ghost" did not receive the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit.
1. There is no Scripture that states or hints that any others than the apostles were miraculously endowed by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.
 2. Why is there no record of the multitude healing? If they were not healing, they could not know they had the power. The proof of the pudding is in the eating.
- F. The first Scripture reference of anyone having miraculous powers of the Spirit other than the apostles is *"Stephen, full of faith and power, [who] did great wonders and miracles among the people."* Acts 6:8
- G. The Book of Acts reveals that the Holy Spirit did His works recorded in Acts Two by the apostles and the apostles only.

II. PENTECOSTAL CLAIMS OF MIRACULOUS POWERS ARE PRESUMPTIONS AGAINST GOD.

- A. Miracle: An instance of God's direct action as distinguished from His mediate action through natural law.
- B. God's purpose in miracles.
 1. Not for exhibition, make money, show mercy.

2. Miracles were for beginnings.
 - a. Old Testament covenant began with them. With Malachi they ceased.
 - b. New Testament opens and closes with miracles.
3. To authenticate divine messages, Acts 8:6,7; Heb 2:4
4. To certify God's spokesman, John 5:36; 15:24
- C. Christ purpose for miracles in His Order,
 1. He gave miraculous gifts to men, Eph. 4:8,11; 1 Cor 12:8-10
 2. To build His house, church, Eph 4:12,13
- D. How long were miracles to continue?
 1. As long as there was a need for them, 1 Cor. 13:8-10
 2. Until "the unity of the faith," Eph. 4:13
 3. Until the message was amply confirmed, Heb. 2:4
- E. House built and "that faith" is come, hence miracles ceased.
 1. Church-kingdom has come.
 2. Gospel completed, James 1:25; 2 Peter 1:3; Jude 3; 2 Tim. 3:16,17
- F. How do we know miracles have ceased?
 1. Miracles came by Holy Spirit baptism.
 - a. Acts 2, 10
 - b. No more Holy Spirit baptism, Eph. 4:5
 2. Miracle imparted by laying on of Apostle's hands.
 - a. Acts 8:17,18; 19:6; 2 Tim. 1:6
 - b. No living Apostles to lay on hands
- G. All miracles ceased with the close of apostolic age.
 1. Eph. 4:8-16, When Christ ascended into heaven, He gave gifts unto men v.8
 - a. Gifts qualified men to acts as: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers
 - b. Purpose of the gifts
 - 1) For the perfecting of the saints, v.12
 - 2) For the work of the ministry, v.12
 - 3) For the edifying of the body of Christ, v.12
 - 4) Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, v.14
 - c. Gifts to continue until "*all come into the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God*" (the faith, that faith, completely revealed) v.13
 - d. When "that" (not HE) which is perfect is come, then "that" which is in part shall be done away," 1 Cor. 13:8-10
 - e. The parts that brought the perfect, or complete, revelation of the Word, were the Spirit's gifts of 1 Cor. 12:7-11
 2. Pentecostals claim only "showy" gifts of the Spirit: Tongues, Healing, Miracles, Prophecy. Are they afraid to

claim the gifts of knowledge and wisdom? Is it that those claims can instantly be exposed as false?

III. PENTECOSTALISM PRESUMES AGAINST GOD'S ROLE FOR WOMEN IN CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

- A. God Almighty subordinated the woman to the man.
 - 1. In creation, Gen. 2:18; 1 Tim. 2:13
 - 2. Because of her sin, Gen 3: 16; 1 Tim 2:14
 - 3. God's order of relations, 1 Cor 11: 3
- B. However, woman is exalted as a servant of God
 - 1. Speak of the great women of the Bible (Sarah, Miriam, *et al*)
 - 2. Woman is a teacher, Titus 2:3,4
 - 3. Prophetess, Acts 21:9; 1 Cor. 11:5
 - 4. Teach men, Acts 18:24-26
- C. False argument for unlimited service of woman, 1 Peter 2:5,9; Gal. 3:28
 - 1. All Christians are priests, a woman may do anything any other priest may do
 - 2. Old Testament limited priest in their service
 - a. The second priest, Jer. 52:24
 - b. Some priest could not serve at the altar, Lev. 21:16-23
 - c. Only one of all priest entered Holy of Holies, Exod. 30:10; Lev. 16:17
- D. Argument for universal priesthood fallacious
- E. God has limited her place and role in Christian service
 - 1. 1 Cor. 14: 34,35; 1 Tim. 2:11,12
 - 3. 1 Tim. 2:8; Titus 2:15. Men to teach anywhere, to any one; not so with women

IV. SOME HERETICAL TEACHING OF PENTECOSTALISM.

- B. Exalts the Holy Spirit above Christ. "He shall not speak [*aggrandize*] of himself," John 16:13
- C. Exalts religious experience above the intellectual and doctrinal content of faith
- D. Sinless perfection, a misinterpretation of 1 John 3:9
- E. Impossibility of apostasy (a natural reaction to support the doctrine of sinless perfection)
- F. Baptism. Paul said only one baptism. Pentecostals claim one, practice a second, pray for a third
- G. Miracles continue (healing, revelation, communication)
- H. A necessary part of the atonement is healing for the body. Examples to the contrary:
 - 1. Paul's thorn in the flesh, 2 Cor. 12:9
 - 2. Timothy's stomach ailment, 1 Tim. 5:23
 - 3. Trophimus' illness, 2 Tim. 4:20

- I. Premillennial, Christ's future reign on earth
- J. United Pentecostal, or "Jesus Only." Deny the trinity, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.

V. REFUTATION OF ALL ERROR BY POSITIVE DECLARATION OF TRUTH 1 John 3:4.

- A. God's work of redemption and salvation done through the Gospel
 - 1. This is the Spirit's work in salvation, 1 Peter 1:22,23; John 3:5
 - 2. This is God's power of salvation, 1 Cor 1:18
 - 3. This is the Gospel of Christ, Rom. 1:16; 6:17; 1 Cor. 15:1-4
- B. Conversion and Justification are the fruits of Gospel obedience, 2 Thess. 2:13,14; Acts 18:8; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Rom. 1:5; 16:26; 5:1,2
- C. Complete salvation is for penitent believing sinner in baptism
 - 1. Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:20,21
 - 2. No residue of "Adamic sin"
 - 3. Divine washing is a clean washing, Titus 3:5; Rev. 1:5
- D. Holiness and power is in living a Christ-like life
 - 1. Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21; 4:13; 2:14-16; 2 Peter 1:5-11
 - 2. A life filled with power of: of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Subjectivism is the root of false doctrine
- 2. False teachers lead away from the truth
- 3. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet.
- 4. Holy Spirit baptism is definitely a thing of the past
 - a. There is no need for it today since man now possesses all truth God intended to commit to him, John 17:17; 2 Pet. 1:3
 - b. Too, there is now only one baptism, Eph. 4:5
 - c. Only one baptism is extant: water baptism (Mark 16:16).
- 5. God is not the author of confusion, 1 Cor. 14:33

The Final Destiny Of Denominations

Alan Adams

- 1. To read the Bible is to read about The Kingdom.
 - a. In fact, failure to understand what The Kingdom is, when it

- came, who is in it, etc., will certainly cause a breakdown in one's attempt to understand the Bible.
- b. Like "faith, hope, and love" (1 Cor. 13:13), the kingdom is one of the *ABC's* of the Bible.
 - c. The fundamental message of John and then Jesus was "*repent ye for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*" (Matt. 3:2).
 - d. That the coming of the kingdom was imminent is seen by Christ's promise that there are "*some of them that stand by who shall in no wise taste of death till they see the Kingdom of God come with power*" (Mark 9:1).
 - e. The kingdom is "of" Heaven in that it originates from Heaven.
 - 1) Though it is not physical (John 18:36); nevertheless,
 - 2) The reign of Heaven has been extended to the world (the earth).
 - 3) Saved people (Christians) living in this world are also presently in The Kingdom (Col. 1:13).
2. Not everyone in this world is in the kingdom.
- a. That special group of people in this world, who are in The Kingdom, is called The Church.
 - b. In fact, the Greek word for "church" (*ekklesia*) means just that:
 - 1) A specially called out group (assembly) of people.
 - 2) This group of people is "called out" by the Gospel (2 Thess. 2:14).
 - a) They have heard God's Word (Acts 2:14-36);
 - b) They trust what they have heard and are moved by it (Acts 2:37);
 - c) They obey the instructions of the Gospel (Acts 2:38,41);
 - d) They are then saved (Acts 2:40,47).
 - e) Being therefore saved, they are "added to the church" (Acts 2:47).
 - c. This special group, community, body; the church,
 - 1) Are those on earth who have been "translated into the kingdom" (Col. 1:13);
 - 2) Have been made "a kingdom" (Rev 1:6); and,
 - 3) Are a "*royal priesthood, an holy nation*" (1 Peter 2:9).
3. Naturally, we need to understand about the kingdom.
- a. Our relationship to it, its mission, how it grows, its law, who is in it, its enemies, and a host of other matters.
 - b. To help us in our understanding of these things Jesus used many simple illustrations based upon the common knowledge and experience of the people at that time.
 - c. These illustrations are called *parables*.
 - d. A unique set of *kingdom parables* is found in Matthew 13.
 - 1) Twelve times in this marvelous section of Scripture the Lord uses the word "kingdom."

- 2) Of the twelve, six times he uses the phrase, "the kingdom of heaven is like..."
 - 3) One of these kingdom parables is special because Jesus not only tells the parable, but also explains it.
 - 4) It is The Parable Of The Tares of the Field (or, The Parable Of The Counterfeit Wheat).
4. We shall see in the course of our study that,
- a. Principles set forth in this parable certainly apply to the origin and nature of denominations; and,
 - b. More particularly, they apply to the inevitable end of all denominations.

DISCUSSION:

I. A PARABLE (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43).

A. Context

1. The Parable Of The Four Soils: Same seed sown on four types of soils has four different results (vs.3-9).
2. Parables reveal things about the kingdom to one class of people, but conceal the same truths from another (vs.10-17; cf. 2 Thess. 2:10).
3. The interpretation of the Parable Of The Four Soils (vs.18-23).
 - a. The seed is God's Word and the soils are four types of hearts.
 - b. Heart number one has no interest in the Word at all;
 - c. Heart number two happily accepts it but is shallow and can't stand the heat;
 - d. Heart number three accepts it but is overcome by the cares of the world; and,
 - e. Heart number four accepts it and bears fruit.
4. A vital principle that connects and contrasts the Parable of the Seed and the Soils with the Parable of the Counterfeit Wheat.
 - a. In The Parable Of The Soils, emphasis is placed on the one good seed (God's Word); but,
 - b. Now two seeds are mentioned with emphasis being placed on a *counterfeit* "seed" that produces counterfeit wheat-Tares.

B. Core (vs.24-30).

1. A farmer, planting winter wheat, sowed good seed in his field.
2. His enemy came while everyone was asleep and sowed counterfeit wheat on top of his good seed.
3. Only in the following spring when the counterfeit grew up along side the real did the distinction become obvious (Cf. Matt. 7:20).
4. By this time there is nothing to do but let the two grow

up together and then separate them at harvest time, when the counterfeit will be burned.

5. An attempt to root up the counterfeit could well cause the true to likewise be rooted up.
- C. The code by which to interpret it (vs.36-42).
 Sower of good seed → The son of man.
 The field → The world.
 Good seed (metonymy) → The sons of the kingdom.
 Counterfeit seed [tares] (*metonymy*) → The sons of the evil one.
 Sower of counterfeit seed → The Devil.
 The Harvest the → end of the world.
 The Harvesters → Angels.
- D. Counterfeit

1. "Tare" is from "*zizania*."
 - a. "...not 'tares,' but 'darnel,' a bastard wheat...This bearded darnel, *lolium temulentum*, is common in Palestine and resembles wheat except that the grains are black. In its earlier stages it is indistinguishable from the wheat stalks so that it has to remain till near the harvest" [Robertson].
 - b. A "troublesome weed in the grain fields, resembling wheat; a plant which has the appearance of wheat and grows exclusively in cultivated fields."
 - 1) Only after "the blade sprang up and brought forth fruit" did the tares become evident.
 - 2) These tares are fake; they're not wheat at all.
 - 3) After awhile the servants came to recognize them as tares, not wheat.
2. Not everything called wheat is wheat, nor is every person who is called a Christian, in fact, a Christian (cf. 1 Cor. 8:5-6).

II. A PRINCIPLE.

A. Seed

1. The word of God (Luke 8:11; cf. Gen. 1:11).
2. Other seed produces, not a Christian, but rather a "counterfeit," something with similarities perhaps, but in fact not a Christian.

B. Distinctions

1. Saved or Not Saved; Christian or Not Christian (cf. Acts 2:40-41; 2 Thess. 2:10; Rom. 10:1ff)
2. Those who have obeyed the Gospel, and those who have not (cf. 2 Thess. 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17).

C. Certitude

1. That someone "calls" himself a Christian does not make it necessarily so (cf. Rev. 2:2,20).

2. Regarding "becoming" a Christian; many become fuzzy when pressed for time, place, and events.
3. I know clearly at what point I ceased being single and "became" married.
 - a. I know equally clearly at what point I ceased being lost and became saved.
 - b. (Rom. 4:23-25; 2 Thess. 1:8; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:2; 10:9-10; 6:4)
 - c. It's really not a difficult matter to identify at precisely what point a person becomes a Christian, and is "called" such by God (Acts 11:26).

III. A PREDESTINATION.

- A. Further subdivision of the *Not Saved/Not Christian* category.
 1. The Bible speaks of profligate, reprobate, immoral people; people who refuse to "retain the knowledge of God" (Rom. 1:28).
 - a. There are people who have little or no interest in religion of any kind.
 - b. There are idol worshippers (Rom. 1:23-25), nature worshippers, ancestor worshippers, etc.
 - c. These are clearly non-Christian, unsaved people, who can be identified as such ten miles away.
 2. Within this larger *Not Saved/Not Christian* category is a class of people who are not what they first appear to be.
 - a. They "call" themselves Christians, and desire to be so designated.
 - b. In many respects, particularly as concerns the way they live, they may at first sight appear to be so.
 - c. Here we must take care. The eyes may not be giving us the whole picture.
- B. The false versus the true.
 1. Paul speaks of "*false apostles...fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ...*" (2 Cor. 11:13-15).
 2. Consider also false or counterfeit:
 - a. "brethren" (Gal. 2:4)
 - b. "teachers" and "prophets" (2 Peter 2:1)
 - c. "Christs" (Mark 13:22)
 - d. "Gospel[s]" (Gal. 1:6-7)
- C. The "tares" and the denominations
 1. The two "seeds"
 - a. One, "the good seed," produces "children of the kingdom" (Matt. 13:38).
 - b. The other, "the tares," produced "children of the wicked one."

2. Are the "tares" lukewarm, unfaithful, or even rebellious Christians?
 - a. Christians can digress and become all of these things, yet they are still Christians.
 - b. The "tares" were never "children of the kingdom" to begin with.
 - 1) They were produced by *another* seed; not "the word of God" (Luke 8:11).
 - 2) They did not immediately appear to be something other than wheat.
 - 3) This is the essence of denominationalism.
- D. The correct attitude toward the counterfeit (doctrines, religions, et al)
 1. Recognition
 - a. Of what they are

—*"Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?"*
 - b. Of their origin

—*"He said unto them, An enemy hath done this."*
—*"The enemy that sowed them is the devil."*
 - c. *"The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn"* (Matt. 13:27-30).
 2. Reaction

—*"the servants say unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he saith, Nay; lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them."*

 - a. The "field" is the "world," and the Lord's servants contemplated pulling these counterfeits up and getting rid of them once and for all.
 - b. Similar to a reaction of Peter to the Lord's enemies (Matt. 26:51-52).
 3. Are we to violently attack and destroy these counterfeits? The Lord says, No, rather coexist for awhile.
 - a. We neither ignore, accept, approve of the "tares."
 - b. We recognize them as "tares," point them out as "tares," as counterfeits.
 - c. We show to all the clear difference between "wheat" and "tares."
 4. As we deal with these "tares," we are patient and prudent in our actions, lest we also cause the "wheat" to be uprooted along with the "tares."

- a. Potential "wheat" may never germinate in the hearts of people if care is not taken.
 - b. Ours is not to gather the "tares" out of the "field," rather to convert them from the false to the true.
 - c. Newborn, weak Christians lacking knowledge and maturity to understand the difference between the true and the counterfeit can be unsettled.
 - 1) Many of these think of denominational people as "other" Christians, as brethren.
 - 2) We must patiently educate our brethren to see the difference, but without arrogance, belligerence or violence lest we cause their faith to be destroyed in the process.
 - 3) Though we point out and distinguish (and yes, we are to judge in this sense!), yet the final punishment (the penal aspect of "judging") is the purview of the "righteous judge" who will judge all men" (2 Tim. 4:8).
- E. A note regarding the "tares" and church discipline.
1. A misconception: Some argue against excommunication (cf. 2 Thess. 3:6-7); pointing to the Lord's order not to "root up" these "tares."
 2. A misapplication
 - a. First, that would be a ~~direct~~ contradiction of the Lord's own orders in Matthew 18:15-17 (cf. Rom. 16:17).
 - b. Second, to "root up," as used in the parable, means to destroy, whereas discipline, and ultimately withdrawal of fellowship, are designed to "restore" an erring church member (cf. Gal. 6:1; 1 Cor. 5:5).
 - c. Third, as we have already shown: "Tares" are not even Christians; they are counterfeit.
- F. There can be no doubt as to the fate of those who receive the seed of and become and remain "tares"
— "*gathered and burned in the fire*"
1. It is frightening to hear brethren, even preachers, postulate that maybe/after all/who knows/could be/perhaps God might allow into Heaven those whom He has clearly said in the Bible will be "cast into a furnace of fire."
- G. We must forbear and persist
1. We live in a imperfect world. "Under the sun" (Eccl. 1:3)
 2. All around us are "things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity" (Matt. 13:41)
 3. We preach, defend, guard, fight against (Eph. 6:10-17) counterfeit doctrines and religions and philosophies.
 4. We wait for the Lord who will at the end of the world send his "reapers" (angels) to "gather up" the "tares" and

"burn them" (Matt. 13:40).

- a. "Vengeance belongs" to the Lord (Rom. 12:19)
- b. Let us patiently wait for that day when finally "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father" (v.43).
- c. In the meantime, let us,
 - 1) Lead as many as we can from the fold of the counterfeit;
 - 2) Prevent as many as we can from ever entering the fold of the counterfeit; and,
 - 3) Boldly hold up the Lord's "seed," and His "kingdom" as the one and only means and fold of safety.

CONCLUSION:

1. Most people have ears, but unfortunately, not all use them for hearing, especially, hearing what needs to be heard.
2. What a tragic thing to pass through life and spend hours hearing things that will not help us get to Heaven, on the contrary hearing and heeding things which will lead us to Hell.
3. This parable is so important that Jesus ends by saying, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

The Final Destiny Of The Church Of Christ

Charles Blair

1. No one can be saved without faith in God (Heb. 11:6).
2. Part of that faith is a trust in what God has revealed.
3. It is a trust which arises because we know that God cannot lie (Heb. 6:18; Titus 1:2).
4. Our hope for heaven is based on what God has said and our need to trust Him to get us home to heaven.
5. The destiny of the church is set and what God promises, God will do.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **WORDS CONVEY IDEAS. WE THEN LOOK TO EACH OF THESE WORDS IN OUR LESSON TITLE TO SET THE TONE FOR WHAT WE SHALL BE DISCUSSING:**
 - A. The word "final" as given by Webster.
 1. Of or coming at the end; last; concluding (the final chapter).
 2. Leaving no further chance for action, discussion or

change; deciding; conclusive (a final decree).

- B. The next word we consider is "destiny."
 - 1. The seemingly inevitable or necessary succession of events.
 - 2. What will necessarily happen to any person or thing.
- C. The word church as we view it in the New Testament. The called out ones.
- D. Finally the word or name, Christ.
 - 1. The Son of God
 - 2. The head of the church
 - 3. The Savior

II. THIS LESSON IS NOT A DEBATE. IT IS A RELIGIOUS DISCUSSION WHOSE AIM IS TO REACH OUR HEARTS. WE THEN USE THESE WORDS (ABOVE) TO CONSTRUCT IN OUR MINDS, EVIDENCE WE NEED TO CAUSE US TO DESIRE HEAVEN AND GOD.

- A. There is coming a day when time shall be no more.
 - 1. Acts 17:31, *"Because he hath appointed a day, in the which, he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."*
 - 2. Judgment is coming because God does not lie.
 - 3. That judgment will be through His Son (John 12:48).
 - 4. God has given us assurance through the raising of His Son from the dead (Rom. 1:4).
 - 5. No man can avoid this appointment (Heb. 9:27).
- B. All mankind is headed for one of two destinies.
 - 1. It is either life or destruction (Matt. 7:13,14).
 - 2. It is either spiritual life or death (Rom. 6:16-17).
 - 3. Heaven nor hell will be an accidental home for anyone.
- C. We each choose where we will end up our journey.
 - 1. We are to be alive to God each day (Rom. 6:11).
 - 2. If we follow Christ, it is because we have made up our minds to depart from lawless behavior (2 Tim. 2:19).
 - 3. The Bible truth cannot be denied. We each shall reap that which we have sowed in our lives (Gal. 6:7).
- D. The church is composed of the ones who have been called by God and have accepted the call by God.
 - 1. God chose the means of the Gospel to save and to call men for salvation (Rom. 1:16; 2 Thess. 2:14).
 - 2. When God calls through the Gospel, then men must respond to that call and obey the will of the Lord (Rom. 10:13,14; Acts 22:16).
 - a. There is for some, like F. Lagard Smith, a confusion over who is a Christian.

- b. God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33).
 - c. Those who obey the Gospel and continue to obey it, are children of God; all others are not (1 Peter 1:21-23).
- E. The church belongs to Christ and not to men.
- 1. He promised, and He cannot lie, that He would build His church (Matt. 16:18).
 - 2. The church is His by purchased price (Acts 20:28).
 - 3. All those who choose to obey Him are added to that blood bought institution (Acts 2:47).

III. ONE MAJOR DOCTRINE WHICH SEPARATES THE LORD'S PEOPLE FROM ALL OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS IS THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE BODY AND THAT BODY WILL BE SAVED BY THE LORD; HENCE ITS FINAL DESTINY:

- A. All discussion is ended when we come and accept what the Lord reveals.
- 1. Jesus is the head of the church which is His body (Eph. 1:22,23).
 - 2. There are individual Christians who make up the local body of Christ in any community but there is only one body (1 Cor. 12:20).
 - 3. There was in the first century and now in the 21st century, only one body (Eph. 4:4).
- B. An institution exists with the approval of God or without the approval of God.
- 1. Every man-made religion is false and will be rooted up at the final judgment (Matt. 15:13).
 - 2. I make this appeal to all in our study. You must be in the body of Christ in order to be saved (Eph. 5:23).
 - 3. All those outside the body or church of Christ will face the wrath of God in the day of judgment (2 Thess. 1:8,9).
- C. May we take a moment and give thought to our souls after we become Christians?
- 1. If all I do is sit on a pew and do nothing to help the church through my encouragement, talents and money; then I stand in jeopardy at this moment.
 - 2. If my life is a hindrance to the growth and strength of the church, I will face God unprepared.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. The final destiny of the church of Christ is eternity with God.
- 2. May each of us right now, choose our final destiny.

