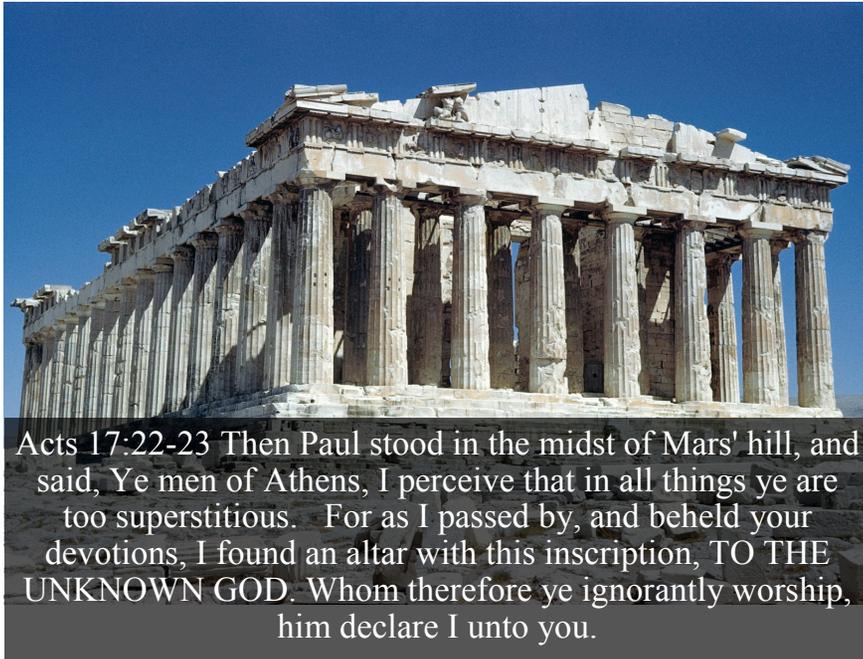


“...strengthen thy brethren”

Luke 22:32



Acts 17:22-23 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

# CHURCH OF CHRIST

of Genesee County

5284 Fenton Road, Flint, Michigan 48507

## January 13, 2019

### Schedule of Services

Worship...	Sunday	11:00 a.m.
	Sunday	6:00 p.m.
Bible Study...	Sunday	10:00 a.m.
	Wednesday	6:00 p.m.

Website: [www.coc-gc.org](http://www.coc-gc.org)

## SERMONS

AM When Will Hope Be Realized?

PM Two Pictures Of What The Lord's People Should Be.

### REQUESTED PRAYERS

# P R A Y E R L I S T

- Cindy Atkinson—health. (knee)
- Al Haskell - kidney problems.
- Marty Stearns— health.
- Michael Golwitzer-health
- Dan Goddard-serious health issues
- Ken Faris-colon cancer-Al's co-worker
- Joan's brother Hurley and Opal, sister Christena Apostolico in Ohio—health problems
- Chere'— Pryia Vannoy (daughter) and family
- Edith Taylor-Bill's mother is getting better.
- Katherine Brooks - prayers for her niece and great-niece.
- Cody Cantrell-coma-Bill's friend.
- Rachel Hall—health problems
- Cindy's friends-Ireland Family, Wayne Hamilton, Kathy and Misty Davis, Jody Rynca-cancer, Marie Hall, Mitchell Larson and Walt and Ilene Davenport— health
- Betty requests prayers for Earlene Currier-health-Betty's Aunt, Betty's daughters: Donna, Carrie, Susan Wills, Debra, also, Lauren Weidner-grand-daughter.
- Ted Millwood—Marquette Hospital in critical condition

Food closet: Paper Products

Ladies Bible Class January 22nd (10 am)

## New Testament Christianity vs. Denominationalism

What is a “denomination”? Does God approve of denominations? These extremely significant and critical questions deserve answers from the Word of God. When we go to the New Testament and examine God’s Word with a view toward ascertaining what His will is with regard to religion, we find that there is a clearly defined system of religion—God’s religion—in the New Testament. It is the religion of Christ that has come to be called Christianity. We also find that Satan does everything he can to blur the distinctions that God wants observed. We should not be surprised at that. Think about the great hoaxes that have been perpetrated upon mankind. For instance, the doctrine of evolution is almost universally believed by the scientific elite of many societies. So it is with many political, philosophical, and religious systems of thought like Communism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Those who have examined the evidence—objective truth—on these matters know that those systems of thought simply are not true. Yet large numbers of people adhere to them.

In 2 Corinthians 2:11, Paul spoke about the fact that Satan endeavors to take advantage of people. He said that we should not let Satan take advantage of us, “for we are not ignorant of his devices.” The word “devices” means “schemes.” We must be aware of the fact that Satan uses deceitful, deceptive ploys in an effort to trick people to get them to believe and practice various things that simply are not true. In a similar statement, Paul used the phrase “wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11). Most people are oblivious to this fact. Many people do not even believe that Satan exists—any more than they believe that God exists. Yet if the New Testament is true, it is clear there is a Satan, and he will do all he can to fool, trick, and deceive people. He wants to obscure distinctions that God wants observed—distinctions that are scriptural and biblical. It is clear that this is the case with denominationalism. Consider the following dictionary definitions (American..., 2000, p. 485). The term “denominate” means “to give a name to; designate.” “Denomination” is “[a] large group of religious congregations united under a common faith and name and organized under a single administrative and legal hierarchy; a name or designation, especially for a class or group.”

“Denominator” refers to “the expression written below the line in a common fraction that indicates the number of parts into which one whole is divided.” “Denominationalism” is “The tendency to separate into religious denominations; sectarianism.” Think about these meanings for just a moment. The very word “denomination” refers to a named or designated division. Denominationalism occurs when religious people and groups divide and segregate themselves on the basis of different designations or church affiliations and different doctrines.

Have you gone to the New Testament and read Jesus’ prayer for unity in John chapter 17? There He prayed against religious division, and prayed to God that believers in Christ would be unified! Paul made the same point to the church of Christ in Corinth: “I beseech you brothers by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you” (1 Corinthians 1:10). Here is a passage that says denominations are not even to exist! “Let there be no divisions among you.” If a denomination is a “designated division,” then denominationalism is clearly unscriptural! It is against the will of Christ. The passage continues, “but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” I assure you, I have nothing against any particular religious group. I have no biases or prejudices against any one church or denomination. But we must go to Scripture and be objective in our appraisal of New Testament truth. It is clear when we go to the Bible that denominationalism, though viewed innocently by millions of people worldwide, is an approach to religion that is out of harmony with New Testament teaching. God does not want denominations to exist. He wants all of us to understand His will in the New Testament, and then to bring our lives into conformity and our spirits into submission to that will.

### “One Body” = One Church

In Ephesians 1:22-23, the body of Christ is referred to as the church, and later we are told that there is only one (4:4). Those two passages alone should cause us to recognize that the existence of denominations is out of harmony with God’s will. Ephesians 4:4 says there is one body. That body is the church of our Lord.

He established it; He built it; He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20: 28). If there is only one church, God is not pleased with the division, the named designations, of competing churches with various names, doctrines, and practices. In 1 Timothy 3:15, Paul wrote to Timothy that he might know how to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God. Most people just do not realize that New Testament truth is that simple, that plain, and that uncomplicated. The denominationalism that has gripped western civilization is so entrenched and so entangled in the minds of people that they seem to be unable to detach themselves from it, and to go back to the New Testament to get a clear conception of the New Testament church. They seem unable or unwilling to embrace pure New Testament teaching and to repudiate all denominationalism. Pluralism: "Live and Let Live," "I'm Okay, You're Okay" Our society says, "People ought to be free to believe what they want. Don't be judgmental. You don't have any right to say they are wrong." But such propaganda is unbiblical. God has a right. He is the Creator, and He said in His Word that we must know His truth, we must be right about that truth, and we must obey that truth (Hebrews 5:9). Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). He also said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Paul spoke about the time when people would refuse to hear healthy teaching (2 Timothy 4:3). But God wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). The Scriptures make clear that God never has and never will sanction the present blurring of the distinction between the New Testament church and the manmade, counterfeit churches that exist in abundance. Many seem oblivious to the fact that no denominations can be found in the Bible. They appear unaware of the fact that the Bible describes a single church—Christ's church. The only hope of any individual is to be in the one true church living faithfully in accordance with God's desires. The New Testament teaches that we must stay with God's words. We are not free to deviate, or to believe and practice whatever we choose (2 John 9; 1 Corinthians 4:6; Galatians 1:8). In the final analysis, denominationalism is what results when humans assert their own religious inclinations, formulate their own religious doctrines, and originate

their own churches. Solomon's words ought to cause every single person to refrain from affiliation with denominationalism: "Every word of God is pure. He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words lest He reprove you and you be found a liar" (Proverbs 30:5-6). The truth continues to be that denominations are manmade divisions, unmitigated departures from the faith. Denominationalism is about the best thing Satan has come up with to subvert the truth of the Bible and to bring otherwise religious people under his influence. The world religions, as well as those who embrace humanistic philosophies like atheism, by definition, have rejected the one true God and have capitulated to Satan. So where do you suppose Satan is going to focus the brunt of his assault upon the Earth? The more he is able to muddy the waters and to obscure the certainty of the truth, the more chance he has of luring people into his clutches.

#### **Conclusion**

If one could be just a Christian in the first century without being affiliated with any denomination, then one can be simply a New Testament Christian today. If denominations were not created by God, but have, in fact, come into existence since the first century, then to participate in and support denominations is to promote that which God did not create. It is to give sanction to mere manmade invention, and to tamper with the divine system originated by God and Christ. It is to subject oneself to the eventual wrath of God, for Jesus Himself declared: "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted" (Matthew 15:13). If we would truly fathom that the church of Christ is distinctive, exclusive, and unique; if we would truly view fraternization with the denominations as traitorous; if we would love the genuine body of Christ with the same fervency and jealousy with which Jesus loves her; then we would be in a position to proclaim with Paul: "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Ephesians 3:21). By Dave Miller Apologetics Press

#### **Reference**

American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2000), (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin), fourth edition.

## SUNDAY 1/13/2019

Announcements: Michael Golwitzer  
Morning: Song Leader: Al Haskel  
Opening Prayer: Al Haskel  
Lord's Supper: Lead: Michael Golwitzer  
Lord;s Supper Assist: Bill Alldaffer, Todd Penoyer  
Preaching: Michael Golwitzer  
Closing Prayer: Todd Penoyer

Bible Class Song Lead: Bill Alldaffer  
Bible Class: Michael Golwitzer  
Bible Class Opining Prayer: Todd Penoyer

Announcements: Todd Penoyer  
Song Leader: Al Haskel  
Opening Prayer: Al Haskel  
Evening: Preaching: Michael Golwitzer  
Lord's Supper: Michael Golwitzer  
Closing Prayer: Todd Penoyer

## WEDNESDAY 1/16/2019

Song Leader: Bill Alldaffer  
Opening Prayer: Al Haskel  
Bible Teacher: Michael Golwitzer  
Closing Prayer: Todd Penoyer

