



The Church, Of Christ or Of Men?

by Carl McMurray

According to 1 Corinthians 14:33 our God is not a God of confusion, but men under heaven who try to worship Him sure are, aren't they! Satan likes that situation. Confusion, doubt, and misunderstood scriptures are his shop tools to destroy the faith of men. One confusing area we often face today has to do with the Lord's body, the church, Ephesians 1:22-23. Some are confused about the Lord's church being different from the churches of men. Often Christ's church is referred to as just another "denomination." Is it really, or is this another one of the Devil's compromises?

The American College Dictionary defines a "denomination" as a "religious sect." In Acts 24:14 Paul stated, "...according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers..." Paul said the Jews referred to the Way as a sect, but he did not accept that misnomer himself. The Jews wanted the Lord's body to be lowered to the level of their own divisive spirit, i.e. Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots, etc. Likewise today, many want the New Testament church to be just another denomination like everybody else. There are a number of identifying marks of divisive denominationalism, however, that set it apart. The sectarian spirit still lives.

Denominations are organizations started by, governed by, and directed by men. Unlike the New Testament church that began on Pentecost by Christ, through His chosen witnesses, the apostles, every protestant denomination in existence today is less than 500 years old and had a human founder. Rather than standing on the word alone, each has allowed men to formulate their own denominational councils, creed books and manuals for their direction.

There are many more identifying marks of the sectarian spirit of denominationalism, but probably the most obvious is their accepting attitude of division. This is truly what sets the denominational believer apart from the New Testament Christian. The very term "denomination" denotes a fracture, a part of the whole. One doctrine that most denominational groups have in common is the idea that one can be saved in any number of a thousand churches, believing almost any doctrine, and living almost any way imaginable. Such plain contradiction to the oneness of the faith (Eph. 4:4-5) will always stand out to the real Bible student and set these groups apart from the Lord's church.

Is the Lord's body a sect or a denomination? It is blaspheming the bride of Christ to say so.

