

MARKET STREET

"And this is the message we have received of Him, and declare unto you..." (1 John 1:5)



MESSENGER

**Market Street
church of Christ**
514 West Market Street
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Athens, Alabama 35612
Phone (256) 232-1525

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Is God Pleased With Denominationalism?

David A. Cox

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes..... 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship..... 10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship..... 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes..... 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Jerry McGlocklin..... (256) 232-7620
Kenneth Smith..... (256) 777-6737
Bonnie Sutton..... (256) 232-2081

Deacons

Marty R. Adams..... (256) 233-5147
Tommy Coblenz..... (256) 232-3312
Joel Hamm..... (256) 278-1977
Larry Mitchell..... (256) 230-0185
Russ Wulfekuhl..... (256) 683-9396

Evangelist

David A. Cox..... (256) 233-8910
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MARKET STREET MESSENGER
*is published in the interest of New Testament
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Market Street church.*

David A. Cox, Editor

It is clearly obvious to any casual observer that the religious world is divided. As a matter of fact, division in religion is considered the norm in our society. People claim to be members of various denominational religious groups that all claim to be following Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Many in the religious world believe that God is pleased with the numerous denominations and people are encouraged to "Attend the Church of Your Choice." But we must ask, "Is God pleased with the religious division that exists today?" The only way that we can know whether or not God is pleased with anything is by looking to what He has revealed to us in the scriptures (1 Corinthians 2:9-13). If we do not find God's approval of something in the scriptures then to practice such is sinful because it is outside the law of God (1 John 3:4; cf. 2 John 9). Let us then examine the scriptures and see if God is pleased with the practice of denominationalism that is prevalent in our world today.

What Is Denominationalism

When asked, "What denomination are you a member of?" people will quickly respond by calling a name of a religious group of which they are a member. According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, the word "denomination" means "a large group of religious congregations united under a common faith and name and organized under a single administrative and legal hierarchy." According to Webster, it means "a religious organization uniting in a single legal and administrative body a number of local congregations." A denomination then is simply, a group of congregations that are joined under some governing body:

1. The number of congregations can be as few as two or more.
2. This tie to a governing body above the local congregation, by definition they are "denominated" from all congregations that do not submit to the same authority. It must be understood that division is necessary for denominations to exist.

Without religious division, no denominations would exist. Denominationalism involves the "naming" of a group that believes a particular set of doctrines and beliefs. Their name distinguishes them from other

groups that believe other things, concerning faith and practice. Denominationalism results in the division of one group from another and each group concentrating on the matters involving their denominational interests.

Without a doubt, there are many in the religious world claiming to be members of various denominations that would not claim to agree with the teaching of and are not devoted to the principles or interests of the denomination of which they are a member. Many will claim that the Bible is the guide for faith and practice rather than the creed books of their particular denomination. So with this thought in mind many ask, "Is denominationalism all that bad?" The answer to that is an emphatic "Yes!" The reason why is because in participating in a denomination we are encouraging division and calling ourselves something besides Christians and glory goes to some one other than Christ.

What About Division?

Paul writing to the church at Corinth about the problems they were having, "Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all 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 judgement... Now I say this, that each of you says, 'I am of Paul' and 'I am of Apollos,' and 'I am of Cephas,' and 'I am of Christ.' Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:10, 12-13). Notice that the dividing of those professing to be Christians into different groups and giving themselves different names is condemned as being wrong and not pleasing to God. It is in opposition to the prayer Jesus prayed saying, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, that they world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:20-21). Jesus desire was for all believers in Him to be one, not many splinter groups teaching many different doctrines. Paul wrote of God's plan for unity encouraging the Christians at Ephesus "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in you all" (Ephesians 4:3-6)

The Body

In God's plan for unity, the first things Paul mentions is that here is "one body." The body is the church and Paul had this clear early in this epistle when he wrote

concerning the authority of Christ and said, "He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23). The unity that God expects and demands is a unity that in one body or church. God has not approved of various religious bodies or denominations which compose the universal church. The body or the Lord's church is composed of all Christians from all times (Hebrews 12:23). The church is not given an early hierarchy with a headquarters on earth. Christ is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23). Individuals make up the body as they are "baptized into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:13, 27). In Acts 2 the Scriptures teach that when one obeys the gospel of Christ, he/she is added by the Lord to the church or the body (Acts 2:37-47). After becoming a Christian then we are to find a group of people that are following the divine pattern God has given for worship and work and join ourselves to that local congregation (Acts 9:17-18, 26). These local congregations are not a denomination. They are independent, autonomous groups following the divine pattern in the Scriptures. They are not tied together by any human organizations, such as headquarters, councils, synods or societies to other congregations. The head is Christ, and it is from His word we receive instructions for our faith and practice (Colossians 1:18; Romans 10:17). As Christians come together to form a local church, they are not becoming a "Church of Christ" denomination, but a church whose devotion is to Christ and His cause.

Let us recognize that by having membership in a denomination; the implication is that we advocate division and separation into religious denominations. The fact is we cannot find any evidence in the New Testament of the practice or acceptance of denominationalism. Instead, the New Testament clearly condemns division. Therefore, denominationalism is not a part of God's plan and is wrong and should be rejected by those that claim to be followers of Christ.

Remember Our Study Periods

Sunday Mornings at 9:45 a.m.

Wednesday Evenings at 7:00 p.m.

Come Join Us As We Study Together

What Do We Have To Offer?

T. Doy Moyer

Take your mind back 2,000 years to a hazy, foggy gardeSoftball teams, chicken dinners, ice cream socials, psychologists, live bands, movies, sports, plays, etc. These are the things that many modern churches have to offer. They cater to the "whole man" and offer everything from sports and all kinds of entertainment to various kinds of counselors and self-esteem workshops. The modern concept of being a church has developed into a free - for - all - do - what - you - want - just - satisfy - my - every - whim debacle. The world thinks that the church exists just to care for social concerns - they shouldn't have "religious" or moral influence at all. If they want to feed the poor or help the homeless, that is fine, but if they want to preach God and moral values, they should keep it to themselves. Sadly, many modern churches have done just that.

The Lord's church was never built to satisfy the whims of social man. read the New Testament. Never do we find the church trying to feed all the poor in the world. Never do we find the church trying to "make disciples" of the nations (Matt. 28:19) by offering ball teams and ice cream. Never do we find the church pandering the social whims of man. That's just not the work that the Lord gave the church to do. We may think of such work as "nice" and "compassionate," but the Scriptures do not reveal that work for the church.

I do not mean to sound unsympathetic to the social desires of mankind. Those things have a place, and as individuals we have obligations to our fellow men. But the point we must understand is this: we can feed the world, entertain the world, and play with the world, but such things do not save souls! And this brings us right back to our function as a church.

Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10), a work infinitely more important than providing temporary shelter. He gave the same charge to His disciples (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-20), who were to pass it on to the ones they taught (2 Timothy 2:2). Every local church is the pillar and support of the truth in their community (1 Timothy 3:15). This is our job. This is our work.

What do we have to offer? Nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 12:2). We have no

gimmicks, nor carnal appeal. We have only the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). That is enough to convert the lost. That is enough to satisfy the inner man (Matthew 5:6).

We cannot compete with the churches of the world, nor do we wish to. We only want to hold out the cross of the Lord. It is by this that all will be drawn to Him (John 12:32). Let's be satisfied with that.

~via *Pause Ponder Profit*, Paragould, Arkansas.

News & Notes

THE SICK:

Paul Adcock	Anita Wheeler
Mary Will Johnston	Cornelia Pepper
Patsy Thomas	Doris Lovell
Cindy Glass	Al Bush
Janet Jones	Everette "Bud" Dollar
Wayne Bolton	Wayne Gooch
Betty Christopher	Linda Jones
Ann Bush	Pamela Simon (Grenada)
Shaun Carruth	

Updates:

Paul Adcock had his second surgery on Thursday at Crestwood...**Dale Adcock** had an injection put in her back on Wednesday...**Anita Wheeler** continues to recover at home...**Peggy Pepper** had knee surgery done on Monday at Athens-Limestone. She has moved the Limestone Heath for Rehab ...**Drew Ogles** had an MRI on Wednesday and is being scheduled for allergy testing...**Brittany Bates Carter, Jewel Dean Kennemer's great-granddaughter**, began treatments for cancer this past Wednesday. These treatments will last for about about 4-5 months. Keep her in your prayers.

Those Undergoing Treatments or Chronic Illness:

Joe Leopard	Ella Melvin
Reba Byram	Irene Inman
Gayle Ball	Janice Cagle
Gilbert Hardy	Jeanette Weir
Diane Kilpatrick	Daniel Ogles
Wayne Wooldridge	Cindy Walker
Jenny Pickens	Gene Carpenter
Linda Ordenez	Charles Burns
Al Pollard	Ava Brooke Campbell

Elizabeth Howard Matt Poff
 Phillip Harwell Una King Carrier
 Shayna Tollison Eli Williams
 Anita Willis

In The Hospital:

Norman Hamm; Millenium Rehab - Huntsville
Ashley Sims; Cobb County Hospital - Atlanta, Georgia

Athens Rehabilitation & Senior Care:

Nelva Reed, rm. 61 William Thomas, rm. 65-A
 Judith Groce, rm. 10-B Dorothy Draper, rm. 104
 Mattye Murray, rm. 2 Helen Trousdale, rm. 30
 Valeria Dalton, rm. 7 Grady Tomerlin, rm. 38
 Terry Camp, rm. 82 Mildred Frantz, rm. 31
 Gayle Mills, rm. 15 Evelyn Hogan, rm. 36
 Mable Crafts, rm. 39 Christine Hudson, rm. 77
 Joyce Martin, rm. 92 Tom Lovell, rm. 92

Limestone Health Facility:

Jerry Gilbert, rm. 55

Shut-In or Away From Home:

Robert & Mot Beasley, at Merrill Gardens, Madison
 Gwen Bullock, at granddaughter's in Huntsville
 Wynell Casteel, at home
 Marjorie Dunning, at Brookdale Farms, Huntsville
 Mary Ruth Gardner, at Merrill Gardens, Madison
 Carl Hargrave, at granddaughter's home in Hartselle
 Essie Hardison, at home
 Ruby Jean Tinnon, at home

GOSPEL MEETING: The *West Rogersville church* in Rogersville is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Wednesday evening. The speaker will be *David Cox*.

DOORTODOOR: Next Saturday morning, November 19th, we are planning to go out door knocking to meet and invite people to our services at Market Street. We will plan to leave from the building at about 9:00 a.m.

NURSING HOME SINGING: Remember the singing at the Athens Rehabilitation and Senior Care on Tuesday afternoon at 5:30.

WORK GROUPS: Work Group Three will be meeting this evening after our evening service. If you are in group three, remember to meet with your group.

THE RECORD: *Attendance for the week of Nov. 6th*

Sunday: Bible Classes 149
 Morning Worship 180
 Evening Worship 119

Wednesday:

Bible Classes 105

Remember Our Service This Evening at 4:00.

Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, November 13th:

Morning Worship

Announcements..... Joel Hamm
 Song Leader Tyler Cox
 Prayer..... Kenneth Smith
 Preaching..... Trenton Barksdale
 Lord's Supper
 Presiding..... Terry Andrews
 Assisting..... Harvey Nixon
 ServingMatthew Vaughn..... Heath Dollar
Nathaniel Adams..... Seth Todd
 Closing PrayerKeith Hinkle

Evening Worship

Announcements..... Joel Hamm
 Song Leader Tommy Burns
 Prayer..... Dan Reed
 Preaching..... Buc Chumbley
 Lord's Supper Terry Andrews
 Closing Prayer Marion Mitchell

Other Assignments for Sunday, November 13th:

Ushers..... Jason Conn/Danny Johnson
 Work Sound System..... Marty Adams

Wednesday, November 16th:

Song Leader Hunter Cox
 Bible Reading..... Ephesians 1:13-23
 Keenon Currier
 Prayer..... A. J. Price
 Invitation Harvey Nixon
 Closing Prayer Joy Warner

Sunday, November 20th:

Morning Worship

Announcements..... Steve Usery
 Song Leader Hunter Cox
 Prayer..... Landon Adams
 Preaching..... David Cox
 Lord's Supper
 Presiding..... A. J. Price
 Assisting..... Larry Mitchell
 Serving Keenon Currier..... Jason Conn
 Kenneth Adams..... Tony Thomas
 Closing Prayer Tommy Burns

Evening Worship

Announcements..... Steve Usery
 Song Leader Joel Hamm
 Prayer..... Jerry McGlocklin
 Preaching..... David Cox
 Lord's Supper A. J. Price
 Closing Prayer James Johnson

Other Assignments for Sunday, November 20th:

Ushers..... Marvin Putman/Keith Hinkle
 Work Sound System..... Terry Andrews