

THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

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DENOMINATIONALISM, A NON-ESSENTIAL

The term "denominationalism" is used by the writer to denote the great number of varying and conflicting religious groups, each of which differs from all the others in name, doctrine, organization, etc., and each of which was begun by a man or group of men sometime after the Lord built His church on the day of Pentecost in the year 33 A.D. (Acts 2). We emphasize that the Lord's church is **excluded** from this classification. It is **not** a denomination. It is the original, built by the Lord Himself in harmony with the Father's will, and is sufficient **within itself** to fulfill all of the Lord's requirements.

The Bible is emphatic in its condemnation of a divided religious condition such as is prevalent now. The Saviour prayed for religious unity—not disunity. (John 17:20-21). The apostle Paul condemned religious division at Corinth. (1 Cor. 1). Hence, nothing which the Bible condemns could be considered essential. We now confine our inquiries to whether there is even a single aspect about denominationalism that is essential to the fulfillment of God's will.

FOR PREACHING THE GOSPEL

Is denominationalism essential to the maintenance of Christianity? Of course

the maintenance of Christianity is dependent upon the propagation of the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), and which in Luke 8:11 is called the seed of the kingdom. If the word is the seed, then the possibility of Christianity rests in the planting of the seed. There is not a single denomination on earth upon which God depends for the planting of this seed! Paul said in Colossians 1:23 that the gospel had been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. What wonderful success in one generation! The church of the Lord was able to accomplish this without the existence of a single denomination, and if every church except the Lord's ceased to exist, she would still plant the seed; hence denominationalism is non-essential to the preaching of the gospel.

FOR REMISSION OF SINS

Is membership in a denomination essential for one to obtain remission of sins and to enjoy spiritual blessings? Their own teaching (for the most part) will answer this question negatively. Most of them say it is not necessary to be a member of their denomination to be saved.

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EDITORIAL.....

IN DEFENSE OF THE TRUTH (NO. 17)

Although R. W. Gray, editor of the North Broad Bulletin (prior to his moving in January to Georgia), wrote at least eleven articles on "**church co-operation**," many of his "arguments" were vague, evasive, illogical and unscriptural. In an effort to justify such practices as the North Broad Church sending funds to "the Herald of Truth", editor Gray tried to justify one church sending (contributing) funds to another church to be used in evangelism. We examined some of his "arguments" in "THE INSTRUCTOR" last month. Let us now consider some other statements the editor made.

I. Editor Gray said: "It is often said, 'a church may assist another only when the receiving church is in need, etc.' Of course this is correct according to both common sense and Holy Scripture. The trouble arises when an attempt is made to define a 'need'; that is, what may be construed as a 'real need', and how do these needs come about?" (N.B. Bulletin not numbered or dated).

OBSERVATIONS:

1. The editor says that both common sense and Holy Scripture teach that "a church may assist another only when the receiving church is in need, etc." It seems that at other times he argues against this statement.

2. If by "assist" the editor means "make contribution out of its treasury", and if by "in need" he means "poor" or "unable to provide the necessities of the saints", I agree.

3. After saying the aforesaid statement is correct according to common sense and Holy Scripture, the editor endeavors to define "in need" or "needs" so as to include such churches as the Highland Church in Abilene, Texas. It looks as though the editor has an "elastic" imagination if he can stretch it to the point that he imagines that the **Highland Church is in need**.

4. If desire plus opportunity creates "needs" as the editor contends in one of his articles, then I could really be "**in need**" by desiring to buy 10,000,000 Bibles for distribution or 10,000 Cadillacs for preachers since I do have an opportunity to buy them. Who can **really believe** the editor's "reasoning" (?) along this line?

5. Editor Gray will not have "the trouble" he says "arises when an attempt is made to define a 'need'" IF he is willing to follow a Scriptural precedent. When the brethren at Antioch sent a contribution to the brethren in Judea, it was described as "**relief**." (See Acts 11:27-30). When various churches accepted collections for the saints in Jerusalem we learn from Romans 15:25-26 that the saints were "**poor**" and from 2 Cor. 9:12 that "the **want** of the saints" was supplied.

6. We never read of a church contributing funds to another church unless it was "**poor**", in "**want**", or an object of "**relief**." We suggest that the editor accept God's Word in these matters and "the trouble" he says "arises when an attempt is made to define a 'need'" will fade into insignificance.

II. Editor Gray also said that "whether a church sends the man OR the funds to support the man is a matter of

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judgment, not law. But this verse (referring to Acts 11:22-CRS) does authorize co-operation of churches in evangelism." (N.B. Bulletin, Not numbered or dated).

OBSERVATIONS:

1. The editor recognizes and admits that a church is co-operating with other churches in evangelism when it supports (sends) a man to preach the gospel to another church. This proves that the editor does NOT agree with those who contend that there must be a pooling of resources of a plurality of churches under one eldership in order for there to be church co-operation.

2. Acts 11:22 says: **"Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch."** PLEASE NOTE: A. This verse says very simply that a preacher, Barnabas, was sent to Antioch. This verse authorizes the sending of a preacher to preach to another church. B. It is beyond me as to how and why editor Gray could think that this verse authorize the sending of funds to another church to support the man. C. Does the editor also think that the sending of funds (to support the man) to a preaching (missionary) society is "a matter of judgment, not of law? If there is no pattern as the editor contends, there could be no violation of the pattern.

3. The editor obviously thinks that he has the right to assume something and then assert it as if it were true without his proving from the Scriptures that such is the case! Peter said: **"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God....."** (1 Peter 4:11).

4. Acts 11:22 does NOT authorize a church to send (contribute) funds to another church for any reason. It DOES authorize a church to send a preacher to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have here an approved example of one church sending a preacher to another church to preach the gospel. This is right and can NOT be wrong. We plead with all to accept God's pattern in all things.

(CRS)

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**DENOMINATIONALISM,
A NON-ESSENTIAL**

The Bible teaches that all spiritual blessings are in Christ, (Eph.1:3), and that one must be baptized to get in Christ where those blessings are to be found. (Gal. 3:26-27). Denominations do not baptize into Christ! God teaches the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins, (Acts 2:38), but denominations (as a whole—CRS) do not baptize for the remission of sins. We conclude, then, that denominationalism is a non-essential in this particular. Centuries before there was another church, we know that people were being baptized for remission of sins and to get into Christ's body (the church, (Col. 1:18), where are found all spiritual blessings! (Eph. 1:3).

FOR BENEVOLENT WORK

Must denominations exist before God's plan for doing benevolent work can be executed? To that we answer that the church of Christ was God's "benevolent society" in the days of the apostles without the existence of denominations or other inventions of men, and it can be so now. Please study carefully the following passages: Mark 9:41; Acts 11:29-30; Rom. 15:25-27; 1 Cor. 16:1-3; 2 Cor. 8:1-15; Gal. 6:10; Phil. 4:15-18; Col. 3:17. (Editor's note: Some of the above passages show individual responsibilities rather than church responsibilities.)

FOR WORSHIPPING GOD

Are denominations necessary in order that men may worship God in spirit and in truth? To the best of our knowledge, denominations have been a hindrance in this matter, because they have made subtractions, substitutions, additions, etc., to the plan for spiritual and truthful worship outlined in the New Testament. Long before the beginning of any denomination Christian people were worshipping the way God prescribed. Please see Acts 2:41-47; Eph. 5:19; Acts 20:7 and 1 Cor. 16:2. Again, we see an un-essential feature of denominationalism.

We ask in conclusion: Were denominations necessary before they existed?

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A Debate With The Mormons

You are invited to attend a series of public discussions which is to be conducted in the Goodyear CIO Union Hall on Hoke Street in Gadsden, Ala. on June 26, 27, 29, 30, 1972 at 7:30 p.m. Carrol R. Sutton of the East Albertville Church of Christ and Mr. Alfred Ramsey of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon) will be the disputants.

Mr. Ramsey will affirm that **“Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God and the Book of Mormon is an inspired book of God as the New Testament is.”** Carrol R. Sutton will affirm that **“The New Testament of Jesus Christ is the complete standard of authority in religious matters today.”**

The North Gadsden Church of Christ where Bro. Ronny Johnson labors has arranged this series of public discussions. We commend them for this and pray that much good will be accomplished.

What Christians Need

Christians do not need new schemes and methods, but more faith in God's plan. Christians do not need more money, but more unselfishness. Christians do not need more time, but more wisdom for using time. Christians do not need to think bigger, but to think. Neither do they need glamour of “new frontiers”, but blessings of “ancient landmarks.”

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No, because every essential for man's salvation is provided in the church which Christ established at least five hundred years before a denomination existed. Our plea to you, therefore, is that you will forsake sectarianism and take your stand with those of us who strive to be Christians— and Christians only!

—Garnet H. Baker in
THE GOSPEL WAY

Sentence Sermons

Beware of your spiritual condition if you find the most enjoyable part of the service to be the closing song and the dismissal prayer.

Habit is a cable; we weave a thread for it each day, and it becomes so strong we cannot break it. —Horace Mann.

Little things are the hinges on which great results turn.

Emotion is no substitute for true devotion.

It is a sickly faith that is shaken because some frail human being goes wrong.

Whenever Christians want to be like “other people” they cease to want to be Christians.

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