



DENOMINATIONS—THE RISE OF HYBRID CHURCHES

J.C. Harrison | Montego Bay Jamaica

In today's world, many denominations teach different and conflicting doctrines, actually confusing people who desire to follow God. Many say this confusion is okay with our Creator, but that conclusion is not true: *"For God is not the author of confusion..."* (1 **Corinthians 14:33**).



Since there is one Bible, how did so many denominations with so many different teachings come about? This question is important because if we understand the reason for denominations, we will understand why being a member of a denomination is inherently against God's plan.

The Whole Counsel of God

The Apostle Paul says, *"Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God"* (Acts 20:26-27).

The word "counsel" simply means "plan," "will," or "purpose" (CSB, NIV, and NET). In other words, Paul is saying to these Christians, *"...if any of you should be lost, I am not responsible [or I am innocent/clean of the blood of everyone], because I have told you everything God wants you to know [or the whole purpose/plan/will of God]"* (EXB—Expanded Bible).

From this passage, it is evident that people must be told the whole plan of God to be saved, not just some or even most of it. The point of knowing the whole plan of God is so we can follow it: *"be doers of the word and not hearers only"* (James 1:22).

The True Church

The church is of vital importance in the New Testament. That Jesus intended to, and did, build His church (**Matthew 16:18**) is evident; however, contrary to popular religious culture, Jesus built only one church (**Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4**). And to be saved, we must be added to His church (**Acts 2:41, 47; Ephesians 5:23**).

The True Church and the Whole Counsel of God

How, then, do we identify the church that belongs to Jesus? The answer becomes clear when we remember that the church is made up of those who are saved and the saved must follow God's whole plan (**Acts 20:26-27**). These two points, when connected, open our eyes to the truth. In the midst of all the religious chaos that exists today, *the church that Jesus built is recognizable for it is made up of people who know, follow, and teach the whole plan of God, nothing more...nothing less.*

Remember, *"Anyone who runs on ahead (of God) and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ (who is not content with what He taught) does not have God; but he who continues to live in the doctrine (teaching) of Christ (does have God), has both the Father and the Son"* (2 **John 1:9**—AMPC). This truth is applicable to individuals as well as to religious groups (denominations).

Denominations

Denominations come about when people create religious groups that follow only portions of God's plan while rejecting and replacing other aspects of His plan with their own ideas—teaching them as doctrine.

Jesus warns about this problem when He says, *"...in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men."* (**Matthew 15:9**). Each denomination forms an identity and a name for itself by intermingling or mixing some teachings of God with its own teachings, thus producing "Hybrid Churches." Hybrids exist because of the combining of some of God's plan with the catechisms, creeds, and ideologies of men, thus producing Theologically Modified [Pseudo-] Churches, which function as imitations of the true church that Jesus built.

The head of each group/denomination accepts (and enforces) the parts of God's plan he likes and rejects aspects he does not like, thus creating a buffet style approach to the Bible. As well, they add their own ideas, not found in the New Testament. Over time many different divided groups with different and contradictory

Sundays at 6:30 AM



April Topics

4/4 Sermon #1294
Deconstructing Doubt

4/11 Sermon #1296
The Truth about the
Sinner's Prayer

4/18 Sermon #1297
Christian Evidences

4/25 Sermon #1298
The Name of Christ

APRIL 2021 NEWSLETTER

teachings come into being, causing the religious confusion we see around us today.

If people simply follow the whole counsel of God, without adding to or taking away from it, we will not have denominations and the resulting confusion. In **John 17:20-23**, Jesus prayed that all who believe in Him should be one. Denominationalism with its inherent division goes against this and other parts of the will of God.

Salvation

The true church abides in and teaches the whole counsel of God as it relates to what mankind must do to be saved as the following scriptures teach:

Hear - Romans 10:12-17

Believe - John 6:28-29, John 3:16, John 20:30-31

Repent - Luke 5:32, 11:32, Jonah 3:1-10, Luke 13:3, 5, Acts 17:30

Confess - Matthew 10:32-33, Romans 10:9-10, Acts 8:36-37

Be Baptized [for the forgiveness of sins] - Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, Romans 6:3-8, 1 Peter 3:18-21

Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Assemble for worship - Hebrews 10:24-25

CHRISTIAN CONFIDENCE

Marcus Mathis | Wichita Falls, TX

According to the Oxford Dictionary, pride is defined as “the quality of having an excessively high opinion of oneself or one’s importance”; whereas, confidence is defined as “a feeling of self-assurance arising from an appreciation of one’s own abilities or qualities.” For the Christian, confidence comes from different sources: past deliverances, faith in God, and the assurance of a secure destiny if we remain faithful to God.



The Apostle Paul himself has already experienced divinely driven deliverances in the past when he writes to the Corinthian church, giving credit to God for what He has done for him: *“Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us”* (**2 Corinthians 1:9-10**). These past deliverances have given him encouragement and confidence that God will act on his behalf again as he experiences day-to-day troubles.

Paul realizes, of course, that God’s ultimate deliverance will come at the conclusion of his life when God’s Son returns and declares that time shall be no more. Perfect deliverance for Paul as well as for all mankind is based on the resurrection of

Jesus from the dead. It is also that event that is the basis for the hope of every Christian.

The promises to Paul inspire confidence in us, but we have even more confidence because of statements like Peter makes in his second epistle as he speaks of the grace and peace that come because of the *“knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord...by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust”* (**2 Peter 1:2, 4**).

The theme of ‘promise’ flows throughout the Bible, the trail beginning in the Garden of Eden. The fall would not determine humanity’s destiny irrevocably. God had a plan for His faithful children, and He pushed that plan forward throughout the pages of Old Testament history. He made sure that such notables as Noah and Lot were saved from the devastation of their time as well as many others.

Out of all the promises in the Bible, Peter has in mind God’s decisive role at the end of history: ‘the promise of His coming.’ We understand that God has an unchanging and faithful nature. Everything God has said, He will do.

Christianity is a confident way of living, built on what God has accomplished in Christ. But Christian confidence does not mean we stop experiencing the frailties of humanity. Even Paul went through periods of discouragement when he seemed to be overwhelmed by troubles. *“For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life”* (**2 Corinthians 1:8**). But He could remain confident because of the resurrection of Jesus. *“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection”* (**Romans 6:5**).

Christians should make sure we do everything possible to weed pride out of our lives. After all, what do we have to be proud about? Should we be proud about our rebellious behavior? Our appetite for sin? Our misguided motives? No, a thousand times, NO!!!

Mankind actually was powerless to do anything to save himself. God created the plan to save fallen man—He sent His Son as a sacrifice. This realization allows the Christian to understand that we are nothing without God. Jesus Christ is alive for Christians, and one day He will return to claim those who are His—both those who have died and those who are living. The early Christians, being confident in this fact, created the Aramaic prayer/greeting: Maranatha, “Come, our Lord!”/ Our Lord is coming!”



Audio/video library and transcripts
www.LetTheBibleSpeak.com



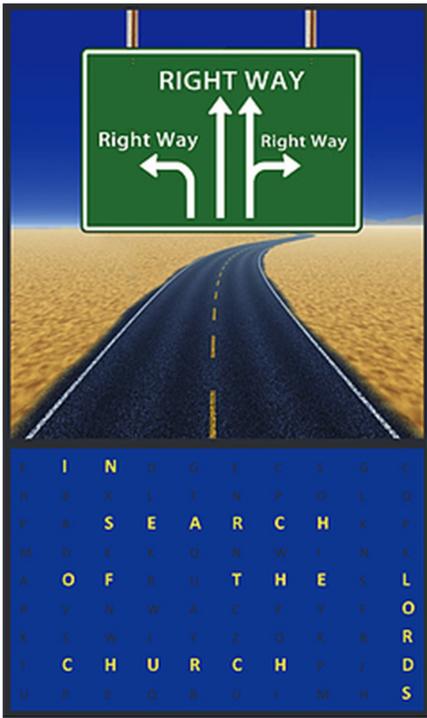
Check out Let the Bible Speak on Facebook
www.facebook.com/groups/LetTheBibleSpeak1



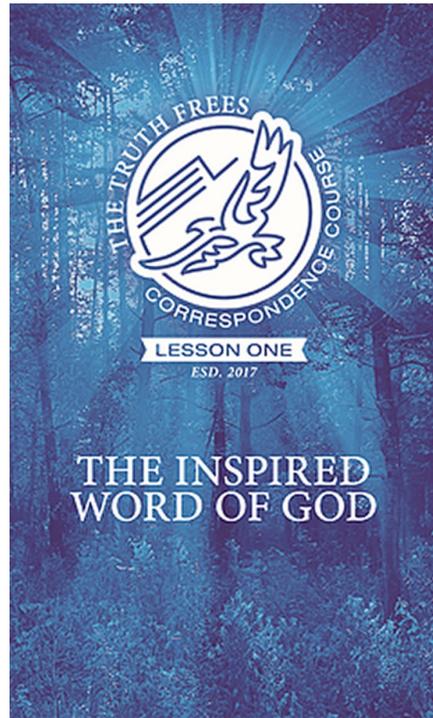
Watch videos of our program
www.youtube.com/LetTheBibleSpeak

FREE RESOURCES

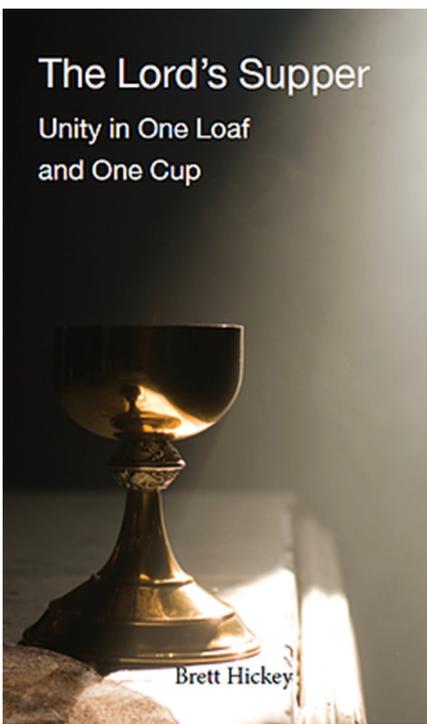
To request a free copy of any resource shown below, simply visit our website, www.letthebiblespeak.com/merchandise or send an email to unityseeker@hotmail.com.



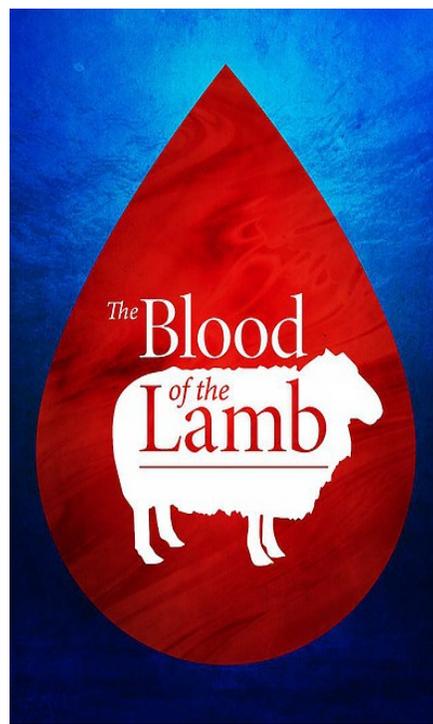
In Search of the Lord's Church
(24 page booklet)



The Truth Frees
(six-lesson Bible study course)



The Lord's Supper
Unity in One Loaf and One Cup
(47 page booklet)



The Blood of the Lamb
(13 page booklet)