

WEST COLUMBIA CHURCH OF CHRIST



“every disciple that is perfect shall be as his master.” Luke 6:40b

Christianity Is Not Denominational

The word "church" in the New Testament is translated from *ekklesia* and means "called out," "assembly," etc. It might refer to any kind of "called" meeting or "assembly" or "congregation." The *ekklesia* of the Lord would be the "called out," the "assembly," or the "congregation" of the Lord, and refers to those people who have been called by the Lord through the gospel out of the service of Satan and into the service of God and righteousness. This idea is indicated in **John 15:18-19: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."** God's church — *ekklesia* — consists of those chosen out of the world, all of them, with the exception of a single one.

The word "church" has three phases of meaning in the New Testament. First, it is applied to local congregations or called out assemblies of the Lord, as in **Acts 15:41: "And he went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches."** When it is used in this way, it carries the idea of organization, that is, the idea of the "called out" of a given community organized together after the New Testament pattern for the worship of God and the service of humanity.

"And when they had appointed them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed" (Acts 14:23).

"And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and the apostles and elders, and rehearsed all things that God had done with them" (Acts 15:4).

"And it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men out of their company, and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren" (Acts 15:22).

Second, the word "church" is used in reference to local congregations or churches in a given province or political division. **"So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied" (Acts 9:31).**

"The churches of Asia salute you. Aquilla and Prisca salute you much in the Lord with the church that is in their house" (1 Cor. 16:19).

"Moreover brethren, we make known unto you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia" (2 Cor. 8:1).

Third, the word is employed to designate the entire congregation of the Lord, all of the called out of the earth. **"And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).**

"And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18).—(cont on page 3)

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SERMONS THIS SUNDAY:

AM: HARVEY ALLEN

PM: HARVEY ALLEN

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord,
shall enter in to the kingdom of heaven;
but he that doeth the will of my Father” - Matthew 7:21

IN THE BIBLE WE'LL DELVE IN 2012

JOIN US IN
NEW TESTAMENT
CHRISTIANITY
TODAY!

A Warm Welcome awaits you at all our services. Come see!
www.WestColumbiaChurchOfChrist.org

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SERVICES

Sunday 10 AM Bible Study
Sunday 11 AM, 6 PM Assembly
Wednesday 7 PM Bible Study
Office Phone (803) 794-5320
Nursery provided

Bible Classes for all ages

LADIES CLASS

To be announced

EVANGELIST

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“PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER” - James 5:16

- **REMEMBER IN PRAYER:** *Margaret Herring, Wilson Burton, Betty Mathis, Lamar Reeves, Elma Berrier and Phyllis Johnson.*
- **Gwen Pittman** came forward Wed PM requesting the prayers of the church.
- Also, **Audry Williams** requests the prayers of the church.
- **Michael** and **Samantha Mancuso** will be having outpatient surgery in the new few weeks.
- **Ryan Sheppard** is home now for good, still fulfilling his National Guard duty though.
- **Tommy White** requests prayers for a friend, **Al Summers** who is having his colon removed.
- Give thanks to God for His mercy, and pray for all these, and the work of the Lord here at West Columbia.

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” - Romans 8:18

“AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY” - Acts 2:42

- **Building Cleaning** signup for the New Year is posted in the Foyer.
- **Marshal Mancuso** has gotten some **new cards** to send to visitors and those we haven't seen recently. See Marshall to get some to use. **Jones Gamble** publishes a list each week of visitors and those we missed on Sunday. Give those folks a call, or send a card to see if they're ok, and to encourage them and let them know we miss them.
- **Bible Study at Church Building, Saturdays 3 pm**, all are invited and please invite visitors to come! It's a good way for people to learn more of us. An informal session around a table with everyone using their bibles and Strong's Concordances.

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.” - 1 Timothy 6:12

IN THE BIBLE WE'LL DELVE IN 2012

REGARDING DENOMINATIONS:

“Every denomination (Catholic or Protestant) had its origin this side of the New Testament. Every denomination has something in its teaching or practice that marks it as different from the church of the New Testament. Otherwise, it would not be a denomination.

As it was possible for an undenominational church to exist at Antioch, so it is possible now. Any church today that has the same faith and practice as did the church at Antioch (and other faithful New Testament congregations) is not a denomination, but a church of Christ”.—**David Pharr**, Gospel Preacher

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye 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 judgment.” - 1 Corinthians 1:10

Christianity Is Not Denominational (Continued from page 1)

When the word "church" is used in its second and third phases of meaning — referring to churches in a given territory or to the universal church — it does not carry with it any idea of organization. There is no suggestion or intimation in the word "church", or otherwise in the New Testament, that God willed the organization of the congregations of any territory or of the entire world in any manner. There is no suggestion of any kind of church organization in the New Testament that is higher than the local congregation with its elders and deacons (Phil. 1:1).

This idea of the church is presented in numerous figures of speech in the New Testament. We have the "vineyard" with Christ as the husbandman and the called out as the "vines" (John 15:1-2). There is also the figure of the vine and the branches with Christ as the true vine and each saved individual a branch in the vine (John 15:5-6).

Then we see the figure of a sheep-fold with Christ as the great shepherd and the redeemed as the sheep (John 10:15-16). Again, it is presented as a sheep-fold with Christ as the door by which the sheep enter (John 10:7-9).

The idea of the called out body of Christ — the church of Christ — is also presented in the figure of a family with God as the Father, Christ the elder Brother, and all of the "called out" as brethren in the family, heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ (1 Tim. 3:14-15; Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:26-27; 4:7).

And then we have the figure in which the church is presented as a human body (Col 1:18 printed earlier). In all these figures we have the picture of oneness, unity, and harmony.

The idea of division is not once suggested. We do not see the picture of a vineyard divided into a hundred different blocks with each conducted in such a way that conflicts with the others. We see a great vineyard, all arranged in a most harmonious manner, conducted under the direction of one husbandman for His glory.

We do not see Christ as many vines with distinct, separate clusters of branches in each vine, with each of these vines growing and producing separate fruit. Instead, we see one great, glorious vine, Jesus Christ, with every redeemed soul a branch in Him, saved and sustained by Him, and bearing the same kind of fruit for Him.

We do not see a sheep-fold divided up into several hundred small flocks, each conducted by a different shepherd, and in competition with each other. Instead, the Bible shows us one great wonderful sheep-fold with one shepherd, Jesus Christ.

We do not see several sheep-folds with as many different doors. The Bible shows us only one sheep-fold with only one door and all of Christ's called out entering in through that one door.

We do not see in the divine picture several hundred separate families, with different fathers and at variance with each other. The church of the New Testament is not portrayed as a group of different families all claiming God as Father, but a single unified family.

We do not see five or six hundred separate, distinct human bodies, with five or six hundred heads, or with Christ as head of all of them while they war, contend and fight one another. In all of these divine pictures, there is not the faintest intimation that suggests division or such a thing as denominational Christianity. In all the pictures there is oneness, harmony, cooperation and undenominational Christianity.

The church of Christ is not a denomination. You can be a Christian, serve God according to His word, live a life devoted to Him, die and go to heaven without ever belonging to a denomination.

- Jesse Parker Sewell, 1876-1969, Gospel preacher, Teacher of God's Word