

# Berryville Bible Beacon

## What Is A Denomination?

**W**hen I took my logic class in school, one of the things that we learned was how to define our terms. One way to define something was to simply point to it and say, "That is it!" This method, of course, assumes that you indeed know what it is that you are trying to define, and that the thing being defined conforms to that definition. This method generally works until you find something that fits the definition, but looks different from what you originally defined. For example, suppose I pointed at a red apple and said, "Apple." That would be quite sufficient until, at least, I came across a green one, and then I might be at a loss. At that point, I need a different method of defining what it is that I was trying to communicate. However, there is always something specific about what it is that you are trying to define that includes everything of that class and excludes everything not of that class.

I think that this is exactly the problem that we run into when those outside of the Lord's church point at us and say, "Denomination!" They see that we have a "church," worship God, have a "pastor," believe in Jesus, study the Bible, meet at about the same time that they meet, have a sign in front of the "church," which bears a name that they see on other "churches," and conclude that we must be something similar to them. "If we are a denomination, then they must be one too," or, at least, that is the kind of thought process I would expect goes through most people's minds when they see our building with our sign on it that says, "CHURCH OF CHRIST." It's not until you really start to look at the churches of Christ that someone starts to understand that there are major differences in how things are done from the way denominations do things. The churches of Christ partake of the Lord's supper

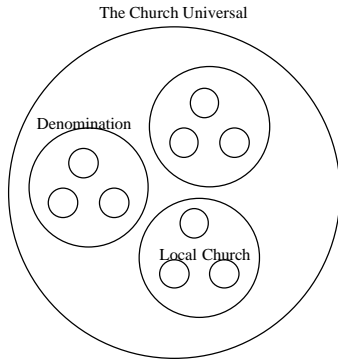
every Sunday. The churches of Christ don't use instrumental music. The churches of Christ baptize for the remission of sins. The differences add up eventually. But there is that one attribute that includes all the denominations in the class "denomination," and excludes the churches of Christ from the class "denomination."

Think about this for a moment. When we speak of the term denomination in reference to money, you have the dollar bill, the five dollar bill, ten dollar bill, twenty, fifty, and the Benjamin Franklin. What is it about these bills that makes them a denomination? They are all different, but profess to be of the same kind or class--the class of legal tender. They all bear the inscription, "This note is legal tender for all debts, public and private." Now, suppose that I'm head of the federal reserve and I decide that I want to print another denomination of money. Let's say that I wanted to print up a twenty-five dollar bill. That would be handy. Four of them would make \$100.00. So I print up the bills, but I don't put the inscription on the bills. There may be some who would "buy it" so to speak, but most would not take it because it is the belief in that statement, if you will, that makes those denominations valuable. Without the belief in that statement, then the denomination would only be worth the sum of the ink and paper with which it was printed. It would not be able to settle any debts, whether public, or private. That's what makes a denomination of money just that, the belief that it will settle debts. That's the defining trait that excludes it from everything else, and includes it in the class it is in.

So what is that attribute that excludes the churches of Christ from being a denomination and includes all of the denominations within the class, "denomination?" It is the belief, that all "churches/denominations" are all

# What Is A Denomination (cont.)

part of the one universal church. That belief can be illustrated with the following graphic, which, by the way, is not original to me. This is the denominational model of the church, which, to be a denomination, one must believe.



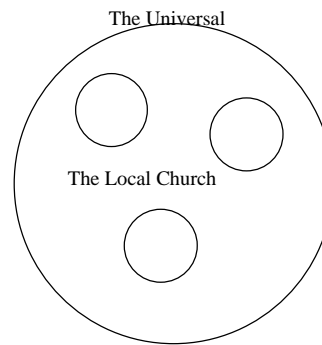
You will notice that the largest circle represents the church universal. The medium sized circle represents the denomination, and the smallest circle represents the local church. This is what one must believe in order to be a religious denomination. This is the defining aspect of what it means to be a denomination. This defining aspect includes everyone with this belief, and excludes everyone without this belief. The only problem with this is that you will not find this organization in any part of the Bible. If you want to be a denomination, then this is how you do it.

Now what makes the churches of Christ not a denomination is simply this, members of the churches of Christ do not hold this belief. Just as that twenty-five dollar bill is not a member of the denomination of legal tender. It is the belief in that one defining factor that makes it so.

Without that belief, it simply isn't so. Someone might ask, "Well, why do you not believe this?" The answer is really amazingly simple. This belief is not found in the pages of the Bible. The denominational model is completely foreign to the New Testament. There were only two types of organizations discussed within the Bible in relationship to the church. There was the local church, and there was the universal church.

There were no denominations under the faith for which Jesus bled and died. You will never find a single one. Moreover, you will never find Jesus or any of his apostles advocating such a situation. In contrast, they advocate absolute unity of the church (John 17:20-23; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13; Ephesians 4:3-6). What is the model for church unity in contrast to the denominational model? There is the universal church and there is the local church. That's all that is there. The following illustration shows this.

This is the model of the church for which Jesus bled and died. This is the model for church unity. We in-



vite all of our friends who may be members of denominations to study these matters. We exhort them to demand the same kind of unity within the church for which Jesus prayed (John 17:20-23) and for which Paul contended (1 Corinthians 1:10-13). We encourage them to search the scriptures to find those things upon which we MUST be united in order to be the Lord's church (Ephesians 4:3-6). The church of Christ is NOT a denomination. There are other differences between churches of Christ and the denominational world, but this is the one key difference that defines what a denomination is, versus what the church of the Bible is. Here is the key to getting beyond that old point and look way of defining a "church" and defining the church in the terms that the Bible defines it in. It starts with this one belief--the unity of the body of Christ based upon what the scriptures authorize her to be. Here is where denominationalism ends and where the church that belongs to Christ, the church of Christ, begins.

Kevin Cauley

## Sermons and Study Topics

Week of 1/25/04

Morning .....	Practicing Forgiveness
Scripture .....	Hebrews 10:1-4, 16-18
Evening .....	Questions and Answers
Scripture .....	N/A
Sunday Morning Bible Study .....	Hebrews
Wednesday Evening Bible Study .....	Our Passion

## Weekly Record

Week of 1/18/04

Sunday Class .....	58
Sunday A.M.....	78
Sunday P.M.....	57
Wednesday .....	58
Contribution.....	\$1285.00
Budget.....	\$1760.00

## A True Soul Winner

**S**everal years ago my husband preached for a little congregation in Cherry Valley, Arkansas. During our time there we became close friends with a woman named Mary Mott. In all my life I had never met anyone who could meet someone on a bus, talk to them, have a Bible study, and schedule another one before getting off at their stop. Mary was a woman who could do just that. She had no fear of approaching any one with the gospel.

I am sure most Americans remember the serial killer Geoffrey Dahmer. It would be a surprise to most people that shortly after his sentence to prison he received a letter that changed his life. A kind Christian woman who was concerned for his soul found compassion on him and offered him a Bible study. Most of us are afraid to talk to our family, friends and neighbors about Christ, not to mention it wouldn't probably cross our minds to write a serial killer. This woman went beyond speaking to those in her community; she went to the cell of a convicted killer. She knew that Christ had died for him, too, and that is why she wanted to teach him to become a member of the church of Christ (John 3:16).

Mary Mott wrote Geoff (as she called him quite affectionately) and offered him a Bible study. She saw that he had a great need to hear the gospel of Christ. (Romans 10:17) Her letter touched his heart, a heart many would think impenetrable. She continued their correspondence and sent him several tracts. He studied his Bible (II Timothy 2:15) and one day he desired to become a member of the church. Yes, my friends he became a member of the church the Christ built (Mathew 16:18). When he was killed in

prison for teaching the gospel (Revelation 2:10) Mary was devastated. But, she had great reason to rejoice (Luke 15:7), because she had helped a lost soul come to Christ. She had helped convert one that the world would have had thrown to the lions, one who most would have said is unworthy of salvation, and one that many would liked to have seen die a thousand deaths.

I had the opportunity to read a letter that Geoff had sent the Memphis School of Preaching when my husband was a student there. I couldn't help but notice the great love he had for the Lord. He spoke about the day he was baptized. That day had been a solar eclipse. He said it was wonderful. He was plunged beneath the waters of baptism full of sin and the sun was dark. But, when he had emerged in newness of life the sun shone brightly. His letter touched me so deeply that I copied it and have kept it in our files.

Mary taught me that teaching is a responsibility that we all have. She showed me through her actions that we must not harbor preconceived notions and take it upon ourselves to "deny" someone the chance to learn the word of God. One never knows who will respond to the gospel call. I hope that Mary Mott's story has been as moving to you as it has been to me. Let us head the gospel call (Mark 16:15, 16)!

Susan Elliott

## Kevin's Korner

As many of you know, there is a militant and radical group in our country that is out to change the traditional family values of our country. This group has invaded Hollywood and gained control of virtually every television program that airs during the primetime hour. They are the homosexual lobby.

The doctrine of this lobby is this. Homosexuality is simply an alternative lifestyle to traditional family values. They argue that being homosexual is like being Hispanic, or Black, and there is nothing that can be done about it. So, they argue that they should be a protected class of people with their own set of "rights."

Perhaps most disturbing are their recent efforts to legalize homosexual marriages in our nation. To this, our President has responded. He will propose a constitutional amendment this year to congress that the institution of marriage be limited to man and woman. As Christians, we ought to support this effort. Homosexuality is a sin, not a lifestyle (Romans 1:26-32). There are some petitions in the foyer to help support our President. Take one; fill your part out; pass it around to your friends and have them sign it too. Righteousness exalts a nation.

### Elders:

Clay Bozarth, Leon Duncan,  
Bruce Foster, Bill Fort, Glenn  
Quigley

### Deacons:

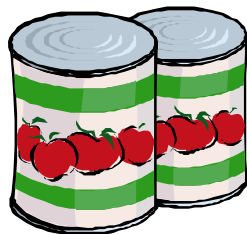
Ken Smith, Brent Stevens,  
Rusty Windle.

### Preacher:

Kevin Cauley... 870-423-6707

# News, Notes, and 'Noucements

- We are truly thankful to God for the wonderful new Lord's day that he has given us today to worship him in Spirit and in Truth!
- Brian Guess is scheduled to have back surgery on February 6th.
- Let us remain constant in prayer for the following individuals: Donna Henderson, Curtis and Opal Hull, Ralph Hunter, Chris Pinkley.
- Ken, Debbie, Callie, and Kendra are all traveling in jolly ol' England this week. Let's remember safe travels for them in our prayers.
- All are cordially invited to an open house at the Cauley's today from two to five P.M.
- Our regular youth devotional is scheduled for next Sunday evening. Please make your plans to attend.
- The elders and deacons meeting will be this evening after services. If you have anything that needs to be brought to their attention, please see one of them.
- On Thursday, February 19th, there will be a Sweethearts banquet in Joplin. If you wish to go to this event, please let Kevin know by February 9th.
- There will be a brief VBS meeting tonight after the evening services.
- Please check the bulletin board in the foyer for next month's monthly assignments.
- The pantry item for this week is Kool Aid.



## Welcome! To the Berryville church of Christ.

### Family Times for Worship and Study

Sunday Morning Bible Class:.....	9:30 AM
Sunday Morning Worship:.....	10:30 AM
Sunday Evening Worship:.....	6:00 PM
Ladies Bible Class: .....	10:30 AM
Wed. Evening Bible Class:.....	7:00 PM

### Serving Each Other

	January 25th, 2004	February 1st, 2004
<b>Sunday Morning</b>		
<b>Songs:</b>	Bill Fort	Ken Smith
<b>Preaching:</b>	Kevin Cauley	Kevin Cauley
<b>Opening Prayer:</b>	Bob Moore	Leon Duncan
<b>Scripture Reading:</b>	Matt Bassing	Perry Foster
<b>Lord's Table</b>	Bill Fort	Clay Bozarth
	Bruce Foster	Brent Stevens
<b>(assist)</b>	Ray Duncan	Jack Gentry
	Jack Gentry	Matt Bassing
<b>Closing Prayer</b>	John Gass	Glenn Quigley
<b>Sunday Evening</b>		
<b>Songs:</b>	Rusty Windle	Rusty Windle
<b>Preaching:</b>	Kevin Cauley	Kevin Cauley
<b>Opening Prayer:</b>	Ken Smith	Bob Moore
<b>Scripture Reading:</b>	Bruce Foster	Bruce Foster
<b>Lord's Table</b>	Dale Pinkley	Brandon Foster
	Perry Foster	Ray Duncan
<b>Closing Prayer</b>	Brandon Foster	Dale Pinkley
<b>Wednesday</b>		
<b>Songs:</b>	Sandy Nieves	Clay Bozarth
<b>Opening Prayer:</b>	Ray Duncan	Kevin Cauley
<b>Invitation:</b>	Matt Bassing	Rusty Windle
<b>Closing Prayer:</b>	Glenn Williams	Bill Fort