

NEWS

Nova Montgomery has received good news concerning the reduced numbers concerning her cancer. She may even have her surgery earlier than first planned. She had another chemo treatment Friday——**Dale Rockett** is not going to have radiation for now. It is encouraging to see him doing well——**Bob Arnold** had another chemo treatment in Dallas this past week, and he appears to be doing well——**Judy Hinson** is still working on gaining strength and she seems to be doing very well. We look forward to seeing her back in our services. (continued on page 3)

ELDERS

Bob Arnold 563-2977

Leon Goff 572-6809

Richard Montgomery
936-577-4819

DEACONS:

Ricky Davis 572-9428

Ken Ferguson 572-4135

Pat Marshall 572-9347

SERVICES:

Sunday

Bible Study 9:45 AM

Worship 10:30 AM

Worship 5:00 PM

Wednesday

Ladies Class 10:00 AM

Bible Study 7:00 PM

PREACHERS:

Drew Nelson 254-541-3815

Leon Goff 572-6809

Assignment

April 17, 2022

Scripture and Lord's Supper
Royce Gibbs

Song Leader

Kendall Johnson

PRAYERS

Sun. AM—Richard Tapparo Opening)

—Terry Jordan (Closing)

PM—Kenneth Amerson (Opening)

—Jimmy Lewis Closing)

Announcements

A.M.—Pat Marshall

P.M.—Pat Marshall

(call Ken Ferguson if unable to serve)

Think It Over—If you were to die today...Where would you spend eternity? To all who love God, and to those who do not, but should, to all who are weary and heavy laden; to all who are lonely and sad; to all who sin and need a Savior, and to whosoever will come a hearty welcome is extended.

Southside
Church of Christ
P.O. Box 242
Mt. Pleasant, TX 75456

Southside Church of Christ

Bulletin

1220 E. Ferguson Rd. Mt. Pleasant, Texas 75455

(903) 572-2148

Website: www.thesouthsidechurch.com

Volume XXVIX

April 17, 2022

Number 16

What Is "Denominationalism?" (By Gary Henry)

The term **denominationalism** is a relatively familiar one, but what does it really mean? The word itself is interesting and instructive. The Latin nomen meant "name." From it we get such English words as "nominate" (to propose someone by name as a candidate), "misnomer" (an incorrect name for something), and even "noun" (the name of a person, place, or thing). The corresponding Latin verb denominare meant "to name." Hence, in English, to "denominate" means to designate, to give a name to — and a "denomination" is a naming or classification of something. In religious usage, a denomination is an organized group of congregations that can be "denominated," "named," or classified together because they have formed a collective entity.

It is important to observe that a denomination is not simply a number of congregations that resemble one another, or seem to belong together. Rather, a denomination is an intentionally organized group of congregations — that is, a group of congregations that participate by intent in some organization through which they act as a unit for certain purposes. They are "named" together (designated or "denominated" as one) because they all participate in the common organization, and (in at least a part of their activity) function as one through the organization.

An old illustration helps to clarify the point. In language, we have "nouns," "plural nouns," and "collective nouns" — and there is a significant difference between "plural" and "collective." For example, "ship" means one boat, "ships" means a plurality of boats, and "fleet" means a plurality of boats that have a relationship that allows them to be considered as a single unit. "Ships" may involve a number of boats that are very much alike, but "fleet"

does not exist until some common intent or organization appears, under which the individual ships agree to subordinate themselves in at least part of their activity.

Now, think carefully about the words “Christian/Christians” and “church/churches” in the New Testament. An individual disciple of Jesus Christ is called a “Christian” (1 Pet. 4:16). It would obviously be possible for there to be a plurality of “Christians” (individuals substantially alike in faith and practice, but living in different places and having no functional ties). However, in the New Testament, when a plurality of Christians in a given locality banded together collectively, with the common purpose of working and worshipping as a unit under common oversight and organization, that is precisely what a “church” was (Acts 11:26; Phil. 1:1; 4:15; etc). So then, we have three New Testament words, referring to three scriptural concepts: “Christian” (noun), Christians” (plural noun), and “church” (collective noun).

But let us take the critical next step. In the New Testament, the noun “church” means a single congregation of Christians (Acts 8:1; 13:1; etc). And the plural noun “churches” means two or more completely independent congregations, which (to the extent they remain faithful to the Lord) are essentially the same in faith and practice (Gal. 1:2; Rev. 1:4). Here, now, is the clincher: Is there a collective noun in the New Testament that refers to a group of churches conceived not simply as a plural-

ity, but a collectivity? The answer, of course is no. The word is not there because the idea is not there. The concept of a collectivity of congregations is simply not in the New Testament.

The “churches” in the apostolic period were never anything more than a plurality of independent, autonomous congregations. To be sure, these strikingly resembled one another. But that was because they followed the same apostolic rule of faith and practice (1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; etc.), and not because they were a “brotherhood of sister congregations” (a curious metaphor that makes little sense grammatically or scripturally). There being among New Testament congregations no intent to function collectively, and there being no organization to effect such work, there was nothing that resembled what we know of today as a “denomination.” The church universal consisted of individual saints (Jn. 15:1-8) — not congregations, and certainly not denominational groups of congregations. In the New Testament, there was no organizational entity larger than a local congregation but smaller than the universal church, and the universal church itself had no organization beyond the singular headship of Jesus Christ.

If that was the case in the New Testament, what should be said about the collective groups of congregations — i.e. denominations — that exist so plentifully today? It is an obvious fact that these do exist, but ought they to exist? Ought there

to be today any such thing as a “denomination,” and organization of churches acting as a functional unit? May we scripturally “denominate” any organization larger than the local church but smaller than the universal church?

And what of the different doctrines and practices that distinguish today’s denominations from one another? These are tough questions we cannot avoid if we honestly care about unity among those who profess to be disciples of the Great Teacher.

=====

Our Gospel Meeting

Wilson Adams will be the preacher in our Gospel Meeting **May 8—13, 7:00 each weeknight, and 10:00 am Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday.**

Gospel meetings are important because the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is preached. The gospel of Christ is God’s power unto our salvation. We have no salvation or hope of entering heaven without the gospel. All of us have committed sin, and the gospel is the “good news” of how God forgives our sins, frees us from the condemnation that has been brought about by our sins (**Rom. 1:16-17; 3:23**).

Do you want to go to heaven? Are you sure you are on your way to heaven? Jesus describes sincere people who thought they were prepared for heaven. But Jesus told them “*I never knew you, depart from Me, you who practice law-*

lessness.” (**Matt. 7:21-23**). These are very religious people who thought they were saved, but they were doing things to please themselves rather than following the commandments of the Lord. The preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ will help us see our condition before the Lord.

The apostle James tells us to “*receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*” (**James 1:21-23**).

Are you ready to look into the mirror of God’s word, to make sure we are really living by God’s word and properly preparing for heaven?

—Leon Goff

=====

NEWS (continued from back page)
——Remember **Nova Montgomery, Dale Rockett, Bob Arnold, Charles Davis, Rance Hockaday, Kenneth and Beverly Amerson, Kenny Ferguson, Ricky Davis, June Johnson, Randy Blackmon, Frank White, Willie Don Davis, William and Yvonne White, Judy Hinson and Catherine Moss—Remember our Shut-in: Marion Shurtleff.**