

When There Was ONE!  
(Roger Bruner)

Edward T. Hiscox, in his book, Standard Manual For Baptist Churches, says on page 22, under the heading of "Church Membership":

"It is most likely that in the Apostolic age when there was but 'one Lord, one faith, and one baptism' AND NO DIFFERING DENOMINATIONS EXISTED, the baptism of a convert by that very act constituted him a member of the church, and at once endowed him with all the rights and privileges of full membership. In that sense, 'baptism was the door into the church.' Just let that sink in...

Have you ever asked yourself, or considered WHY is there no longer JUST ONE CHURCH? HOW and WHY have, "differing denominations" come to be?

The answer is found in "differing messages" being preached. The apostle Paul saw and condemned this in writing to the churches of Galatia (Gal. 1:1-2).

He spoke of "ANOTHER GOSPEL" being preached: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:6-9).

WHY was "another gospel" preached by some? The apostle Paul said it was because of the desire to be please men, rather than please God" in verse 10, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

In Gal. 6:12, we also find that those who preach "another gospel" are afraid to suffer persecution for preaching "THE GOSPEL", so, they pervert, Jesus' message.

This is WHY there are now DIFFERING DENOMINATIONS. Such will continue as long as DIFFERING GOSPELS are preached...such will continue as long as THE GOSPEL is PERVERTED...

The "churches of Galatia" in Gal. 1:2...were not "differing" denominations of the church that Jesus built (Matt. 16:18). They were all local congregations of THE SAME KIND. They were "of Christ", because the SAME GOSPEL was preached in all of them.

The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 4:17, "For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, AS I TEACH EVERY WHERE IN EVERY CHURCH."

What Paul taught in the churches of Galatia, he taught to the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Paul told Timothy to make sure that "no other doctrine" was preached (1 Tim. 1:3).

Teach "NO DOCTRINE" OTHER THAN WHAT?

In 1 Tim. 6:3, Paul said it was other than what, "...does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness...".

When the message was changed, "differing" churches began. If the same message that was preached by the Lord's apostles will be preached, "differing" churches will begin to cease, for people will be encouraged to become "ONE". This is exactly what the Lord wanted and prayed for in John 17:20-21.

Let us all pray for, and labor to return the religious climate to what Mr. Hiscox stated, once existed: "WHEN THERE WAS BUT ONE CHURCH...".