

Prairie Grove Church of Christ

S.R.FF (5 Miles from W-160)

Caulfield, Missouri

THE CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS ARGUMENT

Advocates of denominationalism often use the constituent elements argument in defense of denominationalism. Simply stated, the constituent elements argument means all of the parts make up the whole. Their defense goes along this line. Yes, there is only one church, and all of the denominations are the components (parts) that make up the whole or the one church. To “prove” their position various illustrations are often cited one of which is a pie is made up of many pieces but it is still one pie.

While this may sound very logical, appealing and “scriptural” it simply is **not true!** Remember, illustrations only illustrate they do not necessarily prove a point. In this case, the illustration used is an attempt to justify that which does **not** even exist in the Bible - denominations! As for the pie illustration, the parts (denominations) are not equal. Each slice is not of the same “ingredients.” If you have one pie made up of various pies you do not have one pie of the identical ingredients. Whereas, the church Christ built is equal in all of its “ingredients!”

“The churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16) were not denominations, but local congregations of the one church. All possessed the identical identifying characteristics of the church established on the day of Pentecost!

Furthermore, in order for the “parts” (denominations) to make up the whole they have to be the right parts! Since the Lord did **NOT** promise to build any denomination then a combination of denominations **CANNOT** make up the right parts!

The Lord promised to build only **ONE** church (Mat. 16:18)! Notice, please, the Lord did **NOT** state He would build His churches, but “my church” (Mat. 16:18). On the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ the church was established (Acts 2:47). Since denominations began to come into existence hundreds of years after Acts 2 they **CANNOT** be a part of the body of Christ, the church!

My friends, if every denomination ceased to exist throughout the world could you have New Testament Christianity? Yes! If we take the same identical seed “the word of God” (Lk. 8:11) which was sown on the day of Pentecost, and sow it in the hearts of honest recipients, it will produce the same “crop” today as then!

On the day of Pentecost when they realized they had crucified the Son of God (Acts 2:36), they wanted to know what to do (Acts 2:37) to which they were told to “Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). The Lord did **not** add them to any denomination, but to the one church that Christ built (Mat. 16:18), over which He is the head (Eph. 1:22-23) and wherein are the saved (Acts 2:47). “The churches of Christ salute you” (Rom. 16:16).

Sunday Worship 10:00 A.M. & 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday Bible Study: 7:00 P.M.

“The churches of Christ salute you.” Romans 16:16

- Ivie Powell III,
Preacher

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UNDERSTANDING THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHETS

“BEGINNING ANEW”

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, **forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before**, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14). 2018 is now in the past. We need to leave it there. Basking in past successes, or fretting over yesterday's failures, will not change anything. We must continue to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul wrote to the Hebrew brethren, “For ye have need of patience, that, **after ye have done the will of God**, ye might receive the promise” (Hebrews 10:36). And, Jesus said, “... No man, having put his hand to the plough, and **looking back**, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). It matters not how fast we begin the race, only those who **cross the finish line** win the prize. It doesn't matter how many times one falls down during the race, it's those who fail to get up and finish the race that lose the race. Peter asked, “... Lord, **how oft** shall my brother **sin** against me, and **I forgive him?** till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until **seventy times seven**” (Matthew 18:21-22). And again, God has promised, “For I will be **merciful** to their **unrighteousness**, and **their sins and their iniquities** will I remember **NO MORE**” (Hebrews 8:12). The way one erases the sins of the past, and fulfills their empty dreams of tomorrow, is by giving their life **in service** to Christ **today**, “... behold, **now** is the accepted time; behold, **now** is the day of salvation” (2nd Corinthians 6:2), and again, “While it is said, **Today** if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts ...” (Hebrews 3:15). **Today** is the day for us to obey and be saved. Tomorrow may never come, “**Boast not thyself of tomorrow**; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Proverbs 27:1).

Many look at the New Year as a time for a **new beginning**. **Baptism** is the **new beginning** for the one who is lost in sin. Paul penned, “Therefore if any man be **in Christ**, he is a **new creature**: **old things are passed away**; behold **all things** are become **new**” (2nd Corinthians 5:17). The only way one can enter **into Christ** (above) is through the watery grave of **baptism**, “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been **baptized into Christ have put on Christ**” (Galatians 3:26-27). **Baptism** is therefore likened unto a **new birth**, the old man of sin dies and is buried (Colossians 3:5), and is then resurrected to walk in **newness of life** (Romans 6:4). Jesus told Nicodemus, “... Except a man be **born** of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

After one has initially **obeyed** the gospel, and been **baptized**, like Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:13), if he then falls away, he can be forgiven again through **confession, repentance, and prayer**. John encourages the erring Christian, “If we **confess** our sins, he is **faithful** and **just** to **forgive** us our sins, and to **cleanse** us from **all unrighteousness**” (1st John 1:8-9). And, when Simon fell victim to sin, Peter said, “**Repent** therefore of this thy wickedness, and **pray God**, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (Acts 8:2).

My friend, isn't it time for you to forget the sins of yesteryear, to set aside the empty dreams of tomorrow, and to **begin life anew, TODAY?**

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