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by

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Denominational Religion

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## INTRODUCTION

*Grace and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:7).*

It is with exceeding joy that Denominational Religion from “The Little Book Series” is presented. The text introduces the reader to a **Seven-Step Process**, developed by Dr. Deryl G. Hunt, which requires the people of God to make a right turn, pivotal in the walk of believers. This process comprises GOMA and the ABCDs of character development. GOMA, a non-descript character, is an acronym for **Goal, Objective, Method and Attitude**, an inclusive community building approach to unifying God’s people. GOMA transcends all racial, ethnic, and gender boundaries. Simply stated, when these pillars of life are in operation within us, the outcome is enriching and empowering to the individual, as well as glorifying to God. The ABCDs focus on **Attitude, Behavior, Communication and Discipline**. When GOMA and the ABCDs of character development connect in the lives of people, deliverance happens and a state of humility is established to bring the people where things of the Spirit of Christ can be received. This signifies the complete operation of the **Seven-Step Process**. In this posture, the individual can continue to receive from the Lord reflected by a disciplined and a sustained walk in the Lord.

GOMA is a fluid concept that can be readily adapted across all sectors of society. However, within a faith-based context, GOMA can be viewed as God’s Ordained Minister Appearing who will lead God’s people (via mentoring) to the fullness of the statue of Christ. When the right goals, objectives, methods and attitude are employed, God’s Ordained Minister Appearing shepherds God’s people to higher levels of blessings positioning them to receive of God’s “fresh anointing.” GOMA is born out of the “**New Day Ministry**,” a dispensation where God pours out His Spirit; His Wisdom; His Power; His Creativity, all toward reaching mankind.

Christ said unto Peter (after Peter had received a revelation from God about who Jesus was) that “...upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). What

was this “rock” and how was this building work to be done? Was the Lord referring to a work of man’s hand or a work of the Spirit? In this “Little Book” series on Denominational Religion, we shall show you the natural religion of man. We encourage you to undertake this study with a serious desire to know the difference between that which is of the Spirit and that which is of the flesh.

### **DENOMINATIONAL RELIGION**

At the very beginning of time, religion could be seen. Religion was of God, and because it was, the adversary, desiring to be like the most High, counterfeited religion. He was not able to bring about pure religion because he was not pure. He was able to deceive man into thinking that his religion was superior to God's. He is the author of all negative character traits. He is known as Satan and the devil. He is the enemy of God and of God's people. GOMA, God's Ordained Minister Appearing, will open up the understanding of His people to the subtle and deceitful ways of this adversary. The values and principles expounded by GOMA + ABCD's of character development will produce a heightened degree of watchfulness in God's people. As our goals, objectives, methods and attitude line up with God's plans for our lives, He will establish a watchman within us, that we not be deceived by the enemy. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Ep. 6:18).

Satan did not start out as Satan. He was created as Lucifer, meaning, Light-Bearer. How Lucifer became Satan, the devil, can be seen via the scriptures. Isaiah, Chapter 14 gives us much information: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the North: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High"(Isa.14:12-14). Ezekiel, Chapter 28 describes this same angel as one who, when first created, was wiser than Daniel (v.3), and who ...sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty( v.12).

As in Isaiah, we see also in Ezekiel how the heart of Lucifer entertained ungodliness to the point of bringing forth corruption. "Thou was perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezek. 28:15). "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness...

(v.17).” Pride is viewed as the seed of destruction, the first sin, ushered in by Satan. Satan had entertained a desire in his heart to possess what was not his to have and it greatly displeased God. Pride is seen as vanity, arrogance, and deceit. These qualities tend to demean and humiliate others. To exalt oneself, by default, is to debase another. These qualities do not build community and they do not aid in Christ’s reconciliation work of the church. Pride causes alienation of people. Humility, however, unites people. Humility leads to inclusion. Inclusion encourages the people of God toward good thoughts, good communication, as exemplified in the ABCD’s of character development. Thoughts not of God should be cast down and not given opportunity to settle in the heart.

Though the devil is not God, in wanting to be like God, he seeks worship. In Old Testament scriptures he was known as Bael, the god of the surrounding nations (2 Kings 18: 38-40). In the New Testament, he is also referred to as Beelzebub, the chief of devils (Luke 11:15). The only way he can get his followers to worship him is to masquerade as if he were God. The devil and all those angels that agreed with him in his quest to take God's throne were cast out of heaven: And the great dragon was cast out; that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him (Rev. 12:9). This is the first form of division, schism brought into the world by Satan...a separation of good and evil ordained by God...to protect His people from corrupt communication.

Deception is Satan's chief method of operating. He can only influence individuals, he cannot make one do anything. He uses seduction in many cases to pervert one's view of what is right, in order to convince him to do what is wrong. But I dare say that his greatest area of deception is the area of religion. At the outset of the early New Testament Church, the apostles went forth preaching that Jesus is the Christ, that was and still is the gospel. They preached repentance from dead works and faith toward God. They preached that one must receive the Spirit of Christ to truly belong to God.

Paul, the apostle to the gentiles, who had in the past been a tool the devil used in his religion, after his conversion, came along in due

season preaching that same gospel, but also showing the church that the devil and his evil angels transform themselves, as if they are righteous ministers of God. “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed, as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works (2 Cor. 11: 13-15).

The mistake that many make is to try to deal with the devil in their own wisdom and strength. No one, neither man nor angel, is a match for the devil in his own strength. In Jude 9, Michael, the strong archangel of God dealt with the devil in the strength of the Lord. He said, “The Lord rebuke thee.” Jesus Christ showed us, “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you (Luke 10:19).” So even though the devil is a powerful enemy, in Christ, we have the power to overcome him.

Revelation 12:10-11 reads, “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” Deception is something that one cannot see, something that only the Spirit of Christ is able to discern. It is incumbent upon every child of God to grow spiritually, in order that they may not be deceived by the enemy. Come to know the One who is perfect in knowledge. You can only know Him by way of the Spirit.

Consider the state of Adam before the fall. Adam was operating in pure religion. We know as much, because Adam was undefiled. Adam did not even know evil. Adam’s life was the “good” life of God.

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; And man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God

to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil” (Gen. 2:7-9).

The two trees mentioned in verse 9, which did not come from the ground were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. At the time of Adams’s creation, until the time of his fall, he only knew the things from the tree of life. This is the tree found standing, not only at the beginning of the Bible, but also at the end.

In Rev. 22:2 we read, “In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

Dropping down to verses 14 and 15 we read, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.”

God created man with the ability to choose, but God did all that was necessary for the man to make the right choice. The choice was between pure religion and natural religion. Pure religion was what Adam had, therefore, the choice was whether he wanted to maintain what he had or choose something else. When God’s Ordained Minister Appearing touches our lives, we are inspired toward obedience, making the right turn which fosters right choices...good and exemplary behavior.

Understand that God did not only warn man about his choice, “the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:16-17). Through spiritual discernment, the Lord is able to show that the death spoken of is a “spiritual death.” However, absent a spiritual relationship with God, people will interpret that naturally to mean, physical death.

As long as Adam obeyed the voice of God, there was nothing natural in his life. This is important because the church has the life of God when she is found in pure religion. The life of God comes from the tree of life. This tree was a symbolic tree of the Spirit of truth.

Adam fed from this tree and he was sustained by the “bread of life” from the tree of life. Adam knew good. He was being taught toward the end of perfecting his soul. The Lord God desired to bring him to the realm of the Spirit. As children of God, we must be willing to grow and to develop spiritually, in order that we may move from the milk of God’s word to the meat of His word. Spiritual growth is required in order to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil, (the three enemies of God’s people). As we adopt the right goal, objective, method and attitude, the Lord will bless with spiritual understanding.

Satan had an alternative plan for Adam. Satan desired man to follow him in his rebellion against God. As Satan did not have a foothold in the earth, he knew that his only chance to secure a beachhead was by deceiving Adam.

Adam consisted of male and female. This is clear from the fact that Eve was formed from one of his ribs. Genesis 2:21. In God’s eyes Adam consisted collectively as Adam and Eve. Satan did not approach the male; he pursued the female. As the woman is styled as the weaker vessel, his plan was to entrap her and by doing so, to bring down the head, the man. How did he approach the woman? He did so by offering her another religion...corrupt communication. As people of God, we are often found in this predicament. Spiritually, the way to handle these situations is to cast them down.

Satan’s religion had the trappings of God’s, but Satan’s religion differed from God’s in this very important aspect; Satan’s religion was diverse and deceptive in nature. See the diversity in the symbolic tree of Satan. His tree was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Also, see the deceptiveness of that evil tree in that it operated from a two pronged attack: as an angel of light and as a roaring lion. The angel of light approach represents the religious work of Satan. He also comes as a subtle serpent in connection with his religious lie.

GOMA will aid God's people in revealing the deceptive ways of the enemy, when our ways and attitudes line up with the Spirit.

Satan approached Eve in the guise of an angel of light coupled with the subtility of a serpent. While we will discuss the account of Satan's work in Gen. 3:1-6, it is first needful for us to drive home the point that Satan works the same way today.

Paul understood what most religious people do not understand about Satan's deceptive work. He knew how cunning Satan is and he knew that a child of God could not stand against the tricks of the devil in the flesh.

Writing to the Corinthians, he said, "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2Cor.11:2). Satan's desire was to cause the Corinthians to give up a part of their heart unto another. Any other, it did not matter because God requires the whole heart. As for Paul, he knew that spiritual adultery occurs anytime a child of God is not faithful unto God.

Paul wrote, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtility, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (v.3)." The word simplicity carries the meaning of "pure devotion." It is another way of saying pure religion and undefiled.

Pure devotion is found in Christ. It takes the Spirit of Christ to produce pure religion. Paul was concerned that the devil was at work seeking to bring about a less than pure devotion which is found in the Spirit. In other words, if Satan could have gotten the Corinthians to focus on the flesh (outward works) and not on the Spirit's work within them, he would have caused them to commit spiritual adultery. While Satan was successful to a point, God's mercy was yet with the Corinthians. As people of God, we must will to do God's will, not our own. It is imperative that we are in agreement with God. We must "walk in the Spirit, and [we] shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." (Ga. 5:16). The key is yielding to the Christ Spirit; GOMA will lead you there.

Verse 4 helps us to understand the cunning works of Satan. We see in this verse the making of another religion. Sadly to say, too few men and women take this ominous warning seriously.

The verse reads, “For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him” (v.4). The thought here is that there were those preaching another religion. It had to be a natural religion because God’s pure religion is of the Spirit. Only the Spirit of Christ can rightly divide the word. Know ye His Spirit!

Those of the natural religion preached a natural Jesus. This Jesus is seen today as the focus of men’s religious beliefs. He is worshipped by way of the senses. As the senses are natural, the worship is idolatrous worship. They worship the natural man, Jesus, not the man in the man, the Spirit of Christ. All such persons do not partake of the tree of life (Rev. 22:15). They have received “another spirit.” This spirit is antichrist.

Jesus is natural, the son of Mary, the vessel prepared for the Christ Spirit in which to dwell. Christ is that eternal Spirit that descended from above and took up an abode within Jesus even as we are children of God (Christians), due to the Spirit of Christ that dwell within believers. However, the natural one (physical person) is the child of our parents. 1 John 4:6 reads, “know ye the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” To know God, is to know His Spirit, because He is a Spirit and we must worship Him in Spirit and in truth (see John 4:24).

Those who preach a natural gospel about the resurrection of a natural Jesus are “false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ” (v.13). Being that the natural church is able to trace her history back to the apostles, it is a testimony that the false religion of Paul’s day is still in operation today.

Where did the false apostles learn to do such wickedness? They learned from their father, the devil. “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if

his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works ” (vv.14-15).

To the casual observer, there is no difference between the ministers of God and the ministers of Satan. Only God can show a person whether a minister is of God or of the devil. Men greatly err by attempting to determine spiritual things by natural means. You must seek the Lord God with a pure heart to know whether a person is of pure religion or is of natural religion. This is so because the naturally religious person can fashion himself as if he is of God.

Satan came to Eve via the Serpent. “Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Gen. 3:1) Satan had to first overcome the serpent. Once this occurred, he went after the woman through the serpent with what appears to be a harmless question.

The serpent caught the woman off guard. This is the usual occurrence. God’s people fail to watch as they should. In doing so, they become vulnerable to Satan’s attacks. As for the woman, she fell right into Satan’s trap.

Because she was not watchful, Satan could establish corrupt communication with her. “And the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden; God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die” (vv.2-3). The woman had understanding insofar as the command not to eat (partake) of the evil tree of Satan, though she did not know that the tree was of Satan.

“And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (vv.4-5). The woman fell for “the big lie.” She lost sight of what God had said and began to desire to be like God by some means other than the Spirit. The natural religion was designed by Satan to deceive God’s people and fashion God to be a liar.

When she partook of the evil tree and gave the same evil doctrines unto her husband (v.6), another religion was birthed in the earth. It is the natural religion found among men and women throughout the whole earth. The father of the natural religion is Satan.

### **DENOMINATIONAL RELIGION**

It is important to give some attention to the Spirit in order for you to see the working of God as opposed to the work of the creature. God does not rely on anyone to do His works. God requires a yielded vessel. Through that yielded vessel God pours out His Spirit. God performs His own works.

When Zerubbabel was about to do work on the temple, the Lord had to speak to him the truth mentioned above, "... saying, not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6). Zerubbabel was a chosen vessel of God to perform a work. He had to wait on the Lord to work through him.

Note verse 7, "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shouting, crying, Grace, grace unto it." The key here is grace. Without the favor of God, "the great mountain" would have buried Zerubbabel in one of the small hills. With God's grace upon Zerubbabel, the greatest of problems were leveled out.

When Joseph showed Pharaoh the meaning of his dreams and spoke wisdom unto Pharaoh that the seven plenteous years of his dreams should provide for the seven years of famine, Pharaoh understood where the wisdom came from. "And Pharaoh said unto his servants, can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" (Gen. 41:38)

Neither Pharaoh nor Joseph refused to give God the glory due unto Him. Joseph did not speak by natural wisdom and Pharaoh did not understand with natural knowledge. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art" (v.39).

The wisdom of God was within Joseph by the Spirit of God. The same Spirit required to do the work through Zerubbabel was required to do the work via Joseph. Both men humbled themselves before the Lord. As humble servants, they allowed God to work through them.

There is a wisdom of the soul, as well as a wisdom of God. Each time man acts on his own, the wisdom of the soul is on display. As the soul is a deceiver, the soul acts like the Spirit of God. The soul even claims to be God. It is God's desire that His people cease operating in the soul (doing their will) and allow the Spirit to direct them daily. When one is directed of the soul, one is cut off from God. There is a lack of communication between the soul and the Spirit. When repentance takes place, one is restored unto God.

True "Wisdom crieth without" (Prov. 1:20). True wisdom is of the Spirit. That is why "Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us wisdom" (1Cor. 1:30). This wisdom "Crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? And the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge" (Prov. 1:21-22).

This was more than just a question. The writer called for repentance, saying, "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you" (v.23). The three classes of people mentioned above: simple ones, scorers, and fools cover the spectrum of unbelief.

The "simple ones" lacked wisdom of the Spirit. The Psalmist has written: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Ps. 19:7). Simple does not carry the meaning of stupidity. As was stated, it means that the simple ones lack God's wisdom. Did they have wisdom? Of course they did. The problem for them was that their wisdom was of the soul and their souls needed to be converted.

The conversion of the soul; however, can not take place as long as the soul refuses to hear the reproof of God. In a state of humility, God

pours out His Spirit and makes known His words unto men. Without humility, man goes about in his proud-hearted ways believing that his religious ways are right. Truly these are simple ones. God has given GOMA (God's Ordained Minister Appears) as a means to reach His people, teaching them Godly principles that will enrich them spiritually and will position them to mentor others, by way of precept and example.

What about the scorner? The scorners also lacked the wisdom of God. Unlike the simple ones, the scorner makes a mockery of the wisdom of God. He is abusive in language, sarcastic, and is an unhappy person. "A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise" (Prov. 15:12).

As for the fool, he has said in his heart that there is no God. The Psalmist said, "They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good" (Ps. 14:1). Who is this fool? He is none other than the natural man. It is the fool who has brought about every religion birthed of the soul found in the world.

Denominational religion is a work of foolish men. A denomination is a name given to a class of things or people. In religion, denomination refers to a given religious sect. These share a common philosophy or set of beliefs.

The only denomination or class of people of God, are those who are led by the Spirit. We have shown this class to be made up of those who have pure religion and are undefiled. We may call this class, the "class of the Spirit." Each one in this class can be identified by the fruit of the Spirit which is evidenced in love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. (Gal. 5:22-23). These traits are evidenced in their daily lives.

Any deviation from this class of the Spirit is another class, called the class of the flesh." These are known by their fruits: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, and revellings" (vv.20-21).

The question for us is a simple one: is the fruit of the Spirit present among those who claim denominational religion? To answer this question, we must consider the fruits of the flesh. It is needful to consider the fruits of the flesh because they show forth the clear works of the people involved. The fruit of the Spirit requires spiritual insight. To approach the question from the point of view of the Spirit would not make clear to all the foolish works at hand.

For example, let us look at Saul, who became Paul the apostle. When the Lord introduced himself as Jesus to Saul, as Saul traveled to Damascus (Acts 9) because this was all that Saul knew. God always starts with a person at the level of their understanding, and from there reveals the spirit of what they know. For this reason, the Lord revealed himself to Saul as Jesus, yet it is witnessed countless times in the Bible that Paul preached that Jesus was very Christ.

There is one thing that we must call your attention to regarding the Spirit, namely, unity is the hallmark of the Spirit. Anytime God is at work, unity will be found. When God is not at work, the absence of unity will be present. For unity to exist, there must be inclusion. God's people must be careful not to isolate and alienate people by exercising exclusivity/division due to race, gender, or ethnicity. It leads to division and works against God. Christ's work of reconciliation requires the practice of inclusion in the lives of His people.

So, as not to be critical of any particular denomination, this book deals with those mentioned in the Bible. As the light of God shines on the works of God, and exposes the works of the flesh, allow the Holy Ghost to show you the denominational churches today.

Recall our association of denominational religion with sects. We said that a sect refers to a group of people holding a shared philosophy or set of beliefs. Using this definition, we are able to identify classes of denominational beliefs. We will deal with three: the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the sect that men labeled "the Nazarenes."

Those labeled Nazarenes were the ones led by the Spirit. They revealed in their daily lives the fruit of the Spirit. Those called the Pharisees and

Sadducees made up camps of unbelievers. The works of the flesh characterized their daily walk.

When God used Peter to heal the sick, “Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might over shadow some of them” (Acts 5:15); the Sadducees revealed their heart’s condition. Our key verse is verse 17. Let us, however, read verse 16 first. “There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.” It is true that any people of God should have been glad for this work. It was not so with the Sadducees.

“Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and were filled with indignation (jealousy), and laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison” (v.17). Jealousy is a work of the flesh called “emulations” in Gal. 5:20.

What about jealousy? Can jealousy be found as a trait in present day denominational churches? Over the course of the history of denominational churches, we have found jealousy operating time and time again. It is not hard to find examples of one denomination persecuting another in like manner as the Sadducees did the apostles – with the same motive of jealousy. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil works (James 3:16). But, by employing the seven step process (GOMA + ABCD) of character development, we will be brought to that pure and undefiled religion.

The sect of the Pharisees had some who believed the gospel (Acts 15:5), as well as the Sadducees. I am not saying that “a class of unbelievers” means that none of the people called by that class name were of God. To the contrary, many came out of their denominational religion and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul was numbered among the sect of the Pharisees before he was converted. After he was converted, he was no longer of the religion of men, but of God. Paul testified “that after the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee” (Acts 26:5). Once converted, he was faced

during his life with religious Pharisees and Sadducees who accused him falsely.

We see where the high priest Ananias and the elders accused him with heresy in Acts, Chapter 24. Paul's response was "neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me. But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy (a sect), so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets" (Acts 24:13-14).

The matter of accusing others is something that can not pass without a word pertaining to the history of denominational churches. See the work of the flesh via the Inquisition. The Inquisition was a tribunal for suppressing heresy and punishing heretics. Religious men persecuted all who did not believe their religious doctrines. History has shown the bloody nature of this work of the flesh. Yet men and women claim then, and many do now, that God was with them in their terror.

The third sect is called "the Nazarenes" by many who did not understand the truth. They were the believers in Christ Jesus. Paul was a believer. Many who accused him said, "For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5).

Using the words of the unwise, the sect of the Nazarenes was the only denomination of God. The sect of the Nazarenes believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16). They preached Christ the power and wisdom of God (1Cor. 1:24). They were filled with the Spirit of Christ and they were led by the Spirit of Christ. It was Christ at work in them and not the persons themselves (Gal. 2:20).

Among the Spirit filled church were those who were not of God. These could be found performing works of the flesh. In 1 Cor. 11:18, Paul wrote, "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it." Division characterizes denominational churches today and has done so throughout their existence.

Paul spoke of divisions as a work of the flesh in Gal. 5:20 calling it sedition. When God is at work there is unity. Divisions breed factions (strife), another work of the flesh found in Gal. 5:20. It is a common thing to find factions in today's religion. These factions are called sects or denominations. They are not of God. I do not mean that none are saved. To the contrary, many are saved but they do not know God as they ought.

Peter told us that damnable heresies (factions) would be found among the true believers, saying, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that brought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Peter 2:1). Whenever the works of the flesh are found dominating a religious group's activities, be sure that God is not at work.

We have indicated above how divisions, factions, accusations, murders, etc., have characterized the history of the church since her fall during the early 4th century. Now we shall take a closer look at today's churches display of wisdom.

### **THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD**

Without question, today's churches mirror the wisdom of the world. The world's wisdom is based on that which is observable. This puts the wisdom within the realm of the soul and not the Spirit. The wisdom of the world is natural wisdom.

The method of science is a good example of natural wisdom. Science makes no bones about its method. There are questions that science can address which lend themselves to observation via the senses. There are religious and philosophical questions that science does not attempt to address. God's church is based on faith – in belief in God. The natural church uses the senses – belief based on sight, touch, and smell. Worship via the senses is not routed in faith.

It is the nature of science, the method of observation, which shows forth the wisdom of the soul, as expressed via the senses. To explain what

science has observed brings science into the realm of religion and philosophy without many scientists understanding as much.

There are no clear cut guidelines as to how a researcher is to interpret his data. Some theorize based on one set of values close to those held by theologians. Others theorize based on a set of values close to those held by atheists. Both claim to be scientists because of the method used to derive certain facts. Both operate as a sect because of their shared values with others.

Science requires faith. To be sure, it does not require the faith of God. Nevertheless, science requires faith. Faith means simply to trust. A man can trust another man or he can trust God. Scientists trust man. This means that they have faith in that which is reported by man.

When the social scientist follows the rule of science in studying the rise of drug abuse among preteens, he is believed to the degree that his findings can be replicated by other social scientists. They will not all explain that incidence of drug abuse in the same way, but they can all reach the same conclusion about the incidence. This is because they all have common method in approaching the drug problem.

The question for us is one which may be structured as a social scientist would proceed: To what degree do denominational religious groups differ from the world in their approach to things of the Spirit? Without going into a detailed discussion about the question, we can say that this is a research question for the true social scientist.

If we define denominational religious groups to mean different sects and the world to mean major institutions of society: economic, political, familial, educational, etc. we have the beginning of a research project. Of course, we would have to raise some hypotheses and offer some theory to explain what we postulate.

We, of course, will not undertake such rigorous steps. It is neither needed nor will any useful purpose be served. What we shall do is to ask you to evaluate the question.

Let us rework our question to make it the key question for every one who confesses to be a Christian. This question may be framed as follows: Whom do you say that Jesus is? Our question may seem off target of our discussion, but don't leave me now. Bear with me a little longer.

Our question is one asked by Jesus himself. He asked the question in two parts. Part one asked: "whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" (Matt. 16:13). This question was addressed to the disciples pertaining to those who held the wisdom of the world. Take note that religious men and women hold to the world's wisdom anytime they have not the wisdom of the Spirit.

In asking this question, we could have predicted that many and varied responses would come. Thus, men and women guess a lot. True to our prediction, verse 14 tells us: "And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some Elias; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

The best guesses of religious men, who were the most educated of their day, offered nothing close to the truth. At best, we have a number of opinions by men of the world's wisdom. An opinion is a belief; but it is a belief not based on certainty. To be certain, more than an opinion is required.

Jesus next narrowed his question to the disciples who followed him, saying, "But whom say ye that I am?" (v. 15). The answer which followed came not from the soul, but from the Spirit. Because the answer came from the Spirit, 100% certainty is established. It was Peter who answered.

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16). God's wisdom can be seen in Simon's answer. "And Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (v. 17).

Peter could not know the “true” Jesus with the method of science, i.e., observation. His senses were not equipped to tell him anything of God. This is so because:

- 1) “God is a Spirit” (John 4:24);
- 2) The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit (1Cor. 2:14); and
- 3) Spiritual things have to be revealed (Gal. 1:16).

Peter called Jesus “the Christ.” To Peter, Jesus was the anointed one of God. As the anointing is symbolic of the Spirit, Peter understood “the Christ” to mean the Spirit of God. According to Peter, all of the prophets had the Spirit of Christ in them (1Peter 1:10-11). Paul also stated that Christ is in the believer. Only a Spirit can be in another person. This Christ is seen as the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:9).

The world, by its wisdom, knew not God (1Cor.1:21). Paul asked, “Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” (v20). Now if the world by wisdom knew not God, it is certain that anyone who does not know God is of the wisdom of the world.

Religious men and women do not know who Jesus is even to this day. The average church person will tell you that Jesus is God. They may qualify their statement by saying that he is also fully man. When asked how can such a thing be? They only have an “we will know on the other side, or by and by” answer. Simply speaking, they cannot give you a reason for the hope that is said to be in them (1Peter 3:15).

Religious men and women make Christ to be a natural something. They say that Christ is an office like unto our president’s. This means then that there is no division between the soul and the Spirit insofar as Jesus was concerned. Thus, they are able to call Jesus god and to go a step further to make pictures of this god whom they call Christ.

Christ is revealed in scripture, however, as the Spirit of God. This Spirit of Christ is called “the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16). Christ is seen in the Old Testament before Jesus was born (1Cor. 10:4). The children of Israel tempted Christ “and were destroyed by serpents” (v.9). Were they tempting a function or an office? No! They

tempted God; that God is called Christ by Paul. If Christ is God, and God is a Spirit, then no man knows what God looks like. Therefore, all attempts at worshipping and serving a god that can be observed are of the senses. This then evidences that the wisdom of such persons is not of God but is of the world. Thus, the religious churches and the world view things alike.

God, however, had to reveal His Son unto the disciples. There is not one example from the disciples to show where any of them approached unto God via their senses after they had received the Holy Ghost. Why then does the average person attending church approach God in this manner? To answer the question is simple – the average church goer does not truly know God.

Let us look at one who is well-known in the Bible for being a deeply religious, who we might describe as a member and proponent of denominational religion. We know this man today as Paul the apostle, formerly Saul of Tarsus.

What we shall trace is the transformation of this man's life and the attending development of his character via a method known as the GOMA – ABCD Seven –Step process. An example of a negative application of the Seven Step process follows:

“G” stands for Goal. What was Saul's goal as he went forth in his religion? Let's see what the Bible says: “For ye have heard of my conversation in times past in the Jews' religion, how beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers” (Galatians 1: 13-14). This example bears out precisely what was brought out earlier, how men go about in religion of the flesh believing that they are right, not realizing that they are actually fighting God. Also, the jealousy that is evidenced in natural religion is clearly seen. Saul's goal at this stage of his life was to advance, and to advance in his religion above all else and all others.

“O” stands for objective. What was Saul's objective in the advancement of the religion of the Pharisees? It was to systematically

eradicate all religious sects that did not believe as his sect, the Pharisees did.

“M” stands for method. What was Saul's method in seeking to eradicate all that didn't believe as he did? It was the persecution, imprisonment, torture, and even murder of those who were called Nazarenes. Later as Paul, an apostle and servant of Jesus Christ, he wrote, “And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth hear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom I also received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished” (Acts 22: 4-5).

“A” stands for attitude. What was Saul's attitude? It was an attitude of pride. The Bible says in Proverbs 16:18, “Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” Pride gives rise to all other sins, because it is the turning away from the true God to another, which becomes a god to the individual. As a proud religious man, Saul was on the road to destruction. What is attitude? In a word, it is the disposition of one's heart. The proud disposition of Saul's heart was clearly displayed in his murderous behavior, which ultimately was toward God.

But there came a radical change in Saul's attitude, a complete turn in every facet of his life! What accounts for such a total metamorphosis? In a word, as the writer stated above, it was GRACE. When God determines to show love to one that He might use that one in His service, God will continue to extend grace unto him in order to bring about a change in his attitude from being a proud religious “go-getter” to a humble servant of the Lord. This, God did in the life of Saul of Tarsus to turn his heart to walk with God in the Spirit, as opposed to walking in the pride of natural religion. God's unmerited favor was showered upon Saul even during the time when Saul was fighting God.

At a certain point, Saul underwent a complete attitude change. Understand that attitude is key in whatever a person does or says, and the grace of God brought about circumstances in Saul's life to precipitate that change in attitude. A change in attitude can only come when one is willing to examine himself and honestly assess the

direction that he or she is headed in, and to judge whether it is right or wrong, positive or negative, constructive or destructive. It was God's grace unto Saul that he should witness the stoning death of a man named Stephen, a follower of Jesus Christ who had by way of the Spirit, powerfully witnessed to the council of the elders and scribes of the Jewish religion. They had fabricated charges of blasphemy against Stephen, being jealous of the good works which the Lord had been manifesting through him as humble servant of the Lord.

Saul was a witness to and was in agreement with the stoning death of Stephen. But one thing Saul witnessed that he could not escape was the loving forgiveness of Stephen. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep" (Acts 7: 59-60). As this man died he forgave those who were his murderers! Saul knew that he did not have such love in his heart! The Lord used this occasion to prick Saul's heart concerning where he stood, as one who was religious and claimed to be serving God.

Though Saul did not immediately surrender to those pricks of his heart by way of the Spirit of Christ, it was not long before the Lord, in his grace, dealt more strongly with Saul, as he appeared to Saul in a vision, on his way to Damascus, to bring more Christians back to Jerusalem to be punished. "And as he journeyed he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (Acts 9: 3-5).

The words of Saul in the next verse can truly be said to sum up the radical change in attitude that had been wrought in the life of Saul, who became Paul: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6)

In examining the life of Saul of Tarsus by way of the GOMA-ABCD's, we are at the point of looking at Saul's attitude. As Saul's attitude changed, so did his Goal, Objectives, and Method. His Goal became to please God, his objective to serve God unconditionally, and his method

to hide God's word in his heart. In the Seven Step Process, Attitude is pivotal as to which direction a person's life will take. A person can refuse to change or that person can face up to the fact of the negatives, turn away from them, and move in a positive direction. By the grace of God, Saul dealt with the wrong that he in his ignorance had been doing, repented of it, and launched out under the direction of the Spirit of Christ. We call this change as it relates to the Seven Step Process, "making a right turn." This signifies that an inward change has taken place in the person and has turned to a better, or "right" way of looking at and handling matters. By the grace of God, Saul came to the truly right way of life, the way of the Spirit. Hear what Paul, the transformed Saul, says concerning this new way of life: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Philip. 3:7-9). Paul is actually telling us that all that he had accomplished in his religion was worthless, as it relates to coming to know, love, or serve the living God. When a child of God completes the Seven Step Process, that one is sustained in their spiritual walk, through discipline.

Let's look at Paul's behavior. What work was he about after his marvelous transformation? In short, Paul's work was about preaching the gospel of Christ. In Acts chapter 9, the Bible shows how the Lord sent Paul to Ananias to be delivered and to receive the Holy Ghost. Not long after this, we see stated in verse 20 of that same chapter: "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." In the book of Romans, Paul spoke of the importance of what he was preaching: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

Paul's "right turn" was witnessed by an attitude change from pride to love. Paul's goal was to bring others to Christ. His behavior was motivated by this deep love for God and His people, therefore he preached the gospel of Christ everywhere. God first communicated with Saul, and via the question "why persecutest thou me... why kick

against the pricks, and God's (communication) is what turned Saul's communication. Paul's communication was changed from a natural gospel to that of the gospel of the Spirit (Gospel of Christ). There was no stopping Paul once he received this communication from God, taking it throughout the land that others might be convicted in their hearts as Paul was through the communication with the Lord. Paul showed that what he communicated after his transformation was not of man, nor of man's wisdom (1 Cor. 2:4).

God's communication unto Saul sparked him to become a servant of Christ, indicative of that humble Spirit that took up its abode in Paul. From that point on, Paul took on the likeness of Christ, and through his ministry, he encouraged all others to take on that likeness of Christ, reminding them always to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the love of Christ (1 Cor. 15:58).

Paul was able to preach and to teach the gospel of Christ because he was 'first partaker' of the gospel. He was a man of discipline; he learned to always seek the Lord, as many times as were needful. Paul taught the disciplines of faith, . . . not to be shaken by anything.

Paul stressed the need for constant prayer as one who always prayed for the people of God. Paul was a mentor to all and instructed the brethren everywhere in spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10-19). He trained leaders, being a leader himself, mentored them on how to walk in that leadership role in order to rear up others in the faith. Paul counseled Timothy, his son in the faith, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:2). Paul was inclusive. He taught everyone; he was no respecter of person. His message was one of unity, reconciliation, and community building of the saints. He preached against the ills of denominational religion and desired that the people of God speak the same thing.

Paul was able to say in II Tim. 4:7, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, and I have kept the faith." We (the believer) can also have this same report as Paul, in all walks of life. "He, that hath an ear, let him hear, what the Spirit said unto the churches" ( Rev. 2:7).

How can a man know the very Spirit of God? To begin, just ask, and receive. Receive of this simple teaching on GOMA + ABCD's. It worked in Saul's life, it can also work in yours.

“Without Faith it is impossible to please God...Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17).

### **CONCLUSION**

This book, Denominational Religion, from “The Little Book Series” has traced the history of Satan back to Lucifer (before his fall), meaning Light Bearer. Having a desire in his heart to ascend into heaven and to exalt himself above the stars of God, and to be like the most of high God, Satan ushered sin into the world. The hallmark of Satan's plan is deception which is his chief method of operation. Denominational Religion has carefully unwoven the deceptive devices that Satan uses to ensnare God's people. Absent the Spirit of Christ, there is no way to decipher Satan's clever schemes to delude the people of God. Satan has engaged in deception for thousands of year against the church, in its creation of denominational religion. This creation was a device to bring schism into the church as God did not bring about denominational religions – this is man's invention. Sadly to say, far too many churches are still deceived.

This book gives the antidote to Satan's deception – the Spirit of Christ. Only God is able to rightly divide the word of truth, to know the difference between the soul and the Spirit. It is incumbent upon a child of God to know spiritual things, because He is Spirit and He operates only by way of His Spirit. To not know things of the Spirit is to not know God.

### ***ABOUT THE AUTHOR***

Dr. Deryl G. Hunt is a Pastor, CEO of ICB Productions, international consultant, educator, noted author, and lecturer. He is legendary in the fields of cultural diversity and inclusive community building and is a forerunner with his new and innovative approach in addressing issues of these genres. His ground breaking works are thought provoking and transformational in providing answers to current, as well as age old dilemmas fraught by society. Dr. Hunt engages and captures the attention of even the most jaded minds. His diverse background spans the spectrum of his work to include management training to executives, middle level managers, and line workers in the U.S., Europe, Panama, Haiti, the Bahamas, and most recently the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI).

As an author, Dr. Hunt has written many books on the topics of inclusive community building, mentoring, and conflict resolution. Some of his most distinguished publications include the following:

- *Miami: The Place Where Cultures Meet and Opa locka, The Good City*, 1995.
- *Understanding Culturally Different People: A Training Manual*, 1995.
- *From Diversity to Unity Handbook on Developing Inclusive Community*, 1998.
- *Building the Inclusive Community: An Alternative Student Services Delivery System*, 2002.
- *The Ellison Executive Mentoring and Inclusive Community Building Model*, 2002.
- *Community Moments and Teachable Seconds*, 2002.
- *The Ellison Model Management Plan*, 2002.
- *Administration of Justice (unpublished)*.
- *Building Sustainable Marriages and Healing the Pain of Divorce, Co-author: Dr. Michele Rice*, 2004.

As an educator, Dr. Hunt's higher education consisted of a B.A. Degree in Sociology from Fort Valley University, a M.A. in Sociology from Atlanta University, and a Ph.D. in Public and International Affairs from the University of Pittsburgh. He has held many prominent administrative and faculty positions from consultant to the National Office of Housing and Urban Development, Assistant City Manager, Opa locka, Florida to major universities throughout the nation: University of Pittsburgh, Southern Illinois University, Florida International University, Florida Memorial University and Miami Dade College. Dr. Hunt received the William R. Jones Most Valuable Mentor

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Other books in the “Tree of Knowledge Little Book Series” include:

*The Great Commission*  
*Which Jesus*  
*The Book*  
*Talking About The Blues*

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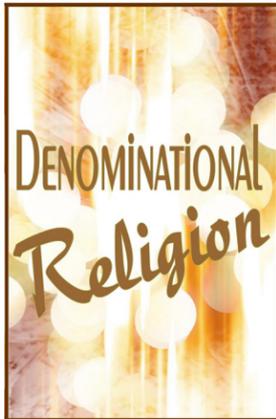
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Christianity, centered in the gospel of redemptive grace, is the systematic corpus of doctrine- a coherent and integrated body of belief. It is, however, infinitely more than just another worldview competing for human allegiance in the market place of ideologies. There is no doubt that denominational religion is not Christianity. Denominational religion preaches the Jesus of history, which is not the Christ. The Jesus of History encourages works and fear but the exalted Christ gives the diligent disciples the spirit of boldness (Christ's Spirit of God). Today, the Church is too involved in religion at the expense of progressive revelation. Satan has used denominational religion to cleverly teach about baby Jesus and the Jesus of history. This book leads the reader to the theater of open-heart surgery. But this is only possible if you are willing to be made willing. Revelation redeems; religion remands. I endorse this book very highly. Dr. Hunt is God's own son, a voice for the New Day Ministry. Please, embrace this colossal TRUTH that is being unveiled. This is a masterpiece. I recommend this text to theologians, religious teachers, preachers, missionaries, christians and other scholars. It is the nutrition for the moment. This is biblical honesty.

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