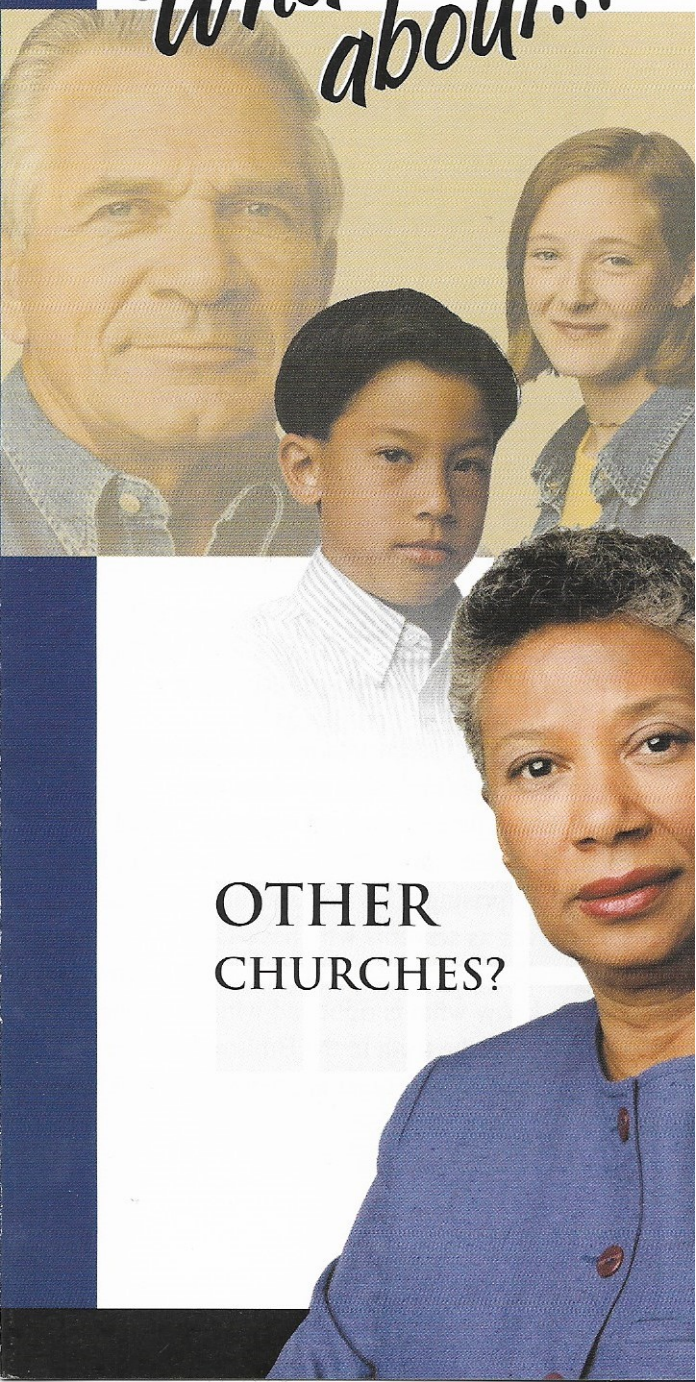


*What
about...*



**OTHER
CHURCHES?**

What About...Other Churches?

Catholic. Baptist. Presbyterian. Lutheran. It can be confusing and frustrating.

Why so many different churches or denominations?

Denominations exist because of different teachings. The differences are troubling but not surprising. Such differences have existed since the beginning of the Christian church. The apostle Paul wrote to the congregation in Corinth, "No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval" (1 Corinthians 11:19 NIV).

So what do we do about these differences? What attitude does God want us to have? How do we know who has "God's approval"?

To begin with, God wants us to watch out. False teachings and false teachers are deceiving. The apostle Paul explains, "Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it's not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants who have God's approval" (2 Corinthians 11:14,15 GW). How can we know what is right and what is wrong? God gave us the truth in the Bible so that we can distinguish true teaching from what is false.

As we recognize the danger and see that we cannot unite ourselves with those who believe something false, we also love the members of those churches. Certainly we do not want them to be hurt by the devil's schemes. As we watch out, God also commands us to reach out.

When a Christian church mixes something false with God's Word, there is real danger. God compares false teaching to gangrene and reminds us that false teachers "destroy the faith of some" (2 Timothy 2:17,18). God warns us that false teaching is dangerous and can threaten life itself. We want to separate ourselves from what will harm or destroy faith.

Out of love we warn them of the dangers for the good of their souls. We speak gentle warnings about false ideas for the same reason we label poison or hazardous materials—to help people avoid what will harm them.

False teaching is a sad reality. So are churches that harbor false teaching.

We carefully watch out and lovingly reach out too.

"How do we know who has God's approval?"

