

Denominationalism Is Scriptural?

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We live in a world of religious confusion. There are literally thousands of religious denominations claiming to follow the Bible and declaring allegiance to Christ. Attitudes of tolerance have developed toward all these differences. Many believe God approves of all the conflicting denominations. Yet, most have never considered the meaning of the term "denomination," or examined the word of God to determine if denominationalism is scriptural.

The word "denomination" signifies a part of a whole, a class, or division. When one searches the Scriptures he finds that no where is it suggested that the church of our blessed Lord is made up of divisions.

There are three very important reasons why the church of our Lord cannot be made up of denominations. First, our Lord prayed for unity-- the very opposite of division. With the cross near at hand, Jesus prayed on the behalf of those who would become believers through the words of the apostles asking, "that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (Jn. 17:20-21). Never did Christ intend for His church to be a clutter of differing groups each teaching conflicting doctrines and wearing different names.

Second, Jesus died for unity, not division. Before Jesus' death all men fell into two classes, Jew and Gentile. There was enmity between the two. Our Lord reconciled "both in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:15-16). Consider this...if Jesus died that men might not be "two," how could He be pleased with men being divided into thousands of denominations?

Finally, the teaching of Christ's New Testament advocates unity and condemns division. The division among the Corinthians was condemned (1Cor. 1:10-13). The Scriptures state Christ's church is His body and that there is only "one body" (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4). Yet, the denominations say there are many religious bodies that make up the church. Who's right?

We can be Christians without being members of any denomination by taking Christ as our creed and the Scriptures as our only guide. If we will simply become Christians (Acts 2:37-38; 8:12, 35-39), serve, and worship God the way the early disciples did (Acts 2:41-42), we will be a congregation, or church of Christ for which He prayed, died, and directs us to be in the Scriptures.

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