

Denominationalism - cont.

when men teach differing doctrines? If the Corinthian church was condemned for their disorderly assemblies, even when Spirit-guided men taught accurately, how much greater the transgression when uninspired men preach another gospel (Gal. 1:6–12)? Disturbances, disorder and divisions inevitably occur when human wisdom predominates (Rom. 16:16–19; 2 Cor. 12:20–21; Jas. 3:13–18).

Demands Compromise with Error

Denominationalism demands compromise with error. Celebrating unity in diversity, men say, “It doesn’t matter what you believe, so long as you are sincere.” God’s word affirms otherwise. People are led astray through philosophy and empty deception that accords with the tradition of men (Col. 2:8–12). Human ordinances are of no value against fleshly indulgence (Col. 2:16–23). We must faithfully preach the word and not turn aside to myths (2 Tim. 4:1–4). In contrast, wayward men pursue strange doctrines, fruitless discussions, and pointless speculation—the administration of God is furthered by faithful adherence to the divine pattern (1 Tim. 1:3–7).

Denominationalism - cont.

Let us recognize the authority Jesus Christ as expressed through the inspired apostolic message (1 Cor. 14:37–38). Let us recognize the perfection of the biblical pattern (2 Tim. 3:13–17; Jas. 1:25). May we all embrace the unifying facts of the gospel: one God and Father, one Lord, one Spirit, one hope, one faith, one baptism, and also one body (Eph. 4:1–6).

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Dangers of Denominationalism (Guest Article)

Denominationalism refers to the division of Christianity into separate religious groups. The term is particularly used about the various Protestant schools of thought. Examples include Presbyterians, Methodists, Anglicans, Lutherans, Baptists, or the many Bible churches of today.

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines "denomination" as "(1) an act of denominating (i.e., to give a name to, designate); (2) a value or size of a series of values or sizes (as of money); (3) name, designation; especially: a general name for a category; (4) a religious organization uniting local congregations in a single legal and administrative body." Religious denominationalism stands in stark contrast with biblical teaching. Jesus said, "I will build My church" (Matt. 16:16–18). Christ is head of the church, which is His body (Eph. 1:22–23). This body, in which both Jew and Gentile are reconciled, is singular and unique (Eph. 2:14–16; 4:1–6, esp. v. 5).

Mocks the Need for Unity

Denominationalism mocks the biblical mandate for unity. Men look at religious division, and say, "It is good." God declares otherwise. The Psalmist

said, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!" (Ps. 133:1–3). Jeremiah foreshadowed a time when God's people would have "one heart and one way" (Jer. 32:38–40). Jesus prayed for perfect unity among believers (John 17:20–23). Paul exhorted the Corinthians to avoid division, and be made complete in the same mind and judgment (1 Cor. 1:10–13). Similar exhortation was offered to the Philippians (Phil. 1:27).

Exalts Human Names Above Divine

Denominationalism exalts human names above divine names. Men choose names that glorify some religious leader, organizational structure, or distinguishing practice. Apostolic preaching centered upon the person of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:12; 1 Cor. 2:1–5). His name held the power of forgiveness (Acts 2:38; 10:42–43), which was confirmed by signs and wonders performed by Jesus and His apostles (Acts 3:6–8; 4:8–12). Therefore, it is not surprising that "the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11:25–26; cf. also Acts 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:15–16). Apostolic era congregations were called "the church(es) of God" (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:16; 11:22; 15:9; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; 1 Thess. 2:14; 2 Thess. 1:4; 1 Tim. 3:5, 15). Collectively, they were called "the churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16). New Testa-

ment churches wore names that signified location: Galatia (1 Cor. 16:1; Gal. 1:2), Asia (1 Cor. 16:19), Macedonia (2 Cor. 8:1), Judea (Gal. 1:22), Laodicea (Col. 4:16), Thessalonica (1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1). They also wore designations that signified blessings: "the churches of the saints" (1 Cor. 14:33) and also "the church of the firstborn" (Heb. 12:23). The church is God's field and building (1 Cor. 3:1–9). Should not its name identify possession and ownership? Since the church is the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:25–27). Should it not wear His name?

Makes God the Author of Confusion

Denominationalism makes God the author of confusion. The churches of men teach ("any and every," constantly changing, ever-evolving, you fill-in-the blank) doctrine. Mainstream churches long ago denied the inspiration and authority of Sacred Scripture. Those who still pay lip-service to such things, still celebrate unity in diversity. Paul rebuked the Corinthians for their divided loyalties (1 Cor. 1:10–13) and for confused assemblies (1 Cor. 14:26–33). If such censure was justified when Paul, Apollos and Peter taught the same things, how much more is it necessary