

Do You Think We Are A Denomination?

2-15-15PM

What is a denomination? We use that word to describe the divisions of currency. The word “denominator” refers to the lower number in a fraction that divides the upper number. We might also see that the word “de-nominate” means to “un-name”. Usually, when we discuss denomination in religion, we mean the many churches divided by doctrine and name. We may even be referring to the Theory of denominationalism: that it is acceptable for churches to differentiate in name and doctrine and still be in Christ. Do you see the common thread in all of these usages? It is “division”.

The Bible is clear on this issue: God **Hates** Denominations. He hates division and the nature of denomination is division. Christ died for unity, to remove the two denominations of the Old Testament (the Jew and the Gentile) Ephesians 2:14-16. Jesus prayer was that all believers would live in unity instead (John 17:20-23). Paul rebuked the “denominating of the church” in I Corinthians 1:10-16. John rebuked distinctions in doctrine in 2 John 7-10, and Paul made it clear that there could only be one doctrine for Jesus’ church in Ephesians 4:3-6.

Any church that desires to be right with God rejects the idea of being a denomination. We KNOW we aren’t (and cannot be) a denomination; in other words, we are not in the “Church of Christ” denomination. Now to be clear, there is a “Church of Christ” denomination that was created by institutionalism in the 1940s-50s, with “church” schools, organizations, etc. How can we be certain we are not a denomination? The concept of total autonomy absolutely prevents denominationalizing.

Even if we know we are not a denomination, is it possible that we talk or think as if we are?

1. Do you think all “churches of Christ” are equal?
2. Do you believe in “church” organizations?
3. Do you believe doctrine comes from the church?
4. Do you separate the Lord from the church?

So you see, while we may profess not to be a denomination, we may still think in such a way that suggests that we are a denomination. We need to understand that we are **just** the Lord’s church. We take His name to signify our identity. We are not by our own determination His; He has defined who belongs to Him (John 10:9-14)

What we need to do is think carefully about our church relationship. Many brethren slip into thinking: The Lord’s church is (like) a denomination; We (our church) are more than our membership. What we must do is speak carefully and act carefully, not just because it might convey a false impression, but because when we speak or act in factual error, it causes us to be in error.