

Denominational vs. Non-denominational

- **What is a denomination?**
 - **Modern definition:**
 - ***“the act of naming or designating a thing”***; **dictionary.com**
 - ***“a large group of religious congregations united under a common faith and name and organized under a single administrative and legal hierarchy”***; **American Heritage Dictionary**
 - ***“A religious organization uniting in a single legal and administrative body a number of local congregations”***; **Webster’s**

Denominational vs. Non-denominational

- **Three main components:**

1. **Name**

- **Usually a man-made name not found in Scripture**
 - **Based on “founder”:** “Lutheran”, “Wesleyan”
 - **Based on doctrine:** “Baptist”, “Methodist”, “Presbyterian”

2. **Organization**

- **Multiple congregations united under a single administration; some form of connective function;**

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- **Three main components:**

3. Doctrine

- Often boast man-made documents that dictate the groups rules or guidelines; creed, articles of faith, catechism
- Often sets rules or commandments that are designed to distinguish itself from others (ex. Church of England vs Catholic Church)
- Often changes rules or commandments to fit situations or societal whims
- Sometimes doesn't hold to any rules at all (community churches)

Denominational vs. Non-denominational

- **Is denominationalism okay?**
 - It is **un-Scriptural**
 - There is no support for these structures by name, organization, or doctrine found in the New Testament; no denomination can go to Scripture to show where Jesus “founded” their organization
 - We only have a handful of approved names by which the church was known; i.e. church of Christ, church of God, body of Christ, etc. I Cor. 1:2; Rom. 16:16; I Cor. 12:27

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 - Local congregations were independent, self-governing; see Acts 20:17, 28, I Pet. 5:1-2
 - Denominations often sponsor institutions, for which there is no authority from God

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 - There is no support for these structures by name, organization, or doctrine found in the New Testament; no denomination can go to Scripture to show where Jesus “founded” their organization
 - Each congregation maintained Christ as their authority; each congregation practiced and taught the same thing... the whole doctrine (teaching) of Christ; Eph. 5:23, I Cor. 4:17; II John 1:9; Gal. 1:6-9

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- **Is denominationalism okay?**
 - It is **anti-Scriptural**
 - **Contrary to Jesus' prayer for his followers – John 17:20-23**
 - **There were not to be divisions or naming after men in the body of Christ – I Cor. 1:10-13, 3:3-4**
 - **Opposes the very point of what Jesus accomplished through the cross – Eph. 2:14-16**

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- **Is denominationalism okay?**
 - **Apostasy was warned about in Scripture**
 - **Acts 20:29-30; III John 9; II Tim. 3:13, 4:1-4**

Denominational vs. Non-denominational

- **Even “founders” of some denominations viewed it as wrong:**
 - Martin Luther (Lutheran church)
 - ***“I ask that men make no reference to my name, and call themselves not Lutherans, but Christians. What is Luther? My doctrine, I am sure, is not mine, nor have I been crucified for any one. St. Paul, in 1 Cor. 3, would not allow Christians to call themselves Pauline or Petrine, but Christian. How then should I, poor, foul carcass that I am, come to have men give to the children of Christ a name derived from my worthless name? No, no, my dear friends; let us abolish all party names, and call ourselves Christians after Him Whose doctrine we have.”***
 - Hugh Thomason Kerr, A Compend of Luther's Theology (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1943, p. 135)

Denominational vs. Non-denominational

- **Even “founders” of some denominations viewed it as wrong:**
 - John Wesley (Methodist, Wesleyans)
 - ***“Would to God that all party names, and unscriptural phrases and forms which have divided the Christian world, were forgot and that the very name [Methodist] might never be mentioned more, but be buried in eternal oblivion.”***
 - John Wesley, Universal Knowledge, A Dictionary and Encyclopedia of Arts, Science, History, Biography, Law, Literature, Religions, Nations, Races, Customs, and Institutions, Vol. 9, Edward A. Pace, Editor (New York: Universal Knowledge Foundation, 1927, p. 540)

Denominational vs. Non-denominational

- **Even “founders” of some denominations viewed it as wrong:**
 - Charles Spurgeon (famous Baptist preacher)
 - ***“I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living! I hope that the Baptist name will soon perish, but let Christ's name last forever.”***
 - Spurgeon Memorial Library, Vol. I., p. 168

**Which would you rather have...a church that was started by a man
or group of men with an agenda?
Or the Church started by the Son of God and taught about in the
New Testament?
Better question...which of these does God want from His people?**