

Denominationalism

I. Introduction:

A. There are many different English word meanings to define denominationalism. To denominate is: “to give a name to; designate” (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/denominate>).

1. We see the base of this problem as early as the first century, in THE CHURCH, and it had to be dealt with (**I Corinthians 1:10-17**).

2. Our faith cannot be of men (**Galatians 1:6-12** and **Titus 1:14**).

B. Like any error, we have to teach and stand against religious bodies that started with man, human tradition, etc. (**Romans 16:17-18** and **I Timothy 1:3-7**).

1. You cannot follow the commandments and doctrines of men (**Colossians 2:4-23**).

2. Such doctrines of men prevent true worship and service to God (**Mark 7:1-13**).

II. Body: To Be Saved, We Must Identify Ourselves After Christ (**Acts 4:10-12**).

A. Jesus promised to establish His church, body, kingdom (**Matthew 16:13-18**).

1. The saved have been added to His church since the first century (**Acts 2:36-47**).

2. The church is made up of people (**I Corinthians 12:27**), but its borders [so to speak] are not earthly (**Hebrews 12:22-28**).

3. The citizenship of the saved is in Heaven (**Ephesians 2:19-20** and **Philippians 3:20**).

B. Only one church, body, kingdom of believers exists with the Lord's approval (**Ephesians 2:11-17**, **Ephesians 3:1-12**, **Ephesians 4:1-6** and **Colossians 3:15**).

1. Christ is the head (**Ephesians 1:22-23** and **Colossians 1:12-24**).

2. The purchase price was His blood (**Acts 20:28** and **Ephesians 5:25**).

3. We are members of one another (**Romans 12:4-5**). Therefore, we should NOT have divisions like this family, that family, etc. (**I Corinthians 12:25**).

C. Christ is the way (**John 14:6**), therefore our identity cannot be tied to others.

1. The church [public assembly], inferring there is no other, without further designation (**Matthew 18:15-17**, **Acts 2:47**, **Acts 5:11**, **Acts 8:1-3**, **Acts 11:26**, **Acts 12:1**, **Acts 12:5**, **Acts 14:27**, **Acts 15:3-4**, **Acts 18:22**, **Acts 20:17**, **I Corinthians 6:4**, **I Corinthians 12:28**, **I Corinthians 14:4-5**, **I Corinthians 14:12**, **I Corinthians 14:28**, **I Corinthians 14:34-35**, **Ephesians 1:22**, **Ephesians 3:10**, **Ephesians 5:23-25**; **29**, **Philippians 3:6**, **I Timothy 5:16**, **Hebrews 2:12**, and **III John 1:6**; **III John 1:9-10**).

2. The church identified by location (**Acts 11:22**, **Acts 13:1**, **Romans 16:1**, **Romans 16:5**, **Philemon 1:2**, **Colossians 4:15-16**, **I Thessalonians 1:1**, **II Thessalonians 1:1**, **I Peter 5:13**, **Revelation 2:1**, **Revelation 2:8**,

Revelation 2:12; Revelation 2:18; Revelation 3:1; Revelation 3:7, and Revelation 3:14).

3. The church of God [living God] (**Acts 20:28, I Corinthians 1:2, I Corinthians 10:32, I Corinthians 11:22, I Corinthians 15:9, II Corinthians 1:1, Galatians 1:13, I Timothy 3:5, and I Timothy 3:15).**

4. The general assembly and church of the firstborn (**Hebrews 12:22-23).**

5. Churches of Christ in reference to multiple locations (**Romans 16:16).**

6. The body of Christ (**Colossians 1:18).**

7. Churches of the saints (**I Corinthians 14:33).**

8. As God's people, we are referred to the house or building of God/Christ (**I Corinthians 3:9 and Hebrews 3:1-6).**

9. In all that though (and more could be stated), we must consider not only what is lawful; but also what is expedient and edifying (**I Corinthians 10:23).**

D. Having said all of the above, a proper identification by name is only one small part of being the Lord's church (**II John 1:6-11).**

1. Naming ourselves doesn't make us the church belonging to Christ if we are sinners (**Ephesians 5:27 and II Timothy 2:19).**

2. We must show ourselves faithful by more than a name (**Matthew 12:46-50, Luke 6:46, Romans 2:1-29, Titus 1:16, and I John 2:3-6).**

3. If examined through the Scriptures, does the fruit of this congregation prove we are God's people (**Matthew 7:20**)?

III. Conclusion: Mankind cannot denominate themselves even if the men they seek to follow are faithful (**I Corinthians 3:1-11).**