

COUNTER-DENOMINATIONAL !

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The views expressed in this document are those of the author: BNJ

What Does 'Non-Denominational' Mean?

Over the years, numerous congregations among churches of Christ have used the term 'non-denominational' as a means of highlighting the fact that they do not consider themselves as just another denomination among many that are said to form 'Christendom' in general, or 'The Church' in particular.

These days, churches of many varieties have begun adopting the term 'non-denominational' to describe themselves. What many of them really mean and practise is 'inter-denominationalism' (i.e. any or all denominations are tolerated).

There are some in the churches of Christ who equivocate with the terms 'denominate' and 'denomination'. They say that since God has given a designation (name) for the church and called it to be a separate people from the world, that the church of Christ is thus 'denominated'. And if it's denominated, it is therefore a 'denomination'. This shows the confusion that exists even in the minds of some of our brethren.

Let's admit the truth. The New Testament does not present to us the concept of a church which is composed of competing and contradictory "denominations". This is the sense in which most churches of Christ have historically used the term 'non-denominational'. The New Testament church of Christ (the body of Christ) is not presented as a body that is carved up unto different pieces. It is presented as one integrated body composed of many individual members (Eph 4:4; 1 Cor 12:27).

Denominationalism is the **division** of one religion into separate groups, sects, schools of thought or denominations. Denominationalism is a human ideology which views the church as being composed of groups which can have labels (names) and doctrines which differentiate one group from another. Inter-denominationalism is the acceptance of denominationalism.

In reality, churches of Christ should be 'counter-denominational' in the sense that we must practice the New Testament concept of the church and the unity it had. Jesus Christ said He would build "His church" (singular). The Bible shows us how this church came into being and that it was 'one church' composed of many congregations whose only real differences were location and local culture.

First century Christians overcame cultural, ethnic and religious differences to become of the 'same mind' in one body, the church. That's Christian unity and that's what we must emulate. The denominationalism ideology of modern so called 'Christendom' is an admission of human failure to remain united in a New Testament church manner.

If the term 'non-denominational' is being (has been) hijacked by religions who embrace denominationalism, then maybe it's time that churches of Christ made it clear that for us 'non-denominational' actually means:

- Contra-denominational
- Denomination-resistant
- Denomination-allergic
- Denomination-averse
- Denomination-incompatible
- Denomination-opposed

•Counter-denominational !

For those in churches of Christ who wish to see themselves as religiously integrated with, and fully tolerant of, others who embrace denominationalism, it's time to reconsider.

I want to be in a church that practices the distinctive New Testament concept of the church and the unity it had.

I want to be in the {insert my location} church of Christ (counter-denominational !).



The term 'non-denominational' is being hijacked to mean 'inter-denominational'

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