

## What Denomination Are You?

I have to share something with you that I heard this week. I wish I had realized this on my own, but I heard it from my friend Terry Francis. He wishes he thought of it on his own, but he saw it on someone's blog or Facebook page or website or something. Have you ever been asked the above question? I'm sure you have. Stay tuned for a very practical answer that I think will blow your socks off.

Denominationalism has plagued Christianity for hundreds of years. It is so much the norm that most folks today can't even think of Christianity without thinking of denominationalism. If someone finds out you are a Christian, they can't be satisfied with that; they have to know what kind of a Christian you are. And that gets asked this way: "What denomination are you?" Or they may just ask what church you are part of and then make a judgment about a denomination based on the name with which you designate the congregation.

We've studied this enough to know that we are not supposed to be a denomination. We are a local congregation that has no organizational hierarchy connection with any other congregation. Those among us who are in Christ are not only part of this local congregation but are also part of the universal body of Jesus Christ. We are not a part of any in between organization comprised of local congregations.

So, how do we answer our title question?

We have learned we should definitely not just say, "Oh, I'm Church of Christ." Christ's church is not a denomination. It is simply the collection of the people who belong to Jesus Christ.

So some have suggested we claim to be a non-denominational fellowship. And technically that is correct. However, that term is becoming muddy. There are so many churches claiming to be or presenting themselves as non-denominational (some of which are actually still connected to denominations) that the term itself is not necessarily helpful in defining what we mean. In fact, most folks who say they are part of a non-denominational church actually mean they are part of an interdenominational church. They betray this when they go on to say, "In our church we have Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, etc." This is not non-denominational Christianity, it is interdenominational. It actually means that a person can be a member of a congregation, the universal church, and a denominational organization as well.

For a time, I would say I'm part of anti-denominational Christianity. And technically that is also correct. I am against denominationalism in all forms. I even preach against the kind of unofficial denominationalizing I believe I sometimes see in myself and my brethren. But I admit that I don't like this term because I prefer to be defined by what I'm for, not what I'm against.

Then there was un-denominational Christianity. And technically this is correct. The problem is it doesn't spark much more thought in the person who hears it than claiming to be non-denominational does.

So, what can I say that will be truthful and thought-provoking? What can I say that might not only express what I really believe and also provoke discussion with those who ask so that we might get into good Bible study about the nature of the Christ and His church?

Are you ready for this?

"Oh, Edwin, you're a Christian. That is so cool. Me too. What denomination are you?"

"Actually, I'm just trying to be a pre-denominational Christian."

Isn't that fabulous? Like I said above, wish I had thought of that. But doesn't that get right to the heart? What did those people on the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2**) who responded to Peter's plea to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins become? They were just Christians. What denomination were they? They weren't part of one. They were Christians before denominationalism. They were pre-denominational. That is what I want to be. I want to be just what they were. I want to be a Christian who is a just a Christian pre-denominationalism.

How about you?

—Edwin L. Crozier