

1

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4-6)

In the religious world today, there are phrases, “inter-denominational” and “non-denominational” that are thrown about. Inter-denominational implies that there are denominations of Christianity working together with each other. Non-denominational, on the other hand, implies that there are those among the many denominations who choose to work independently. Does anybody see a problem? Both of these approaches imply and assume that Christianity is composed of denominations—many parts. The reality is, denominations are a man-made construction. They are not part, at all, of God’s plan.

Christianity is “un-denominational,” or even more precisely, “anti-denominational.” Our text from Paul’s letter to the Ephesians makes it quite clear that there is just one Christianity. The idea of denominationalism is the idea of the Lord’s church being made of various parts—denominations—with the whole thing being the great invisible church. This concept is completely foreign to the New Testament. The Lord’s people at Ephesus knew nothing about denominations, but they were instructed to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (**Ephesians 4:3**). Paul lists seven points of unity are listed (**Ephesians 4:4-6**). When we plead for unity on the basis of these, we will of necessity be crying out against denominationalism. If denominationalism is wrong, then it is wrong to be a part of it!

There is **one body**. That body is the church (**Ephesians 1:22,23**). It is just one spiritual body. The individual unit of this body, or church, is the individual—not the denomination (**John 15:1-5**)!

There is **one Spirit**. This Spirit is the Holy Spirit—of the Godhead (**Acts 2:38**). This Spirit is the Spirit that gives life in the new birth (**John 6:63; 3:3-5**). There is just one Holy Spirit as compared to many evil spirits (**1Timothy 4:1**).

There is **one hope**. Hope is in Christ (**1Timothy 1:1; Colossians 1:27**). There is no hope outside of Christ. All spiritual blessings are in Him (**Ephesians 1:3**). Furthermore, there is only one way to get into Christ where the one hope is (**Galatians 3:26,27**). Where does that leave those who hope in a denomination?

There is **one Lord**. This refers to Christ (**Acts 10:34-36**). Christ is Lord, ruler, king (**1Timothy 6:13-18**). He is the only one. We properly recognize Christ as the one Lord when we do what he tells us to do (**Matthew 7:21**)!

There is **one faith**. It is the common or universal faith (**Jude 3**). Saints are urged to continue in this faith (**Acts 14:22**). This faith comes from hearing His word (**Romans 10:17**). When we all read the same word and accept it, we will all believe the same thing—we will all be of one faith.

There is **one baptism**. When Paul wrote his letter, the baptism of John had already served its purpose (**Acts 19:1-5**), as had all of the Jewish ceremonial washings. There is just one baptism—an immersion in water for the remission of sins (**Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Acts 10:47,48**).

There is **one God**. This was the teaching of Jesus, too (**Mark 12:29**). Likewise, this was the teaching of all of the apostles (**1 Timothy 2:5; Acts 17:23**).

Paul made it easy to see the “seven ones.” This is God’s platform for unity. There is **one body** made to live by **one Spirit**, with **one hope** under **one head**, who is the **one Lord**, served with **one faith** through **one baptism** under **one God**. This is un-denominational Christianity. Don’t you want to be a part of that?

Why have denominations at all?

Denominations are not needed for strength. Christianity has survived in spite of denominations, not because of what they have to offer. Division promotes weakness rather than strength. Frankly, how much would Christianity suffer [even as the world thinks of it] if any particular denomination should suddenly cease to exist?

Denominationalism is not needed in order to have all spiritual blessings. These are in Christ. People enjoyed these blessings in Christ long before any of the denominations existed. All one has to do is to obey the gospel to have all spiritual blessings, as this puts one into Christ where all spiritual blessings are.

Denominationalism is not needed in order for Christianity to be perpetuated. The hope of Christianity continuing is in the word, which is the seed of the kingdom (**Luke 8:11**). Even the existence of the seed does not depend upon the denominations, for the seed came first, and according to **1 Peter 1:25**, will be here if all denominations are gone.

Denominationalism is not needed in order to evangelize the world. The Lord gave the commission to the apostles. They handed it down to faithful men. Before the time Scripture was completed, this gospel had been taken to the whole world. (**Colossians 1:23**). This was done long before any denomination existed upon the face of the earth. This shows that no denomination is needed in order to evangelize the world. Denominations present a problem in evangelizing, for people have trouble seeing why there are so many different churches, each claiming to be the church belonging to Christ.

Denominationalism is not needed in order to worship God properly. Christians met and worshipped God for years before any of the denominations came into existence. Really, if one, five, or twenty denominations suddenly ceased to exist, would that matter as to whether or not people could worship God?

Some may say: “Your church is a denomination,” or “You are a member of a denomination.” I deny that! My hope is built upon being just what I read in Scripture. I believe I can show any sincere heart that the church of which I am a member is not a denomination, but rather corresponds exactly with what you find in the Bible. There are people all over the country who follow the God’s pattern without any denominational affiliation at all.

Would you like to be a member of the church, the one body? Seek to be saved like those in the Bible, and you will be part of that number (**Acts 2:47**).

—S. Scott Richardson Sr.