

Occasionally someone asks the question, "What kind of church are you out there at Remmel? Are you non-denominational? Are you a church of Christ? Are you Baptist? Are you something else? Just what are you anyway?"

Those questions are very easy to answer unless you want someone to understand the answer. Someone's understanding of the answer comes from their own experience and what they think the meaning of certain words happens to be. Stay with me here as I attempt to explain.

When someone asks, "Are you non-denominational?" they usually don't actually mean non-denominational, they usually mean all denominational. Non-denominational has come to mean, by popular usage, that a church will accept people from all religious faiths, even though they fundamentally disagree. In fact, that is not the definition of non-denominational; it is the definition of all-denominational.

Non-denominational actually means, independent of any outside governing body and having no book of rules other than the Bible. So a church that has a convention, synod, council, etc., at which they decide church policy and official doctrine is, by definition, a denomination. Since the Remmel church is not controlled by an outside governing body and has no book of rules other than the Bible indicates we are non-denominational.

Then someone asks, "Are you a Church of Christ?" Again it depends on what you mean by Church of Christ. If you mean a denomination that was started by men and is of rather recent origin, I would have to answer no! If you mean by Church of Christ, a bunch of holier than thou, condemning individuals who would rather argue about scripture, than try to live it out everyday in their lives, again, I would have to answer no!

Perhaps some of you have seen our church bulletin. At the top it says we are "Christ's church at Remmel," our highway signs say, "Church of Christ," and our stationary and business cards say, "The Remmel Church." I almost always refer to us as "The Remmel church" when I am writing to someone or talking about our congregation.

So, is this cause for any alarm? Does this mean we don't know who we are? Does this mean we have fallen off the left side of the chart and are now rightly tagged with the "L"(Liberal)word? Are we now, all denominational?

Let me emphatically say NO to all of the above. In fact, using different terms to describe the church is not only perfectly scriptural, it is more in keeping with the teachings and practices of the church of the New Testament.

Sadly, many don't understand that the church of the New Testament didn't even have a name. The most common reference to the church in scripture is simply, "The church." Almost every letter of Paul begins with, "to the church at" So, to call ourselves, "The Rimmel church," is more in keeping with the New Testament than any other designation. Of course, since there were no denominations in the first century, everyone understood who Paul and others were talking about when he used the term, "the church."

Some today want to use the term "Church of Christ" exclusively and are upset if this term is not used. Is the Rimmel church a church of Christ? Absolutely! But what does that mean?

"Church of Christ" is not actually a name for the church, it is simply an explanation that the church belongs to Christ. In Matt. 16:18 Jesus said, "I will build my church." Whose church is it? It is Christ's church, or the church of Christ. Both terms mean exactly the same thing.

In fact, in scripture, the church is referred to as the church of God, the church of the firstborn, the church, etc., all referring to the same body; the body of Christ. Since in scripture, body and church refer to the same thing, to say someone is a member of Christ's body, Christ's church, the body of Christ or the church of Christ all mean the same thing. Never does the Bible refer to the church as a denomination and never does it refer to church as if it had an exclusive name.

It may surprise some to realize that the one and only time a biblical reference is made to "church of Christ" is in Rom. 16:16, where Paul says, "The churches of Christ salute you," meaning all the congregations of the church in that area send their greetings.

So to arbitrarily pick out one phrase in scripture and force that to be the "official" name of the church, is totally incorrect.

There is some benefit, however, in using a term that is easily understood by everyone. Perhaps that's why many have traditionally used the term, "church of Christ." It's a scriptural term and I have no problem using it provided people understand what it actually means.

If we use "Church of Christ" in a denominational way, e.g., as the official one and only NAME for the church and in so doing differentiate ourselves from what we consider "other denominations," we show a lack of understanding of what the church really is and how it fits into the Biblical framework of the New Testament.

In a sense, we have the best of all worlds at Remmel. Since we are the only religious group who meet in the Remmel community, to call ourselves, "The Remmel Church," is not only scripturally accurate we are easily identified by everyone in this area and we offend no one in the process.

Let's see – scripturally accurate, non-offensive, and communicative. What a concept!

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