
Subject: The Faith Assembly Denomination
Posted by [jisamazed](#) on Mon, 14 Apr 2008 03:54:18 GMT
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Note: This could have gone into the "rant and rave" section, but I think that it is more appropriate in the doctrine section. This issue is one of my pet peeves with the teaching of HEF and FA in general. I look forward to reading people's responses to it.

Random House defines "denomination" this way:

1. a name or designation, esp. one for a class of things 2. a class or kind of persons or things having a specific name 3. a religious group, usually including many local churches 4. the act of naming or designating a person or thing (5. etc...)

History:

The church in America and many other places around the world was in rough shape in the 60's. Many different protestant groups had taken a defensive posture and become so fearful of anything that smacked of compromise that they could not grow and learn and be open to the moving of the Holy Spirit. There were plenty of exceptions, and there were always a few offensive-minded congregations in every evangelical denomination who rose above the status quo of the time. Some Pentecostal churches shined as lights, but even many of them were burdened by legalism, hidden immorality or showiness. Then the Lord sent a move of the Spirit so powerful that we still experience it today. The charismatic movement brought new life to a struggling church, and much angst and controversy with it as well. A lot of people got kicked out of churches or left because they wanted to function in the Holy Spirit rather than dead traditions. The people in the new churches often referred to the old churches as "denominational" because many such churches seemed to be bound by their denominational rules and traditions. Eventually, any church that was not charismatic or independent was called "denominational". The reasoning was that we don't need to form these interchurch organizations that stifle growth and revival. We are supposed to be autonomous in ourselves.

However, as has happened throughout Protestant history over the past 400 years, the independent churches and groups of churches became a denomination of sorts of their own. They might not have become an organization of churches, but their elitism and "more spiritual than thou" mentality reflected the churches that they came from. This problem has occurred many, many times in church history, and Faith Assembly is but one example. Even Augustine of Hippo in the 4th century complained of all the different groups of churches that claimed to be the purest, each one believing that the others were somehow less pure than they.

FA was a denomination of sorts:

Each "denomination" has a distinctive set of doctrines and practices that defines it and sets it

apart from other churches or groups of churches. Faith Assembly was no different. FA teachers planted other churches in North America and regularly taught in those churches. Usually, the teacher from FA carried greater authority in the church than any local leadership, if there was any. Worship structures were usually similar to that of FA, with music, utterance gifts and teaching from the pulpit, in that order. Tape racks made HEF's and others' sermon readily available. Church discipline was used to weed out those who would not follow the program. There was a suspicion of other churches, and denominations were often mocked. If you wanted a FA-type congregation to believe you, all you had to do was say, "The denominational churches believe such and such... we don't believe that. We believe the opposite." People did not want to do what the "Babylonish denominational system" did.

The Hypocrisy of it all:

Meanwhile, the Lord was moving mightily in some "denominational" churches, filling people with the Holy Spirit, giving them a hunger and thirst for Him, bringing them into balance. People were healed and delivered and set free from bondages. Their theology became more Christ-centered, as did their lives. However, the FA-churches were so afraid of violating their traditions or HEF's teaching (which somehow became synonymous with the Word of God) that every move of God in the mid to late 80's was met with opposition from the "deeper life brothers" (Tom Hamilton's term). The Lord brought people a fresh understanding of grace through Jerry Ervin, and he got kicked out. The Lord implored people to humble themselves and admit their extremes through Steve Hill, and people hollered that he was somehow compromising the "end-time message of faith", whatever that is. In our church in GR, a couple of women were despised because they wore jeans to a roller-skating party. Whenever change comes to a denomination, there are always people who don't want to change, no matter how Biblical the change is. Jesus said to the pharisees, "... you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition." In this case, it was the FA tradition. Thus, the hardliners who claimed to be faithful to "the message" actually became denominational pharisees. I can say that because I was one of them for a while, somewhat. I hope that the people I hurt can forgive me.

Appropriate terminology:

It is inaccurate to say, "the denominational view" or "the denominational way". There is not one "denominational" way of doing things. There is a huge diversity among protestant denominations, and none of them believe exactly the same things. Some don't believe anything. Some of them are wonderful, spirit-filled congregations who operate in the power and authority of the name of Jesus. On the other hand, I can think of some independent, nondenominational, charismatic churches that are bound by their own pride. They are so impressed by their break from the status quo that they have developed their own status quo, freely assuming the worst of other believers and churches. If you don't believe that it still happens, just read some of the posts on this forum.

Instead of referring to all non-charismatic churches as denominational, make a difference between those that are Christ-centered and Bible-based, and those that are not. Those are the true churches, and we can learn from them and have fellowship with them.
