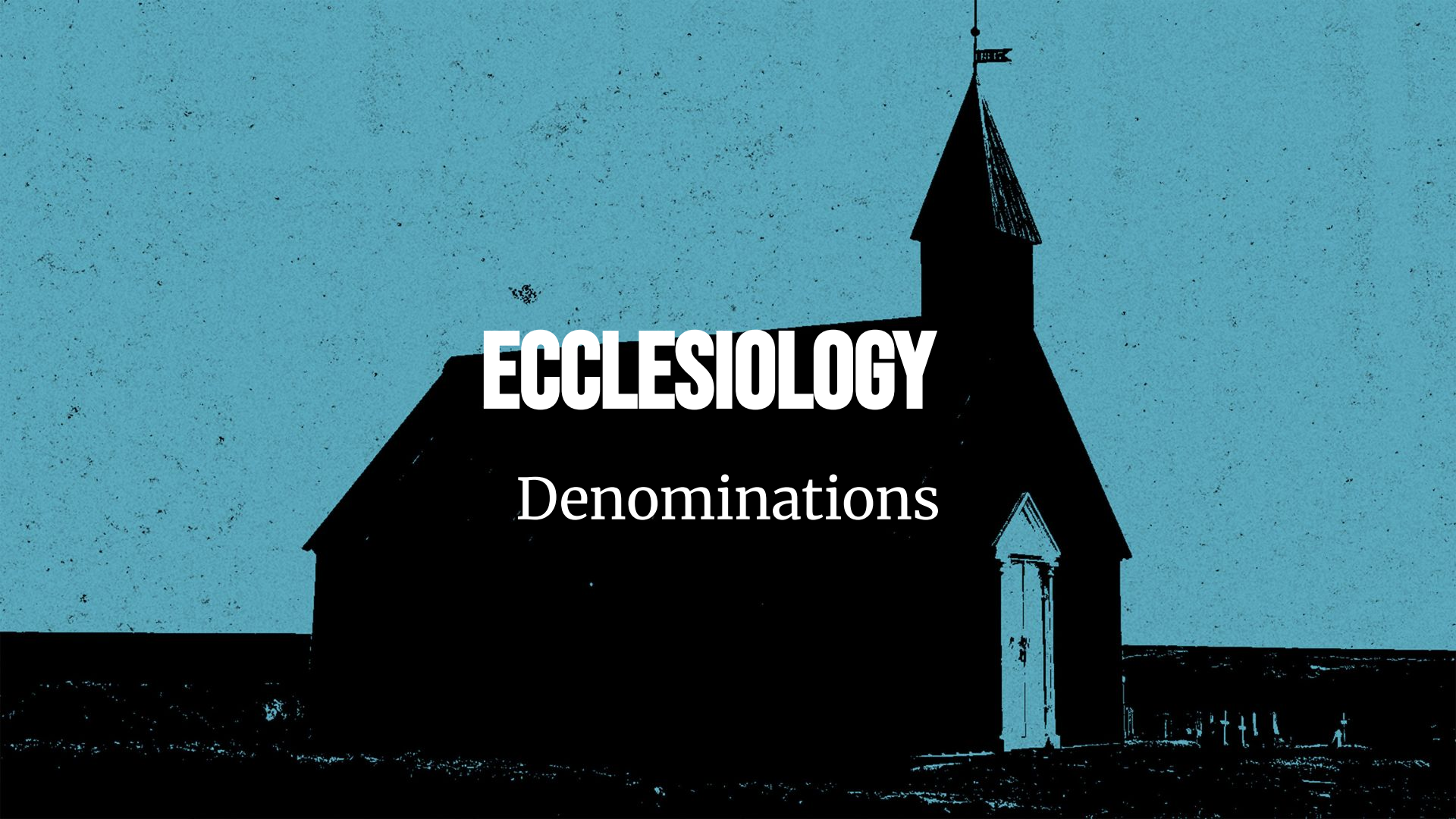




ECCLESIOLOGY

Denominations



THE PROBLEM OF DENOMINATIONS

**THE BOUNDARY LINES OF THE HOUSE:
CULTS VS. DENOMINATIONS**

CULTS VS. DENOMINATIONS

10 Reject a *factious* man after a first and second warning, 11 knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.

Αἰρετικός (hairetikos) – divisive, factious, contentious, a heretic

CULTS VS. DENOMINATIONS

- **Doctrinal Error** : Holding a private, mistaken opinion on a secondary issue.
- **Schism** : A corporate division over non-essential practices that hurts the church but doesn't destroy its foundation.
- **Heresy** : An obstinate, stubborn departure from the core truths of the gospel.

There is difference betwixt error, schism, and heresy. Error is when one holds a strong opinion alone; schism, when many consent in their opinion; heresy runs further, and contends to root out the truth. **Error offends, but separates not; schism offends and separates; heresy offends, separates, and rageth.** Error is weak, schism is strong, heresy obstinate. Error goes out, and often comes in again; schism comes not in, but makes a new church; heresy makes not a new church, but no church. Error is reproved and pitied, schism is reproved and punished, heresy is reproved and excommunicated. Schism is in the same faith, heresy makes another faith. Though they be thus distinguished, yet without God's preventing grace, one will run into another.

—Thomas Adams, *The Works of Thomas Adams*, Vol. 3

CULTS VS. DENOMINATIONS

- **Denomination** : Group of believers who differ on secondary issues from other denominations. United by core essentials of the gospel
- **Cult**: Departs from historic core essentials, heretical

	Orthodox Christian Denominations	Non-Christian Cultic Movements
Source of Revelation	The Bible is held as the supreme and sufficient authority for faith and practice.	Extra-biblical writings or modern prophets are claimed to carry equal or superior authority, replacing or authoritatively interpreting Scripture.
Christology	Affirmation of the full deity and full humanity of Jesus Christ as defined in the historic ecumenical creeds.	Rejection of Christ's true deity, framing Him as a created being, an angel, a secondary god, or merely an ideal human.
Soteriology	Salvation is viewed as a gift of grace received through faith in the finished work of Christ (<i>sola gratia, sola fide</i>).	Salvation is made contingent upon human effort, ritual observance, and strict obedience to the specific organization.
Ecclesiastical Outlook	Recognition of the universal church, acknowledging that true believers exist across various traditions and denominations.	Radical isolationism, asserting that salvation is found exclusively within their specific organizational boundaries.
Governance and Control	Local or connectional governance designed to support ministry, with varying degrees of member freedom.	Centralized, highly authoritarian headquarters exercising coercive control over members' personal, financial, and intellectual lives.



TRACING THE PROTESTANT FAMILY TREE

SIXTEENTH-CENTURY PROTESTANT REFORMATION

SIXTEENTH-CENTURY PROTESTANT REFORMATION

LUTHERAN



SIXTEENTH-CENTURY PROTESTANT REFORMATION

LUTHERAN



Pietist Revivals

Radical Pietism

Mission Friends

EFCA

SIXTEENTH-CENTURY PROTESTANT REFORMATION

LUTHERAN



REFORMED



Pietist Revivals

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ANABAPTIST



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Holiness Movement

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Holiness Movement

Assemblies of God

Brethren

Independent
Bible Churches



UNITY VS. UNIFORMITY

1 CORINTHIANS 1:12

12 Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, “I am of Paul,” and “I of Apollos,” and “I of Cephas,” and “I of Christ.”

13 Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

THE TRAP OF UNIFORMITY

Uniformity is external and organizational.

1 CORINTHIANS 1:20-25

20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 but **we preach Christ crucified**, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

THE REALITY OF UNITY

Biblical unity is not organizational; it is **relational** and **spiritual**.

A small, dark, isolated church with a steeple against a dark, cloudy sky. The church is silhouetted against a dark, textured sky. The steeple has a small flag on top. The church is surrounded by a dark, flat landscape.

0%

How many of us who have it 100% right.

Dear Sir,

As you are likely to be engaged in controversy, and your love of truth is joined with a natural warmth of temper, my friendship makes me solicitous on your behalf.... If you account him a believer, though greatly mistaken in the subject of debate between you, the words of David to Joab concerning Absalom, are very applicable: "Deal gently with him for my sake." The Lord loves him and bears with him; therefore you must not despise

him, or treat him harshly. The Lord bears with you likewise, and expects that you should show tenderness to others, from a sense of the much forgiveness you need yourself. In a little while you will meet in heaven; he will then be dearer to you than the nearest friend you have upon earth is to you now. Anticipate that period in your thoughts; and though you may find it necessary to oppose his errors, view him personally as a kindred soul, with whom you are to be happy in Christ forever.

—The Works of John Newton, Letter XIX “On Controversy.” Reprinted from New Horizons, October 2002.



THE HOUSE, THE HALLWAY, AND THE ROOMS

THE HOUSE, THE HALLWAY, AND THE ROOMS

THE HOUSE, THE HALLWAY, AND THE ROOMS

1. The rooms are a divine accommodation

THE HOUSE, THE HALLWAY, AND THE ROOMS

1. The rooms are a divine accommodation
2. Choose your room by truth, not taste

THE HOUSE, THE HALLWAY, AND THE ROOMS

1. The rooms are a divine accommodation
2. Choose your room by truth, not taste
3. Practice charity under one roof

THE BIBLICAL MOSAIC (UNITY & DIVERSITY)

