



THE SEVIERVILLE SOWER

Sowing the seed (Luke 8:11) into the hearts of mankind.

Sevierville Church of Christ | 208 Hicks Drive | Sevierville, TN 37862 | (865) 453-8009 | seviervillecoc.org

January 9, 2022

Pre-Denominational

Bill Boyd

Some people think the church of Christ is a sect. That does not surprise me. Paul was called “a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes” (Acts 24:5). The chief of the Jews in Rome said to Paul, “as concerning this sect, we know that it is everywhere spoken against” (Acts 28:22). It was not a complimentary term. The word “sect” in the King James Version is translated “heresy” in other versions. Those who called the church a sect thought the Christians had come together on a falsehood, but to their credit, they recognized that the members of that body believed a distinctive doctrine and that their faith gave them a distinctive identity. Some today say the church is sectarian because of its distinctive plea, but saying that does not make it so.

I have heard it said that the church is “undenominational.” I have said that myself, and I know what I meant. As a prefix, “un” can mean “not,” and that is what I was trying to say; the church is not denominational. Yet, “un” often has other meanings, like “reverse” or “opposite.” “Non-denominational” may be a better term. “Non” almost always means “not,” and the church of Christ is not denominational. Yea, verily, it is “anti-denominational”—against denominationalism. It is often hard for people to think of a “church” that is not denominational. For a long time, members of the Lord’s body were about the only ones ever saying that.

Now, I am seeing many different kinds of churches that call themselves “non-denominational.” Many say they are a “Community Church.” Some use creative names like, “The Spirit of Love Church” or “Rock Fellowship.” They say they are “non-denominational” because they are independent congregations that answer to no higher organizational structure. I understand that, but while these modern non-denominational churches value their independence, they do not so much value Bible authority. They pretty much worship

any way they want to, teach their own plan of salvation and openly fellowship with those who do not share their distinctive faith. They still think that when it comes to salvation, “one is just as good as another.”

Locally, churches of Christ are independent congregations. Like the Christians in the New Testament, their spiritual brethren are those of “like precious faith” (2 Peter 1:1), but they limit their fellowship to those of that faith. That is why some call them a “sect.”

“Pre-denominational” is a relatively new term (as least it is to me.) “Pre” means “before.” A church that is “pre-denominational” is a church that existed before there were denominations. While some find it difficult to think of a church existing today that is not part of a denomination, they never seem to have a problem understanding that the church Jesus established in the New Testament was pre-denominational. In the New Testament, people were baptized into Christ and added to His church without joining any denomination. (There was no denomination to join; there was just the one church.) These pre-denominational Christians worked together and assembled to worship in independent congregations. Elders were appointed to shepherd the flock and to oversee their work, and some of the saints were asked to serve as deacons. Christ was their Head, and they recognized a common identity with those in other locations with the same faith. “Pre-denominational” is a good term; it points back to the early church. We can hear the same Gospel they heard, respond to it the same way, be added to the same church and gather in local congregations to worship just as they did, without joining any denomination.

We can be the pre-denominational church. Those who do not understand this may call us a “sect,” but that is nothing new.

Prayer Requests & Announcements

Please pray for Mary Carr regarding the passing of her husband Earl yesterday morning at LeConte Medical Center. There are no plans for any services. She asks that everyone give her a few days to cope with his death.

Keep Connie Duncan in your prayers as she will be having shoulder surgery on the 10th of this month.

Shirley McKnight will be having pre-op on the 12th and hip replacement surgery on the 24th. Please keep her in your prayers for successful surgery.

Shawna Langston continues to recover from a recent illness. Neither she nor Cindy tested positive for Covid. Cindy's son, Joey, who was diagnosed with Covid, is recovering at home. Also, her sister's grandson, Antonio, has recently been diagnosed with Covid.

Dave Barber's son, Jack Barber was recently diagnosed with Covid.

Remember Tammy Gresham in prayer regarding the recent passing of her mother.

Paul Rolen, Mary Kate's brother, is scheduled to have back surgery on January 24. Your prayers are appreciated for this lengthy and extensive surgery.

Continue to Remember...

Chris Bender, John and Helen Carr, Dennis and Marty Danilchuk, Lindsey Johnson, Shirley McKnight, Sue Moore, Lyn Morris, Joanne Roark, Shirley Yeager, Becky Duncan (Joe and Connie's daughter-in-law), Brittany Hutchcraft (Shirley Yeager's granddaughter), Adam Lane (son-in-law of Vickie Price), Harlie McClung (John and Helen Carr's 12 year-old great-granddaughter), Anita Ogle (Sherry Simms' friend), Casie Rains (friend of the Hansens), Paul Rolen (Mary Kate's brother), Frankie Simms (Scott Simms' father), Wayne Tart (Tammie Fish's brother).

Ladies' class Thursdays at 6:15 at the Hansen's house

Monthly afternoon song service: January 30

Fellowship lunch: February 6

Evangelism Materials

Extra supplies for our evangelism work are freely available in the supply room to our members. Instructional books, DVDs, and Bible study materials are available. We also have a variety of cards for our Compassion Card work.

Weekly Assemblies

Sunday:	Bible Study 9 a.m.
	Worship 10 a.m.
	Worship 1 p.m.
Wednesday:	Bible Class 7 p.m.

The Bible's Amazing Unity

Eric Lyons

Imagine asking an actress from Hollywood, a farmer from Oklahoma, and a restaurant manager from Alabama to write an essay about the causes of the Civil War. Even though they would all write at the same time about a war that occurred less than 200 years ago, numerous differences would be obvious. The Hollywood actress might say the war was a result of slavery. The restaurant manager may assert the war was about states' rights. And the farmer from Oklahoma might claim that the war was because of stubbornness on both sides—the North and South. The point is, these three individuals likely would have many different things to say about the war.

When we compare ordinary human authors to the writers of the Bible, we realize that the Bible truly is an amazing book written by men who were inspired by God. Considering it was written by approximately 40 different writers over a period of about 1,600 years (1500 B.C. to A.D. 100) and contains no contradictions in its original form, one has to admit that the Bible is no ordinary book. From Genesis through Revelation the theme is Jesus Christ—His coming, His presence, and His return. Yet, the Bible writers were as different as the Hollywood actress and the Oklahoma farmer. Some were fishermen, some were farmers, some were military leaders, and some were kings. Some wrote in the Hebrew language, while others wrote in Aramaic or Greek. Some of the Bible writers penned letters while traveling, and others while in prison. Yet when we look at the Bible, it shows amazing unity—unity that can be explained only by the fact that Bible writers were guided by the Holy Spirit.

Truly then, as the apostle Paul wrote nearly 2,000 years ago, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Elders

Randy Hansen, Robert Moore, Kevin Ruiz, and Jerry Sutton

Deacon

Lenwood Johnson (finance)

Preacher

Kevin Ruiz