

Letters: Denominations

June 18, 2013

Evolving denominations

Regarding "[Denominations dying—or transforming into something new?](#)":
Man evolves. So does the way he worships. If not, we'd still be sacrificing goats.

Charles D. Hoffman

New York

Drawing denominational conclusions

I enjoyed [the article](#) on the future of denominations.

As Christianity sees a rise in cultural and ethnic contextualization, defining our terms and core principles will become of prime importance. What is a religious denomination? Some define it as "a subgroup within a religion that operates under a common name, tradition and identity."

Over time, members of a religion may find they have developed significantly different views on theology, philosophy, religious pluralism, ethics, religious practices and church order. Consequently, different denominations may eventually form. Surely we can attest to this phenomenon by simply observing our own state of Texas. The greatest danger to SBC would seem to be fragmentation over the issue of Calvinism.

When only one in five churches file an Annual Church Profile with the Southern Baptist Convention, Baptist General Convention of Texas, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship or Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, one would wonder if we can accurately draw any conclusions

about involvement in our denominations, organic fellowships or their structures.

Like our forbearer, Isaac Backus, we would do well to look for the renewing presence of the Spirit of God and be awakened to the challenge of being faithful to our calling in the postmodern context.

David Mahfouz

Port Neches

Nature of the church

As a former Southern Baptist—now Eastern Orthodox—what the Southern Baptist Convention and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship need to do is begin a serious inquiry into what the nature of church is.

Both its strength and weakness in the past has been its congregational structure. That has been under attack from within for the last 35 years.

It needs to look to how the church formed and was established by Jesus and the apostles and how it flourished in the ancient world and what happened to it and find where they fit into it. And if they don't: Why? And how to get back into it?

Important clues can be found in W.O. Carver's commentary on Ephesians *Glory of God in Christian Calling*.

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