



# Seeking Undenominational Christianity

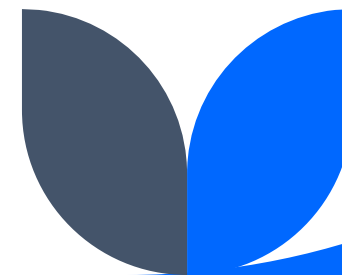
Tom Rucker – Hardin Valley Church





# Why Study Church History?

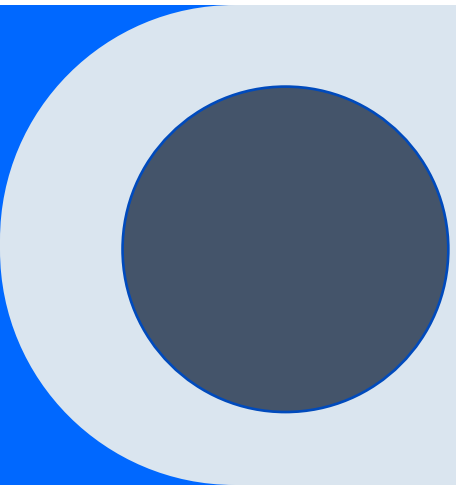
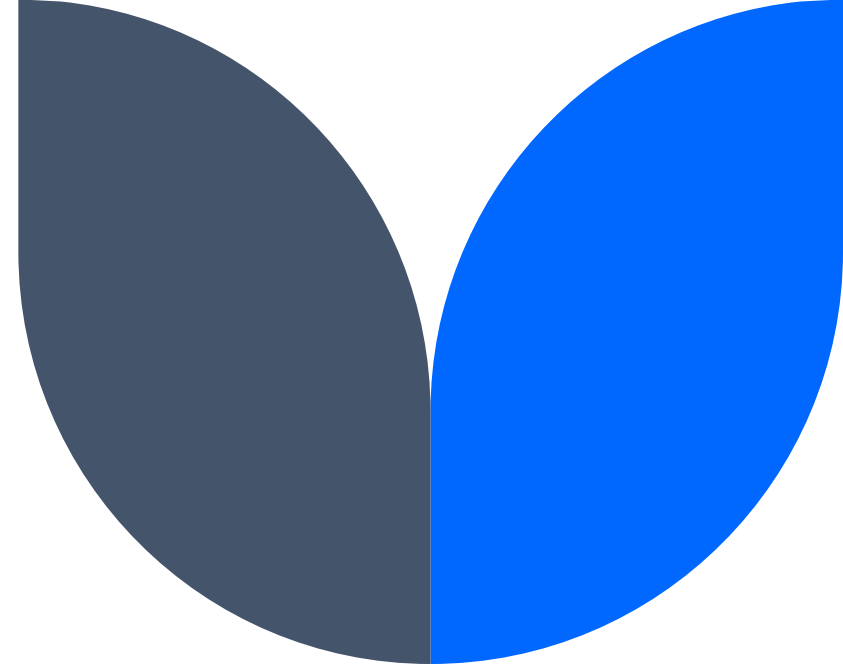
- This study is based on three convictions:
  - God is at work within us.
  - God is at work among us.
  - We are not the first God worked among.
- Therefore, we examine the lives of Christians who have gone before us because they are our sisters and brothers, our mothers and fathers in the faith. Christian fellowship is not broken by death.
- Have we in our movement been reluctant to admit we have a history?





# Seeking Undenominational Christianity

Approaches to Unity



# Possible Approaches to Unity

- Authoritarian
  - Most clearly seen in the Roman Catholic church.
  - Based on agreement with and submission to the Roman church.
  - The individual must maintain a “closed mind” and accept without question.
- Interdenominational
  - Assumes Christianity contains no divine pattern of church organization and doctrine.
  - All beliefs are considered valid.
- Undenominational
  - Assumes the Bible is the revealed will of God.
  - Requires the individual to study the scripture to find God’s will and pattern for the church.
  - Allows for differences of opinion on disputable matters.



## Romans 14:1-4

As for the one who is **weak in faith**, welcome him, but not to quarrel over **opinions**. <sup>2</sup> One person believes he may eat anything, while the **weak** person eats only vegetables. <sup>3</sup> **Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.** <sup>4</sup> Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

## Romans 14:5-6, 10

<sup>5</sup> One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. <sup>6</sup> The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God....<sup>10</sup> Why do you **pass judgment** on your **brother**? Or you, why do you **despise** your **brother**? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God;

## Romans 14:13, 17-19

<sup>13</sup> Therefore let us **not pass judgment** on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.... <sup>17</sup> For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

<sup>18</sup> Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. <sup>19</sup> So then let us pursue what makes for **peace** and for **mutual upbuilding**.

## Romans 15:5-7

<sup>5</sup> May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such **harmony** with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> that together you may with **one voice** glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup> Therefore **welcome one another** as Christ has welcomed you, **for the glory of God.**

# Discussion

- On what kind of questions do people have differing opinions and dispute about?
- Do people have strong convictions about these kinds of questions or do they consider them insignificant and can they take them or leave them?
- In this context, what is the difference between one who is strong in faith and one who is weak in faith?
- What are the obligations of each?
- What can we learn that applies to unity of believers?

## 1 Timothy 2:23-26

<sup>23</sup> Have nothing to do with **foolish, ignorant controversies**; you know that they breed quarrels. <sup>24</sup> And the Lord's servant must **not** be **quarrelsome** but **kind** to everyone, able to **teach**, patiently enduring evil, <sup>25</sup> **correcting his opponents with gentleness**. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, <sup>26</sup> and they may come to their senses and **escape from the snare of the devil**, after being captured by him to do his will.

## Ephesians 4:11, 13-15

<sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers.... <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the **unity of the faith** and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and **carried about by every wind of doctrine**, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. <sup>15</sup> Rather, **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ...

## From HVCOC Handbook:

“These scriptures emphasize that we are not to **judge** or **despise** one another in these situations. Sometimes these differences impact how we do things. When the difference is determined to not affect our salvation in Christ, the elders of our congregation will study the Scriptures and come to a conclusion that they deem is **best for the whole congregation** in terms of consistently following God’s guidance, spiritual growth, peace and harmony, and encouragement in Christ.”

# Discussion

- On what types of questions can we have differences of opinion without affecting our fellowship?
- On what types of questions do the elders need to make practice decisions?
- Can people that differ in their opinion on these things still be in fellowship with us? On what basis?

# From HVCOC Handbook: Our Fundamental Beliefs

- The Godhead
- The Bible
- Mankind
- Salvation

## From HVCOC Handbook: Our Practices

In our desire to pattern ourselves closely to the model given in Scripture, we have to the best of our ability followed the Bible in these areas:

- Water Baptism
- The Church
- Church Leadership
- Church Membership
- Worship

# Hard Questions Class

- Creation/Early Genesis
- Paradise and Heaven
- Jews Current Relationship
- Why was I Chosen
- Eternal Security
- Adams Sin and Original Sin
- Divorce and Adultery
- Homosexuality
- Faith, God's Will
- Bearing Fruit
- Spiritual Gifts Questions
- Agreement/Disagreement
- Life, Death
- Millennium
- Church Issues
  - Denominationalism
  - Music Style
  - Women's Role



# Seeking Undenominational Christianity

The Restoration Movement

