

Denominations

What are our differences?

Peak Bible Church May 2023

Three Major Divisions

- Eastern Orthodox
- Catholic
- Protestant

Protestant Churches

The Five Solas

- Sola Gratia- Grace Alone
- Sola Fide- Faith Alone
- Solus Christus- Christ Alone
- Sola Scriptura- Scripture Alone
- Soli Deo Gloria- To the Glory of God alone

Protestant Denominations

Evangelical Free

Because Imputationist Free won't catch on.

- Origin: Associated with the birth of evangelicalism in America. Officially began in 1950 with the combination of the Swedish Evangelical Free Church and the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Free Church Association.
- Services: similar to Baptists.
- Polity: Congregational (largely elder led congregational rule)
- Beliefs: Broad range. Mostly orthodox.
- Key Figures: D.A. Carson, Chuck Swindoll

Baptists

You are one, you just don't know it.

- Origin: Began in the 1600s as a separatist movement from the Church of England (Baptists are great at separating)
- Services: involve singing, prayer, scripture reading, receiving offerings, preaching, and in many cases a time of response. Baptism and communion may also be part of the service
- Polity: Christ is the head of each local church and the elders or congregation may have ultimate authority.
- Beliefs: Autonomy of the local church, baptism by immersion, regenerate church membership,
- Key figures: John Bunyan, Charles Spurgeon, Paul Washer, who else do you need?

Presbyterianism

“A little dab will do you.” -Steve Lawson

- Origin: Began with John Calvin and John Knox during the Reformation.
- Services: Formal, liturgical patterns with an emphasis on preaching.
- Polity: Locally governed by elders who take part in a larger assembly of elders (presbyteries), which take part in an even larger assembly (synod or general assembly).
- Beliefs: Spiritual Presence of Christ at the Lord's Table, Calvinist view of salvation, Infant baptism via sprinkling.
- Key Figures: J. Gresham Machen, R.C. Sproul, Tim Keller

Lutheranism

Because we've always been one.

- Origin- Protestant Reformation under Martin Luther
- Services: More liturgical than many protestant denominations. May include confession and affirmation, offertory, sermon or homily, recitation of creeds, and other prayers.
- Polity: Can vary between Episcopal and Congregational. Some synod activity.
- Beliefs: The Book of Concord contains many confessions, real presence of Christ in communion, infant baptism, two kingdom doctrine.
- Key Figures: Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon

Methodism

What happens when you aren't a Calvinist.

- Origin: John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield. “The Holy Club.” 1729. Broadly evangelistic in the early days. Good men.
- Services: Musical prelude, singing at various points, Scripture reading from the Revised lectionary, congregational prayer, sermon, offering, benediction, musical postlude.
- Polity: Connexionalism. Teaches the importance of connecting among believers at various levels composed of elected lay people and ordained ministers to govern the needs and concerns of local churches up through the denomination.
- Beliefs: Broadly Arminian. Christian Perfection.
- Key Figures: John and Charles Wesley, Thomas Oden, Joel Green.

Episcopalian/Anglican

Colonization for the win.

- Origin: Separated from Catholicism in 1534 as part of the Reformation. Spread throughout the British empire.
- Services: Formal, follow liturgical pattern and values historical traditions. The Book of Common Prayer is immensely valuable.
- Polity: Resembles Catholicism with bishops and archbishops. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the senior bishop and symbolic head known as the first among equals.
- Beliefs: Book of Common Prayer. Believe Christ is present in the elements but reject transubstantiation. Presence of Christ is in the heart and you take through faith. Cross of Lutheranism and Calvinism.
- Famous Figures: C.S. Lewis, J.I. Packer, John Stott, N.T. Wright

Pentecostal/Charismatic

Because biblical truth wasn't exciting enough for them.

- Origin: Came out of the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition of the 19th century. Associated with revivals at Bethel Bible College in Topeka Kansas and the Azusa Street Mission in L.A. in the early 1900s.
- Services: singing, preaching, baptism, Lord's Supper, receiving offerings, and often times for prophecies and speaking in tongues.
- Polity: Congregationalist with largely independent churches in cooperation with other churches.
- Beliefs: Most often an Arminian view of salvation including the potential to lose your salvation. Verification of salvation through speaking in tongues. Apostolic Miracles. Baptism in the Holy Spirit separate from conversion. Experiential.
- Key Figures: Gordon Fee, Chuck Smith, C. J. Mahaney

Non-Denominational Churches

Don't tell me what to do.

- Origin: Increasing popularity throughout the 20th century.
- Services: Wide ranging. Often very similar to Baptist.
- Polity: Congregational- Elder Rule
- Beliefs: Wide ranging. Often similar to Baptist and Evangelical Free.
- Famous Figures: Gene Getz, Tony Evans, Francis Chan
- Where we fit technically.