

## Types of Churches

**\*\*All because someone is a part of denomination does not mean that they have the same beliefs as that denomination.\*\***

### ❖ What is a denomination?

#### ➤ Why are there denominations?

➤ A denomination is a division and group professing belief in Jesus, who set themselves apart by name, beliefs, and practices.

- Most denominations are governed by a hierarchy.
- There are now thousands of denominations.
- The name “evangelical” has been applied to conservative churches.
- More churches do not openly present their denomination.
  - Many people do not realize that they are serving and giving under a higher government not established in Jesus’ words.
- Inter-denominational churches are called “ecumenical”.

### ❖ What does the Bible say about denominations?

➤ While some thank God for denominations, Christ prayed for the oneness of the Church (John 17:20-21).

- We must endeavor for unity (Eph. 4:1-6).
- We can be completely united without divisions speaking the same with the same mind and judgment (1 Cor. 1:10).
- We must not be divided according to name or leaders (1 Cor. 1:11-13, 3:1-4).

➤ Galatians 5:19-21 teaches us that sectarianism is condemned and that those who practice such will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

- “Religious parties” from the Greek *hairesis* “will not inherit the kingdom of God”.
- Are people guilty of denominationalism, who are among the denominations?
- Are all other churches denominations?
- On counterpoint, what about Mark 9:38-41 and Philippians 1:15-18?

### ❖ What should we do about denominations?

➤ How should we act toward erring churches (2 Tim. 2:24-26)?

- In order to encourage repentance, should a minister or any church leader fellowship an erring church, who permit denominations, disregard sexual affairs, sue each other, have members eating in other places of worship,

*do not partake of the Lord's Supper together, do not consider Jesus' death in the Lord's Supper, value other members greater than others by their spiritual abilities, have speakers speak in foreign languages in church, disorderly speaking at the same time in church, do not pray or sing with the mind, have women speaking in church, have members that do not believe in the resurrection?*

- *Should they call them a "church of God", "sanctified", "brethren", bless them, and tell them that they are "of Christ"?*
- *Or should we note that they are "babes", "carnal", and come to them with the rod?*
- *This congregation was the Church in Corinth.*

➤ **How can we show the distinction of the Church as opposed to all others?**

❖ **From my personal perspective, there are 6 types of churches.**

- *These 6 types would consist of high-church, low-church Calvinist, low-church charismatic, low-church free-will, cults, and social-liberal.*
- *There are essential 4 styles of public worship including ritual, traditional, contemporary, and primitive.*

❖ **What are "High-Churches"?**

- *As clergy, the priests lead their worship gatherings in robes, with aesthetic rituals, marches, and chants along with teaching, music, collection, prayers, and the Eucharist.*
- *High-churches have aesthetically appealing buildings.*
- *These high-churches consist of the Catholic Church, the Orthodox, Episcopal, and even cross over into the Lutheran.*
- *These high-churches have great hierarchies from laity upward to the highest official clergyman.*
- *These churches often emphasize practices called "sacraments".*

❖ **What are the Different Kinds of "Low-Churches"?**

- *The low-churches do not have a priest leading but rather a shepherd figure or "pastor".*
  - *These assemblies lack the rituals of high-churches.*
- *(1) There are **the low-church Calvinists** who consist of **Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians**.*

- *Their gatherings consist of teaching, reading, music, prayers, financial collections, and more depending on whether being **traditional, contemporary, or somewhere in between.***
- *Calvinists believe that all people are born totally corrupt in nature, that Christ's sacrifice was only for the elect of God and not for everyone, and that God's sovereignty is enacted by the Holy Spirit convicting God's elected ones to be saints, who therefore cannot fall from grace.*
- (2) Next, there are **the low-church charismatic** churches including Pentecostals, Churches of God, Assemblies of God, and many now "non-denominational" churches.
  - *In fact, many of these churches distinguish themselves as "**non-denominational**" and, or "**charismatic**".*
  - *"**Charismatic**" is from Greek word "charisma" referring to the miraculous gifts from the Holy Spirit. These churches believe that they still have these gifts through men as presented in 1 Corinthians 12.*
  - ***These conduct their assemblies with gifts** of healings, prophesying, and tongue-speaking.*
  - *These mostly believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the essential point of their salvation, and that baptism in Jesus' is necessary for salvation.*
- (3) Also, **the free-will low-churches** consist of Christian churches, free-will Baptists, and churches of Christ.
  - *These churches are already **non-denominational** and even **un-denominational.***
  - *Some of these congregations are usually **self-governed** as are the churches of Christ.*
  - *Their convictions consist of being **saved by faith producing works** and that man has free-will to choose what is right and wrong.*
  - *These strive to rely solely upon revelation from New Testament scripture.*
  - *Most of these churches believe that **baptism in Jesus' name is essential to salvation**, and churches of Christ believe that this is the exact moment of salvation.*
  - *The assemblies of these churches mostly consist of the weekly Lord's Supper, singing, prayers, collection, and teaching.*
  - *Some differ from traditional to contemporary to "organic" house-churches.*

## ❖ What are Cults?

- *Now, **cults are simply religious abusive traps.***
- *These groups appear amazingly euphoric, united, offer belonging, engaging to visitors, and alluring with appealing leaders.*
- *Below the surface, **cults trap members by extorting them**, so that they may use them for their own purposes that would be considered abusive.*
- *Some denominations practice **discipling** in the form of individual shepherding of every member into a hierarchy.*

## ❖ What are Social-Liberal Churches?

- *Lastly, the social-liberal churches counter society's traditional morals and aims at the authorities and churches behind them.*
  - *These are in contrast to "evangelicals", and these groups have had some of the greatest loss of adherents.*
  - *Some of these churches include skeptics, atheists, agnostics, Muslims, and variety of other faiths.*
- ***Social-liberal churches accept homosexuality and abortion as moral rights.***
  - *They support politicians and use the media to market and influence the population's worldview to make their social reforms.*
- ***They often claim to not hold a set of constant beliefs among their congregations.***
- *They question Christian authorities by simply **supplying a skeptical view of the Bible**, of church governments, of history, and specifically of biblical figures including Jesus.*
  - *At the very core, these aim to reform perceptions of Jesus and his teachings away from the Jesus seen in the Bible.*
- ***Social-liberal churches include "United Churches of Christ", Unitarian Universalists, "Disciples of Christ", Episcopal, Presbyterian, and some individual churches using labels like "Unity Church" and even "Community Church".***
  - *Some churches claim the names "Episcopal" and "Presbyterian" as "evangelical" in opposition to social-liberal churches.*

➤ **Origin of Denominations**

- Hegesippus said in 170 AD, “Therefore was the Church called a virgin, for she was not as yet corrupted by worthless teaching. Thebulis it was who, *displeased* because he was not made bishop, first began to corrupt her by stealth. He too was connected with the seven sects which existed among the people, like Simon, from whom come the Simoniani; and Cleobius, from whom come the Cleobiani; and Doritheus, from whom come the Dorithiani; and Gorthæus, from whom come the Gorthæani; Masbothæus, from whom come the Masbothæi. From these men also come the Menandrianists, and the Marcionists, and the Carpocratians, and the Valentinians, and the Basilidians, and the Saturnilians. Each of *these leaders* in his own private and distinct capacity brought in his own private opinion. From these have come false Christs, false prophets, false apostles - men who have split up the one Church into parts through their corrupting doctrines, *uttered* in disparagement of God and of His Christ.... There were, moreover, various opinions in the matter of circumcision among the children of Israel, held by those who were opposed to the tribe of Judah and to Christ: such as the Essenes, the Galileans, the Hemerobaptists, the Masbothæi, the Samaritans, the Sadducees, the Pharisees.”