

How to Find the Lord's Church

In the Past – How to choose a church?

- Location – close enough?
- Building – suitable?
- Size – large enough?
- Friends – social enough?
- Children – play enough?
- Respectability – who goes there?
- Social connections, etc.

Present

Why choose a church?

- Who needs it?
- Rv.2-3, not one reference to ...
 - Area of town
 - Size
 - Friends
 - Children
 - Building...
 - Lord's focus: truth and purity

Christians were not left alone

- Christians met with Christians in local churches. Hb.10:25
- Ac.2 . . . 9:31

Most people would not recognize
Lord's church if they found it

I. Terms That Describe It

Roman Catholic?

- Latin Vulgate, 'universam ecclesiam' –
Ac.5:11
 - Not their name; describes effect of
Ananias and Sapphira on whole church

“Church”

- Universal:
 - Build My church, Mt.16:18
 - Added to, Ac.2:47; 5:14
- Local:
 - Mt.18:17, tell it to the church
 - Ro.16:16, salute you
 - 1 Co.1:2, at Corinth
 - Gal.1:2, of Galatia
 - 1 Th.1:1, of Thessalonians

Denomination

- Congregations formed into manmade organization
 - 1 Co.1:10-12
 - 1 Co.4:17
 - Even denominational names are divisive

‘The idea of denominations or confessions, as applied to churches, is of modern date’ – Sch. VII. 526

Denomination

- **Baptist:** distinguishes it from other denominations; emphasizes water baptism
 - Different gospel. Gal.1:6-9
 - Not church of NT, or Savior... Ac.4:11-12
 - Endorse denominations
 - OT admonitions (Ro.15:4). 1 K.12
- **Presbyterian:** ...church government
- **Methodist:** ...method of worship
- **Pentecostal:** ...spiritual gifts

Hiscox, p.22

“It is most likely that in the Apostolic age when there was but ‘one Lord, one faith, and one baptism,’ and no differing denominations existed, the baptism of a convert by that very act constituted him a member of the church, and at once endowed him with all the rights and privileges of full membership. In that sense, ‘baptism was the door into the church.’ Now it is different...”

– The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches, Edward T. Hiscox, D.D.

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I. Terms That Describe It

II. Where it Originated

Catholic: Rome

- Isa.2:1-3, Zion... Lk.24:46-47 → Acts 2
- Joe Smith of Knoxville...Joe Smith of St. Louis
- Denominations originated in other places
 - Baptist: Holland
 - Presbyterian: Scotland
 - Methodist: England
 - Pentecostal: US

I. Terms That Describe It

II. Where It Originated

III. Its Age

Nicene Council: 325

- “Pope” originally applied to all “bishops” in the west
- 1073: “Pope” Gregory VII restricted its use to bishop of Rome
 - Contrast first century church: Ep.2:20
 - Acts 2, 5, 11, church of Lord, 1st Century
- Denominational birthdates too late...

Baptist: 1609?

Presbyterian: 1560

Methodist: 1729

Pentecostal: 1918

I. Terms That Describe It

II. Where It Originated

III. Its Age

IV. Its Founder

R. Cath. claims to have begun with Peter

- Married (1 Co.9:5)
- Roman Catholics say Peter was pope, AD 41-67
- Paul, twice a prisoner in Rome, never mentions Peter . . . or 'pope'

Mt.16:18; Ac.20:28

- We refuse money with wrong picture
- Denominations claim different founders

“The only Head of this church is Christ; for a church with two heads would be a monster”

– Sch. VII 524

- Baptist: (?) [Particular / General Baptists]
- Presbyterian: John Knox
- Methodist: John Wesley
- Pentecostal: Bresee; Spurling, et al.

I. Terms That Describe It

II. Where It Originated

III. Its Age

IV. Its Founder

V. Its Law

Who in the Bible is addressed as 'pope'?

Peter?

Who was **archbishop**? ...**Cardinal**?

- All Christians were priests, 1 Pt.2:5
- 2 Tim.3:16-17; Ja.1:25. Gal.1:6-9
- Denominations follow different laws –
 1. Baptist: Bible + creed → Baptists
 2. Presbyterian: Same → Presbyterians
 3. Methodist: Same → Methodists
 4. Pentecostal: Same → Pentecostals

I. Terms That Describe It

II. Where It Originated

III. Its Age

IV. Its Founder

V. Its Law

VI. Its Entrance Requirements

R. Catholic:

Either by baptism ('sprinkling') or if validly baptized outside Church, by profession of Catholic faith

Ac.2:37-47, added when saved

Denominations follow different plans –

1. Baptist: repent, believe, vote, baptism
2. Presbyterian: sprinkle infants; teach
3. Methodist: same as Presbyterians
4. Pentecostal: some same as Baptists; others require H.S. baptism

I. Terms That Describe It

II. Where It Originated

III. Its Age

IV. Its Founder

V. Its Law

VI. Its Entrance Requirements

VII. Its Structure

One bishop oversees plurality of churches

- NT: Ac.20:28, church has plurality of elders (Ph.1:1; 1 Pt.5:2-3)
 - Independent / Autonomous

Denomination: organization larger than local church, smaller than church universal

1. Baptist: convention; President...
2. Presbyterian: different elders; hierarchy
3. Methodist: presiding elders; circuits
4. Pentecostal: preacher oversight...

“The Reformation came out of the bosom of the Latin Church and broke up the visible unity of Western Christendom, but prepared the way for a higher spiritual unity on the basis of freedom and the full development of every phase of truth. Instead of one organization, we have in Protestantism a number of distinct national churches and confessions or denominations. Rome, the local centre of unity, was replaced by Wittenberg, Zurich, Geneva, Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh. The one great pope had to surrender to many little popes of smaller pretensions, yet each claiming and exercising sovereign power in his domain” – P. Schaff, History, VII p. 43

I. Terms That Describe It

II. Where It Originated

III. Its Age

IV. Its Founder

V. Its Law

VI. Its Entrance Requirements

VII. Its Structure

VIII. Its Worship

Campbell-Purcell

“...in the latest Lateran great synod, under the pope’s nose, and in his ear, one bishop styled him Prince of the World; another orator called him King of Kings, and Monarch of the Earth; another that he had all power above all powers, both of heaven and earth”

- Acts 2:42; Ep.5:19; Ac.20:7; 1 Co.16:1-2

Luther

“The custom of kissing the Pope’s feet must cease. It is an un-Christian, or rather an anti-Christian example, that a poor sinful man should suffer his feet to be kissed by one who is a hundred times better than he. ... Compare them together: Christ and the Pope. Christ washed his disciples’ feet, and dried them, and the disciples never washed his. The Pope, pretending to be higher than Christ, inverts this, and considers it a great favor to let us kiss his feet ... Paul and Barnabas would not suffer themselves to be worshiped as gods by the men at Lystra...”
(Ac.14:14) – Sch., VII

Denominations promote different acts of worship

1. Baptist: National anthem; organs; sporadic Lord's supper; fundraisers, etc.
2. Presbyterian: Organs; social gospel, etc.
3. Methodist: Same. Political forums...
4. Pentecostal: Mechanical music; H.S. baptism; ignore 1 Co.14 rules

Earmarks

- No matter how much another hog looks like yours, it is not yours unless the earmarks match
- Police manhunt: 6'6" John Smith...
- Imagine Peter ... a Roman Catholic?
- Imagine Paul ... a Methodist?

Where are NT earmarks
identifying denominations?