

History of the Church and Denominations

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1. Church (or assembly) in Greek is *ekklesia*
 - a. A gathering of persons, often called out from normal pursuits for a purpose 1 Peter 2:5
 - b. Also used for unruly mob in Acts 19
 - c. Church may mean the collection of all believers, or the particular local expression of it
2. Denomination is anything that is given a **name**
3. Origins of denominations in Bible
 - a. Paul warns the Corinthian assembly against following individuals 1 Cor. 1:12
 - b. Actual divisions begin to split the church 2 Tim. 1:15
4. Periods of persecution AD 64 - AD 312
 - a. Christian claims resented in polytheistic Roman world
 - b. Christians' reputation for charitable works attracted converts Acts 2:45-47
 - c. Martyrdom followed refusal to sacrifice to Roman emperor/god Rom. 13:7
5. Christianity becomes official religion under Constantine (272-337)
 - a. Following vision, wins victorious battle under sign of cross
 - b. Constantine displayed images of himself and cross together, but remained as *Pontifex Maximus* of the pagan religions 2 Cor. 6:15
 - c. Bishops were welcomed at court and imperial power was used to help settle church disputes
 - d. Constantine himself baptized on deathbed AD 337
 - e. Constantine's mother Helena discovered "true cross" in Jerusalem, beginning mania for relics that continued through medieval times, even today Col. 2:17
6. Catholic church
 - a. Catholic means "general" or "universal"
 - b. Constantine established the catholic church in Constantinople
 - i. Rivalry between Roman and Byzantine bishops until Great Schism of 1054 led to Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches
7. Introduction of major doctrines and practices
 - a. Clericalism: Distinction between clergy (ordained or consecrated) and lay people (laity)
 - i. Began soon after age of apostles; Ignatius urged obedience toward bishop in each city
 - ii. In RC church, based on "apostolic succession" Acts 2:42
 - iii. In Protestant denominations, ordination recognizes that a person is called to ministry and is sufficiently educated to teach sound doctrine Heb. 5:12
 - iv. Clerical idea of priesthood comes owes much to O.T. (unusual clothing, titles, concept of special holiness) 1 Pet. 2:5,9
 - b. Rise of papacy (pope)
 - i. Started with 4 "patriarchs" in Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch
 - ii. Bishop of Rome claimed to be heirs of St. Peter Matt. 16:17-19
 - iii. Started to gain pre-eminence with Innocent I, 402; extended with Leo, 440, and Gregory, 590
 - iv. Competing claims between Rome and Constantinople led to separate Orthodox churches (Greek, Russian, etc.)
 - v. Tensions between the pope and secular authorities (kings, governments) continued until the 20th century
 - c. Infant baptism gradually became prevalent between 200 and 400 AD
 - d. Monasticism/asceticism (monks and nuns)
 - i. Began with self-denying hermits in Mideast Col. 2:21-23
 - ii. Highly regulated communities began with Benedict (480-550) 1 Cor. 5:9
 - iii. Itinerant/mendicant monks begun by Dominic, Francis (c. 1200) 2 Thes. 3:6

- e. Veneration of saints and relics Rom. 1:25
- f. Celibacy of priests
 - i. Recommended for much of church history but not strictly enforced until Gregory in 1074 1 Cor. 9:5
- 8. Reintroduction of Christianity in Europe after fall of Roman Empire
 - a. Irish very influential in re-Christianizing England, Switzerland, etc.
 - b. Charlemagne (742-814) united central Europe and conducted forced baptisms of conquered foes, supported power of pope
- 9. Forerunners of Reformation
 - a. "Silver thread of God's grace"
 - i. Paulicians (650-872 AD)
 - 1. Based beliefs on Gospels plus Paul's epistles
 - ii. Waldensians
 - 1. Founded by Peter Waldo in Lyon (1170)
 - 2. Ascetic movement in opposition to luxury of Roman church
 - iii. Albigensians (Cathars)
 - 1. Similar to Waldensians; prominent in southwestern France
 - 2. 1 million died in Albigensian crusade 1209-1229
 - b. John Wycliffe, England (1330-84)
 - i. Priest and Oxford professor
 - ii. Preached against abuses in church
 - iii. Directed first English translation of complete Bible
 - iv. Followers were known as Lollards; active until reformation
 - v. Was opposed by church but not executed
 - c. Jan Hus, Czechia/Bohemia/Moravia (1369-1415)
 - i. Influenced by Wycliffe
 - ii. Opposed indulgences, excommunication, other church doctrines
 - iii. Was tried and burned at the stake at Council of Constance
 - d. Developments which broke the church's monopoly on learning
 - i. Constantinople fell to Muslims 1438, bringing many Greek scholars to Europe
 - ii. Invention of printing press and paper multiplied copies of Bible and other writings
 - iii. Erasmus produced *Textus Receptus*, improved edition of Greek NT
- 10. Reformation
 - a. Martin Luther, Germany (1483-1546)
 - i. Started school to be a lawyer but turned to theology and philosophy
 - ii. After near escape from lightning, became a monk, where he read the Bible for the first time.
 - iii. Suffered constant anxiety about his soul until he realized the truth of "faith alone"
 - iv. Was much disturbed by luxury and impiety during a visit to Rome
 - v. As university professor, in 1517 published 95 "theses" against sale of indulgences by Johann Tetzel, widely copied and admired in Germany
 - vi. Refused orders from Rome to recant; eventually burned a bull (order) or excommunication, signalling a break with the Roman Catholic church
 - vii. Tried before Emperor Charles V at Diet of Worms. Found guilty but escaped with life. Protected by Elector of Saxony.
 - viii. Translated Bible into German, wrote hymns, published treatises, and married a former nun.
 - ix. Founded churches in Saxony that became the **Lutheran** church. Retained some Catholic elements, especially sacraments of baptism and communion. Believed in "consubstantiation"; prevented communion with Zwingli & Calvin

- x. Repudiated Peasants' War
 - xi. At Diet of Spires, European powers reached a sort of agreement that regional authorities could determine religion of country. At a second diet, the Catholic authorities prevailed and the German electors **protested**; thus the name **Protestants**.
- b. Ulrich Zwingli, Switzerland (1484-1531)
 - i. Began by simple reading and exposition of Bible from pulpit
 - ii. Developed more systematic theology than Luther
 - iii. Persecuted Anabaptists, a splinter group of the reformation
 - iv. Organized alliances of reformed Swiss cities; died in battle
 - c. John Calvin, Switzerland (1509-1564)
 - i. Studied law, classical literature, Greek and Latin in French universities 1 Pet. 2:2
 - ii. After joining the reformation, left France for Geneva, Switzerland
 - iii. Wrote *Institutes of the Christian Religion*
 - iv. Joined with Zwingli against Luther in communion controversy
 - v. Like Zwingli, sermons were often methodical exposition of scripture
 - vi. Became a near-dictator in Geneva; went so far as to burn heretics at the stake
 - vii. Theological principles became basis of Reformed churches (vs Lutheran)
 - d. John Knox, Scotland (1513-1572)
 - i. Influenced by George Wishart, became close colleague of Calvin while in exile from Scotland
 - ii. Instrumental in converting Scotland from Catholic to reformed
 - iii. Was constant opponent of Mary, Queen of Scots
 - iv. Wrote statements of faith and **constitution** for Presbyterian churches
2 Tim. 3:16-17, 1 Tim 1:9, Eph. 4:15-16
11. The English reformation (1527)
- a. Henry VIII had been named "Defender of the Faith" against Lutheranism
 - b. Requested annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon in 1527
 - c. Through a series of acts and decrees, Henry declared England completely independent of Rome and made himself the supreme authority in all spiritual matters
 - d. Thomas Cranmer was first archbishop
 - e. Tyndale's Bible was widely distributed in England
 - f. Protestant ideas were introduced gradually, leading to a mix of Catholic and Protestant theology and practices
 - g. Monasteries were dissolved 1536-1541, enriching the crown, chantries later
 - h. Much reformation was reversed in 1543
 - i. Protestantism gained with accession of Edward VI in 1547 at age 9
 - j. Mary I became queen in 1553. Restored Catholic faith and executed 283 Protestants
 - k. Elizabeth I succeeded Mary in 1558
12. State churches
- a. Church of Scotland, Church of England, Church of Denmark, etc.
13. Types of church government (polity)
- a. Episcopalian
 - i. Greek *episkopos* = overseer (KJV bishop)
 - ii. In the episcopalian model, a bishop has authority over a geographic region, archbishops are over bishops, etc.
 - iii. Examples: Roman Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox
 - b. Presbyterian
 - i. Greek *presbuteros* = elder
 - ii. In the presbyterian model, each church is governed by a group of elders, some of whom also participate in higher level boards, and so on up

- iii. Examples: Presbyterian, independent churches governed by elders
 - c. Congregational
 - i. Each congregation or assembly governs itself
 - ii. There may be larger associations or conventions but not authoritative
 - iii. Examples: United Church of Christ, Baptist
 - d. What does scripture say?
 - i. There is no distinction between overseers and elders
 - ii. Elders are always mentioned in the plural. There are no positive instances of a single person heading an assembly Phil. 1:1, 3 John 1:9
 - iii. Assemblies not independent but no level of government higher than the assembly
- 14. Denomination family tree
 - a. Oriental Orthodox
 - i. Nestorian, Coptic,, Armenian Orthodox, etc.
 - b. Roman Catholic
 - c. Eastern Orthodox
 - i. Greek Orthodox
 - 1. Russian (Ukranian), Serbian, Romanian, etc.
 - d. Protestant
 - i. Pre-Reformers
 - 1. Waldensians: Peter Waldo (c. 1140-1205)
 - 2. Moravians: Wycliffe and Hus
 - ii. Lutheran: Martin Luther
 - iii. Reformed: Zwingli and Calvin
 - 1. Presbyterian
 - 2. Evangelical Free
 - 3. Christian/Missionary Alliance
 - 4. Church of Scotland: Knox
 - 5. Anabaptist movement
 - a. Mennonites
 - b. Amish
 - c. Church of the Brethren
 - iv. The church of England (Anglican)
 - 1. Created and consolidated during Elizabeth's reign
 - 2. Offshoots
 - a. Episcopal (American branch of Anglican church)
 - b. Puritans
 - c. Methodism
 - i. Started as unofficial revival movement by John Wesley, Charles Wesley, and George Whitefield
 - ii. Split from Anglican church after Wesley's death (1791)
 - d. Holiness churches
 - i. Church of the Nazarene
 - ii. Assemblies of God
 - iii. Salvation Army (William Booth 1829-1912)
 - iv. Foursquare Gospel (Aimee Semple McPherson 1890-1944)
 - v. Vineyard Fellowship
 - vi. Calvary Chapel
 - 3. Friends (Quakers): George Fox (1624-1691)
 - 4. Baptists: John Smyth 1609
 - a. Millerites / Seventh Day Adventists

- e. Latter-Day Saints (Mormons): Joseph Smith (1805-1844)
15. What causes new denominations to form? **Examples**
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| a. Separation from false teaching or corruption in church | Lutheran |
| b. Nationalist | Anglican, Episcopal |
| c. Evangelism | Methodist |
| d. Disagreement over narrow doctrine | Baptist |
| e. Single charismatic leader | Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists |
| f. Missions or ministry | Salvation Army |
| g. Radical separation from the world | Mennonites, Amish |
| h. Desire for mystical or individual experience | Friends |
16. Brethren movement
- a. Began with two men and two women breaking bread in Dublin in 1820
 - b. Reaction to spiritual dryness in Anglican church but drew adherents from many denominations
 - c. Goal was neither to reform any church or form a new one, but to recognize that all believers belong to Christ's church
 - d. Guiding principles
 - i. Trust Scripture for direction on practices, not just creeds
 - ii. Gather solely to the name of Christ 2 Tim. 2:22, Eph. 4:15
 - iii. Basis of unity is the Spirit Eph. 4:3
 - iv. Expression of unity is the one loaf 1 Cor. 10:17

