



“You Lot Can’t Agree” A Deep Dive on Denominations

Introduction

Ministry vision: wanting to read Mark 1:1 evangelistically with someone

- Why can’t Christians agree with each other?
- Why are all these different denominations? What are their differences?
- Why do you think your denomination is better than the others?
- If I wanted to join a church, how would I know which one?
- How can I trust that what your church says is right?
- Does your church let their ministers get married?
- How much does it cost \$\$ to come to your church?
- Why are there different leadership structures for churches?

-Other questions you have?

A. Historically

How did we end up with all these different denominations?

First Thousand Years

-251 Cyprian (Bishop of Carthage) writes *On the Unity of the Church* – church unity is centred on the bishop, and especially as he presides over the Lord’s Supper

-284 – Diocletian becomes Roman Emperor; restructure of the empire into east (Constantinople) and west (Rome)

-306 Constantine becomes emperor in the West; Licinius (East)

-313 – Constantine & Licinius issue an Edict =>religious freedom

325- Council of Nicea

-who called the Council?

-451 -Council of Chalcedon

-broad representation of Bishops

-last council recognised by both east and west for official teaching

-800AD – Christmas Day – Charles the Great (Charlemagne) crowned by Pope Leo II
Emperor of (Holy) Roman Empire

-1054 – The East-West Schism

People are different

*Persistent ideal of an empire united by common religion – political unity and church
unity intertwined*

1215 – 4th Lateran Council – Pope Innocent III

-truth is found only in the official church

Reformation

-1517 German monk named Martin Luther begins a protest

-1520- Luther summons to a meeting in Worms (near Strasbourg). Appears before
Charles V of Spain (Holy Roman Emperor). Asked to recant/deny all that he has written
over the last couple of years

*Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not
trust either in the pope or in the councils alone, since it is well known that they have
often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted
and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract
anything, since it is neither safe no right to go against conscience.*

Martin Luther – Diet of Worms, 1520

Protest(antism) spreads through Europe

England

-1534 – English Parliament passes “act of Supremacy” – king as head of the church of England – a state church not under the power of the Pope

-Book of Common Prayer 1549 (Act of Uniformity)

Over the coming years, not everyone wanted a state church

1600s – Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists

-dissenters not encouraged (eg: John Bunyan *Pilgrims Progress* 1675)

John & Charles Wesley

-forming societies/fellowship classes/prayer groups = Method(ism)

South Australia

1834 Act of Parliament to establish the Province of South Australia – including the provision of a Colonial Chaplain

-No mandated state church

-CoE, AND Methodists, Baptists, and Lutherans - religious freedom

B. Biblically

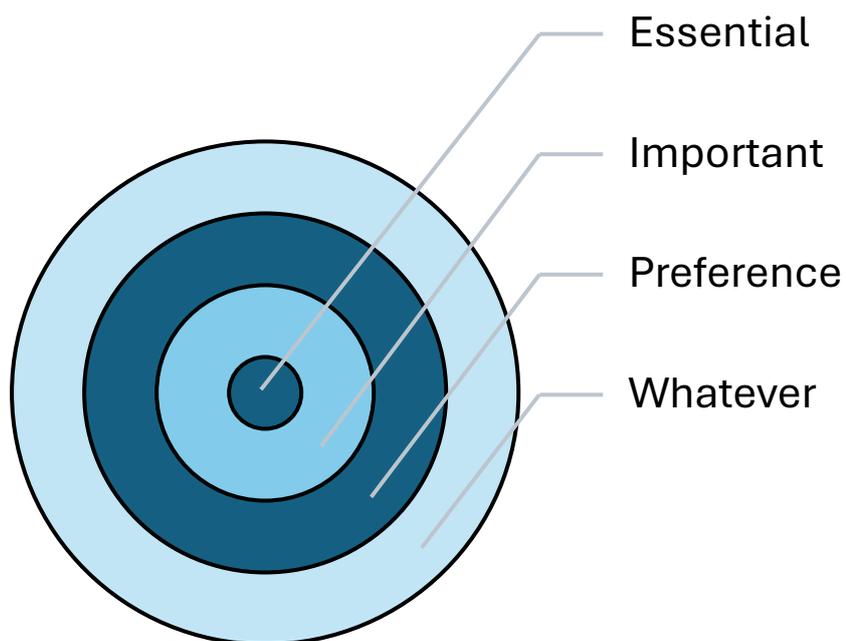
John 17:20–23

Acts 14:26-15:11

Eph 4:1-6

Rev 7:9-10

How do We Work out What is Important?



Where would the place the following issues on the diagram above?

Speaking in tongues

style of church music

baptism of babies

The timing of Jesus' return

not playing sport on Sundays

using the KJV Bible

Women preaching

system of church government

seven day creation

Physical resurrection of Jesus

wearing hats in church

using the Alpha course

Work out what belongs in the essential

e.g.

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son does not life.

1 Jn 5:11-12

³Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. ⁴For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a licence for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

Jude 3-4

Working out what is important

Romans 14

The value of denominations

C. Practically

Does it obscure Jesus or does it make Jesus more visible and obvious?

How do you know what's true about God? (authority)

How do people relate to each other?

What church does? (ministry)

A Final Word: Cults

Key things I am learning?

What do I want to consider further?