



D.J.G. Study

what is the church?

Lesson two – the church today

Refresh on what we covered last week - Who started the church, what was some of the history, and how it got to where we are today.

Splits in the church

Why are there so many different churches? Well, basically the practice has been to split into different churches when people disagree on something. Some churches have even split for reasons as small as “We should not have musical instruments in our church” and “We should not have a Youth Ministry in our church.” There have been churches that have split for big reasons like “We should not have women in leadership positions” and “We think you should be able to live a life of sin and still be a pastor.”

These splits have created literally THOUSANDS of different churches. So I did my best to combine these churches in 3 categories that will help simplify the breakdown in your minds.

Mainline Churches (LITURGICAL)

These churches are characterized by many things. The main thing is that these churches are liturgical. What I mean by this is that these church's services are very ordered, very scripted. There are creeds and prayers that are repeated week in and week out. The congregation typically reads a lot of prayers, creeds, and liturgical responsive readings together in unison. The most prominent form of music you will find in these churches are the hymns. The whole service is performed very professional with little to no deviation from the script. The majority of the body in these churches is older. We're talking 60's and up. These churches have a National (and sometimes international) governing body that decides what things the church believes and what the Church can and cannot do on issues like Abortion, and Homosexuality, and marriage, and communion.

Some Good Examples of Mainline Churches: Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran, etc.

Non-Mainline Churches (NON-LITURGICAL)

*DISCLAIMER** The Non-Mainline and Non-Denominational are split in this manner only by Worship Style differences from the Mainline. These categories are not entirely Theological Differences.*

Usually characterized by being a lot looser than the Mainline churches. These churches are typically more progressive when it comes to music and teaching. They are typically churches that you will find in the middle of nowhere, or churches that have a body that is more younger to middle age than anything else. There is a little more room for flow in the Gatherings that these churches pull together. There is an order to the service, but there is a little more ebb and flow. There is room for things to change, and there are very few, if any liturgical readings. These churches have a

national governing Body, but sometimes these churches can choose not to follow what their Governing Body decrees. There is a little freedom with the edicts cast down from these churches' Government. Some churches in this category are even autonomous and govern themselves.

Some Good Examples of Non-Mainline Churches: C&MA, Saddle Back in CA, Friends, etc.

Non-Denominational and Charismatic churches (PROGRESSIVE / EMERGENT)

*DISCLAIMER** I have lumped Charismatic Churches in with this group only due to their freer style of worship*

These churches are REALLY loose compared to the Mainline churches. They are usually full of people who are loud, energetic, rarely will bring in older music, and have a body membership composed of mostly younger people. There is virtually no liturgy to be found in these churches, and in some of the Charismatic churches you may even find yourself surrounded by people dancing, shouting, and praising God in other languages during times of singing, prayer, and the sermon itself! Many of these Non-Denominational churches have no National Governing Body and are entirely autonomous. Some have one, but many of these churches

Some Good examples of Non-Denominational Churches: Willow Creek in Chicago, Mars Hill in MI.

Some Good Examples of Charismatic: Assemblies of God, Praise and Worship Center, etc.

Churches that aren't really churches or

Some churches claim to be Churches that follow after God, but really aren't parts of the Body at all.

Jehovah's Witnesses

I do not know a massive amount about the Jehovah's Witnesses, but I can tell you a few things that make them unable to be a church.

(Notes from the CULTS book)

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons)

Mormons believe many un-Biblical doctrines. Baptism is not required for salvation. God did not start out as a human being, and we do not become gods when we die. The Book of Mormon is not a book that came from God himself (or through an angel). There is no sin that God says His blood cannot forgive, but ours can. The list can go on.

So What Makes a Church a Church?

For a church to truly be a church of God, they need to follow the Bible primarily. They need to see the need for Humans to confess their sinfulness to God and then follow Him in obedience in their own lives. A true Church of God will not have ridiculous restrictions on who can practice worship, or who can drink this substance, or who can drive

this type of car (and by ridiculous I mean that these demands cannot contradict what Scripture has to say on the subject). A true Church will seek to edify (lift up) its members and seek to impact the community around them for Christ. A true church is a church body that will seek God's will first, and their own only after that. A True church will call people out on their sins in a Biblical way. There are more, but we will get into that next time.



Firehouse Ministries