

## Why I Am Not A... Roman Catholic

In this new series, we will take a quick look at other Christian groups and their history. We will highlight key doctrinal differences between Baptists and them. Up first, the Roman Catholic Church.

### I. History

- A. Claims to begin with Christ and Peter in Matthew 16:18-19
- B. Really was a product of Constantine's legalization of Christianity in A.D. 313
- C. Has been one of the largest persecutors of other Christian groups
- D. Today claims to have over 1.2 billion members.

### II. Errors in Catholic Doctrine

- A. NOTE - Quotes are from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, referenced by paragraph number. This is available online if you want to check them yourself. I've also tried to attach a Scripture reference that refutes the Catholic position.
- B. The Catholic Church is the one and only true church
  1. "It requires them to make known the worship of the one true religion which subsists in the Catholic and apostolic Church." - 2105
  2. I Corinthians 3:21-23
- C. Infallibility of the Catholic Church
  1. "The supreme degree of participation in the authority of Christ is ensured by the charism of infallibility. This infallibility extends as far as does the deposit of divine Revelation; it also extends to all those elements of doctrine, including morals, without which the saving truths of the faith cannot be preserved, explained, or observed." - 2035
- D. Only Authority to Interpret Scripture
  1. "The task of interpreting the Word of God authentically has been entrusted solely to the Magisterium of the Church, that is, to the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him." - 100
  2. II Timothy 2:15
- E. Pope is Head of Church and Has Authority of Christ
  1. "The Roman Pontiff and the bishops are 'authentic teachers, that is, teachers endowed with the authority of Christ, who preach the faith to the people entrusted to them, the faith to be believed and put into practice.' The ordinary and universal Magisterium of the Pope and the bishops in communion with him teach the faithful the truth to believe, the charity to practice, the beatitude to hope for." - 2034
  2. Colossians 1:18
- F. Catholic Church is Necessary for Salvation
  1. "Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it." - 846
  2. Romans 10:13
- G. Tradition is Equal to Scripture
  1. "Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence'." - 82
  2. Colossians 2:6-8
- H. Salvation by Faith and Works
  1. "so that all men may attain salvation through faith, Baptism and the observance of the Commandments" - 2068

2. Ephesians 2:8-9

#### I. Divine Grace May Be Earned

1. "Moved by the Holy Spirit, we can merit for ourselves and for others all the graces needed to attain eternal life, as well as necessary temporal goods." - 2027

2. Ephesians 2:8-9

#### J. Merits of Mary and Saints Can Be Applied to Others

1. "This treasury includes as well the prayers and good works of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They are truly immense, unfathomable, and even pristine in their value before God. In the treasury, too, are the prayers and good works of all the saints, all those who have followed in the footsteps of Christ the Lord and by his grace have made their lives holy and carried out the mission in the unity of the Mystical Body." - 1477

2. Isaiah 64:6

#### K. Penance Necessary for Salvation

1. "This sacrament of Penance is necessary for salvation for those who have fallen after Baptism, just as Baptism is necessary for salvation for those who have not yet been reborn." - 980

2. I John 1:7

#### L. Purgatory

1. "The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned." - 1031

2. \*crickets\*

#### M. Indulgences

1. "The doctrine and practice of indulgences in the Church are closely linked to the effects of the sacrament of Penance. What is an indulgence? 'An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints.' 'An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin.' The faithful can gain indulgences for themselves or apply them to the dead." - 1471

2. I John 1:9

#### N. False Doctrines Concerning Mary

1. "Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix." - 969

2. I Timothy 2:5

3. "In giving birth you kept your virginity; in your Dormition you did not leave the world, O Mother of God, but were joined to the source of Life. You conceived the living God and, by your prayers, will deliver our souls from death." - 966

4. I Corinthians 6:14

#### O. Transubstantiation

1. "Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation." - 1376

2. We believe that the Lord's Supper *symbolizes* the body and blood of Christ, not *literally* becomes it.

## Why I Am Not A... Jehovah's Witness

Before we move on into groups like the Mormons or the Jehovah's Witnesses, I think we need to take a step back and look at what cults are

### I. History

#### A. Under Charles Taze Russell

1. Started from a Bible study group in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1870.
2. Had some ties to early Seventh Day Adventist leaders.
3. Started publishing a periodical called "Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence". This eventually became known as "The Watchtower"
4. In 1884 incorporated the Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society
5. Died in 1916
6. Old-timers often called this group "Russellites"

#### B. Under Joseph Franklin Rutherford

1. President from 1917-1942, his election was disputed
2. Centralized governing power over congregations to the Watch Tower.
3. In 1922 began to emphasize house-to-house preaching
4. Adopted the name "Jehovah's Witnesses" in 1931

#### C. Under Nathan H. Knorr

1. President from 1942-1977
2. Commissioned their own translation of the Bible: "The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures"
3. Began enforcing stricter moral codes
4. Since 1976, the Governing Body became more powerful than the president.

### II. Sampler of False Doctrines

A. *NOTE - I am only able to give references to many of JW's writings. Some are still copyrighted, and as a whole the group is very secretive about their beliefs.*

#### B. No Trinity

1. *Let God be True*, 2nd Ed., pp. 100-101; *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* p. 7; *Watchtower*, 2/1/1960, p. 94, *Why Do You Believe in the Trinity?*
2. I John 5:7

#### C. Holy Spirit is a force and not a being

1. *Reasoning from the Scriptures*, 1985, pp. 406-407; *The Holy Spirit is God's impersonal active force*, *The Watchtower*, June 1, 1952, p. 24.
2. I Corinthians 3:21-23

#### D. Christ was the *first* creation

1. *Aid to Bible Understanding*, pp. 390-391.
2. John 1:1

#### E. Christ is actually the archangel Michael

1. *The Watchtower*, May 15, 1963, p. 307; *The New World*, 284.
2. Hebrews 1:5-8

#### F. Christ was "born again"

1. *The Watchtower*, Nov. 15, 1954, p. 682.
2. Hebrews 7:26-27

- G. Christ died on a stake, not a cross
  - 1. Reasoning from the Scriptures, 1985, pp. 89-90.
  - 2. John 19:17, 19, 25, 31
- H. Christ did not physically rise from the dead, but as a spirit
  - 1. *Awake!* July 22, 1973, p. 4.; *Let God be True*, p. 276.
  - 2. I Corinthians 15:14
- I. Christ began to rule the earth invisibly in 1914
  - 1. *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, p. 300.
  - 2. Revelation 19:11-21
- J. The sins of Adam and Eve were not atoned for
  - 1. "The man Adam is not included in those ransomed. Why not? Because he was a willful sinner, was justly sentenced to death, and died deservedly and God would not reverse his judgment and give Adam life." *Let God be True*, p. 119, copyright 1946.
  - 2. I John 2:2
- K. No fire in hell
  - 1. *Let God be True*, pp. 79, 80.
  - 2. Revelation 20:14-15
- L. Only 144,000 people are really saved
  - 1. *Reasoning from the Scriptures*, 1985, p. 76.; *Watchtower* 11/15/54, p. 681.
  - 2. II Peter 3:9
- M. Lots and lots of date setting
  - 1. Russell emphasized 1874-1918
    - a) 1799 - Last days began
    - b) 1874 - Start of Jesus invisible presence
    - c) 1878 - Jesus became king in heaven
    - d) 1914 - End of the world
  - 2. Rutherford
    - a) 1914 - Last days, began, Start of Jesus' invisible presence, Jesus became king in heaven
    - b) 1925 - End of world, earthly resurrection begins
  - 3. Others
    - a) 1951 - end of world because of 37 years between Christ's death and destruction of Jerusalem
    - b) 1975 - end of the world because it was 6,000 years since Creation?
    - c) 2033 - because of something about Noah's days being 120 years.
  - 4. Matthew 24:36, 25:13

## Why I Am Not A... Mormon

We turn our attention now to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, otherwise known as Mormons.

### I. History

#### A. Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805-1844)

1. Was caught up in the religious excitement of the Second Great Awakening
2. Claimed a vision in 1820 that Mormons claim founded Mormonism
3. In 1823, claims an angel named Moroni revealed the location of a book made of golden plates. Smith began translating these with the help of "seer stones" in 1827, and the finished work became the Book of Mormon. Moroni supposedly took the plates back when the translation was complete.
4. Started the "Church of Christ" in 1830.
5. Fled west with his growing group of followers, with stops in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois.

#### B. Brigham Young (1801-1877)

1. After a succession crisis after Smith's death, Young eventually became the President of the Church in 1847.
2. Led the Mormons to establish themselves in modern Utah.

### II. Sampler of False Doctrines

#### A. Jews settled America around 600 B.C., Indians are the "lost tribes of Israel", Jesus appeared to them, there was a prophet named Mormon whose son was Moroni that was later an angel that appeared to Joseph Smith...

1. See The Book of Mormon. Seriously, that's what it is about.

#### B. A plurality of gods

1. "And they (the Gods) said: Let there be light: and there was light," (Book of Abraham 4:3).
2. Isaiah 44:6

#### C. God was once a man

1. "God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!!! . . . We have imagined that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea and take away the veil, so that you may see," (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 345).
2. "As man is, God once was; as God now is, man may be." - Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow
3. Isaiah 57:15

#### D. God has a physical body

1. "Therefore we know that both the Father and the Son are in form and stature perfect men; each of them possesses a tangible body . . . of flesh and bones," (Articles of Faith, by James Talmage, p. 38).
2. John 4:24

#### E. You can be a god, too!

1. "THE STRAITNESS OF THE WAY. Mortality is the testing or proving ground for exaltation to find out who among the children of God are worthy to become Gods themselves, and the

Lord has informed us that "few there be that find it." (Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., Doctrines of Salvation, Vol.1, p.69 - p.70)

#### F. No Virgin Birth

1. "Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers" (Mormon Doctrine, by Bruce McConkie, p. 547).
2. Isaiah 7:14

#### G. Forgiveness through Works

1. "As these sins are the result of individual acts it is just that forgiveness for them should be conditioned on individual compliance with prescribed requirements--'obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel,'" (Articles of Faith, p. 79).
2. Ephesians 2:8-9

#### H. Bible only as reliable as its translation

1. "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly. . ." (8th Article of Faith of the Mormon Church)
2. II Timothy 3:16

#### I. Bible is not complete

1. "...it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of men, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled." (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 10)
2. II Timothy 3:16

#### J. Jesus and Satan were spirit brothers, or something

1. "Who will redeem the earth, who will go forth and make the sacrifice for the earth and all things it contains?" The Eldest Son said: "Here am I"; and then he added, "Send me." But the second one, which was "Lucifer, Son of the Morning," said, "Lord, here am I, send me, I will redeem every son and daughter of Adam and Eve that lives on the earth, or that ever goes on the earth." (Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 53-54)
2. John 3:16

#### K. Racial Issues

1. "As a result of his rebellion, Cain was cursed with a dark skin; he became the father of the Negroes, and those spirits who are not worthy to receive the priesthood are born through his lineage," (Mormon Doctrine, 1958, p. 102).
2. John Taylor: ". . . after the flood we are told that the curse that had been pronounced upon Cain was continued through Ham's wife, as he had married a wife of that seed. And why did it pass through the flood? Because it was necessary that the devil should have a representation a upon a the earth as well as God . . .," (Journal of Discourses, vol. 22, p. 304).
3. Matthew 28:19

#### L. Baptism for the dead

1. "Because all who have lived on the earth have not had the opportunity to be baptized by proper authority during life on earth, baptisms may be performed by proxy, meaning a living person may be baptized in behalf of a deceased person." - mormon.org

## Why I Am Not In A... Church of Christ

We turn our attention now to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, otherwise known as Mormons.

### I. History

#### A. "Restoration Movement"

1. A movement that began during the Second Great Awakening (1790-1840) that sought to reform and unify Christianity
2. Major leaders were Barton Stone of Kentucky and Thomas and Alexander Campbell of Pennsylvania.
3. Divisions led to a split in 1806, when Stone's followers would become the Christian (Disciples of Christ) denomination while the Campbells' became the Church of Christ.

#### B. Alexander Campbell (1788-1866)

1. Immigrated to America from Scotland in 1809, following his minister father to Pennsylvania.
2. Published the *Christian Baptist* from 1823-1830, then *The Millennial Harbinger* from 1830 until his death.
3. You may see people from 100 years ago call the Church of Christ "Campbellites".

### II. Close Isn't Good Enough

- A. So far we have dealt with groups (Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Mormons) that hold drastically different doctrines than what the Bible plainly teaches.
- B. With the Church of Christ, we can find some areas of common ground or concern that is admirable, such as:
  1. Desire to return to a simpler Christianity based on the Bible
  2. Autonomous, congregational rule of churches
- C. BUT there are a few areas of major concern that separate the Baptists from the Church of Christ that cannot be ignored.

### III. Sampler of False Doctrines

#### A. Salvation requires baptism

1. "In the act of baptism remission of sins or pardon is received." - Foy Wallace, Jr.
2. "God saved us by means of baptism. Baptism is a bath of regeneration and renewing, in both of which the Holy Spirit is the actor. That is why God could use baptism as such a means (*dia*), why baptism is by no means a mere symbol or picture but a true means of divine grace ... To reject baptism is to confess the absence of regeneration" (R.C.H. Lenski, St. Paul's Epistle to Titus, pp. 935,936).
3. The misinterpret certain verses (Acts 2:38, John 3:5, Mark 16:16, I Peter 3:21, Acts 22:16)
4. The minimize other verses (John 3:16, Acts 16:31, Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 10:9-10, Titus 3:5)

#### B. Church governed by plurality of elders

1. "Congregations referring to themselves as Churches of Christ believe that local congregations should be led by a plurality of biblically qualified elders, assisted by deacons, often with an appointed minister in each congregation." (Wikipedia article on Elder)
2. This type of church government is called presbyterian.
3. I Timothy 3:1-13

#### C. A Capella singing

1. "One prominent feature of music in churches of Christ is that it is unaccompanied by mechanical instruments" - [housetohouse.com](http://housetohouse.com), "Why Do Churches of Christ Not Use Instrumental Music?"
2. This is based on a logical exercise that says since the Bible doesn't say use instruments in church worship then we shouldn't.
3. Psalm 92:1-4, and many others

#### D. Postmillennialism

1. "However, we noticed that the idea of a literal thousand year reign of Christ, along with the concept of a Rapture, are simply not taught in the Bible. These theories have arisen through the misapplication of figurative passages of Scripture. Revelation 20 has been misused by many to teach the idea of a literal 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth." - <http://truthfortheworld.org/second-coming-of-christ-part-2>
2. Um, all of Revelation, and I Thessalonians 4:16-17

#### E. "One True Church" syndrome

1. too lengthy to copy here - <http://truthfortheworld.org/only-one-is-the-true-church-of-christ>
2. This idea is based on a false notion of a need for a "pure" and "holy" church to exist. We are men who are imperfect, and not perfect church exists. Besides, the church does not save, it is Christ who saves! My faith is not based on a human organization, even if it was ordained of God.
3. I Corinthians 1:11-13

## Why I Am Not A... Methodist

### I. History

#### A. "The Holy Club"

1. Began by students at University of Oxford in England in 1729.
2. Members adhered to a "system" that helped manage their spiritual lives, such as helping the poor, fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays until 3 p.m., and scheduled prayer times.
3. Members included John Wesley (1703-1791), Charles Wesley (1707-1788), and George Whitefield (1714-1770).

#### B. John Wesley

1. 15th of 19 children born to Samuel and Susanna Wesley (only 9 survived infancy)
2. Ordained as a priest by Church of England in 1728
3. Attended a Moravian meeting on May 24, 1738:
  - a) "In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."
4. Began open-air preaching in 1739.
5. Developed his Theology sign the "Wesleyan Quadrilateral"
  - a) Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience

### II. Sampler of False Doctrines

#### A. Infant Baptism

1. "Understanding the practice as an authentic expression of how God works in our lives, The United Methodist Church strongly advocates the baptism of infants within the faith community: "Because the redeeming love of God, revealed in Jesus Christ, extends to all persons and because Jesus explicitly included the children in his kingdom, the pastor of each charge shall earnestly exhort all Christian parents or guardians to present their children to the Lord in Baptism at an early age" - Book of Discipline, 1992
2. Infants baptized in the Bible = 0
3. Commands to baptize anyone but those that profess Christ (hard for a baby)= 0
4. Acts 8:36-38

#### B. Baptism by Sprinkling or Immersion

1. "United Methodists may baptize by any of the modes used by Christians. Candidates or their parents have the choice of sprinkling, pouring, or immersion; and pastors and congregations should be prepared to honor requests for baptism in any of these modes." - [umc.org](http://umc.org), taken from The United Methodist Book of Worship, 1992.
2. Baptism by sparkling is unknown in the Bible. The root word for baptism literally means to dip. It is also a picture of Christ death, burial, and resurrection.

#### C. You can lose your salvation

1. "The profession of our faith and growth in holiness are necessary for God's saving grace to continue its work in us, and both of these are things we must do for our love to be genuine

and not compelled. We thus remain free to resist God's grace, to revert to spiritual torpor, and possibly experience spiritual death and Hell as its consequence." - umc.org

#### D. Ecclesiastical Hierarchy

1. "As the primary legislative body, General Conference is the only entity with the authority to speak on behalf of the entire United Methodist Church. The General Conference meets every four years to consider the business and mission of the church. An equal number of lay and clergy delegates are elected from United Methodist bodies around the world to decide matters of policy and procedure for the denomination." - umc.org
2. Also has Jurisdictional conferences, Central conferences, Annual conferences, Districts, and local churches.
3. "churches" - used 37 times in New Testament. No mention of higher authority governing local congregations

#### E. Christian Perfectionism

1. "Entire sanctification is a state of perfect love, righteousness and true holiness which every regenerate believer may obtain by being delivered from the power of sin, by loving God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, and by loving one's neighbor as one's self. Through faith in Jesus Christ this gracious gift may be received in this life both gradually and instantaneously, and should be sought earnestly by every child of God." - [umc.org](http://umc.org), taken from The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2012
2. Philippians 3:12-15

## Why I Am Not In A... Cowboy Church

### I. History

- A. Without getting into the romanticized image of the America West that was such a fixture of American pop culture in the early 20th century, let's just say that Cowboy churches trace their roots to about 1970.
- B. Organizations, such as Cowboys for Christ and Rodeo Cowboy Ministries, grew out of nondenominational prayer meetings held at rodeos and other events.
- C. "The world's first stationary cowboy church" began in 1985 by Jeff Copenhaver at Billy Bob's Texas.
- D. The Baptist General Convention of Texas began working with Cowboy churches in 2000 with the establishment of the Cowboy Church of Ellis County.
- E. Many other denominations, including Pentecostals, Methodists, and Nazarenes, have also helped found Cowboy churches.

### II. Characteristics

- A. Many, at least in our area, seem to be very Baptist in their doctrine (if you can find anything on what they believe)
- B. Nondenominational
  - 1. Loosely affiliated congregations that remain largely independent
- C. Non-traditional
  - 1. Meet in sale barns, arenas, etc.
  - 2. May not do things such as pass offering plates
  - 3. "Come as you are"
- D. Western Heritage Culture
  - 1. EVERYTHING is rooted in the western world, from decor to music to terminology
- E. Mission to reach the "unchurched"

### III. Some Issues I have with their philosophy and practices

- A. NOTE - I can't really go into doctrines like I have with other groups mainly because doctrine is not emphasized or standardized
- B. In many ways, they are a reaction to problems in today's churches
  - 1. Many see church as stuffy, rigid, and judgmental, so they strive to be the opposite.
  - 2. Reactions = Overreactions
- C. "Meeting half way"
  - 1. The idea of watering down the church and Christianity so as to make it more palatable for non-churchgoers
  - 2. This is not the idea Paul expresses in I Corinthians 9:19-23
- D. Heavy on Western culture, light on doctrine
  - 1. While many preach the true Gospel, there seems to be little focus on doctrine

2. Most the emphasis is on being a good person
3. “Cowboy Church of Ellis County practices historic, biblical Christianity. We embrace the core teachings of the Christian faith that have survived the test of time and been widely embraced by the Christian church as a whole. This includes things such as the virgin birth, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and the necessity of faith in Christ for the remission of sins. But just as important, we believe that faith should be practical—that it should be applied. A system of doctrines and beliefs is of little value if it accomplishes nothing in the life of the person holding it. So, our primary focus will always be the Word of God applied to real life. Just as Jesus spoke in the common language of his day to penetrate hearts and change lives, we work hard to make the Bible both understandable and applicable to life today.” - <http://cowboyfaith.org/about-us/our-beliefs/>

#### E. Niche appeal of the gospel

1. Focuses on one group of people to reach and minister to
2. “Cowboy Church of Ellis County was founded as an outreach to cowboys and others who live or love rural and western lifestyles. In many ways, that mission has not changed. Cowboy Church continues to reach out to cowboys and their families with a state of the art covered rodeo arena, as well as numerous rodeo, equine, and outdoor activities. Among these are amateur bull riding, team roping, team sorting, barrel racing, and equine activities for kids.  
However, you don't have to be a cowboy to enjoy Cowboy Church. From fishing tournaments and motorcycles to old fashioned game nights and pot-lucks, Cowboy Church has over 40 different ministries and fellowships designed to appeal to almost anyone. We also offer some of the finest youth and children's programs to be found anywhere. So, even if you're not a cowboy, check us out. You may be surprised at how well we'll fit.” - <http://cowboyfaith.org/about-us/ministries/>

#### IV. References

- A. <http://americanfcc.org/>
- B. <http://www.texasmonthly.com/story/where-have-all-cowboy-churches-come>
- C. <http://www.wrs.vcu.edu/profiles/CowboyChurches.htm>

## Why I Am Not A... Pentecostal

### I. History

#### A. Charles Parham (1873-1929)

1. Born in Iowa, his family moved to Kansas in 1883.
2. Originally affiliated with the Methodists, started his own independent, holiness ministry in 1895.
3. Was influenced by other religious sects, including Frank Sandford.
4. In 1901, students in a Bible school he had started in Topeka, Kansas, held a prayer meeting in which Agnes Ozman spoke in tongues.
5. Was arrested in 1907 in San Antonio, Texas, on charges of homosexuality. This were later dropped.
6. Taught “initial evidence” (tongues), annihilationism, faith healing, British Israelism, and that God made white people on the eighth day.

#### B. William J. Seymour (1870-1922)

1. Born in Louisiana to former slaves, and was influenced by many holiness groups and leaders.
2. Spent six weeks in 1906 at Charles Parham’s Bible school in Houston, Texas, before leaving for Los Angeles.
3. On April 9, 1906, one of his followers named Edward Lee spoke in tongues and Seymour followed a few days later.
4. Led the “Azusa Street Revival” from 1906-1909
5. Parham and Seymour fell out over tongues (*xenoglossy* vs. *glossolalia*, respectively), some ecstatic practices, and Seymour’s egalitarian racial views.

#### C. More names to know

1. Leaders: Benny Hinn, Rex Humbard, Aimee Semple McPherson, Oral Roberts, Smith Wigglesworth, Jimmy Swaggert, and Pat Robertson.
2. Associated groups: Apostolic church, Assembly of God, Full Gospel, Hillsong Church, and many non-denominational groups.
3. Much of Pentecostalism has been rebranded as the Charismatic Movement.

### II. Some Issues

#### A. Salvation

1. While believing in Salvation by grace through faith, they will often “require” the a sign, especially tongues, and believe that salvation can be lost.
2. John 10:28-30

#### B. Tongues

1. What they believe
  - a) Tongues are evidence of the Spirit’s Baptism
  - b) Tongues are a “divine” language
2. What I believe
  - a) Biblical tongues are real, human languages (Acts 2:6-11)

- b) The time of Biblical tongues is over (I Corinthians 13:8-10)
  - c) Biblical tongues could be interpreted (I Corinthians 14:27-28)
  - d) Biblical tongues should not lead to chaos or confusion (I Corinthians 14:33)
  - e) Not everyone had used this one gift (I Corinthians 12:28-30)
  - f) Biblical tongues were a sign to the Jews (Isaiah 28:11-12, I Corinthians 14:20-22) Jews are present every time tongues are used in Acts (2:6-11; 10:46; 19:6)
- C. Healing
- 1. "God did not intend that His children be sickly. He provided for the healing of our bodies in the atonement, just as surely as He provided for the salvation of our souls. This is fully documented by the Scriptures." - <http://www.upcbaypoint.com/Articles2/healing.html>
  - 2. See James 5:14-16
- D. Prophetic Knowledge
- 1. Sometimes called word of knowledge or word of wisdom
  - 2. Basically, it is special, direct, Divine revelation
  - 3. II Timothy 3:16-17

## Why I Am Not A... Lutheran

### I. History

- A. Lutheranism has its roots in the Reformation in 1500's Germany
- B. Martin Luther (November 10, 1483 - February 18, 1546)
  - 1. After almost being struck by lightning in July, 1505, he left law school to become a Catholic monk.
  - 2. Taught theology at the University of Wittenberg
  - 3. On October 31, 1517, he nailed his famous *Ninety-Five Theses* to the door of All Saint's Church in Wittenberg. These dealt mainly with the sale of "indulgences" by the Catholic church and, in particular, Johan Tetzel.
  - 4. Through the next decade, he gained fame as his writings spread through Europe and he further developed his position on Justification.
  - 5. Over time, he and the Catholic church became more and more distant until he was excommunicated by pope Leo X on January 3, 1521.
  - 6. Published a German translation of the New Testament in 1522 and the Old Testament in 1534.
- C. Other names
  - 1. Philipp Melanchthon, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Paul Tillich, Johann Sebastian Bach

### II. Some Issues

- A. Incomplete "Reformation"
  - 1. Basically what Luther did was to create a different version of the Catholic church minus doctrines he disagreed with (indulgences, popes, etc.)
  - 2. Side Note - Baptists are not Protestants. We never left the Catholic church because we were never part of it.
  - 3. The Lutheran and Reformation motto of "Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Scripture Alone" is good, if they only stood by it.
- B. Infant Baptism
  - 1. Although we do not claim to understand fully how this happens, we believe that when an infant is baptized God creates faith in the heart of that infant. We believe this because the Bible says that infants can believe (Matt. 18:6) and that new birth (regeneration) happens in Baptism (John 3:5-7; Titus 3:5-6). The infant's faith cannot yet, of course, be verbally expressed or articulated by the child, yet it is real and present all the same (see e.g., Acts 2:38-39; Luke 1:15; 2 Tim. 3:15). The faith of the infant, like the faith of adults, also needs to be fed and nurtured by God's Word (Matt. 28:18-20), or it will die. - <http://www.lcms.org/faqs/doctrine>
  - 2. Bible answer - \*crickets\*. NO BABY IS EVER BAPTIZED IN THE BIBLE!
- C. Consubstantiation
  - 1. There are three prevalent views on the Lord's Supper
    - a) Transubstantiation - the bread and wine *literally become* the flesh and blood of Christ (Catholics)

- b) Consubstantiation - the bread and wine *contain the essence* of the flesh and blood of Christ (Lutherans, Protestants, Methodists, and others.)
  - c) Symbolism - the bread and wine *symbolize* the flesh and blood of Christ (Baptists)
- D. End Times
- 1. Lutherans hold to a post-millennial view on end times
  - 2. Scripture teaches that all Christians will endure varying degrees of "tribulation" until the last day, that Christ will return only once (visibly) to "catch up" ("rapture") all believers, living and dead, into heaven, and that all believers will reign forever with him in heaven. Lutherans understand the "1,000 years" of Rev. 20:11-15 to be a figurative reference to Christ's reign here and now in the hearts and lives of believers, which will culminate in our reigning with Christ forever in heaven following his return on the last day. - <http://www.lcms.org/faqs/doctrine>
  - 3. I Thessalonians 4:13-18, I Corinthians 15:50-54, and the entire Book of Revelation.
- E. Use of Liturgy
- 1. "a fixed set of ceremonies, words, etc., that are used during public worship in a religion" - Merriam-Webster
  - 2. Lutherans will use a set of calendar with specific scriptures to be read each Sunday in relation to festivals or holidays.
  - 3. Consists of a First Reading, Psalm, Epistle, and Gospel.
  - 4. This leads to formalized worship and places undue emphasis on days or seasons.

## Why I Am Not A... Presbyterian

### I. History

- A. Presbyterianism has its roots in Protestant Reformation and the teachings of John Calvin
- B. John Knox (1513?-1572)
  - 1. First appears as a reformer in the Catholic church in Scotland
  - 2. Was briefly part of the Church of England until forced to leave England under “Bloody Mary”
  - 3. Spent time in Geneva and Frankfurt, where he came in contact with other Reformers such as John Calvin.
  - 4. In Scotland, his fiery sermons and leadership helped establish the Church of Scotland and put him in opposition to Mary, Queen of Scots.
    - a) Mary supposedly said “I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe.”
- C. In America
  - 1. In 1706, independent Presbyterian churches founded the first presbytery (more on that in a bit) in America
  - 2. In 1788, the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America was held.
  - 3. Through the years there have been major debates, schisms, and reunifications due to issues like the Great Awakening, slavery, and Modernism.
  - 4. Today, the Presbyterian Church, USA (PCUSA) has about 2.3 million members and the more conservative Presbyterian Church of America (PCA) has about 335,000 members.
- D. Famous Presbyterians
  - 1. John Witherspoon, Mr. Rogers, J. Gresham Machen, Billy Sunday, William Jennings Bryan, Peter Marshall, Lewis Sperry Chafer

### II. Some Issues

- A. Calvinism
  - 1. “TULIP”
    - a) Total Depravity
      - (1) Men are so fallen that they are unable to seek salvation
      - (2) um, see Ephesians 2:8,9 and Joshua 24:15
    - b) Unconditional Election
      - (1) God picks and chooses individuals that He will save
      - (2) um, see Ephesians 2:8,9
    - c) Limited Atonement
      - (1) Christ only died for the people who would be saved
      - (2) um, see Isaiah 53:6 and I John 2:2
    - d) Irresistible Grace

- (1) If God chose to save you, you cannot turn it down
  - (2) um, see Acts 7:51
  - e) Perseverance of the Saints -
    - (1) The saved cannot help but be holy until God calls them home
    - (2) um, see Jude 1 (Preservation, not Perseverance!)
- B. Presbyterian church government
1. Authority Flowchart
    - a) Congregation - LOWEST
    - b) Session - Elders/Deacons/Boards
      - (1) Pastors are called "teaching elders"
    - c) Presbytery (representatives of some congregations meeting together)
    - d) Synod (more regional)
    - e) General Assembly (National level)
  2. "Top -> Down" leadership
  3. Congregations are not independent
  4. um, see Acts 9:31, Acts 16:5, Romans 16:16, etc.
- C. Infant Baptism
1. "We believe the Bible teaches that baptism is a covenant sign for believers and their children. We do not think that baptism saves someone but it signifies them as a part of the community of the church, receiving all of the benefits of that community. As an infant, parents bring their child to be baptized in obedience to God, trusting that the child will one day respond to God's promises in faith... As an older child or adult, baptism is for believers who have not previously been baptized but with the same meaning, you being brought into the community of the church. Adult baptism is the final step of church membership. We love to celebrate baptisms." - <http://www.faithpcachurch.org/baptism/>
  2. Bible verse supporting infant baptism - 0. Zero. Zilch. Nada.

## Why I Am Not... Amish or Mennonite

A “two for one” lesson!

- I. History
  - A. Both the Amish and the Mennonites trace their heritage back to European Anabaptists.
  - B. Mennonites
    1. Grew out of the German Anabaptists during the 1500's.
    2. Menno Simons (1496-1561)
      - a) Was a Catholic priest until 1536, after years of studying the Bible and subjects like infant baptism and transubstantiation.
      - b) His brother Pieter had become a radical Anabaptist earlier, and was killed in reprisals after some Anabaptists forcibly took a Catholic monastery near Bolsward, Friesland.
      - c) Menno became a very influential Anabaptist leader, with strong emphases on pacifism, personal holiness, and church discipline.
    3. In 2009, there were 387,103 Mennonites in the U.S.
  - C. Amish
    1. Began as a sect of Mennonites in Switzerland
    2. Their name comes from one of their early leaders, Jakob Amman (1656-1730)
      - a) Amman was probably an illiterate tailor who converted to Anabaptism in the 1670s.
      - b) Very little is known of his teachings and life, except for his positions on personal holiness and church discipline
    3. There are an estimated 290,000 Amish in the U.S.
  - D. Because of the way of life these groups adhere to, they are often called “Plain People”
  - E. Baptists today share a common heritage with many of the Anabaptist groups.
- II. Some Issues
  - A. Extreme Separation
    1. These groups take verses like James 1:27 as a command to not only be separate from the evils of the world but from corrupt society itself.
      - a) For example, many do not use electricity or automobiles
    2. There is also little interaction between their own communities based on even the slightest of difference.
    3. John 17:14-15
  - B. Extreme Pacifism
    1. Traditionally, these groups obtain from violence and even self-defense
    2. They will refuse to join the military, and have often been granted exemption from drafts.

3. Their pacifism can go so far as to doing nothing that would prevent “God’s will” from happening, including use of health care.
4. Luke 3:14 (spoken to soldiers), Romans 13:3-4

#### C. Legalism

1. The Amish live by an unwritten code called the *Ordnung*.
  - a) How to dress, how to act, how to behave, how to worship, etc.
2. Mennonites have a much broader spectrum, with some as conservative as the Amish (the “Old Order”) and others accepting the most liberal church positions (Progressive Mennonites)
3. When a member of these groups fails to adhere to the standards that have been set, they are in danger of being shunned or excommunicated.
4. Much of this regulation is decided by the local leader (bishop for the Amish)
5. Romans 14:1, Colossians 2:20-23

#### D. Works Salvation

1. It can be difficult to nail down exactly what these groups believe in regards to salvation. They often profess “Salvation by Faith” but personal holiness and lifestyle gets mixed in. To some, there is no salvation outside of their churches.
2. Many do not believe you can know for sure you are saved (it’s too prideful)
3. Ephesians 2:8-9

#### E. Extreme Separation of Church and State

1. These groups often take this traditional Baptist position to extremes, rejecting government aid and refusing to vote.
2. The Amish often will self-govern their communities
3. Romans 13

## Why I Am Not... Non-Denominational

### I. History

- A. Non-Denominational churches are difficult to trace because of their independence and variety of positions.
- B. In a sense, independent congregations have existed since the foundation of the church (that was God's plan for them, by the way)
- C. In America in the past century or so, there has been a rising movement against denominations, their governance and politics especially, that has led to congregation claiming to be independent.
- D. According to various sources, the movement has grown from 200,000 members in 1990, to 8,000,000 in 2008, to 12,000,000 in 2012.
- E. Southern Baptist writer Thom Rainer conducted an informal poll that revealed these main eight reasons why people attend non-denominational churches:
  1. Denominational churches have a negative reputation. Some respondents used the phrase "negative brand" to communicate this reason.
  2. Denominations are known more for what they are against than what they are for.
  3. There is too much infighting and politics in denominations.
  4. The denominational churches are too liberal. From what I can tell from these respondents, they are current and former members of mainline churches.
  5. There is a general waning of institutional loyalty in institutions such as denominations.
  6. Denominations have inefficient systems and organizations. They are too bureaucratic.
  7. Some of the respondents could see no perceived benefit to belonging to denominations.
  8. Denominations are not good stewards of their financial resources.
- F. Bonus! Bible Churches
  1. Began as a movement in the 1940's as a conservative, practically fundamentalist, response to problems in mainline denominations
  2. Usually they are very conservative, and almost Baptist. One key difference is many use of a presbyterian form of government in each congregation.
  3. Dallas Theological Seminary has been very prominent in this movement.

### II. Some Issues

- A. Denominations define, not just divide.
  1. Many non-denominational churches tend to be very weak on doctrine and heavy on worship and fellowship.
  2. Because non-denominational churches run the full spectrum of doctrine, you may not know if they are Charismatic, Progressive, Evangelical, or extremely conservative.
  3. NOTE - Baptists are often classified as a denomination, but the heavy emphasis on local church autonomy almost always leave these congregations independent. There is no official hierarchy or voice for the Baptists.
- B. Non-denominational churches often downplay doctrine for the sake of unity or growth.
  1. Doctrine defines us.

2. Be leery of any group or church that will not tell you what they believe
  3. False doctrine and false teachers do exist - I Timothy 6:3-5, II Peter 2:1-3
- C. Non-denominational is sometimes a code word for ecumenicalism
1. This is especially true with ministries other than churches.
  2. Ecumenicalism is the idea that all churches of all creeds should set aside differences for the sake of unity.
  3. I'm sorry, but we've seen too many critical doctrinal errors in the groups we have study to have close relations with many of them.
- D. While often standing for foundational doctrines, they often more liberally minded on other issues
1. A quick look online at the "what we believe" pages of many non-denominational church websites will show very, very basic tenets.
  2. Another example, many are "dual practice" when it comes to baptism.

## Why I Am Not... Any of These

Where going to hit a few remaining groups with this lesson that I didn't find to warrant dedicated lessons.

- I. History and Characteristics
  - A. Assembly of God
    - 1. Branch of Pentecostalism
    - 2. Officially began in 1914 at a conference in Hot Springs, Arkansas.
    - 3. About 3,000,000 in U.S.
    - 4. Famous people: Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker, Paul Crouch, Elvis Presley, Jimmy Swaggart.
  - B. Nazarene
    - 1. Came into being through a series of mergers of various Holiness churches, the most important in 1907-1908.
    - 2. Mixture of Methodist and Holiness doctrines.
    - 3. About 600,000 in U.S.
    - 4. Famous people: James Dobson, The Speer Family
  - C. Apostolic
    - 1. Many groups use this name, almost all are Pentecostal.
    - 2. These groups usually claim that the office of Apostle is to be kept.
  - D. Episcopalians
    - 1. This is basically the American branch of the Anglican Church, a.k.a the Church of England.
    - 2. Officially began to split from England in 1789
    - 3. Uses their own version of the Book of Common Prayer
    - 4. Promotes itself as being the middle road between Catholicism and Protestantism
    - 5. Almost 2,000,000 in U.S.
    - 6. Famous people: George Washington, Donald Trump,
- II. Some Issues
  - A. Assembly of God
    - 1. Believe that salvation can be lost
    - 2. Believe in speaking in tongues
  - B. Nazarene
    - 1. Do not believe in assurance of salvation
    - 2. Infant Baptism
    - 3. Entire Sanctification
  - C. Apostolic
    - 1. Tongues and other Holy Ghost errors
  - D. Episcopalians
    - 1. Tends to be very liberal in social issues.
    - 2. A hierarchy, especially of bishops, run the church

## Why I Am Not A... Southern Baptist

I'm a Baptist. But there are even those of those among Baptists that I have to take issue with.

### I. History

#### A. Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)

1. In 1740, there were only about eight Baptist churches in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina with perhaps 300 members all together.
2. In 1814, the General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States of America for Foreign Missions (a.k.a. the "Triennial Convention") united Baptists from all of America.
3. Discontent grew within the Triennial Convention's southern ranks. This was fueled by some slaveholding Baptists from the south being refused appointments from the Convention. Also, many southerners felt they were not getting enough attention in the Convention's missionary work.
4. In May 1845, the Southern Baptist Convention was organized at the First Baptist Church of Augusta, Georgia.
5. In 2013, the SBC claimed 15.74 million members in 46,125 churches in the United States.

#### B. Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT)

1. Various regional groups in Texas officially merged in 1886 to form the BGCT
2. Sometimes will be called "Texas Baptists"
3. Cooperates with the SBC.
4. Very liberal. Many conservatives have left and started other groups.

### II. Some Issues

#### A. Denominational Hierarchy

1. The four levels of convention hierarchy: local congregation, local association, state convention, national convention.
2. While in theory, the participation is voluntary, much of the authority is top-down.
3. For example, missions are supported on the convention level. Churches blindly send their money through the Cooperative Program to a Mission Board that distributes money. The special Lottie Moon Christmas Offering that many SBC churches do accounts for about 50% of their International Missions Board's support.
4. Response: Churches may act together of their own free wills, but there is nowhere in the Scripture an organization above the local church.

#### B. Ecumenicalism

1. This is the movement that pushes for differing denominations and even faiths to cooperate and set aside their differences.
2. Baptists Conventions and Institutions often make strange alliances and honor people are not even close to being Baptist,

3. Response: DIFFERENCES MATTER! Hasn't that been the point of this whole series of lessons? See I Timothy 6:3-5, Ephesians 5:11, I John 4:1-6.

#### C. Boards

1. Not only is the extra-ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Conventions an issue, most of the church are run along a more Presbyterian form of government with boards, (especially deacons) and committees taking the lead in the church.
2. Response: the New Testament pattern for church government is two offices: pastor and deacon. See I Timothy 3:2-13.
  - a) Side Note: my great-great-granddad, W.A. Souther, was an old-time Landmark Baptist preacher. In his day, they referred to SBC churches as "board Baptists" and themselves as "no-board Baptists".
  - b) Just for fun: the only mention of "boards" in the New Testament is in conjunction with a shipwreck (Acts 27:44)

#### D. Liberal Theology

1. The track record for Conventions is towards liberalism and modernism.
2. Battles have raged throughout the history of the SBC over fundamental aspects of theology.
  - a) J. Frank Norris and others sounded the alarm in the early 20th century.
  - b) Conservatives tried to take control in the late 20th century.
3. Some examples:
  - a) From the *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* (1958): "Evolution: A fundamental assumption in biology which asserts that, by a mechanism not yet determinately known, biologic forms change in to other biological forms. Species are not fixed but are changeable, and over a period of time, the new species derive from previous ones. The theory was given a testable formulation by Darwin (1859); since then a number of mechanisms have been proposed to account for the process, none of which has yet made its way to a full acceptance among biologists. The argument for the validity of the theory is based upon composite picture made up of elements from paleontology, comparative morphology, and genetics."
  - b) From *The Truth in Crisis: The Controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention* by James C. Hefley (1990): "In 1969 the SBC Sunday School Board's Broadman Press released W.A. Criswell's *Why I Preach That the Bible Is Literally True*..The Association of Baptist Professors of Religion (APBR) saw the book as an attack on academic freedom and passed a resolution critical of Broadman's promotion.... Robert S. Alley, a religion professor at the University of Richmond, a Virginia Baptist school, was on record as saying that Adam, Eve, Noah, Jonah... 'were fictitious persons who proclaimed a truth.' Jesus, he added, was a 'historical figure,' of whom 'certain aspects of his life as recorded in the Gospels are symbolic.... The legend of the virgin birth was used to demonstrate that Jesus was indeed human, born of a woman.'"
4. Response: Liberalism has crept in so slowly, like leaven as Christ described, but its affect is UNDENIABLE in the Southern Baptist world. We could go on for literally hours exposing fundamental doctrinal errors being taught in classrooms and preached from pulpits.