

Bible for Life: *Denominations*

CLASSES 1-2: **CATEGORIES OF DOCTRINAL BELIEF AND PRACTICE**

1.1 ACTIVITY

~ Put the following doctrinal statements in order of importance:

- A. The world was created in six literal 24-hour days.
- B. Jesus Christ is God.
- C. Communion juice should not be served with wine.
- D. Homosexuality is sin.
- E. Hymns are better than contemporary music.

1.2 WHAT IS AT STAKE?¹

- At stake is the _____ and _____ of the Church and the church

Universal Church: Acts 9:31

Local church: 1 Cor 16:19

“The ability to rightly discern the difference between core doctrines and legitimately disputable matters will keep the church from either compromising important truth or needlessly dividing over peripheral issues” (Erik Thoennes, Prof of Theol at Biola University, *Life’s Biggest Questions: What the Bible Says about the Things That Matter Most*, quoted in article #1.2)

- Danger of compromising truth = Purity (Titus 2:1, 1:9, 2 Thess 2:15, Eph 4:11-14)
- Danger of needless division = Unity (1 Cor 1:10, 4:1-3, Php 1:27, 2 Cor 13:11)

1.3 IS IT BIBLICAL TO CATEGORIZE CERTAIN DOCTRINES?

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Matthew 23:23

- All truths are _____, but not all are equally _____

¹ The following discussion is primarily taken from the following articles:

#1 – “Not All Doctrines Are at the Same Level: How to Make Some Distinctions and Determine a Doctrine’s Importance.” Justin Taylor, Sept 29, 2015. Thegospelcoalition.org.

#2 – “A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity.” Albert Mohler, May 20, 2004. AlbertMohler.com.

#3 – “4 Ways to Fight Clean Over Doctrine.” Dustin Neeley, May 21, 2012. Thegospelcoalition.com.

#4 – “When Should Doctrine Divide?” Gavin Ortlund, Aug 14, 2017. Thegospelcoalition.com.

#5 – “How to Weight Doctrines for Christian Unity.” Joe Rigney, May 27, 2014. Thegospelcoalition.com.

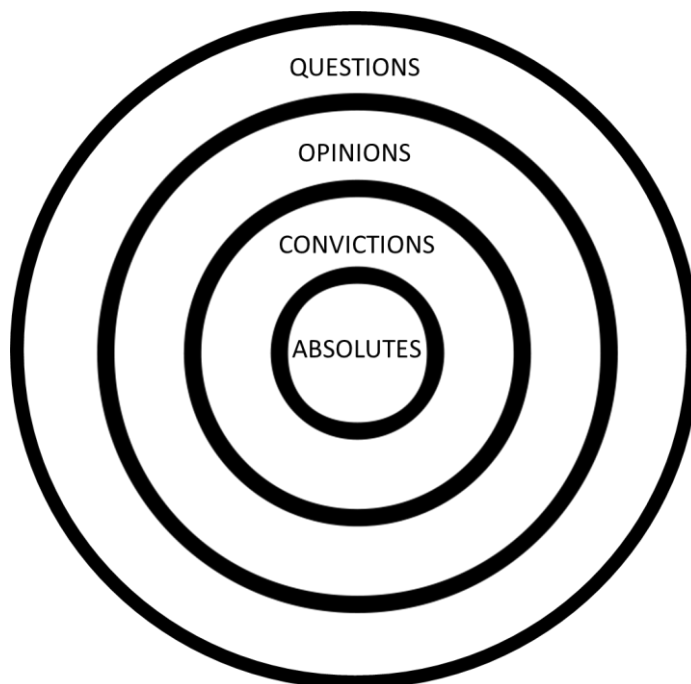
1.4 HOW DO WE CATEGORIZE DOCTRINES?

DANIEL WALLACE (Prof at Dallas Theological Seminary)

1. Essential for the _____ of the church – necessary for salvation
2. Essential for the _____ of the church – necessary for Christian growth
3. Essential for the _____ of the church – necessary for functional unity
4. _____-_____ doctrines or *adiaphora*

ERIK THOENNES (Prof of Theology – Biola University)

1. _____ – core beliefs of Christian faith
2. _____ – may have significant impact on health/effectiveness of the church
3. _____ – less-clear issues generally not worth dividing over
4. _____ – currently unsettled issues



ALBERT MOHLER (President of Southern Baptist Theol Seminary – Prof of Theology)

3 Orders of Doctrine – or “doctrinal triage”:

1. First-order doctrines – denial of which represents denial of Christianity itself
2. Second-order – create significant boundaries between believers
3. Third-order – disagree and remain in fellowship even within a congregation

CLASS MODEL:

1. _____ – You have to believe it in order to be saved or be a true church.
2. _____ – Still important, but non-essential for salvation.
3. _____ & _____ – Scripture doesn’t necessarily say clearly, but this is what I believe.

1.5 HOW DO WE DETERMINE WHERE A DOCTRINE IS CATEGORIZED?

Erik Thoennes (Prof of Theol – Biola University)

Seven considerations: (#1.2)

1. Biblical _____
2. Relevance to the _____ of God
3. Relevance to the _____ of the Gospel
4. Biblical _____ and significance
5. Effect on other _____
6. _____ among Christians
7. Effect on _____ and church life

AT STAKE IN THE DOCTRINAL DEBATE:	
Purity	Unity
Compromising Truth	Needless Divisions
Doctrinal Minimalism	Doctrinal Separatism
Making Molehills out of Mountains	Making Mountains out of Molehills
Theological Liberalism	Theological Pharisaism

1.6 WHEN IS IT NECESSARY TO DIVIDE OVER DOCTRINE OR PRACTICE?

1 Corinthians 1:10

1 Corinthians 11:18-19

Acts 15:36-41

- Denominations form when _____ or _____ considerations make it unreasonable or impractical to move forward together.

1.7 HOW DO WE MAINTAIN UNITY AMIDST DENOMINATIONALISM?

- **First**, the church must recognize different _____

- **Second**, we must ask: what kind of partnership or unity will best serve to

- **Third**, we must make distinctions between _____

- **Fourth**, we must be honest about _____

- **Fifth**, we must commit to _____ and _____ over second and third-level disagreements (1 Cor 8:1b)

1.8 SUMMARY AND FINAL CASE STUDY

- New denominations form when doctrinal or practical considerations make it unreasonable or impractical to move forward together.
- Third-level doctrines (convictions/adiaphora) should typically not hinder fellowship.
- Second-level doctrines (non-salvific) may be a legitimate reason for divisions.
- Only those outside the church/Christianity fail to believe first-level doctrines.

CLASS 3: BAPTIST

Within most denominations, there are _____.

- Remember: New denominations form when doctrinal or practical considerations make it unreasonable or impractical to move forward together.

3.1 RESOURCES

- *The Complete Guide to Christian Denominations* (Ron Rhodes, Harvest House Publishing, 2005, 2015 – second ed.).
- “Denomination Comparison” Chart (Rose Publishing).

3.2 HISTORY

1611 – John Smythe and other English Puritans form the first Baptist church on English soil

1) Congregational _____

2) Members must be _____

3) Scripture teaches only _____ baptism

- Early Baptists shared some similarities with _____, but these groups are not the same.

1639 – First Baptist church in America established in Providence, RI by Roger Williams

3.3 SCOPE

- 100 million worldwide, 32 million USA.
- Rhodes lists 14 different Baptist denominations (2005 ed.).

3.4 SUB-DENOMINATIONS

A. Southern Baptist Convention:

B. American Baptist Association:

C. General Association of Regular Baptist Churches:

D. Reformed Baptist Church:

E. Other:

CALVINISM	ARMINIANISM
Total Depravity – Humans are unable to do good apart from God’s work.	Free Will – Humans have free wills and freedom to choose good or evil.
Unconditional Election – God unconditionally elects those to salvation based solely upon His sovereign choice.	Conditional Election – God’s elects those whom He foreknew would respond to His call of salvation.
Limited Atonement – Christ died only for the elect; He saves all those whom He intended to save.	Unlimited Atonement – Christ died for all and atonement is only effectual for those who believe.
Irresistible Grace – God extends to the elect a call that inevitably brings them to salvation.	Prevenient Grace – All humans are given grace enough to allow them free choice to accept or reject the Gospel.
Perseverance of the Saints – Those who are genuine believers will endure in faith to the end of their lives.	Conditional Perseverance – Believers are capable of turning from faith and losing their salvation.

3.5 DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE

A. Ordinances

B. Church Government:

C. Soteriology:

D. Ecclesiology:

E. Eschatology:

CLASS 4: PRESBYTERIAN

- Meaning of name: derive from Greek word πρεσβύτερος meaning _____

4.1 HISTORY

- Rooted in work of two men: John Calvin (1509-1564) and John _____ (1513-1572)

- Westminster Confession of Faith – completed in _____

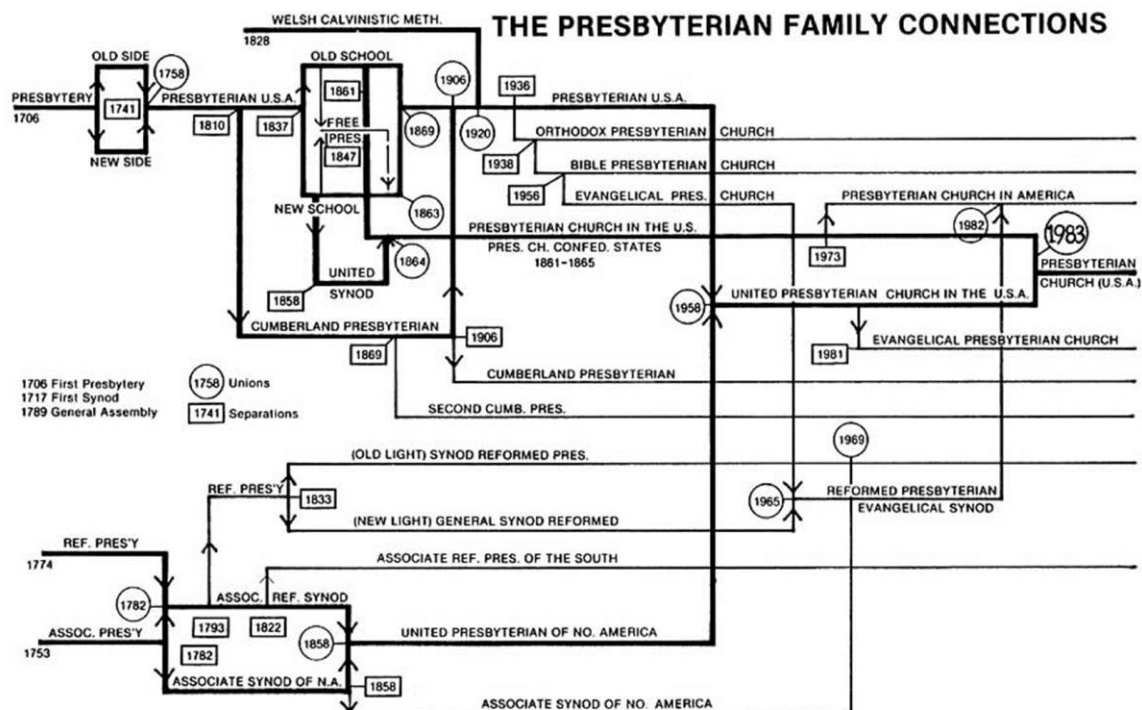
- First presbytery (association of local Presbyterian churches) founded in Philly in _____

- First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church held in Philly in _____

4.2 SCOPE

40-50 million worldwide, 2 million USA

4.3 SUB-DENOMINATIONS



[Taken from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presbyterian_Church_\(USA\)#/media/File:Presbyterian_Family_Connections.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presbyterian_Church_(USA)#/media/File:Presbyterian_Family_Connections.jpg)]

A. Presbyterian Church (USA) (1983) – _____

B. Presbyterian Church in America (1973) – _____

4.4 DOCTRINE & PRACTICE

A. Ordinances

A helpful five-part explanation for infant baptism:²

- “1) The church of the Old Testament and the church of the New Testament are, in essence, the same church;
- 2) God includes the children of believers as members of this church;
- 3) In the Old Testament era, children of believers, because they were church members, were given the sign of circumcision;
- 4) In the New Testament era, God has taken the sign of circumcision and changed it to baptism;
- 5) Therefore, in the New Testament era, children of believers, because they are church members, are to be given the sign of baptism.”

B. Church Government

1. _____ – elected elders that govern an individual local congregation
2. _____ – oversee the well-being of congregations in their geographical area
3. _____ – group of presbyteries
4. _____ – meets once/year and oversees entire denomination
5. _____ Elder vs _____ Elder

C. Soteriology

D. Ecclesiology

E. Eschatology

F. Other

² <http://www.opc.org/cce/tracts/WhyInfantBaptism.html>.

CLASS 5: LUTHERAN

5.1 HISTORY

Founder: _____ (1483-1546)

Major Document: The Book of the _____

5.2 SCOPE

80 million worldwide

7 million USA

5.3 SUB-DENOMINATIONS

Note: primarily focused in USA here.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (1987) – 9300+ cong, 3.8 million members

- Largest Lutheran sub-denomination in America.

- Key word: _____

The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (1847): 5000+ cong, nearly 2 million members

- 2nd largest Lutheran sub-denomination.

- Key word: _____

5.4 DOCTRINE & PRACTICE

A. Ordinances

*Baptism*³

“We believe that Baptism is one of the miraculous means of grace (another is God’s Word as it is written or spoken), through which God creates and/or strengthens the gift of faith in a person’s heart”

“The LCMS does not believe that Baptism is ABSOLUTELY necessary for salvation... It is not a mere “ritual” or “symbol,” but a powerful means of grace by which God grants faith and the forgiveness of sins.”

Lord’s Supper

- Lord’s Supper – 4 Views:

_____substantiation (Catholics): bread/wine actually literally change into body/blood of Jesus. Jesus is literally present.

_____substantiation (Lutherans): Christ is present in, with and under the bread/wine. Elements don’t change, but Christ’s presence is real. It’s means of grace.

_____ (Presbyterians): Christ is present spiritually in the elements. Also a means of grace.

_____ (Baptists): Christ isn’t present in the elements literally or spiritually. Elements are symbolic.

B. Church Government

C. Soteriology

D. Ecclesiology/Eschatology

³ <https://www.lcms.org/about/beliefs/faqs/doctrine#baptism>. The following quotes all come from the FAQ section of their website.

CLASS 6: EPISCOPAL & METHODIST

ANGLICAN/EPISCOPAL CHURCH

6.1 HISTORY

“Anglican” – means _____ (or related to the Church of England)

Henry VIII (1509-1547) –

Thomas Cranmer’s *The Book of* _____

“Episcopal”: ruled by _____

6.2 BIBLICAL TERMINOLOGY

Acts 20:17/28 –

1 Peter 5:1-4 –

_____ = πρεσβύτερος – *presbuteros* – the spiritual maturity of the office

_____ = ἐπίσκοπος – *episkopos* – leadership and direction of the church

_____ = ποιμήν – *poimen* – feeding, nurturing and protecting the flock⁴

⁴ Definitions from Phil A. Newton and Matt Schmucker’s *Elders in the Life of the Church: Rediscovering the Biblical Model for Church Leadership* (Kregel: 2014), pg. 49.

6.3 SUB-DENOMINATIONS/DOCTRINE & PRACTICE

Episcopal Church USA (1789): nearly 2 million members, 7000+ cong

Standard Doctrines:

Church Government:

- Basic unit of worship is a _____ (local church).
- Each parish is governed by a _____.
- Six or more parishes are known as a _____.
- Each Diocese is overseen by a _____.
- All bishops are overseen by the _____ of Canterbury.
- Every three years, General Convention meets:
 - House of Bishops (all diocesan bishops)
 - House of Deputies (4 priests and 4 laymen from each diocese)

Ordinances:

Reformed Episcopal Church in America (1873): 6400 members, 125 cong

METHODIST

6.4 HISTORY

Founder: _____ (1703-1791)

_____ first annual Methodist conference held in Philly

6.5 SCOPE

Methodists: 61 million worldwide, 11 million USA

Episcopalian/Anglican: 80 million worldwide, 2 million USA

6.6 SUB-DENOMINATIONS/DOCTRINE & PRACTICE

United Methodist Church (1968): 8+ million members, 24k+ cong

African Methodist Episcopal Church (1816): 1.85 million members, 7700+ cong

Free Methodist Church of North America (1860): 61k members, nearly 1000 cong

Doctrine & Practices:

CLASS 7: AMISH & MENNONITE (ANABAPTIST)

7.1 HISTORY

- Originated in _____
- Founder of Mennonite Church: _____ Simons (1496-1561).
- Basic theological belief: based on the Dordrecht Confession of Faith (1632 – Netherlands).
- Founder of Amish Church: Jakob _____ (1693).
- In late 1800s, Amish split into _____ Order Amish (stricter)
and _____ Order Amish (progressive).
- Quaker churches today are known as “_____ Church.”

7.2 SCOPE

2 million worldwide
1 million USA

7.3 SUB-DENOMINATIONS

Old Order Amish Churches (1720s): 80,000+, 3500+ cong.

Church of God in Christ, Mennonite (1859): nearly 13,000 members, 450+ cong

Mennonite Church (1725): 118,000+, 1200 cong.

7.4 DOCTRINE/PRACTICES

- Amish are known for _____ their members.

Matthew 18:15-20 –

- The biblical goal of church discipline is _____.

1 Timothy 5:19-20 –

Luke 17:3-4 –

Other Doctrines/Practices:

CLASS 8: PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC

8.1 HISTORY

1906: The _____ Street revival – official launch of Pentecostal movement

1914: Assemblies of God organize.

8.2 TERMINOLOGY

_____: Name comes from Acts 2 – Holy Spirit working on day of Pentecost, which baptized the believers in the HS and was accompanied by the gift of speaking in tongues.

_____: Whereas Pentecostals teach tongues is *the* evidence of your baptism in the Holy Spirit, a Charismatic will teach tongues as *an* evidence of your empowerment in the Holy Spirit.

_____: Tongues (and other “sign gifts”) are no longer a gift for today’s Church Age.

8.3 SCOPE

250-300 million worldwide

13-14 million USA

8.4 SUB-DENOMINATIONS

Assemblies of God (1914): 2.6 million members, 12,000+ cong (nearly 50 million overseas)

- Believe in divine _____ as part of the Gospel (Is 53:5).

Church of God (1886): nearly 1 million members, 4500+ cong

- Formally known as the “_____ Church”

Vineyard Churches International (1983): uncertain demographics

- Concept of God’s _____ is at the heart of their theology.

Calvary Chapel (1965): 1800 churches

- Fellowship of churches founded by _____

8.5 DOCTRINE & PRACTICES

A. Bibliology (Doctrine of God's Word)

2 Timothy 3:16-17

B. Ordinances

C. Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 13:8-10

1 Thessalonians 1:5

Hebrews 2:3b-4

D. Worship Services

E. Eschatology

CLASS 9: SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS

9.1 HISTORY

1782: William _____ born in Massachusetts

Key Text: _____ – “2300 evenings and mornings”

_____: The year that William Miller predicted Christ would return (Jesus’ “advent”)

_____ – three phases:

- 1) 1844 – Second Coming
- 2) Second Coming – Millennium
- 3) After Millennium

1845: _____ claims to have witnessed visions and received messages from heaven

- *Steps to Christ* (1892): personal devotional topics

- *Conflict of the Ages*

9.2 SCOPE

18 million worldwide

1 million USA

9.3 SUB-DEMONINATIONS

Seventh-day Adventist Church (1863): 12 million+ members, 51,000+ cong

Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement (1925): 24,000 members, unknown cong.

9.4 DOCTRINE & PRACTICES

Bibliology:

Soteriology:

Ecclesiology:

Sabbath:

Romans 6:14

Colossians 2:16

Romans 14:5-6

Acts 20:7

1 Corinthians 16:2

Eschatology:

Daniel 8:14

Luke 23:42-43

2 Corinthians 5:8

Matthew 25:46