

**QUICK LOOK AT**  
**MODERN DENOMINATIONS**

# Similarities / Differences

We might not agree on everything but have a lot in common.

## Similarities (Essentials)

- Belief in **one God** (God's unity)
- **Trinity** (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)
- Full **deity** and full **humanity** of Christ.
- Man is **sinner** in need of **salvation** (depravity)
- **Miracles** like the Virgin Birth & Resurrection
- **Salvation by grace/faith** in finished work of Christ
- **Second coming** of Christ
- **Bible** is Word of God

## Differences (Non-Essentials)

- Forms of **Church Government** (Congregational, Presbyterian, Episcopal)
- **Women pastors** (Complementarian vs. Egalitarian)
- **Baptism**: Child vs. Adult baptism
- **Charismatic gifts** continue today or ceased?
- Man's part in salvation (**predestination** vs. **free-will**)
- View of **End Times**
- **Values** (topical vs. expository preaching, seeker sensitive, etc.)
- Style of **Worship** (modern, hymn, no instruments, etc.)

"In essentials, **unity**; in nonessentials, **liberty**; and in all things, **charity**." (17<sup>th</sup> c. Lutheran theologian Rupertus Meldenius)

\*Some like Oneness Pentecostals reject

	Government Type (Church Polity)	Theological Distinctives (Liberal, Conservative, etc.)	Role of Women (Egalitarian, Complementarian)	Baptism (Pedo/Covenant, Credo/Believers)	Other Distinctives
<b>Assemblies of God</b>	Congregational	Charismatic	Egalitarian	Credo-Believers	Pentecostal Within US: 12,850 churches, 3.1 million members; worldwide: 67 million members.
<b>Calvary Chapel</b>	"Moses model"	Charismatic	Complementarian	Credo-Believers	Pre-Mill/Pre-Trib.
<b>Christian &amp; Missionary Alliance (C&amp;MA)</b>	Presbyterian	Conservative	Complementarian in U.S.; in Canada women may be ordained.	Credo-Believers with immersion	Emphasis on healing ministry; Missions-focused; Pre-Millennial eschatology. Within US: 2,000 churches, 430,000 members;
<b>Church of the Nazarene</b>	Episcopal	Wesleyan/Holiness	Egalitarian	Pedo-Covenantal	Christian Holiness, Emphasis on Missions Within US: 5,000 churches, 650,000 members; worldwide: 29,000 churches, 2.2 million members.

### Assemblies of God

Assemblies of God: The Assemblies of God is a Pentecostal Christian denomination founded in 1914, emphasizing the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives. It is one of the largest Christian denominations globally, with a strong focus on evangelism, missions, and church planting.

- Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker were prominent American televangelists who gained fame in the 1970s and 1980s through their television program, The PTL Club. Their ministry faced scandals in the late 1980s, leading to the collapse of their religious empire and Jim Bakker's imprisonment for financial fraud.
- Johnny Cash
- Phil Keaggy
- Sarah Palin
- Jimmy Swaggart

### Calvary Chapel

Calvary Chapel is a non-denominational evangelical Christian fellowship that began in the 1960s, with Pastor Chuck Smith at its helm. Known for its verse-by-verse teaching, casual atmosphere, and contemporary worship style, Calvary Chapel has grown into a global network of churches.

- Chuck was ordained as a Foursquare pastor in 1950
- Calvary Chapel was originally part of the Foursquare Church
- But in 1968 the Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa congregation broke from the denomination and formed an association of autonomous churches.

- Described as a “Charismatic but non-Pentecostal denomination.”
- Distinctives: (1) Priority of God's Word; (2) Verse-by-verse teaching; (3) Spirit-led living; (4) Centrality of Jesus; (5) Grace orientation; (6) Male leadership; (7) Contemporary worship; (8) Evangelism and discipleship; (9) Pre-tribulation rapture focus

### **Christian & Missionary Alliance (C&MA) / The Alliance**

The Christian & Missionary Alliance is an evangelical Protestant denomination founded by A. B. Simpson in 1887, with a strong focus on global missions and holiness theology. The C&MA emphasizes the deeper life in Christ and the importance of sharing the Gospel with the world.

Fourfold Gospel symbols: (1) The Cross: Christ as Savior; (2) The Laver: Christ as Sanctifier; (3) The Pitcher of Oil: Christ as Healer; (4) The Crown: Christ as Coming King

- A. W. Tozer was an influential American pastor, author, and theologian associated with the Christian & Missionary Alliance. His writings, including the classic book "The Pursuit of God," continue to inspire Christians in their pursuit of a deeper relationship with God.
- Ravi Zacharias has roots here

### **Church of the Nazarene**

The Church of the Nazarene is a Wesleyan-Holiness denomination founded in the early 20th century, emphasizing personal sanctification and social holiness. It has a global presence and is known for its commitment to evangelism, compassionate ministries, and higher education.

- Pt. Loma Nazarene College

### **What is Episcopal church structure?**

An episcopal system of church governance refers to the leadership structure in which bishops have authority over a group of churches, known as a diocese.

### **Episcopal Church?**

The Episcopal Church, also known as the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, is a branch of the Anglican Communion, which originated in England during the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. The Anglican Church was initially formed when King Henry VIII separated from the Roman Catholic Church and established the Church of England, with himself as the supreme head.

The Episcopal Church in the United States of America was formed after the American Revolution, when the Anglican Church in America had to reorganize itself without the support of the British Crown. The church adopted a new

constitution and a new name, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, in 1789. Today, the Episcopal Church is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with over 1.7 million members.

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<b>Evangelical Free Church (EFCA)</b>	Congregational	Conservative	Complementarian	Both	Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; church planting ~1,500 churches, 371,000 members in US.
<b>Evangelical Lutheran (ELCA)</b>	Presbyterian	Mixed/Liberal	Egalitarian	Pedo-Covenant	In communion w/RCA, PCUSA & UCC ~9,300 churches, 3.7 million baptized members.
<b>Foursquare Gospel [International Church of the Foursquare Gospel]</b>	Congregational w/ Oversight	Pentecostal	Egalitarian	Credo-Believers	Within US: 1620 churches, 243,400 members; worldwide: 66,000 churches, 8 million members.
<b>Lutheran Church Missouri Synod</b>	Presbyterian (but Congregational in many functions)	Conservative	Complementarian	Both	~6140 churches, 2.1 million baptized members.

### Evangelical Free Church (EFCA)

Emphasizes the authority of the Bible, the centrality of Christ, and the importance of individual congregational autonomy. EFCA churches typically share conservative evangelical theology while allowing for a range of worship styles and practices.

- Walter Kaiser, Jr., Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary President Emeritus
- Chuck Swindoll, Dallas Theological Seminary former president

### Evangelical Lutheran (ELCA)

The largest Lutheran denomination in the United States, known for its moderate-to-liberal theological stance and emphasis on social justice issues. The ELCA affirms the Lutheran confessions and sacramental theology, while engaging in ecumenical efforts and encouraging dialogue with other Christian traditions.

Most welcoming of gays/lesbians

Over 500,000 people have left the ELCA since the church's human sexuality decision in 2009

700 congregations have voted to withdraw from the ELCA

### Foursquare Gospel / Foursquare Church / Foursquare Pentecostal Official name: International Church of the Foursquare Gospel (ICFG)

The International Church of the Foursquare Gospel is a Pentecostal denomination that highlights the fourfold Gospel, which represents Jesus as

Savior, Baptizer with the Holy Spirit, Healer, and Soon-coming King. Founded by Aimee Semple McPherson in 1923, the Foursquare Church emphasizes the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, evangelism, and missions.

- Described as a “Charismatic and Pentecostal Denomination”
- Chuck Smith grew up attending. See *Charisma vs. Charismania*
- Chuck Smith says very Pentecostal in his book but seems very well balanced to me!

### **Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS)**

A conservative Lutheran denomination in the United States that upholds the historical Lutheran confessions and a literal interpretation of the Bible. The LCMS is committed to preserving traditional Lutheran doctrine and practices, while maintaining a strong emphasis on evangelism, education, and mission work.

- Against homosexual marriage.

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<b>National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. (NBC)</b>	Congregational	Mixed Conservative (Does not prescribe nor exercise administrative or doctrinal control over any of its membership)	Either, depending on local congregation	Credo-Believers	Within US: 9,000 churches, 5 million members; worldwide: 31,000 churches, 7.5 million members.
<b>Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)</b>	Presbyterian	Reformed; Conservative	Complementarian	Pedo-Covenantal	Cessationist
<b>Presbyterian Church in the USA (PCUSA)</b>	Presbyterian	Reformed; Mixed	Egalitarian	Pedo-Covenantal	In communion w/RCA, ELCA & UCC; “ecumenical” ~9,800 churches, 1.6-2 million members in US.
<b>Reformed Church in America (RCA)</b>	Presbyterian	Reformed; Mixed	Egalitarian	Pedo-Covenantal	In communion w/ELCA, PCUSA & UCC; the <b>more liberal</b> of the Reformed denominations; “ecumenical” ~850 churches, 240,000 members in US.

### National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. (NBC)

The NBC is the largest predominantly African-American Baptist denomination in the United States, emphasizing missions, evangelism, and social justice. The denomination seeks to maintain the autonomy of local churches while fostering unity and cooperation through its conventions and conferences.

- Notable people: Martin Luther King Jr., Benjamin Mays

### Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)

The PCA is a conservative, Reformed, and evangelical denomination of Protestant Christianity, committed to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Westminster Catechisms. It prioritizes theological orthodoxy, strong biblical preaching, and local church autonomy. More conservative in theology - homosexuality is a sin, opposes same-sex marriage.

- Notable people: Tim Keller, R.C. Sproul

### Presbyterian Church in the USA (PCUSA)

The PCUSA is a mainline Protestant denomination that seeks to balance Calvinist theology with progressive social values, with an emphasis on social justice and inclusiveness. It is known for its democratic governance and diverse theological perspectives. More liberal in theology. In 2015, the PCUSA changed its definition of marriage to include same-gender marriages. However, not all congregations within the PCUSA perform same-gender marriages, and the issue of human sexuality remains a point of debate and disagreement within the denomination.



- Notable people: Eugene Peterson, Frederick Buechner

### **Reformed Church in America (RCA)**

The RCA is the oldest Protestant denomination in the United States with Dutch roots, focusing on a balanced theology and a commitment to mission work, evangelism, and ecumenical partnerships. It maintains a strong connection with its Dutch Reformed heritage. A diverse range of congregations, blending conservative and liberal perspectives. Various congregations are actively examining their stances on Scripture interpretation, women's ordination, and LGBTQ+ inclusion. Some churches have been concerned about it becoming theologically liberal and have joined PCA above.

- Notable people: Albertus C. Van Raalte, Norman Vincent Peale

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<b>Salvation Army</b>	Episcopal	Conservative	Egalitarian	Do not Baptize	Military organization & terminology; hands-on ministry/help & mercy. World: 15,400 churches; 4.5 million volunteers
<b>Southern Baptist (SBC)</b>	Congregational	Mixed/Conservative	Either, depending on local congregation	Credo-Believers with Immersion	Dispensational ~46,500 churches, 15.5 million members in US.
<b>United Methodist (UMC)</b>	Episcopal	Mixed	Egalitarian	Pedo-Covenantal	Wesleyan Within US: 32,400 churches, 7.2 million members; worldwide: 12 million members.
<b>Vineyard Christian Fellowship</b>	Congregational	Pentecostal; Conservative	Egalitarian	Credo-Believers	Roots: Calvary Chapel & John Wimber; Quest for the Radical Middle Within US, 600 churches; 190,000 members; worldwide: 1,500 churches.

### Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is a global evangelical Christian movement, functioning as both a church and a charitable organization, committed to social welfare and the alleviation of poverty. Its mission is to spread the Christian faith through social action and to meet human needs without discrimination.

- Notable people: William Booth, Catherine Booth

### Southern Baptist (SBC)

The SBC is the largest Baptist denomination in the United States, with an emphasis on congregational autonomy, evangelism, and conservative theology. The denomination is known for its missionary work, biblical inerrancy, and strong commitment to traditional moral values.

- Notable people: Billy Graham, Al Mohler
- Christian Heritage College (San Diego Christian) is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

### United Methodist (UMC)

The UMC is a mainline Protestant denomination with a strong emphasis on social justice, evangelism, and scriptural holiness. The denomination is known for its connectional structure, with local churches working together in districts, conferences, and general agencies. Homosexuality current hot topic. The denomination has historically rejected homosexuality but has recently seen

increased debate on the issue. The UMC elected its first openly gay bishop in 2016, further fueling discussions surrounding LGBTQ+ inclusion.

- Notable people: John Wesley, Charles Wesley

### **Vineyard Christian Fellowship**

The Vineyard is a charismatic evangelical Christian denomination, focusing on contemporary worship, the practice of spiritual gifts, and a commitment to social justice and compassion. It seeks to balance biblical teaching, charismatic experiences, and community engagement. Founded by John Wimber in 1977, is a charismatic evangelical movement associated with the "Signs and Wonders" movement and the Toronto Blessing. Emphasizing contemporary worship, spiritual gifts, and social justice, it has been referred to as the "Third Wave of the Holy Spirit."

- Notable people: John Wimber, Rich Nathan



## Overview of Church History

- DONE** Early Fathers, Theologians and Councils
- DONE** Events of the Reformation
- DONE** Shared Beliefs between Roman Catholics and Protestants
- DONE** Overview of Key Differences
- DONE** Denominations Since the Reformation

# EXTRA MATERIAL

# Christianity 2018

Roman Catholics	1,239,950,000
Pentecostals/Charismatics	682,731,000
Protestants	567,185,000
Independents	446,434,000
Evangelicals	349,499,000
Orthodox	284,499,000
Unaffiliated	108,025,000
<b>Total Christians</b>	<b>2,438,373,000</b>

Source:

<http://www.gordonconwell.edu/ockenga/research/documents/StatusofGlobalChristianity2018.pdf>

Denominations: **48,000**

Congregations: **5,758,000**

Seems grossly inflated; I counted **700 denominations on Wikipedia.**