

Is the Nondenominational Church Biblical?

Introduction. Names like Grace Community Church, City Church, Epic Church, One Hope Church, Amazing Grace Fellowship, New Life Church, LifePoint Church, Journey Church, Elevation Church, Ascend Church, Hillsong Church and Catalyst Church sound really modern and vibrant. But we want to know if they're biblical.

More Americans than ever attend nondenominational churches, and it's a major shift in American Christianity. In 1972, fewer than 3% of Americans identified as nondenominational Christians. Now it's 14%, or nearly 40 million people in approximately 40,000 groups, according to the General Social Survey. Ryan Burge believes it's possible that nondenominational Christians could overtake Roman Catholics in the next 15 years to be "the largest religious tradition in America."

I believe people generally want to do right or at least feel they're right, but truth is more than just "wanting or wishing" to do right. The New Testament church is truly nondenominational, but that term is getting uncomfortable and inaccurate to use. However, one preacher used "predenominational" a while back, so we're going to look at four arguments for the predenominational church, and see why the relatively new nondenominational churches can't be biblical.

I. The Predenominational Church is God's Own Creation Through Jesus

- A. Jesus said He would build His church (Matthew 16:18), and Paul stated that the church was purchased with Christ's blood (Acts 20:28). Because the church is God's own creation, it was conceived in eternity (Ephesians 3:10-11) and it glorifies God (v. 21).
- B. Nondenominational churches arose in the late 1990s and early 2000s, coming first from denominational churches (Baptists, Assemblies of God, Pentecostals, etc.). But the predenominational church isn't a denomination because a denomination is a class of church that's distinctive from other churches, yet part of the same class of church (Protestantism, Evangelicalism).

II. The Predenominational Church Contains the Saved Everywhere

- A. Jesus is the Savior of the body (Ephesians 5:23). "Body" is a synonym for "church" (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18), of which there's only one (Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 2:16; 4:4; Colossians 3:15).
- B. Outlining the predenominational church is simple because the biblical terminology either includes all the saved (Matthew 16:18; God adds us to this body, Acts 2:47), or it refers to local congregations meeting together (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 1:2; et al.).
- C. The saved aren't a part of a homogenous whole (like the nondenominational churches want you to believe), but are called by the gospel and commit themselves to faithful living (Romans 8:12-14; cp. Colossians 3:5-11).

III. The Predenominational Church Faithfully Submits to New Testament Truth

- A. The predenominational church uses the seed of the Word of God (Luke 8:11; 1 Peter 4:11). It produces Christians only; nothing more, nothing less (Acts 11:26; cp. 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16).
- B. Paul, because he was inspired by God, had the authority to direct churches in the way of God (1 Corinthians 7:17; 14:37; 16:1; 1 Timothy 3:15). This was a part of “sound words” (2 Timothy 1:13). Other apostles could make similar claims (2 John 9; Revelation 2:7).
- C. Nondenominational churches wanted more freedom from their denominational authority structures. One of the reasons why they’ve grown so quickly is because they tend to avoid controversial issues. But contention is necessary sometimes (1 Corinthians 11:19; Jude 3).
 - 1. Nondenominational churches brought Calvinistic and charismatic beliefs systems with them from their origin denominations.
 - 2. But beyond the denominational doctrines is the deeper reason why nondenominational churches don’t preach the truth: they’re “cultural churches, responding not to sound doctrine, but to the changes and whims of culture.
 - 3. This is one reason so-called “churches of Christ” are adopting female preachers and elders, and capitulating on LGBTQ+ rights. They’re following culture disguised as biblical exegesis.

IV. The Predenominational Church Promotes Righteous Unity

- A. Before Jesus was crucified, He prayed for unity (John 17:20-21). When the New Testament saints deviated from unity, they were condemned and exhorted to unity once again (1 Corinthians 1:10-11; Ephesians 4:1-6).
- B. All of the words used to express this institution indicate unity:
 - 1. “Church” (Ephesians 1:22).
 - 2. “Body” (Colossians 1:18).
 - 3. “House” (1 Timothy 3:15).
 - 4. “Kingdom” (Colossians 1:13).
 - 5. “Bride” (Revelation 21:9).
- C. Nondenominational churches utilize a “Christ-centered focus,” prioritizing the “essential” tenets of faith (like the death and resurrection of Jesus) while allowing flexibility on secondary matters like baptism, eschatology (end times), or church governance, spiritual gifts, roles of men and women, worship style, and frequency of communion. Discerning the difference between “essential” and “secondary” matters takes Bible knowledge and a dedication to preserve truth, not attendance numbers.

Conclusion. The church has always existed with structure, accountability, and doctrinal clarity. When those anchors are removed, even with good intentions, we open the door to scriptural drift, personality-driven leadership, and a faith shaped more by culture than by the unchanging Word of God. This is a call to discernment.

Unity isn’t found in independence, but in truth. Freedom in Christ isn’t freedom from sound doctrine, but freedom to live within it. God’s people love the whole counsel

of God, testing every teaching against Scripture. We've got to remain humble enough to be accountable and grounded enough to be firm. Because in an age that celebrates cultural standards, the church must be anchored in truth, fellowship, and Christ.

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