

I love this question!

Personally, I identify with the concerns around whether Riverview Church affiliates with a church body. Frankly, it's easy to get stuck on worries about this. So let me give a few points that might help you to pull the trigger on joining us as we journey with each other, and with our church affiliation.

First, let me answer straightly: Yes, Riverview does indeed affiliate with the Assemblies of God (AG). For those of you who don't know, the AG is a modern Pentecostal church body that believes in a present day work of the Holy Spirit. Because of this, our church has a number of advantages available to us as we do life together, such as cooperating with a large community of like minded believers who are involved in the work of the Great Commission around the world in some pretty powerful ways. We also get a lot of outside mentoring, coaching, and even accountability from the AG which enables us to build our church in an effective way. It's truly an exciting time to join us!

That said, our affiliation with the Assemblies can be disturbing for some people who are suspicious of churches who are part of a "church brand." So let's try to set some of these concerns aside by looking a little at the subjects of both denominationalism as well as non-denominationalism.

Understanding Denominational and Non-Denominational Churches

In my mind, the sort of problems people have with affiliating with a larger church body basically stem from two main issues:

1. The belief that scripture in fact discourages us to denominate, and
2. The belief that all church bodies think that their particular reading of the Bible is right and everyone else is wrong.

So let's deal with these two ideas and let's see if we don't learn something new.

First, the Bible *does* teach that "denominating" is a bad idea. We see this from Paul's statement about division at the Corinthian church. There, Paul writes:

- My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? (1 Cor 1:11-13; NIV)

A lot of folks rightly point out that Paul is saying it's wrong to denominate (a word which means to name), because it leads to division. However, what many folks seem to miss here is that Paul is also rebuking non-branded churches as well. Check it out!

Paul says that some at Corinth were wrongly claiming “I follow Christ.” While that might seem positive, Paul was actually pointing out that such boasting was rooted in the same spiritual pride as those who claimed to follow Paul, Apollos or Peter.

The problem that Paul is speaking to here is the tendency to motivate division in our churches by claiming that we have attained theological purity. However, in reality, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, and William Seymour ALL carried something special about their view of scripture. And we need to pay attention to all of them, because we should be Christians who are interested in defending biblical truth—period.

Now, does this mean that all Bible teachers are right? No, of course not! 2 + 2 can never equal 5. Yet we need to acknowledge that all churches have something special to bring to the table when it comes to Biblical truth.

For this reason, we want to gather each Sunday in honor of ALL that Christ has accomplished through us historically, recognizing that all orthodox teachers have something that we should be willing to validate. Why Because, to quote the words of Paul: “Christ is not divided.”

However, we also need to understand that not all large, church bodies are truly “denominational” in nature. In other words, not all church bodies are theologically named after some great leader in church history. Instead there do exist some non-confessional church bodies which don’t necessarily swear allegiance to one particular theological brand. And, as it turns out, the Assemblies of God is one of those church bodies. In other words, the AG is, technically speaking, a “non-denominational” church body because it’s not named after anyone special. Make sense?

So then with that said, let’s address the question: What exactly is the AG?

The simplest way to say this it is that the AG is a fellowship of Pentecostal Christians. In other words, the AG believes in the modern day work of the Holy Spirit.

From its founding days, the AG sought to affiliate with a broad group of American christians who called themselves “Evangelicals.” Evangelicals are basically comprised of Baptists, Lutherans, and pretty much anyone who has been historically touched with a deep passion for true, authentic New Testament Christianity. In fact, the only real difference between the AG and most other evangelical movements is its unique emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church today.

If you want to see the most important official theological statement from the AG, then [click here](#) to view the 16 fundamental truths that we uphold. As you read, try to keep in mind that the document you’re skimming is not a “confession of faith” (like the Lutheran Book of Concord or the London Baptist Confession). Instead, the document simply provides a way for the AG to identify both its similarities with (as well as its differences from) other great evangelical movements. In no way is it therefore a “paper-pope”.

For this reason, it's not likely that you're going to perceive a massive difference between the theology of Riverview church and the theology of other great American evangelical movements. In our case, we're just a group of believers who are crazy about Jesus and want to see him lifted high!

As far as my personal theology is concerned, I think you'll find as you hang out with me that I'm basically an ecclesiastical mutt. Though I am deeply convicted that God is alive and doing amazing things in our time, my theology, in the end, is more of a cocktail. In other words, I search pretty broadly to answer some of our toughest Bible questions. And I am very committed to equipping believers to live out a living, active, two-way relationship with the Lord.

If you have any other questions about these matters, just scan the list of topics on our FAQ page. Or set up a meeting to visit with one of our awesome team members. We're happy to help get you connected to all that God is doing here at Riverview Church.