

# Centerpoint School of Theology

- 60 -

## THE CHURCH

### 1. I BELIEVE IN THE CHURCH

“[We believe] in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.”

*Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed* [AD 381]

“Because it is now our intention to discuss the visible Church, let us learn even from the simple title “mother”, how useful, indeed how necessary, it is that we should know her. For there is no other way to enter into life unless this mother conceive us in her womb, give us birth, nourish us at her breast, and lastly, unless she keep us under her care and guidance until, putting off mortal flesh, we become like angels [Matth 22: 30]. Our weakness does not allow us to be dismissed from her school until we have been pupils all our lives. Furthermore, away from her bosom one cannot hope for any forgiveness of sins or any salvation, as Isaiah [37:32] and Joel [2:32] testify. Ezekiel agrees with them when he declares that those whom God rejects from heavenly life will not be enrolled among God's people [Ezekiel 13:9]. On the other hand, those who turn to the cultivation of true godliness are said to inscribe their names among the citizens of Jerusalem [Isaiah 56:5; Psalm 87:6]... By these words God's fatherly favour and the especial witness of spiritual life are limited to his flock, so that it is always disastrous to leave the church.”

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 Vols., Library of Christian Classics, 20-21 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), IV.1.4, 2:1016.

1 What does “church” mean?

- a. Matthew 16:18, Caesarea Philippi: “I will build my church [ἐκκλησίαν (feminine singular accusative noun: ἐκκλησία)].”
  - i. Jesus purchases the church at the cost of his own life (Matt. 16: 21-23)
  - ii. Jesus expands the church by the proclamation of the gospel (Matt. 16:18-20)
  - iii. Jesus builds his church in enemy occupied territory which he promises to overcome (Matt. 16:18b)
  - iv. Jesus calls us into an army of fellow cross-bearers to advance the church (Matt. 16:24-28)

2 The demise of the church in our time

- a. *Life after Church: God’s Call to the Disillusioned* (Brian Sanders; IVP 2009); *Church Nobodies: How 4 Acts of Love will make your Church Irresistible* (George Schultz; Group Publishing, 2013); *Dear Church: Letters from a Disillusioned Generation* (Sarah Raymond Cunningham, Zondervan, 2006); *Quitting Church: Why the Faithful are Leaving* (Julia Duin; Bonfire Books, 2013) etc.
- b. Kevin de Young and Ted Kluck, *Why We Love the Church: In Praise of Institutions and Organized religion* (Moody, 2009).
- c. Emergent Church: D. A. Carson, *Becoming Conversant with the Emergent Church: Understanding a Movement and its Implications* (Zondervan, 2005); Kevin de Young and Ted Kluck, *Why We’re Not Emergent: By Two Guys Who Should Be* (Moody, 2008); Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Baker Academic, 2005). Etc.
  - i. “Emerging churches are communities that practice the way of Jesus within postmodern cultures. This definition encompasses nine practices. Emerging churches (1) identify with the life of Jesus, (2) transform the secular realm, and (3) live highly communal lives. Because of these three activities, they (4) welcome the stranger, (5) serve with generosity, (6) participate as producers, (7) create as created beings, (8) lead as a body, and (9) take part in spiritual activities.” (Gibbs and Bolger). (Many of these values are apparent in the contemporary church-planting scene).
  - ii. Post-modern values on institutions, history, liturgy, organized religion, mission, spirituality etc.

3 What does “church” mean”

- a. Building, denomination, gathering of people with a collective mind-set; “going to church”, “”coming from church”?
- b. ἐκκλησία

c. קהל qāhāl (LXX rendered ἐκκλησία)

i. ek-kaleo:

1. Called out from the world
2. Called into fellowship with
  - a. One another
  - b. Christ

#### 4 NT example #1: Ephesians

a. Workmanship: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Eph. 2:8-10)

i. ποίημα “workmanship”:

1. construction: in the artistic sense (poem, painting, symphony)
2. conjunction: solidarity (singular noun) – what God has done for us individually has welded us together into a single entity by virtue of the uniting link we share with Christ.

#### 5 NT example #2: 1 Peter 2:4-10

a. “As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,  
a cornerstone chosen and precious,  
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone,”

and

“A stone of stumbling,  
and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

b. Corner-stone, rejected stone, stumbling stone, chosen/precious stone

- c. “being built up as a spiritual house”
  - d. priests offering sacrifices to the Lord (5)
  - e. heralds declaring his praises (9)
  - f. mercy-driven consciousness (10)
- 6 Three principal metaphors:
- a. Building/Temple “a dwelling place for God” (Ephesians 2:22; cf. 1 Peter 2:5, 9)
  - b. Body (Paul; Ephesians 4:12 “for building up the body of Christ”; cf. 1 Cor. 10:16; 12:27)
    - i. “[I believe in]... the communion of saints” (Apostles’ Creed). Some take this statement to exegete previous statement “I believe in the holy Catholic Church” meaning Christians in fellowship with each other across time and space. But more likely it is meant to convey union with Christ of the church militant with the church triumphant as a body.
  - c. Bride: “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.” (Eph. 5:25-27; cf. Rev. 19:7; 21: 9, 17).

# Centerpoint School of Theology

- 61 -

## THE CHURCH

### 3. THE BODY OF CHRIST

“The basic idea of the body of Christ is that all that the church is as the New Testament people of God it is *in Christ*, and that its historical mode of existence and manifestation in the world, too, must answer to that. “Body of Christ” is the Christological concentration of “people of God,” just as it is implied in the Headship of Christ that the redemptive-historical and pneumatic unity of the people of God is grounded in Christ and is effectuated in communion with him.”

Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of his Theology*  
(Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), 395.

“As in the human body the head—meaning, the mind sustained by the brain inside the skull—animates, controls, directs and integrates the action of the whole organism in its various parts, so to the church, which is one body under Christ its Head, grows and upbuilds itself in faith and love through the harmonious operation of each particular body part. That is to say, as each believer seeks to attain total Christlikeness, and as the Holy Spirit of Christ prompts each to cooperative work and service out of love to God, to neighbors, and to the body of Christ as such, the church moves forward into “the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God... *to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*” (4:1-16, esp. 13). The vision is of divinely managed coordination of all who compose the body, and of developing discernment of the truth and wisdom of God by the body corporately. That is a goal that all Christians should embrace.”

J. I. Packer, *Taking God Seriously* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 90-91

## 1. Schemes for studying the church

- a. The Church as THE PEOPLE OF GOD
  - i. God's worshipping community (Doxology and Liturgy)
  - ii. God's dwelling place (Presence and Temple)
  - iii. God's chosen family (Election and Grace)
  - iv. God's new creation (Covenant, Kingdom, Holiness)
  - v. God's world-wide witness (Vocation)
- b. The Church as the FLOCK OF CHRIST
  - i. Given by the Father to the Son
  - ii. Gathered by the ministry of the Son through the Holy Spirit
  - iii. Gathering by mission to Jew and Gentile
  - iv. Glorifying by life and worship
  - v. Glorified with its Lord
- c. The church as CHRIST'S BODY, BRIDE and BUILDING
  - i. Its constitution: covenantal union
  - ii. Its function: a Spirit-empowered ministry
  - iii. Its edification: a matter of active love
  - iv. Its mission: word, work, world
  - v. Its destination: the stature of the fullness of Christ

## 2. The Church as THE BODY OF CHRIST

- a. Principal texts:
  - i. **Romans 12:5**: "so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another." (ESV)

- ii. **1 Corinthians 10:17**: “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.” (ESV)
  - 1. Roman Catholic materialistic view of the body of Christ
    - a. *Hoc est corpus meum!* (cotext of 1 Cor. 10-11)
    - b. *Mystical union*
    - c. Traditional RC view (Body as coterminous with RC Church) v. Vatican 11 and *Lumen Genitum*.
  - 2. Incarnational idea: church as *physical* extension of the physical body of Christ. Hypostatic union as consisting of
    - a) Divine nature and b) Christ *plus* the church
- iii. **1 Corinthians 12:12-27**: “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. [13] For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit....” (ESV)

b. Theological Significance

- i. Variety of theories as to source:
  - 1. John 15: Vine and branches
  - 2. Most likely (?): The Damascus-Road experience
- ii. Union of believers
  - 1. Context of justification: Gal 3:28
  - 2. Context of gifting: Corinth
- iii. The HEAD of the Church: CHRIST
  - 1. A metaphor that does not occur in Romans or Corinthians
  - 2. Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 1:18
  - 3. Christ as Head- KINGSHIP
  - 4. Gifting/edification/strengthening of the church

5. Ascension and gifting: Ephesians 4:7-8 (Psa 68 18)
6. Lists: no comprehensive list in the New Testament

7	1 Cor. 12:8-11	1 Cor. 12:28	Rom. 12:6-8	Eph.4:11	1 Pet. 4:11
	wisdom-word	apostles	prophecy	apostles	speaking
	Knowledge-word	prophets	service	prophets	servicing
	faith	teachers	teaching	evangelists	
	Healing-gifts	Miracle-workers	exhorting	Pastors/ teachers	
	Miracle-working	healing	giving		
	prophecy	helps	leadership		
	Distinguishing spirits	administration	Mercy-ministry		
	speaking in tongues	tongues			
	interpreting tongues				

- a. Primacy of word gifts
- b. Role of love: “Rom 12:3-8 (verse 9 “Let love continue”; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Cor. 13:1ff; Eph 4:16
- c. Humility of use:
  - i. “For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.” Romans 12:3 (ESV)
  - ii. “For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?” 1 Cor. 4:7 (ESV)
  - iii. “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. [2] Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. [3] But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.” 1 Cor. 11:1-3 (ESV)

8. Gifts are *for* others

9. The gifts:

- a. apostle
- b. prophet
- c. evangelist
- d. pastors/teachers ( Eph 4:11 “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers” (*hendiadys?*))
- e. healings
- f. wisdom and knowledge
- g. tongues
- h. prophecy

# Centerpoint School of Theology

- 62 -

## THE CHURCH

### 4. THE FAMILY OF GOD/THE PEOPLE OF GOD

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

1 Peter 2:9-10

“The New Testament defines the church in terms of the fulfillment of Old Testament hopes and patterns through a relationship to all three Persons of the Godhead, brought about by the mediatorial ministry of Jesus Christ. The church is seen as the family and flock of God (Eph. 2:18; 3:15; 4:6; John 10:16; 1 Pet. 5:2-4), his Israel (Gal. 6:16); the body and bride of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-28; Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9-27); and the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16; cf. Eph. 2:19-22). Those in the church are called the “elect” (chosen), the “saints” (consecrated ones, set apart for God), and the “brothers” (adopted children of God).”

J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1993), 200-201.

## **1. Schemes for studying the church**

- a. The Church as THE PEOPLE OF GOD
  - i. God's worshipping community (Doxology and Liturgy)
  - ii. God's dwelling place (Presence and Temple)
  - iii. God's chosen family (Election and Grace)
  - iv. God's new creation (Covenant, Kingdom, Holiness)
  - v. God's world-wide witness (Vocation)
- b. The Church as the FLOCK OF CHRIST
  - i. Given by the Father to the Son
  - ii. Gathered by the ministry of the Son through the Holy Spirit
  - iii. Gathering by mission to Jew and Gentile
  - iv. Glorifying by life and worship
  - v. Glorified with its Lord
- c. The church as CHRIST'S BODY, BRIDE and BUILDING
  - i. Its constitution: covenantal union
  - ii. Its function: a Spirit-empowered ministry
  - iii. Its edification: a matter of active love
  - iv. Its mission: word, work, world
  - v. Its destination: the stature of the fullness of Christ

## **2. The Church as THE PEOPLE OF GOD**

- a. Ephesians 2:11-22
  - i. Ephesians 5:1 "beloved children"

- ii. Adoption: “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.” (Ephesians 2:19)
- iii. Strangers in Paradise: “Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” (Ephesians 2:11-13)
- iv. Remember who you were:
  - 1. “Gentiles,” “un-circumcision,”
  - 2. “separated from Christ”
  - 3. “alienated from the commonwealth of Israel”
  - 4. “strangers to the covenants of promise”
  - 5. “without hope” – “having no hope”
  - 6. “without God in the world”
  - 7. “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1)
  - 8. “walked, following the course of this world” (Ephesians 2:1)
  - 9. “following the prince and power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2)
  - 10. “among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind” (Ephesians 2:3)
  - 11. “children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3)
- v. Remember who you are:
  - 1. “But God” (Ephesians 2:4)
  - 2. “made us alive” (Ephesians 2:5)

3. “raised us up with him” (Ephesians 2:6)
4. “seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6)
5. “brought near” (Ephesians 2:13)
6. “who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace” (Ephesians 2:14-15)
7. “reconcile(d)” (Ephesians 2:16)
  - a. “He made both one” (Ephesians 2:14a)
    - i. Explained negatively and horizontally:
      1. Broken down the dividing wall
      2. Abolishing the hostility ..  
commandments/regulations
    - ii. Explained positively/vertically:
      1. Create one man (Ephesians 2:15)
      2. Reconcile both to God (Ephesians 2:16)
  - vi. The Explanation for how we came to be who we are:
    1. “God’s workmanship” (Ephesians 2:10)
    2. “He came and preached peace” (Ephesians 2:17) – Jesus came to Ephesus!
  - vii. A summary of all that Paul is trying to say (?)
    1. “We all have access by one Spirit” (Ephesians 2:18)

### 3. Implications

- a. The UNITY of the church
- b. Multiculturalism (“*the segregated church on Sunday at 11am*”)
- c. John Piper *Bloodlines* (Crossway, 2011):

- i. “The bloodline of Jesus Christ is deeper than the bloodlines of race. The death and resurrection of the Son of God for sinners is the only sufficient power to bring the bloodlines of race into the single bloodline of the cross” (p 13-14).
- d. The Lord’s Supper as Family meal
- e. Family Life: dysfunctional or caring and loving?

# **Centerpoint School of Theology**

**- 63 -**

## **THE CHURCH**

### **THE MARKS (NOTAE) OF THE CHURCH**

“And [we believe] in one, holy, Universal and Apostolic Church.  
[Εἰς μίαν, ἁγίαν, καθολικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν]”

The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (AD 381)

## 1. NOTAE (MARKS):

Nicene Creed (325 A.D.)

“we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church.”

### i. **Oneness**

1. Rome and Orthodoxy

2. Anglo-Catholicism

3. Reformation Anglicanism (Hooker)

- a. Ephesians 4:13-16 “...until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, [14] so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. [15] Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, [16] from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” (ESV)

b. Four inferences

### ii. **Holiness**

Three inferences

### iii. **Catholicity**

Two inferences

### iv. **Apostolicity**

Two inferences

## 2. Luther’s Seven Marks

a. Part III of “*On Councils and the Church*,” Luther identifies “seven marks of the church,”

1. The Holy Word of God

2. Sacrament of Baptism

3. Holy Sacrament of the Altar

4. The Office of the Keys Exercised Publicly

5. The Calling, Consecrating and Ordination of Minister

- 6. Prayer, Public Praise and Thanksgiving
- 7. The Sacred Cross (Suffering)

b. The issue readdressed at the Reformation: Calvin *Institutes* 4.1.7-29

i. **Preaching of the Word**

1. Orthodoxy

The distinction between doctrines that “first of all” and those which are “secondary”

a. “For I delivered to you as of **first importance** what I also received” 1 Cor. 15:3

b. Vatican II “cardinal doctrines”; hierarchy of truths

c. Also in Protestantism: e.g. William Cunningham, Historical Theology “fundamental doctrines of Scripture”

2. Proclamation

Possible to have an orthodox creed but an unorthodox proclamation of it!

ii. **Administration of the Sacraments**

1. See lectures on sacraments

2. Calvin “duly (“properly”) administered” Inst. 4:14:1-26

iii. **The exercise of discipline**

1. John Knox, Andrew Melville: “*Books of Discipline*”

2. Discipline=organization! Not just censure!

3. Church censures:  
Some have added:

a. Worship

b. Ministry to the Poor (deaconal ministries)

c. Suffering

# Centerpoint School of Theology

- 64 -

## THE CHURCH THE CHURCH AS MOTHER AND BRIDE

“You cannot have God for your Father unless you have the church for your Mother.”

Cyprian, *On the Unity of the Catholic Church*  
CSEL 3.i.214; tr. LCC V. 127f

“For what has joined together, it is not lawful to put asunder” {Mark 10:9}so that, for those to whom he is Father the church may also be Mother. And this was so not only under the law but also after Christ’s coming, as Paul testifies when he teaches that we are the children of the new and heavenly Jerusalem [Gal. 4:26].”

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*,  
trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols., Library of Christian Classics, 20-21  
(Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), IV.i.1, 1012.

1. The BRIDE OF CHRIST imagery:

a. *John the Baptist:*

- i. John 3:29: “The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.” (Parable explaining John’s own role in the kingdom.)

b. *Jesus:*

- i. Mark 2:19: “And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.”
- ii. Cf. Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13): “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.”

c. OT background:

- i. Isaiah 62:4-5 (Cf. Jer. 2:2; Hosea 2:16-20)

“You shall no more be termed Forsaken,  
and your land shall no more be termed Desolate,  
but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her,  
and your land Married;  
for the LORD delights in you,  
and your land shall be married.  
For as a young man marries a young woman,  
so shall your sons marry you,  
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,  
so shall your God rejoice over you.”

- ii. These passages depict Israel or the faithful remnant within Israel as the bride of the Lord. John the Baptist is therefore saying that the Jesus he has introduced them to is none other than Israel’s King and Messiah.

- 1. The Isaiah passage: 61:10 - 62:7 – Poem: The Savior and his gathered people

Is. 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD;  
my soul shall exult in my God,  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

11 For as the earth brings forth its sprouts,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up,  
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise  
to sprout up before all the nations.

Is. 62:1 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,  
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet,  
until her righteousness goes forth as brightness,  
and her salvation as a burning torch.

2 The nations shall see your righteousness,  
and all the kings your glory,  
and you shall be called by a new name  
that the mouth of the LORD will give.

3 You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,  
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

4 You shall no more be termed Forsaken,  
and your land shall no more be termed Desolate,  
but you shall be called My Delight [*Hephzibah*] Is in Her,  
and your land Married [*Beulah*];  
for the LORD delights in you,  
and your land shall be married.

5 For as a young man marries a young woman,  
so shall your sons marry you,  
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,  
so shall your God rejoice over you.

Is. 62:6 On your walls, O Jerusalem,  
I have set watchmen;  
all the day and all the night  
they shall never be silent.  
You who put the LORD in remembrance,  
take no rest,  
7 and give him no rest  
until he establishes Jerusalem  
and makes it a praise in the earth.

2. Parallel with the Third Servant Song (Isa. 50:4-9):

- a. The Servant testifies to his acceptance of the Lord's will and commits himself to obedience and suffering
- b. Here is Isa 61:10ff, someone accepts with joy the task of salvation (61:10) and commits to its completion (62:1).
- c. Who is this? First Person singular (62:1) – looking back at the Anointed One of 59:21.

d. Poem has FOUR sections:

JOY in the work of salvation (61:10)  
Single INTERCESSOR (62:1-3)  
JOY in transformed ZION (62:4-5)  
INTERCEDING company (62:6-7)

d. Paul:

- i. 2 Cor. 11:2: “For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you pas a pure virgin to Christ.”
- ii. Eph. 5:24-27: “Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit fin everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”

1. *What does this say about Paul’s understanding of Genesis 2:24?*

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” Note: Greg Beale: “Ephesians 5:32 says that genesis 2:24 is not primarily about the relationship of husbands to their wives but rather about the relationship of Christ to the church, and that this relationship is a “mystery” that is “great.” Paul is saying that what appeared to be a pattern describing only the human institution of marriage now describes, in view of Christ’s coming and the formation of his church, much more. The pattern of a man leaving his family and becoming one with a wife found in Gen. 2:24 contains within it a mirror image of a greater marriage: the Messiah leaving his heavenly home and Father and becoming united with the church. Until the climax of the age, believers are to view their marriages in this way: wives should faithfully “respect” (Eph. 5:33) their husbands in order to reflect what the church has done (and should do) in regard to Christ, and husbands should give of themselves for their wives in order to reflect what Christ has done [Eph. 5:25]” (Greg Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Understanding of the Old Testament in the New* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011], 940).

e. John:

- i. Rev. 21: 2, 7, 9: 22:17: “And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband...

Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, ‘Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.’

Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, ‘Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb...

The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.'  
And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life  
without price."

## 2. Theological/Practical Lessons:

a. Love the church as you would a bride: we cannot understand biblical marriage if we don't understand the relationship of Christ to the church. Bad marriages reflect bad attitudes to the church. Bad-mouthing the church is like bad-mouthing someone's bride!

b. The Betrothal: in eternity. (John 17: 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24)

"...you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him... I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word... I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours... And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled... Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world."

c. Holiness of the church (bride): "that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

i. Harlot imagery (Hosea)

d. Marriage and Revelation passages. Future consummation. Eschatological optimism... Matthew 16 and "gates of hell". Revelation 21-22.

# **Centerpoint School of Theology**

**- 65 -**

## **THE CHURCH**

### **EVERY-MEMBER MINISTRY**

“Every-member ministry is biblically normative. The ascending Lord never proposed that his church became a congregation of spectators.”

Eric Wright, *Church – No Spectator Sport* (Evangelical Press, 1994), 11

## Ephesians 4:7-16

- a. “But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. 8 Therefore it says, ‘When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.’ 9 (In saying, ‘He ascended,’ what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? 10 He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 *to equip the saints for the work of ministry*, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” (ESV)
- b. “11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry*, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (KJV)

### 1. Every Christian is gifted by Christ with varied grace:

- a. “But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift” (v. 7).
  - i. Uniquely graced (John Stott “serving grace”)
    1. Everyone is “special”
  - ii. Fruit of the Ascension
    1. V. 8 and Psalm 68:18
  - iii. Cf. Romans 12:6, “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us.” (One body... many members “and all the members do not have the same function” [12:7]). The Head knows what is best for the body and how to distribute the gifts according to his will.

### 2. Some Christians are gifted by Christ with special grace:

- a. “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers” (v.11).

- i. Four gifts or five? (“shepherd-teachers”).
- ii. Permanent or temporary? (apostles and prophets as “foundational” – Ephesians 2:20 “built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets”). Note additional lists of gifts in 1 Cor. 12:8-11; 1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:6-8 and 1 Pet. 4:11. “Apostles” here as those who were directly appointed by Christ to bear witness to his resurrection. “Prophets” – “apostles *who are* prophets” (*hendiadys*) – Wayne Grudem (and double view of prophecy, one non-revelatory in nature and continuing in the present day). Doubtful if the text can bear such a distinction. “Evangelists” – apostolic plenipotentiary?
- iii. “Shepherd-teachers” – 3 office or two (and a half!) office view of official office in the church today (Pastors, elders, deacons). Again a *hendiadys* is favored today – “pastors *who are* teachers.”
- iv. The church and structure/office. *Who runs the church? Is this question even relevant?*
- v. Note: these are WORD-BASED GIFTS. What does the modern church need? Preaching, teaching, instruction... first of all.

### 3. Gifts are for the equipping of the saints

#### a. “to equip the saints” (v.12)

- i. The gifting of apostles and prophets *then* and evangelists, pastor-teachers *now* is in order to equip the saints.
  1. “equip” (καταρτισμὸν):
    - a. Repair what is broken: (as in Matthew 4:21 “mending their nets”)
    - b. Supply what is lacking (1 Thess. 3:10 “supply what is lacking in your faith.”)
  2. Ordinary (what a terrible word that is!) Christians need the help of pastor-teachers because they are broken and deficient without them. Who needs the church (and its “officers”) – you do!
  3. The body needs a lot of work done on it.
  4. What should I look for in a church? Pastor-teachers who will love me enough to fix me and supply what I cannot get elsewhere is a part of the answer.

4. The saints are the ones who do the ministry (too!)
    - a. “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (v.12)
      - i. KJV and (eg) ESV – and Calvin, Owen, Hodge, *and* Lincoln in the Word Biblical Commentary [1990]).
        1. KJV takes the three clauses as parallel: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.
        2. ESV (and most modern translations) take the first clause as referring to the gifted ones and the last as the responsibility of the saints.
        3. For a defense of the KJV construction, see T David Gordon, “Equipping Ministry in Ephesians 4?”, JETS 37/1 (March 1994), 69-78.
      - ii. Examples of every-member ministry:
        1. Acts 8:1-4 “Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.” Everyone who was scattered from Jerusalem at the time of Saul’s persecuting policies engaged in evangelism. (For a contrary understanding, see Scott Clark’s The Heidelberg, <http://heidelberg.net/2013/01/does-acts-8-provide-a-warrant-for-every-member-evangelism/>).
        2. What am I gifted to do? Am I the only one who recognizes this gift (alarm bells if this is the case!). How can I utilize this gift to further the kingdom of God? Am I prepared to be out of the spotlight? Do I need my name printed in the church bulletin in order to do this? Are there needs that I can meet?
      - iii. Healthy churches and healthy church-members are not given to consumerism: what’s in it *for me*? Church hopping results from a narcissistic approach to what it means to be a church member.
5. The aim of the ministry (every-member ministry) is the building up of the body of Christ
  - a. All saints are gifted, some are gifted in special ways and all need building up.
  - b. The whole and the part:
    - i. The part: “Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up (οἰκοδομήν)” (Rom. 15:2)

- ii. The whole: “for building up (οικοδομήν)the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:12). That is, the CHURCH – as building (2:20-22), body (4:1-16, esp. v.13) and bride (5:25-27).
- c. What does this “building up” look like?
- d. “until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (v.13)
  - i. Unity of the faith
  - ii. Unity of Knowledge
  - iii. Mature man – the stature of the fullness of Christ (the church is to reflect Jesus)
  - iv. No longer tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (v.14): strong, mature, discerning faith.

T. David Gordon, "Equipping Ministry in Ephesians 4?", JETS 37/1 (March 1994), 69-78

John Jefferson Davis, "Ephesians 4:12 Once More: Equipping the Saints for the Work of Ministry?"  
*Evangelical Review of Theology* 24.2 (2000): 167-176.

R. Paul Stevens, foreword by J. I. Packer, *The Equipper's Guide to Every-Member Ministry: Eight Ways Ordinary People Can Do the Work of the Church* (Regent College Publishing, 2000)

# Centerpoint School of Theology

- 66 -

## THE CHURCH AS A WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY

“Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more.”

John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad* (Grand Rapids, MI: Maker Academic, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2010), 15.



1. “Worship” (Old English: *weorthscipe*, “worth-ship” or “worthiness” translates a variety of Hebrew and Greek terms that denote inner dispositions and outer expressions involved in the recognition of and response to the God who reveals himself in Scripture: in creation, providence and redemption. The terms include the following ideas:
  - a. Bow down before
  - b. Kiss toward
  - c. Express reverence and awe
  - d. Honor the glory of
  - e. Serve
  
2. Creation as a temple reflecting the being and character of God:
  - a. The same Hebrew verbal form (hithpael), *hithallek*, used for God’s “walking back and forth” in the Garden (Gen 3:8), also describes God’s presence in the tabernacle (Lev 26:12; Deut. 23:14 [15]; 2 Sam. 7:6-7).
  - b. Second, Gen. 2:15 says God placed Adam in the Garden “to cultivate it and to keep it.” The two Hebrew words for “cultivate and keep” (respectively, *abad* and *shamar*) can easily be, and usually are, translated “serve and guard.” When these two words occur together later in the OT, without exception they have this meaning and refer either to Israelites “serving and guarding/obeying” God’s word (about 10 times) or, more often to priests who “serve” God in the temple and “guard” the temple from unclean things entering it (Num. 3:7-8; 8:25-26; 18:5-6; 1 Chr. 23:32; Ezek. 44:14). Therefore, Adam was to be the first priest to serve in and guard God’s temple.
  - c. Eden as “holy space” in which God’s image-bearers may worship their Creator (gen. 1:26-28).
  - d. See, “The Final Vision of the Apocalypse and Its Implications for a Biblical Theology of the Temple,” in *Heaven on Earth. The Temple in Biblical Theology* eds. S. Gathercole and T. D. Alexander (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004) 191-209.
  
3. Corporate *gatherings for worship*:
  - a. Old Testament
    - i. The main features in the liturgical pattern:
      1. The Sabbath: every seventh day observed as a memorial of Creation (Gen. 2:3; Exod. 20:8-11) and redemption (Deut. 5:12-15). Enforced (Exod. 16:21-30; 20:8-9; 31:12-17; 34:21; 35:1-3; Lev. 19:3, 30; 23:3; cf. Isa. 58:13-14) with drastic consequences for Sabbath-breaking (a capital offense, Exod. 31:14; Num. 15:32-36).
      2. Three annual national feasts (Exod. 23:14-17; 34:23; Deut. 16:16) in which the people gathered in God’s sanctuary to offer sacrifices

celebrating his bounty, to seek and acknowledge reconciliation and fellowship with him, and to eat and drink together as an expression of joy.

- a. Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread (14<sup>th</sup> Day of first month) commemorated the Exodus (Exod. 12; Lev. 23:5-8; Num. 28:16-25; Deut. 16:1-8);
  - b. Feast of Weeks (*Firstfruits*) marked the end of the grain harvest, and was held fifty days after the Sabbath that began Passover (Exod. 23:16; 34:22; Lev. 23:15-22; Num. 28:26-31; Deut. 16:9-12)
  - c. Feast of Tabernacles (Booths, Ingathering, 15<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> of seventh month), celebrated the end of the agricultural year, as well as being a reminder of how God led Israel through the desert (Lev. 23:39-43; Num. 29:12-38; Deut. 16:13-15).
3. Day of Atonement (10<sup>th</sup> day of 7<sup>th</sup> month), when the high priest took blood into the sanctuary to atone for Israel's sins during the previous year, and the scapegoat went into the desert as a sign that those sins were now gone (Lev. 16).
  4. Regular sacrificial system, involving daily and monthly burnt offerings (Num. 28:1-15) plus a variety of personal sacrifices, the common features of which were that anything offered must be flawless and that, when an animal was offered, its blood must be poured out on the altar of burnt offering to make atonement (Lev. 17:11).

ii. Exilic worship:

1. The term synagogue refers to an assembly or congregation of Jews for the purpose of worship and study (Acts 13:43), or the building in which such an assembly meets (Luke 7:5). James uses the same word to refer to a Christian assembly (James 2:2, "assembly" ESV).
2. Without a temple, worship was confined to embryonic "synagogue" worship. What did they do in the synagogue? Prayed, read and expounded Scripture, sang (though not in all synagogues). After the Second Temple, Jews continued to gather in synagogues for this purpose.

b. New Testament:

- i. Christ's priesthood, sacrifice, and intercession supersede the entire Mosaic system for putting away sin (Heb. 7-10).

- ii. Baptism (Matt. 28:19) and the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:23-26) replace circumcision (Gal. 2:3-5; 6:12-16) and Passover (1 Cor. 5:7-8).
  - iii. Jewish festal calendar no longer binds (Gal. 4:10; Col. 2:16).
  - iv. Sabbath is renewed and re-counted, on the basis of one-plus-six rather than six-plus-one. Apostles taught Christians to worship on the first day of the week, the day of Jesus' resurrection, "the Lord's day" (Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10), treating it as the Christian Sabbath.
  - v. "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."
4. We do not have any specific record of liturgy in the New Testament. Fragments (glimpses) can be found:
- a. "Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off." (Acts 13:1-3).
  - b. "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7).
  - c. "What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God. Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church." (1 Cor. 14:26-35).
  - d. Regulative principle:
    - i. Colossians 2:23, "These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion [ἑθελοθησκία] and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh."

ii. 1 Corinthians 14

1. Context of public worship. Paul is dealing with the issue of the perpetuation of adolescence in worship. Acting like infants. Grow up! Many things which are unclear.

- a. Tongues: 2 principles in corporate worship:

- i. There must be no more than 3 who participate in tongues
- ii. Tongues must all be interpreted. There is no command in the Bible quite like this one. You must be silent if there is no interpreter. It is a command! No debate about cessation in Paul's time. There are tongues and they from the Holy Spirit. I don't care if they are of the Holy Spirit, Paul seems to be saying, if there is no interpreter, or if you happen to be the fourth one, you must sit down and be quiet!

- b. Prophecy.

- i. Paul has explained the prohibition of tongues in worship. "But the HS has given me this tongue..." Shut up! Because tongues is for unbelievers primarily on the basis of Isaiah 28:11. i.e. a judgment against unbelieving Israel. Therefore if there is no interpreter, it will not edify the church and it will make unbelievers think you stark raving bonkers. Therefore prefer prophecy.
- ii. Worship is to be God-centered and edifying and in a known tongue. So in prophecy: let 2 or 3 prophets speak. "I have a word from the Lord... and I'm must give it" Not while he's speaking, you're not! Not a question: is it prophecy? Is it Grudem's type of prophecy, or Packer's, or whoever's. Its very simple: if you are number 4, you will not speak no matter how important you may think it is. And you will not speak while someone else is speaking.

iii. Westminster Confession 21:1,

1. "The light of nature shows that there is a God, who has lordship and sovereignty over all, is good, and does good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the

imaginings and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture.”

e. Certain Regulatory features:

- i. Sung and spoken praise is offered: “be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart” (Eph. 5:18-19) cf. Col. 3:16). Inclusive psalms. And “songs” or “hymns” in Rom. 8:34 [“Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us] Phil 2:6-11 and Col. 1:15-20. (*Pliny speaks of the early church singing hymns to Christ as God.*)
- ii. Prayer: “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way” (1 Tim. 2:1-2, clearly in a worship setting vv 10-15).
- iii. Scripture is read and expounded. Few would possessed copies of the Scripture (OT), hence “devote yourself [Timothy] to the public reading of Scripture” (1 Tim. 5:13). New Testament epistles were designed to be read to the entire church (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2). Especially, “And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea” (Col. 4:16).
- iv. Preaching, exposition... for which gifts are given to the church (Acts 13:1; Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:24-31; Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 3:16-4:5).
- v. Congregational response. 1 Corinthians is a dysfunctional setting, but there is the assumption that the congregation say “Amen” – “Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outside say ‘Amen’ to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying?” (1 Cor. 14:16); “For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory” (2 Cor. 1:20).
- vi. Sacraments: Regular participation in the Supper – 1 Cor. 11:17-22.
- vii. Lord’s Day:
  1. For *sociological* reasons, meeting at night: “On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight” (Acts 20:7).

2. For *Christological* reasons, first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10) marking the day of Christ's resurrection.

Bibliography:

Carson, D. A. *Worship by the Book* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002)

Chapell, Bryan, *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape our Practice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009)

Due, Noel, *Created For Worship: From Genesis to Revelation to You* (Grand Rapids, MI: Mentor, 2005). *A biblical-theological approach reflecting a more relaxed view of regulation.*

Gore, R. J. Jr., *Covenantal Worship: Reconsidering the Puritan Regulative Principle* (NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2002). *Gore is critical of the regulative principle and argues for a more relaxed approach. "Whatever is consistent with covenantal faithfulness is appropriate" (10)*

Horton, Michael, *A Better Way: Rediscovering the Drama of God-Centered Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002). *A covenant-renewal approach to the pilgrimage of the worshipping community.*

Johnson, Terry, *Reformed Worship: Worship That is According to Scripture* (Reformed Academic Press, 2000)

Kauflin, Bob, *Worship Matters: Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008)

Old, Hughes Oliphant, *Worship That is Reformed According to Scripture* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1986)

Payne, Jon, *The Elements of Christian Worship: An Introduction to Historic Protestant Liturgy* (GPC Press, 2007)

Peterson, David, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1992)

Ryken, Philip G., Derek W. H. Thomas, and J. Ligon Duncan, *Give Praise to God: A Vision for Reformed Worship* (NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2003)

# **Centerpoint School of Theology**

**- 67 -**

## **THE CHURCH AND “CHURCHES”: SCHISM AND DISCIPLINE**

“The purest Churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated, as to become no Churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, there shall be always a Church on earth to worship God according to His will.”

Westminster Confession 25:5

“Church censures are necessary, for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren, for deterring of others from the like offenses, for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump, for vindicating the honor of Christ, and the holy profession of the Gospel, and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the Church, if they should suffer His covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.

“For the better attaining of these ends, the officers of the Church are to proceed by admonition; suspension from the sacrament of the Lord's Supper for a season; and by excommunication from the Church; according to the nature of the crime, and demerit of the person.”

Westminster Confession 30:3-4

1. Church/churches – universal/local (universal: Matt. 16:18, Acts 15:22; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 1:22); local (house churches): Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15).
2. Unity of the church: “one, holy, catholic, apostolic” (*Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed*, AD 381).
3. Schism:
  - a. East-West Schism (over *filioque*) in AD 1054
  - b. Western Schism within the Roman Catholic Church (when several claimed to be Pope simultaneously) AD 1378 – 1417
  - c. Books of Discipline (Church of Scotland).
    - i. Two works regulative of ecclesiastical order in the Church of Scotland after the Scottish Reformation. They were drawn up by John Knox and others on the Geneva model.
      1. *The First Book of Discipline* (1560).
      2. *The Second Book of Discipline* (1578)
    - ii. Care: when “discipline” is attributed as a Mark (*notae*) of the church, it is often referring to “order, structure”– i.e. *polity*, rather than sanctions.
    - iii. “As no commonwealth can flourish or long endure without good laws and sharp execution of the same, so neither can the kirk of God be brought to purity, neither yet be retained in the same, without the order of ecclesiastical discipline.” (*First Book of Discipline*, Chapter 9).
    - iv. James Durham, *Concerning Scandal: Concerning Scandal in General, Public Scandals, Scandalous Errors & Scandalous Divisions* (1659 repr., ed. Chris Coldwell; Dallas: Naphtali Press, 1990). *Useful introduction by David Lachman.*

#### 4. Church Discipline

- a. Restoring straying sinners at the local church
- b. Subtext – Perseverance and discipline:
  - i. “For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end” (Heb. 3:14).
  - ii. “the one who endures to the end will be saved” (Mark 13:13).
  - iii. The role of the church in enabling, encouraging perseverance.

c. ADMONITION

- i. Private dispute: undertaken by every member of the church.
  1. “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector” (Matt. 18:15-17).
- ii. Spiritual Deterioration:
  1. The role of the “spiritually mature”
    - a. “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted” (Gal. 6:1).
    - b. “restore” (*katartizete*) – “to return to its former condition”
    - c. “gentleness” – no bullying, witch-hunts.
  2. The role of the church’s oversight (elders):
    - a. “We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves” (1 Thess. 5:12-13).

d. SUSPENSION

- i. “Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. 9 It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. 10 For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. 11 For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. 13 As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. 14 If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him,

that he may be ashamed. 15 Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother” (2 Thess. 3:6-15).

1. They are “brothers in the Lord” (3:6, 15).
2. Their lives do not match the gospel (3:7-8, 10-12, 14).
3. The church is told what to do (3:6, 14-15).
4. Purpose is to make them ashamed (3:14) in order to restore.
5. If they refuse to be restored, Matthew 18:17 applies.

e. EXCOMMUNICATION:

i. 1 Cor. 5:1-13

“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father’s wife. 2 And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

1Cor. 5:3 For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. 4 When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

1Cor. 5:6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 8 Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

1Cor. 5:9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— 10 not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? 13 God judges those outside. Purge the evil person from among you.”

ii. Nature of this discipline

1. “remove” (5:2)

2. “deliver to Satan” (5:5)
3. “cleansing out of old leaven” (5:7)
4. “avoid social contact” (5:11)
5. “purge the evil person from among you” (5:13)

iii. Aim of this discipline is repentance and restoration: “so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord” (5:5).

5. The problem text!

- a. Matthew 7:1-5, “Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. 3 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.”

# Centerpoint School of Theology

- 68 -

## THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

“I fear there are some Christians among you to whom Christ cannot say ["Well done, good and faithful servant"]. Your haughty dwelling rises...thousands ...have scarce a fire to warm themselves at, and have but little clothing to keep out the biting frost; and yet you never darkened their door. You heave a sigh, perhaps, at a distance, but you do not visit them. Ah! my dear friends! I am concerned for the poor, but more for you. I know not what Christ will say to you in the great day. You seem to be Christians, and yet you care not for his poor. Oh, what a change will pass upon you as you enter the gates of heaven! You will be saved, but that will be all. There will be no abundant entrance for you: `He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly'....I fear there are many hearing me who now know well that they are not Christians because they do not love to give. To give largely and liberally, not grudging at all, requires a new heart; an old heart would rather part with its life-blood than its money. Oh, my friends! enjoy your money; make the most of it; give none away; enjoy it quickly, for I can tell you, you will be beggars throughout eternity." - R.M. M'Cheyne, Scotland, 1838

What is the church's mission?

<p style="text-align: center;">The Great Commission Matthew 28:18-20</p> <p>“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Cultural Imperative Genesis 1:28</p> <p>“And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cf. Genesis 1:22: “And God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.’”</p>
<p>1. Four verbs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>make disciples</i> (imperative)</li> <li>b. <i>go, baptize, and teach</i> (participles)</li> </ul> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Making disciples, therefore, involves <i>teaching</i> and the teachings of Jesus apply to every sphere of life.</p> <p>2. <i>Discipleship</i> involves submission to the <u>Kingship</u> (“authority”) of Jesus Christ.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Becoming a Christian in medicine, in politics, in construction, or in the arts is quite vain unless Christ reigns.”</p> <p>3. Disciple-making is a perpetual activity of the church until Jesus returns.</p>	<p>1. Five verbs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Be fruitful, multiply, fill, subdue and have dominion</li> <li>b. John Currid: “This reflects the idea that being fruitful, multiplying and filling are not merely commands relating to human reproduction. Rather, they apply to all of life, including the socio-economic and spiritual realms, as well as to giving birth. The concepts of ‘subduing’ and ‘ruling’ support the interpretation of this verse as <i>a world-and-life directive</i>: man is to be overseer of the earthly kingdom.” (<i>Genesis</i>, 2 Vols. [Darlington: EP, 2003], 87-88). <i>Emphasis added.</i></li> <li>c. Debate exists over terminology and apparent meaning: Rule, subdue, <i>or</i> dominion, stewardship?</li> <li>d. The issue revolves around environmentally sensitive concerns over perceived misuse of this imperative by Christians.</li> </ul>

What is the mission of the church? What does God expect your church to go into the world to do?

- a. “Mission” refers to something or someone who is sent out with a task.
- b. “Church” is the corporate body of Christ, both worldwide and the local congregation.
- c. What about the word “missional”?
  - a. Trendy term, but what does it mean? Different things to different people!
    - i. I am “into” mission as a way of life.
    - ii. Get out of your holy huddle and “do community.”
      1. Passion for renewing the city can run the risk of marginalizing the one thing that makes Christian mission, mission: namely, making disciples of Jesus Christ.
      2. Extremes:
        - a. Christians should not be concerned about suffering in the world
        - b. Christians should only focus on evangelism
        - c. Gospel to be front and center in the church. The priority must be the Great Commission, else the cultural mandate collapses into another social gospel.
        - d. Genesis 12:1-3: “Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’”
          - i. Some say: this is a moral agenda for believers. It is a command to go into the world and be a “community blessing station. But it doesn’t work that way in Genesis. The patriarchs were blessed despite themselves” (de Young).
- e. Luke 4:16-21: “And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was

written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.' And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'"

- i. Was Jesus' primary mission feeding the poor? Hardly!
- ii. Watch the verbs! – proclamation verbs.
- iii. The importance of diaconal ministry (see end piece)
- iv. The word for "poor" in Luke carries more of a spiritual than an economic sense.
- v. Calvin's Geneva? But Geneva was his parish! Company of Pastors.

#### Polar views of the church's mission:

##### 1. Neo-Kuyperianism:

- Intellectual descendants of Abraham Kuyper ("There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!")
- The church exists to be a light in the world, with a goal of the renewal of the cosmos involves exercises Christ's Lordship in the arts, education, politics, economics, etc.
- A desire to make their faith public
- Zeal to confront injustice and help the hurting
- Appreciation for the goodness of the created world
- Takes seriously that Christianity is about more than sinners getting their ticket punched for heaven
- BUT: Blurs the distinction between common grace and special grace

- Blurs the distinction between general and special revelation
- Can minimize personal redemption at the expense of cosmic renewal
- Explicit biblical support for commanding all Christians to change the world or transform the culture is very thin
- Devolves quickly into an indistinct moralism

## 2. Two-Kingdoms View (Spirituality of the Church)

- Dual citizenship
- The realm of nature does not function in the same way as the realm of grace
- Should not attempt to influence the culture and “redeem/transform” it; instead the church needs to focus on “being the church” through “ordinary means of grace” ministry. Christians can do a great deal of good in the world, but the church has a limited mandate.
- Critique:
  - i. Emphasis on the church and the ordinary means (e.g., preaching, sacraments)
  - ii. Realistic assessment of the fallen nature of the world and the dangers of utopian idealism
  - iii. Acknowledges that while Christians can do and should do many worthwhile things in the world, the church as church has a more limited mandate
  - iv. Avoids endless, and often silly, pronouncements on all sorts of cultural and political matters
  - v. Takes seriously the already and not-yet of the kingdom
  - vi. Understands ~ every nice thing that happens in the world is not “kingdom work”
  - vii. A bulwark against theonomy and reconstructionism
  - viii. BUT: An unwillingness to boldly call Christians to work for positive change in their communities and believe that some change is possible
  - ix. The doctrine of the “spirituality of the church” allowed the southern church to “punt” (or worse) on the issue of slavery during the 19th century; same is true of Apartheid in South Africa, Nazism in Germany, Abortion or Gay (same-sex) marriage

Bibliography:

2K:

James Bannerman's chapter "The Church in Its Relation to the World"—in volume one of *The Church of Christ* (1868)

Greg Bahsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*

D. A. Carson, *Christ and culture revisited*

Richard Gamble, *In Search of the a City Set on a Hill*

\_\_\_\_\_ *The War of Righteousness*

John Fea, *Was America Founded as A Christian Nation: A Historical Introduction*

Greg Foster, *The Contested Public Square: The Crisis of Christianity and Politics*

Greg Frazer, *The Religious Beliefs of Americas Founders*

Greg Frazer, VanDrunen, David (Autumn 2007), "The Two Kingdoms Doctrine and the Relationship of Church and State in the Early Reformed Tradition", *Journal of Church and State* 49 (4), 743763.

Philip Hamburg, *Separation of Church and State*

Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*

Daryl Hart, *A Secular Faith*

James Davidson Hunter, *To Change the World* (The most important on this list)

Thomas Kidd, *God of Liberty: Religious History of The American Revolution*

Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*

Richard Niebhur, *Christ and Culture*

Oliver and Joan O'Donovan, *From Irenaeus to Grotius*

David Van Drunen *Living in God's Two Kingdoms*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Natural Law and The Two Kingdoms*

TRANSFORMATIONALIST

Albert Wolters, *Creation Regained*

John Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*

Tim Keller, "The Gospel and the Poor," <http://www.hlic.org/uploads/thegospelandthepooroutline.pdf>

Charles Marsh and John Perkins, *Welcoming Justice: God's Movement Toward Beloved Community* (IVP, 2009).

FENCE SITTERS

Kevin de Young and Greg Gilbert, *What is the Mission of the Church: Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom and the Great Commission* (Crossway, 2011).

COLLECTIONS OF BOTH VIEWS

Ian Shaw ed., *Social Issues and the Local Church* (Evangelical Press of Wales, 1988) (especially, Donald MacLeod, "The Christian and the State" 59-76; Paul Bassett, *The Inner City* 77-90).

Aquila Report summary of a debate between deYong, Trueman and Evans:

<http://theaquilareport.com/a-summary-of-a-discussion-on-transformationalism-trueman-evans-deyoung-and-hart/>

## **Helping the Poor The Church's Responsibility?**

I address a thorny issue: do we have a responsibility *as a church* to help the poor? Two issues of interpretation immediately spring to the surface: is this a “church” responsibility or an individual responsibility, and what *exactly* do we mean by “poor”?

In response to the first, some may cite James Henley Thornwell’s doctrine of the “spirituality of the church” and suggest that this is not the church’s responsibility. Frankly, I have always thought this to be somewhat bizarre. How can the church preach the gospel and at the same time refuse to give the hungry bread? The issue is far more complex, of course. For example, an individual Christian may support a certain political party (at odds with some of his brothers and sisters) in compliance with Scripture’s mandate to be a good citizen, but it would not be right for the church as a whole to do so.

In response to the second, particularly in a global economy and shrinking world (emails soliciting help come from the other side of the world, for example, many of which are scams; but some are genuine), make defining poverty and my obligation all the more difficult.

The Bible is not silent on this issue. Think of the gleaning laws in Deuteronomy 25 or the command to “open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor” in Deuteronomy 15:11. Mull over Psalm 35 and Proverbs 14 and add specific New Testament statements calling for compassionate discipleship in the face of the weak and helpless (Matt. 9:35-36), and especially the early church’s attempts at addressing the issue in Acts 4:34-35 together with Paul’s two-year obsession with aiding poverty relief in Jerusalem, telling the Ephesian elders, “we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35).

How, then, should *we* meet this obligation? Two principles might help us here:

First, we are most responsible for those nearest to us. Family (children, parents) are our immediate responsibility. Failure here makes us “worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim. 5:8). Next comes the church community. This is what we see in Acts (2:45; 4:32-37), for example, as the poverty stricken early church took care of each other. After that, the household of faith all over the world – our Easter offering to diaconal missionary needs in a hospital in Pakistan was an example of that. But our responsibility doesn’t – *cannot* – end there. There are the needs of the non-Christian within our community. Sometimes, opportunity dictates what we should do. The Good Samaritan offered aid simply because he saw the need and was in a position to do help. We can do the same.

Second, we are responsible for those least able to help themselves. “Widows and orphans” (Jam. 1:27) – in a New Testament society where there was no social and governmental aid (in some form, we do that willingly or otherwise in paying taxes); then there were believers in prison – in prison, that is, for their faith (Heb. 10:34). Equally, the New Testament insists that *we not* aid the idle and the wicked (1 Thess. 4:11-12; 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:14). The New Testament is clear, those who will not help themselves ought not to be helped.

We have barely begun to address this issue. It is one that our Congregational Outreach committee deals with on an on-going basis. Pray for them – for wisdom and strength as they seek to alleviate in some measure the needs that arise within and around our church community.

Derek W. H. Thomas

**CENTERPOINT  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**

**THE CHURCH:  
ONE HOLY CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC**

**A Praying Community**

“The comprehensive act in which they all embark is the homage of an intelligent and eternal worship. To this end was man invested with dominion over the works of God’s hands, that, as the priest of nature, he might walk through the aisles of her vast cathedral, and lead the whole choir of earth in chants of thanksgiving and joy. It is his office to gather the inarticulate praises of this dumb world into his censer, investing them with his own intelligence and thought, and lighting them at the fire of his own devotion; and then, as the voice of nature, to pour the flood of praise forever upon him who has created all for his own glory.”

Benjamin Morgan Palmer, *Theology of Prayer* (Sprinkle publications, 1980, page 17).

**1. The precedent for corporate prayer.**

- a. “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayers” (Acts 2:42).
- b. “And when they heard it, they lifted up their voices together to God” (Acts 4:24).
- c. “[Peter] went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying” (Acts 12: 12).
- d. “And when [Paul] had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all” (Acts 20:36).

**2. The power of corporate prayer.**

- a. “Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses’ hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek” (Exod. 17:11-13).
- b. “And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31).

- c. “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God.....praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints” (Eph. 6:11-12, 18).
- d. “And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God...and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake” (Rev. 8:3-5).

### **3. The pattern of corporate prayer.**

- a. Focused on spiritual as well as physical needs (e.g., Col. 1:9-14):
  - filled with the knowledge of his will
  - walk in a manner worthy of his calling
  - fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work
  - increasing in the knowledge of God
  - strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might
  - endurance and patience with joy
- b. Comprehensive in scope (e.g., I Tim. 2:1):
  - supplications
  - prayers
  - intercessions
  - thanksgivings
- c. Usually contains same elements as personal prayer, as in Nehemiah 9:
  - Adoration (v. 6-15)
  - Confession (v. 16-21)
  - Thanksgiving (v.22-31)
  - Supplication (v. 32-38)

### **4. The practicalities of corporate prayer.**

- a. Brief (proportional to numbers and time)
- b. Be wary of “practicing righteousness before men” (Matt. 6:5)
- c. LOUD (principle of I Cor. 14:9 - “if you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said?”)

- d. Forego lengthy prayer requests - just pray!
- e. Pray Scripture back to God.
- f. Don't be shy - everyone should feel free to participate.
- g. Be comfortable with occasional silence (Rev. 8:1)
- h. Don't dominate or monopolize - focus on praying for one thing.
- i. Concentrate, listen carefully and give silent (or verbal!) assent.
- j. Avoid the ruts - variety is refreshing.
- k. Make corporate prayer a priority, a habit.
- l. Know that it can be hard work.
- m. These are principles, not rules. Let the Spirit move.

Suggestions for further reading:

- Richard Bewes, *Equipped to Serve* (Christian Focus, 2013).
- Douglas F. Kelly, *If God Already Knows, Why Pray?* (Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1989).
- Benjamin Morgan Palmer, *Theology of Prayer* (Sprinkle Publications, 1980). Originally published 1894.



## **The Church: Elders and Deacons**

- I. Why Does the Church Exist:** Blue Max Trucking: “Building the Carolinas, One Load at a Time”
- A. The Church Exists to Bring Glory to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
    - 1. Our present and final redemption in Christ is to the praise of his glory (Eph. 1:11-14, 3:21)
    - 2. The present and eternal purpose of Christian believers is to live for Christ’s glory (1 Cor. 10:31, 2 Cor. 5:9).
    - 3. Jesus Christ is glorious (2 Cor. 1:20, Heb.13:20-21 20, Jude 24-25)
    - 4. The Church is to acknowledge Christ’s glory (Phil 2:11, I Tim 1:17, I Peter 4:11, Romans 11:36).
    - 5. The Church of the Lord Jesus Brings Glory to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit especially through worship (Matthew 28:9, Luke 24:50-53, I Peter 2:4-6, 9-10, Ephesians 2:19-22).
    - 6. The eternal pattern of the church’s preoccupation of worship in heaven is to shape the church’s current activity (Rev 1:5b-6, Rev 4:8-11, Rev 5:12-14)
- II. The Mission of Christ’s Church**
- A. As the head of the church (Matthew 16:18, Ephesians 2:20), Christ commissions the church to fulfill the mission of Making Disciples through reaching people for Christ (Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 5:10, Luke 24:27, Acts 1:8).
  - B. The Church Equipping people to love and serve Christ (Colossians 1:28, Ephesians 4:11-16, John 17:7, Luke 2:52)
  - C. WCF 25.3 “Unto this visible Church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world”
  - D. The Bible gives us markers of the kind of Church Jesus promises to build. Those markers are epitomized in Acts 2:42-47 - Growth in Grace and Knowledge of Christ through his appointed means (Word and sacrament), the worship of the Triune God, Life under a biblical World and Life View, Commitment to Fellowship and Service, Commitment to Evangelism and Missions.

E. First Presbyterian Church Mission Statement

*In keeping with the Great Commission, First Presbyterian Church of Columbia aspires to be a dynamic Christian community within the heart of South Carolina, centered in the worship of God and bearing witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*As Christ's disciples we strive to build vibrant lives, strong families, and a fellowship in which members care for and love one another and together seek the well-being of our city, state, and the world.*

*By the power of the Holy Spirit we seek to develop a vital preaching and teaching ministry, aimed at drawing men and women to Christ; healing, comforting and nurturing them in the faith; equipping them for service, and deploying them effectively into all walks of life.*

**III. The Role of Leaders at First Presbyterian Church (Pace Cars)**

God can work among his people the way he chooses. He has chosen to work through officers. The Westminster Larger Catechism #158 describes an office as an authoritative position appointed by Christ in Scripture for the government of his church that has distinct gifts, functions and a specific authoritative calling.

- A. Examples to the Flock (Jn. 13:15, Phil. 3:17, 2 Thess. 3:9, 1 Thess. 1:7, 1 Tim 1:16, 4:12, 1 Pt. 5:3)
- B. Provide Vision (Proverbs 29:18, 1 Chron. 12:32)
- C. Servants of God's People, (Mark 10:42-45, Galatians 2:20)

Oswald Sanders in *Spiritual Leadership*: "True greatness, true leadership, is achieved not by reducing men to one's service but in giving oneself in selfless service to them." Sander reminds us of this master principle of service among Christ's people: "greatness comes only by way of servant-hood, and that first place in leadership is gained by becoming everyone's slave."

- D. Provide Order in Christ's Church (Titus 1:5)
- E. Teach and Guard the truth of God's Word (John 17:17, II Timothy 2:2, 2 Timothy 1:14).
- F. Shepherds of God's Flock (I Peter 5:1-2)
- G. Equipping the Saints for Ministry (Ephesians 4:12)

Most of the Reformers including John Calvin held there were four offices in Christ's church: Minister, Teacher (Doctor), Ruling Elder and Deacon. The 1619 Synod of Dort: "the offices of four kinds: of the Ministers of the word, of the Professors of Theology, of the Elders, and of the Deacons." While the ARP Church officially holds to a three office view, the function of Teacher (Doctor) is a distinct calling under the office of Minister.

## IV. Origin and Character of the Eldership

### A. Eldership in the OT

Eldership can be traced back to the days of the people of God in Egypt, but especially becomes prominent in the Exodus (Numb.11:16ff.).

### B. In the NT Church

1. Incidental reference in Acts and Paul's address to the elders of Ephesus (Acts 20:17-35).
2. Paul's teaching on eldership in the Pastoral letters (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1)
3. Incidental comments in the Letters which appear to apply specifically to elders.

The ultimate origin lies in Christ (the Chief Shepherd/Chief Bishop 1 Pet.5:4; 2:25).

### C. In Acts 20 and elsewhere, the function of congregational leaders is described:

*Episkopos*: An overseer or "bishop" cf. Phil.1:1; 1 Tim.3:2; Tit.1:7). Peter uses the same term to describe Jesus (1 Pet.2:25). This involves:

1. Leading and ruling: Elders 'direct the affairs of the church' (1 Tim.5:17). Cf. 1 Thess.5:12.  
Note especially Heb.13:17 (cf. vv. 7, 24). Leaders "keep watch" as those who are alert to the needs of their charge; they are to give account of their stewardship; their leadership should evoke obedience. Such leadership is intended to be a joy, willingly and eagerly engaged in (Heb.13:17; 1 Pet.5:2).
2. Guarding: Acts 20:28. Both themselves, each other, and the whole flock in our care.  
Reasons:
  - i. the Spirit has appointed you;
  - ii. the value of the flock—purchased by Christ's blood;
  - iii. the presence of enemies—cf. Matt.16:18;
  - iv. the danger of failed leadership, v.30.

Paul himself is an example of this in his own "eldership" at Ephesus, Acts 20:31.

3. Nourishing: the *episkopos* is to be a shepherd (v.28). In the NT a central aspect of this role is feeding the flock. The language of 1 Pet.5:2 suggests this has a focus in biblical instruction (cf. 1 Pet.2:2; 2Tim.3:16-17).

Within the corporate oversight the NT appears to distinguish a general responsibility (1 Tim.3:2; Tit. 1:9) and a particular role for those whose special task is teaching and preaching (1 Tim.5:17).

### D. Special Challenges

1. Traditional church elders are Sheep Farm Directors, not Shepherds:  
Function of eldership is ruling, caring for, teaching and discipling members of the congregation.

2. Traditional church elders become accustomed to the role of sheep rather than of Shepherd.
  - i. Sheep react to circumstances; but the elder/shepherd is meant to be a strategist.
  - ii. He has vision, mission, goals, clear on the steps to be taken to achieve them.
  
3. The Shepherd goes before the flock: he sees further, he leads, he plans, he anticipates. *Presbuteros*: An elder. While the OT term (*zaken*) is very broad in terms of age, the NT “spiritual” age or maturity, experience, graces and gifts is what is in view. The elder must not be a recent convert (1 Tim.3:6).
  - i. The nature of the task requires maturity, e.g. dealing with situations such as Acts 20:29-30. The weakness of the flock necessitates stable leadership (Acts 20:35). Tasks such as those described in 1Thess.5:14 (probably addressed to “those who work hard among you”) require such maturity.
  - ii. Elders lead not merely by teaching but by modeling. The elder is an “example” (*tupos*, a type!) to the flock (1 Pet.5:3).

#### V. Personal Challenge of the Eldership (“Take heed to yourselves”)

Some indication of the specifics of his exhortation may be gleaned from the later directives Paul gives to Timothy and to Titus (1 Tim.3:1ff; Tit. 1:5ff).

Essentially Paul covers five areas of the elder’s life:

- A. The mastery of self (“temperate, self-controlled” 1 Tim.3:2; “self controlled . . .” Tit. 1:8)
- B. The character of his domestic life (“the husband of but one wife . . . he must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect” 1 Tim.3:4, cf. Tit. 1:6).
- C. Open-heartedness. This marks his relationships with God’s people (“hospitable” 1 Tim.3:2; Tit. 1:8)
- D. The seriousness of purpose that mark his life (“upright, holy and disciplined” Tit. 1:8)
- E. The security of his grasp of apostolic truth, evidenced by his ability to use it for the edification of the church and the defense of the faith (“He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it,” Tit. 1:9; “able to teach” 1Tim.3:2).

How do you recognize an elder? He is a Model Christian Man (1 Pet 5:3-*tupos*), a type for other Christians. In him grace has produced qualities and characteristics of Christ-likeness.

Paul puts this NEGATIVELY: “above reproach” ( 1 Ti. 3:2; Ti. 1:7).

- In two areas: 1. His general Christian life  
 2. His specific calling as an elder

So much so that a qualification is: “What do outsiders think?” (1 Ti. 3:7).

**Elders are stewards:** We are called to manage the household of faith. Elsewhere, we are stewards.

What is a steward in this context?

- Person who is familiar with resources
- aware of the needs (not a slave to the “wants”!)
- able to bring the resources to meet the needs

Cf what Paul says about pastor-teachers in Eph. 4:

1. stability to the church
2. equipment for the saints to enable them to minister
  - We need to be men of vision if we are to be able to do this.
  - We also need to be men willing to take responsibility.

**Elders are teachers.** 1 Tim. 3:2 “able to teach,” skillful in teaching.

Cf. 2 Tim. 2:24. Hence 2 Tim. 2:15 and 2 Tim. 3:14.

Paul spells this out more fully in Titus 1:9ff:

1. Hold firmly to the message
2. Encourage others by sound doctrine
3. Refute those who oppose it

This is why elders are asked to subscribe doctrinally to a fuller statement of faith than members (the Westminster Confession of Faith)

For this we need to be men who are growing: thinking, reading, studying his Word.

## VI. The Origin of the Office of Deacon

- List of offices in the NT church (minus one) – Ephesians 2:20; 4:11
- References to Deacons – While the word *diakonos* is used frequently in the NT, only three times does it refer to the office of deacon. (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8, 10). No reference to the origin of the office in these texts.
- Witness of Acts (2:42; 11:27-28; 14:23; 15:6) - Apostles, Prophets and Elders

*What about Acts 6:1-6?*

The word *diakonos* (deacon) is not used to refer to the seven.

“The Seven” – two of them engage in a preaching ministry in Acts 7 & 8 and are referred to as *Evangelists*.

*Evangelists* – Also rarely mentioned in NT. (Acts 21:8; 2 Tim. 4:5; Eph. 4:11) Appear to be apostolic lieutenants with apostolic authority to perform certain functions of an apostle. (Titus 1:5) If two of the seven were Evangelists – apostolic lieutenants – then likely they all were.

Church offices develop in NT like “nesting dolls” opening to reveal another layer. Jesus is the origin of all offices. Gives his authority to apostles (Matt. 10:1; 28:18-20); he is true prophet; he is Chief Shepherd and Overseer (1 Pet. 2:25); he is The Servant (Matt. 20:28; Rom. 15:8). From Jesus we get Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, Deacons.

Acts 6 is often used to make a dividing wall between elders and deacons; two separate ministries in which elders doing spiritual work and deacons doing practical work. But Acts 6 is actually the formation of a select group of Evangelists who were apostolic lieutenants. The office of Deacon did not begin until later.

A. Two offices, one ministry

The role of deacons in the church, contrary to the view already stated, is intimately tied to the ministry of the elders. Here are some reasons.

- What Acts 6 does give us is a pattern of ministry that focuses on word and deed.

The types of Gifts reflect the need for a ministry of word and deed (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; 1 Pet. 4:11)

1. Sign gifts
2. Speaking gifts
3. Serving gifts

The gifts differ, but the differing gifts work together in one body to serve the gospel. (1 Cor. 12:31) Elders and deacons work together to accomplish ONE ministry. They are two sides of one coin in that regard.

- Notice also that the office of deacon is always mentioned in connection with the elders. (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8,9)
- The required qualifications for deacon are similar to elder, except for the ability to teach and refute error.

B. Implication: For these three reasons, it seems clear that deacons serve in coordination with elders. This coordinated effort is also modeled for us in the way Apostles and Evangelists work together in a coordinated ministry.

**The Qualifications of Deacon: 1 Tim. 3:8-10**

- V. 8 – Deacons are people of character
- V. 9 – Deacons are people of the gospel
- V. 10 – Deacons are people of proven worth
- V. 12 – Deacons must manage their families well

**The Nature of the Office of Deacon**

With few references to diakonos and no clear description of duties, we are left to fill in the gaps regarding the nature of the office.

A. *Diakonos*: 1 Tim. 3:13 – those who serve well as deacons. . . *Diakonos* means servant, but is used in a wide range of contexts (e.g. serving at table, serving as the assistant to the master of a house). Contrary to popular thought, it is a position of authority. We saw how deacons, like elders, must manage their own families well. The deacon's authority is derived authority. Deacons serve on behalf of another.

It is practical work – caring for the practical needs of the body – but spiritual in nature.

If the diaconate is a servant role, then we need to look at models in the Bible.

- Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37)
- Jesus is the chief model of service. Everything that is true of deacons is first true of Christ.

## Our Tradition

- *The office of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of sympathy and service after the example of Christ.* – Form of Government, chapter 7
- *The diaconate shall be responsible for the congregation’s ministry to those in material need or distress.* – Form of Government, chapter 7
- John Girardeau – Synod of 1877 “It is important to note that whenever mention is made of the deacons, it is always the care of the poor.” The Southern Presbyterian Review. He also mentioned the “temporal prosperity of the Church” as part of the Deacons scope of oversight. “The Deacons free the ministry and eldership from engrossment in the temporal business of the Church.” “The Deacon’s office is important in its bearing upon the support of the ministry.” “The Deacons’ office is important to the prosecution of the benevolent enterprises and the support of the institutions of the Church.” The Deacon’s office is important, in its bearing upon the perfect conformity of our whole system theoretically and practically, to the pattern shown us in the Mount.”
- Encourage the Practice of Total Stewardship: *“It shall also encourage practice of total stewardship among the members of the congregation. It shall plan, in collaboration with the Session, the causes toward which the offerings of the congregation shall be directed; devise effective methods for securing and receiving these offerings; secure and receive special offerings as directed by the Session and the higher courts of the Church; and see that all offerings are properly distributed.”* – Form of Government, chapter 7, 197
- Tend to the General Property of the Congregation: *“It shall have the care of the general property of the congregation, both real and personal. In matters requiring extraordinary expenditure for acquisition, construction, or alteration of church property, consent of the congregation is required.”* – Form of Government, chapter 7, 197

## B. Implications

1. Know the People
2. Model service and generosity.
3. Exercise your gift and office with compassion.
4. Lead congregation in deeds of mercy.
5. Assist elders in their duties by freeing them to shepherd.
6. Consider whom you can serve in the First Presbyterian family.
7. Practice Stewardship of Resources.
8. Be Familiar with Church Property and a Steward of Church Property

- C. The Challenge to the office of deacon – *Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?* (Matt. 18:1-4) (Luke 22:7-27) Peter serving at table. Jesus would teach him something about identifying with Christ.

- Deacons must fight the temptation toward recognition.
- Deacons must fight the temptation toward upward mobility.

D. The Solutions:

- Serving the lowly is serving Christ (Matt. 25:40)
- Serving the lowly is serving like Christ (Phil. 2:1-11)

E. Fruits of Service

- Unity among the body (Acts 6:1-6) – envy and jealousy are derailed.
- Witness to the kingdom of God (Matt. 11:1-6)
- Praise to God (2 Cor. 9:12)

We need God's help for the leaders (Elders and Deacons) of our congregation: "Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God" (2 Corinthians 3:5). "Who is sufficient for these things? For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ (2 Corinthians 2:16b-17).