

Staying Sharp on the Doctrine of the Church

**Allegheny District
Waterdam Church
Canonsburg, PA
February 24-25, 2011**



Introduction



What would things look like if Satan actually took over a city? The first frames in our imaginative slide show probably depict mayhem on a massive scale: Widespread violence, deviant sexualities, pornography in every vending machine, churches closed down and worshipers dragged off to City Hall. Over a half-century ago, Donald Grey Barnhouse, pastor of Philadelphia's Tenth Presbyterian Church, gave his CBS radio audience a different picture of what it would look like if Satan took control of a town in America. He said that all of the bars and pool halls would be closed, pornography banished, pristine streets and sidewalks would be occupied by tidy pedestrians who smiled at each other. There would be no swearing. The kids would answer "Yes, sir," "No, ma'am," and the churches would be full on Sunday ... *where Christ is not preached.*

Michael Horton, "Christless Christianity: Getting in Christ's Way," *Modern Reformation* 16/3 (May/June 2007), 10.



What if the church serves people, not as a market transaction, but because it is the people of God? What if our choir works hard on their anthem, not because they hope you will like it and be inspired by it but because the choir knows that we are called to be a sign, a signal, a foretaste, a Beachhead of God's kingdom in the world? What if I'm preaching this sermon, not because I think it's uppermost on your list of weekly wants, but rather because I believe this is what God wants? . . . What is the greatest service the church can render the world? Perhaps the service we render is not necessarily what the world thinks it needs. But the church is not only about meeting my needs but also about rearranging my needs, giving me needs I would never have had had I not come to church.

William Willimon, "On Not Meeting People's Needs at Church," *Preaching Now* (June 29, 2004), 3.



When we, the church, are confused about who we are and whose we are, we can become anything and anyone's. We can become a goose-stepping, Hitler-saluting abomination, as we were in the middle of the last century in Germany. We can become a self-righteous, self-centered, and racist boot on the neck of our neighbors, as we were in South Africa until the end of apartheid. We can become a machete-wielding, genocidal horror, as we were in Rwanda just a few years ago. We can become a corpulent, self-important irrelevance, as we are in so much of America today. And we can become a sad, shrunken ghost pining for past glory and influence, as we are in Canada, Britain, and most of Europe.



5

When the church is confused about who it is and whose it is, it can become just another institution, just another collective, just another voluntary society. So we need ecclesiology – the doctrine of the church – to clarify our minds, motivate our hearts, and direct our hands. We need ecclesiology so that we can be who and whose we truly are.

John G. Stackhouse, Jr., ed. *Evangelical Ecclesiology: Reality or Illusion?* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 9.



6

Far too many people define the church by her function, which will have profound implications for determining whether or not the church is "successful" or not. Time and again this is the problem with pastors and churches. We must understand the nature of the church as the people of God (1 Pet. 2:9-10), the church of Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18) and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14). The church does have a function, but her function is rooted in her nature. This statement illustrates the biblical reality of the church: "The church is. The church does what it is. The church organizes what it does. The nature of the church is based on God's presence through the Spirit. The ministry of the church flows out of the church's nature. The organization of the church is designed to support the ministry of the church." (Craig Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000, p. 37.)



7

"The church is." This describes the nature of the church as a divine creation, brought into being through the ministry of the triune God. This is critical to understand or we will end up understanding the church like a social club or some other organization, not a divinely created organism.

"The church does what it is." Based on the church's nature, it will engage in certain activities and ministries. This would be summarized in the purpose of the church, viz. to glorify God in worship, nurture and outreach. But, importantly, all of these need to be filtered back through the grid of what the church is to ensure it is God-honoring and Christ-exalting. At best this is where many begin to think about the church, either assuming the nature of the church or being ignorant about it.



8

"The church organizes what it does." This gets at the structure of the church, beginning with the elders and the deacons/nesses. This simply recognizes that we need to be wise and discerning about how most effectively to carry out the God-ordained ministries to which we have been called rooted in her nature and purpose. This is where many pastors, leaders and churches are spending their time and energy today, and in most instances, those focusing on this piece do so without an awareness of the God-ordained nature and purpose of the church.



The doctrine of the church is of the utmost importance. A theology for the church would be incomplete without a theology of the church. . . . It is the most visible part of Christian theology, and it is vitally connected with every other part. A distorted church usually coincides with a distorted gospel. . . . This is not to say that all differences in ecclesiology are tantamount to differences over the gospel itself.

Perhaps the popular disinterest in ecclesiology results from the understanding that the church itself is not necessary for salvation. Cyprian of Carthage may have said, 'No one can have God for his father, who has not the church for his mother,' but few would agree with this sentiment today. . . . And emphasizing salvation by faith alone, evangelical Protestants certainly have even less use for the church, much less for studying the doctrine of the church.



However, the church should be regarded as important to Christians because of its importance to Christ. Christ founded the church (Matt. 16:18), purchased it with his blood (Acts 20:28), and intimately identifies himself with it (Acts 9:4). The church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:23; 4:12; 5:23-32; Col. 1:18,24; 3:15; 1 Cor. 12:12-27), the dwelling place of his Spirit (Rom. 8:9,11,16; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:11,15-17; Eph. 2:18,22; 4:4), and the instrument for glorifying God in the world. Finally, the church is God's instrument for bringing both the gospel to the nations and a great host of redeemed humanity to himself (Rev. 5:9)."

Present-day errors in the understanding and the practice of the church will, if they prevail, still further obscure the gospel. Christian proclamation might make the gospel audible, but Christians living together in local congregations make the gospel visible (see John 13:34-35). The church is the gospel made visible.

Mark E. Dever, "The Church," in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (B&H, 2007), 766-767.



Nicene-Constantinople Creed (381)

". . . We believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church."

We believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

This is a corporate confession made by all those who comprise the Church of Jesus Christ. Although people enter into the Church individually through new birth, they enter into the corporate Church family. In our day of individualism and privatization, the corporate component of the Church must be re-emphasized.

We **believe** one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We certainly do not believe in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit the same way in which we believe in the Church. However, belief in God in all His fullness and all that belief entails is the basis for the new birth, which is the basis of becoming a part of and believing in the Church. The Church is not first and foremost a sociological phenomenon but a new creation by God the Holy Spirit. In our day, it is essential to remember that these truths have been revealed by God, and they must be believed.



Do we believe in the church in the same way we believe in God the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Spirit? The English translation is confusing and misleading as it adds "in" before the marks.

Credo in unum Deum Patrem omnipotentem . . . et in unum Dominum Iesum Christum . . . et in Spiritum Sanctum . . . et unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam

"We believe **in** one God, the Father, the Almighty . . . and **in** one Lord, Jesus Christ . . . and **in** the Holy Spirit . . . and [**in**] one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church."

In essence we are saying that we do not believe in the church in the same way/manner we believe in God, Son and Holy Spirit who create the church.

Angelo Di Berardino, ed., *We Believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church*, 5, Ancient Christian Doctrine (IVP Academic, 2010).



Nature or Attributes of the Church

We believe **one** holy catholic and apostolic Church.

This spiritual community created by the Holy Spirit is one. There is a unity among these people who comprise the Church. As the Father and the Son are one, so those who are part of the Church are one with the Father and the Son, and with one another. This is confessed as a "communion of saints."

Texts: Eph. 4:1-6 (cf. Jn. 10:16; 17:11, 20-23; 1 Cor. 1:10-17)

We believe one **holy** catholic and apostolic Church.

Rooted in the holy character of God, those He creates anew are also holy.

Those who are part of the church are holy in two respects. They are holy by virtue of being united to Christ and set apart for Him. They are also holy in behavior in that they take on the holiness of their Head, Jesus Christ. This is confessed as a "communion of saints."

Texts: 1 Pet. 2:4-10 (cf. Isa. 6:3; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 1 Pet. 1:16)

14



We believe one holy **catholic** and apostolic Church.

God promised that all the nations would be blessed through Abraham, and this promise was fulfilled in Christ and all those who now by faith believe in Him. God is drawing a people to Himself that crosses all social, racial and intellectual boundaries, a church that is universal in scope. Although being a part of the Church is exclusive, only through Jesus, membership is universal in that the church exists globally and it is made up of people from every tribe and language and people and nation.

Texts: Col. 1:15-20 (cf. Gen. 12:1-3; Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 1:21-23; Rev. 5:9-10)

We believe one holy catholic and **apostolic** Church.

The teaching of Jesus was faithfully passed on by the apostles. Since Jesus Christ is the Church's Head, she is dependent upon the faithful teaching of the apostles. This is a truth once for all entrusted to the saints. This is a message to be proclaimed, which is at the heart of the missional thrust of the Church.

Texts: Eph. 2:11-22 (esp. vv. 19-22; cf. 3:5)

15



We believe one holy catholic and apostolic **Church**.

Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the Church, has promised that He will build His Church.

Texts: Heb. 12:18-24 (esp. vv. 22-24; cf. Matt. 16:18)

16



Viewing the church in terms of the gospel helps us to see how the various descriptions fit together. The church is *apostolic*, because it is founded on the apostolic gospel and called to fulfill the apostolic mission. The *holiness* of the church means that life, as well as truth, marks Christ's church; the behavior of Christians in the world must be remarkable enough to cause grudging admiration, astonished curiosity or threatening hostility (1 Pet. 2:12; 3:16; Jn. 15:18). The *unity* of the church requires a new community, joined in a common faith and life. The *catholic* character of the church flows from the fact that the church is a colony of heaven; it cannot conform to the social castes and sectarian goals that divide a fallen world, for it is the beginning of the new humanity in Christ.

The heavenly definition of the church explains the contrasts of its existence in time (*militant/triumphant*) and space (*local/universal*), as well as the perspectives of earth and heaven (*visible/invisible*). The distinction between the church as *organization* and *organism* describes how the church is to live in both the ardour and the order of the Spirit.

Edmund P. Clowney, *The Church* (IVP, 1995), 72-73.



The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to create/birth the people of God! John Stott has written (*Between Two Worlds* [Eerdmans, 1982], 109), "the church is the creation of God by his Word. . . . God's new creation (the church) is as dependent upon his Word as his old creation (the universe). Not only has he brought it into being by his Word, but he maintains it through the same Word." The Catholic Church believes it was the church that created the Word, whereas we as Protestant evangelicals believe that "God's Word has always created his people!" (Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Crossway 2000), 29).

18



Justification by faith is the 'article by which the church stands or falls' (*articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*) – Martin Luther

"Literally, the article of the standing and falling of the church; i.e. the article of Christian doctrine necessary to the life and perpetuation of the church; a phrase used by Luther and thereafter, especially by Lutheran theologians, to describe the doctrine of justification." *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms* (Baker, 1985), 46

19



We are not the church's guardians. If it were up to us, the church would perish before our very eyes, and we together with it. . . . But it is another who obviously preserves both the church and us.

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

20



Images of the Church

Paul S. Minear, *Images of the Church in the New Testament*



II. Minor Images of the Church

1. The salt of the earth
2. A letter from Christ
3. Fish and fish net
4. The boat
5. The ark
6. Unleavened bread
7. One loaf
8. The table of the Lord
9. The altar
10. The cup of the Lord
11. Wine
12. Branches of the vine
13. Vineyard
14. The fig tree
15. The olive tree
16. God's planting

22



II. Minor Images of the Church

17. God's building
18. Building on the rock
19. Pillar and buttress
20. Virgins
21. The Messiah's mother
22. The elect lady
23. The bride of Christ
24. The wedding feast
25. Wearers of white robes
26. The choice of clothing
27. Citizens
28. Exiles
29. The Dispersion
30. Ambassadors
31. The poor
32. Hosts and guests



23

III. The People of God

33. The people of God
34. Israel
35. A chosen race
36. A holy nation
37. Twelve tribes
38. The patriarchs
39. Circumcision
40. Abraham's sons
41. The exodus
42. House of David
43. Remnant
44. The elect
45. Flock
46. Lambs who rule
47. The Holy City
48. The holy temple
49. Priesthood
50. Sacrifice
51. Aroma
52. Festivals

24



IV. The New Creation

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 53. The new creation | 61. The coming age |
| 54. First fruits | 62. God's glory |
| 55. The new humanity | 63. Light |
| 56. The last Adam | 64. The name |
| 57. The Son of Man | 65. Life |
| 58. The Kingdom of God | 66. The tree of life |
| 59. Fighters against Satan | 67. Communion in the Holy Spirit |
| 60. Sabbath Rest | 68. The bond of love |



V. The Fellowship in Faith

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 69. The sanctified | 78. Slaves |
| 70. The faithful | 79. Friends |
| 71. The justified | 80. Servants |
| 72. Followers | 81. "with..." |
| 73. Disciples | 82. Edification |
| 74. Road | 83. Household of God |
| 75. Coming and going | 84. Sons of God |
| 76. Witnessing community | 85. Brotherhood |
| 77. Confessors | |



VI. The Body of Christ

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 86. The body of life | 92. Head of the church |
| 87. Members of Christ | 93. The body of this head |
| 88. The body and the blood | 94. The unity of Jews and Gentiles |
| 89. The diversities of ministries | 95. The growth of the body |
| 90. Spiritual body | 96. The fullness of God |
| 91. Head of cosmic spirits | |



Select Bibliography



2003

The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations by Dan Kimball, Rick Warren, Brian D. McLaren, and Howard Hendricks (2003)

The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship That Actually Changes Lives by Peter Scazzero and Warren Bird (2003).

2004

Stop Dating the Church!: Fall in Love with the Family of God (Lifechange Books) by Joshua Harris (2004)

Nine Marks of a Healthy Church by Mark Dever (2004).

The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God by Greg K. Beale (2004).



29

2005

Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens by Neil Cole (2005)

The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel by Mark Dever and Paul Alexander (2005)

The Community of the Word: Toward an Evangelical Ecclesiology ed. by Mark Husbands and Daniel J. Treier (2005).

2006

Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples by Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger (2006)



30

2007

The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church by Alan Hirsch and Leonard Sweet (2007)

They Like Jesus but Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations by Dan Kimball (2007)

Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church: Mandate, Commitments and Practices of Diverse Congregations by Mark DeYmaz (2007).

The Living Church: Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor by John Stott (2007).

What is a Healthy Church? by Mark Dever (2007).

Starting a House Church: A New Model for Living Out Your Faith by Larry Kreider and Floyd McClung (2007).

A Theology for the Church ed. by Daniel L. Akin (2007).



31

2008

Reimagining Church: Pursuing the Dream of Organic Christianity by Frank Viola (2008)

Essential Church?: Reclaiming a Generation of Dropouts by Thom S. Rainer and Sam S. Rainer (2008)

Total Church: A Radical Reshaping around Gospel and Community (Re:Lit) by Tim Chester and Steve Timmis (2008)

Who Stole My Church?: What to Do When the Church You Love Tries to Enter the 21st Century by Gordon MacDonald (2008)

Quitting Church: Why the Faithful are Fleeing and What to Do about It by Julia Duin (2008)

What is a Healthy Church Member? by Thabiti M. Anyabwile (2008).

People and Place: A Covenant Ecclesiology by Michal S. Horton (2008).



32

2009

Vintage Church: Timeless Truths and Timely Methods (Re:Lit: Vintage Jesus) by Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears (2009)

Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional by Jim Belcher and Richard J. Mouw (2009)

Why We Love the Church: In Praise of Institutions and Organized Religion by Kevin DeYoung and Ted Kluck (2009)

Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church by Reggie McNeal (2009).

Introducing the Missional Church: What It Is, Why It Matters, How to Become One by Alan J. Roxburgh and M. Scott Boren (2009).

The House Church Book: Rediscover the Dynamic, Organic, Relational, Viral Community Jesus Started by Wolfgang Simson and George Barna (2009).

Exploring Ecclesiology: An Evangelical and Ecumenical Introduction by Brad Harper and Paul Louis Metzger (2009).

Deliberate Simplicity: How the Church Does More by Doing Less by Dave Browning (2009).

33



2010

Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations by Ed Stetzer and Thom S. Rainer (2010)

Ethnic Blends: Mixing Diversity into Your Local Church by Mark DeYmaz and Harry Li (2010).

The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission by Christopher J. H. Wright (2010).

The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love: Reintroducing the Doctrines of Church Membership and Discipline by Jonathan Leeman (2010).

The Gifts of the Small Church by Jason Byassee (2010)

Hipster Christianity: When Church and Cool Collide by Brett McCracken (2010)

34



2011

Church in the Present: A Candid Look at What's Emerging by Scot McKnight, Peter Rollins, Kevin Corcoran, Jason Clark (2011).

A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story by Michael. W. Goheen (2011).

The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation by Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile (2011)

The Attractional Church: Growth Through a Refreshing, Relational, and Relevant Church Experience by Bill Hornsby (2011)

The Doctrine of the Church by Greg R. Allison (????)

35



Church

- Allison, Greg R. *The Doctrine of the Church* (Wheaton: Crossway, ????)
- Clowney, Edmund. *The Church*. Contours of Christian Theology. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995.

Polity

- Brand, Chad Owen and R. Stanton Norman, ed. *Perspectives on Church Government: Five Views of Church Polity*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004.
- Cowan, Steven G., ed. *Who Runs the Church? 4 Views on Church Government*. Counterpoints: Church Life. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004.
- Dever, Mark. *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004.
- Dever, Mark and Paul Alexander. *The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2005.

36



Article 7: The Church

Ordinances

- ❑ Armstrong, John H., ed. *Understanding Four Views of Baptism*. Counterpoints: Church Life. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.
- ❑ Armstrong, John H., ed. *Understanding Four Views on the Lord's Supper*. Counterpoints: Church Life. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.
- ❑ Marshall, I. Howard. *Last Supper and Lord's Supper*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980.
- ❑ Wright, David F. ed. *Baptism: Three Views*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009.

Discipline

- ❑ Adams, Jay E. *Handbook of Church Discipline: A Right and Privilege of Every Church Member*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986.
- ❑ Laney, J. Carl. *A Guide to Church Discipline*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1985.
- ❑ Leeman, Jonathan. *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love: Reintroducing the Doctrines of Church Membership and Discipline*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.



In our Articles of Incorporation, Article II, Objectives, it states the following about the organizing structure of this association:

- A. The Evangelical Free Church of America shall be an association and fellowship of autonomous but interdependent congregations of like faith and congregational government whose purpose shall be to glorify God through obedience to the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ by bringing individuals to personal faith in Christ and helping them toward maturity in Him.



The Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America (2008)

The Evangelical Free Church of America is an association of autonomous churches united around these theological convictions:



The Church

7. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.



God's gospel is now embodied in the new community called the church.



But God in his grace has purposed to restore his fallen creation and to redeem a people for himself. In Jesus Christ God has acted to rescue sinful human beings from his wrath and to reconcile them to himself. This work of Christ in his cross and resurrection is now applied to us by the Holy Spirit, who unites us with Christ so that what is true of him becomes true of us. And in uniting us with Christ, the Spirit also creates a new community we call the church. The church, as those saved by God's grace and united with Christ by God's Spirit, becomes the embodiment of the gospel in the world.



-
- I. The Nature of the Church
 - A. The True Church
 - 1. The True Church Comprises All Who Have Been Justified by God's Grace Through Faith Alone in Christ Alone



I. The Nature of the Church

A. The True Church

1. The True Church Comprises All Who Have Been Justified by God's Grace Through Faith Alone in Christ Alone
2. The True Church Comprises Those United by the Spirit into the Body of Christ of Which He Is the Head

45



B. The Local Church

1. A Visible Community Manifesting the True Church in the World

46



B. The Local Church

1. A Visible Community Manifesting the True Church in the World
2. Local Church Membership Should be Composed Only of Believers

47

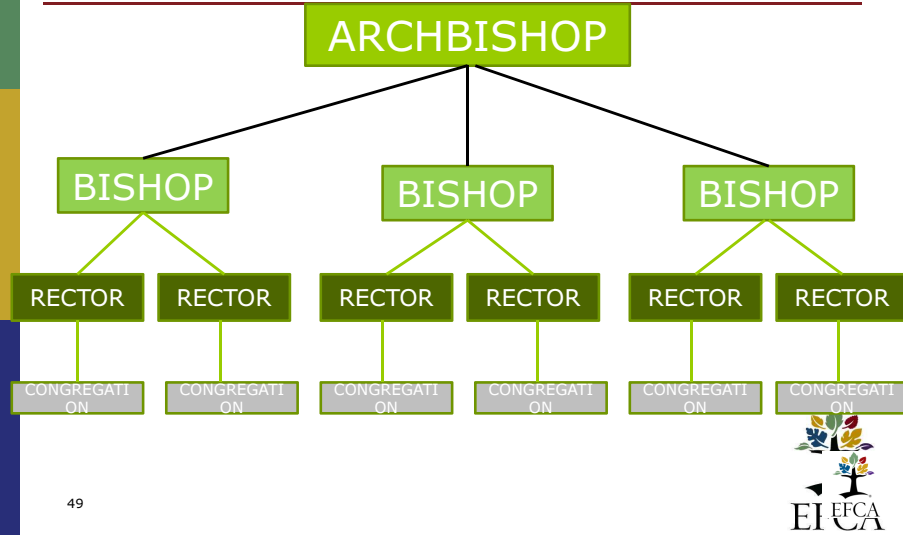


**VARIOUS FORMS OF CHURCH
GOVERNMENT (GRUDEM, PP
923-936)**

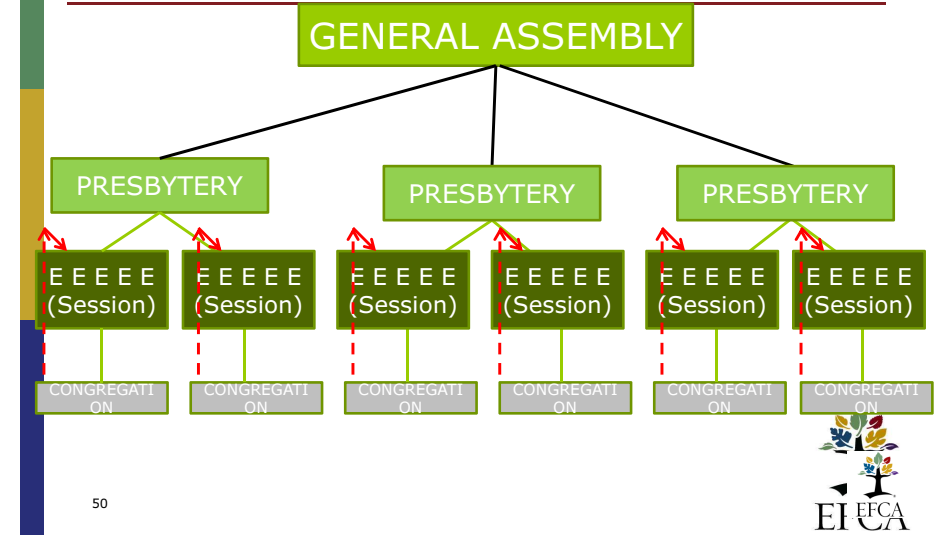
48



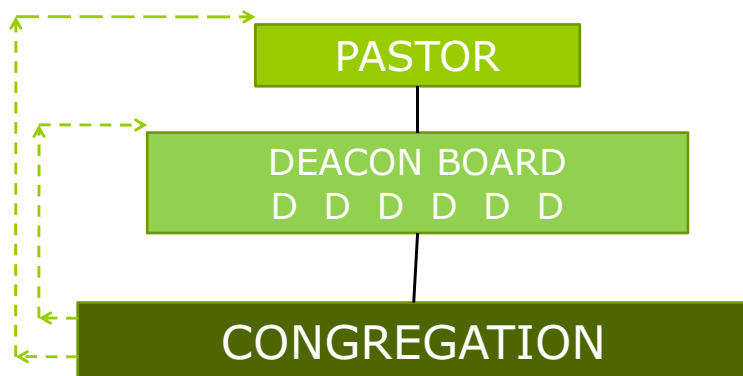
Episcopalian Government



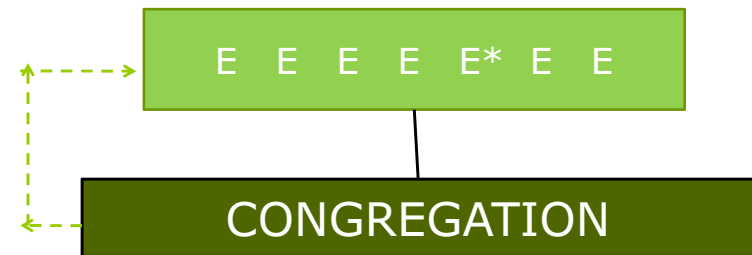
Presbyterian Government



Congregational: Single-Elder (Single-Pastor) Government



Congregational: Plural Local Elder Government



Congregation elects leadership board and delegates all decisions to leaders apart from budget approval, calling the senior pastor, approvals of sale and purchase of property, or bylaw and constitutional changes.

Leadership Board is responsible for congregational Mission, Vision, and Policy. They guard the Values, Mission, Preferred Future and approves Ministry Initiatives. The leadership Board then delegates the details and strategy to its staff. The senior pastor serves on the leadership board.

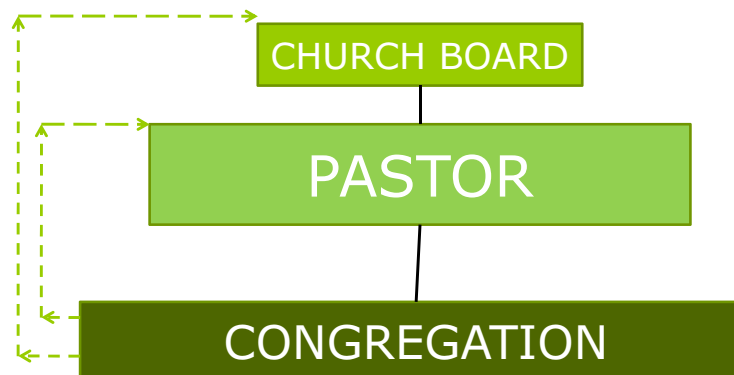
Staff is responsible for the day to day church management and deciding how to implement vision approved by the leadership board. Staff Equips and deploys congregation in ministries based on passions and gifting.

Teams are empowered to lead their ministries in line with church philosophy with oversight by staff. Ministry teams operate within parameters laid out by the leadership board.



53

Congregational: Corporate Board Model of Church Government



54

Congregational: Government by Pure “Democracy”

CONGREGATION



55

Congregational: No Government but the Holy Spirit

CONGREGATION



56

**BIBLICAL BASIS FOR
CONGREGATIONAL POLITY
(CONGREGATIONAL RULE-
ELDER LED)**



1. Jesus is the lone Head of the Church (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18), and He builds her (Matt. 16:18). This means the church is governed preeminently as a Christocracy not a democracy.



2. The universal/true church is comprised of all those who by/through faith in Jesus Christ have been born again (Jn. 3:3, 5; Tit. 3:4-8).



3. All those who have been born again and thus a part of the true church are priests, i.e. it acknowledges the priesthood of the believer (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:9).



4. Those believers who gather in a local area are part of the local church (1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; Philem. 1-2). This is why the expectations for membership in the local church are no greater than the expectations of being born again - faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

61



5. With Christ as the Head of this priesthood of believers, He has also given spiritual gifts to each one to be used to glorify Him and build up the body (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-7, 28-30; Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Pet. 4:10-11). Some of these gifts are to be used for positions of leadership in the local church, specifically elders/overseers/pastors (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9; note that these terms are used synonymously: Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; 1 Pet. 5:2) and deacons and deaconesses (1 Tim. 3:8-13).

62



This is servant-leadership (1 Thess. 2:7-12; 1 Pet. 5:1-4), like Christ who modeled this (Mk. 10:45). These servant-leaders are to be affirmed/chosen by the people they serve. This addresses an internal call of God and gifting by God, and an external recognition and acknowledgment of this by the people in the local church. A pastor (vocational elder) who has been called to provide leadership to the church full-time serves as one among a plurality of elders (Acts 14:23; 20:17; 1 Tim. 4:14; Tit. 1:5; Jms. 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1-2).

63



6. Each local church is autonomous, i.e. free from any external, earthly hierarchical structure, but under Christ's Headship and Lordship, and thus she determines how best to fulfill her God-given ministry (Acts 6:1-7; 13:1-3). Each local church had the authority and the responsibility to deal with problems (Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:1-4).

64



Although the authority ultimately resides in the congregation (accountable to Christ), the congregation has recognized, affirmed and appointed gifted people to lead them. And those leaders are accountable to Christ and the congregation. In essence, leaders are responsible to God for how they lead/serve the people (1 Pet. 5:1-4); people are responsible to God for how they follow/serve the leaders (Heb. 13:17).

65



7. As a group of like-minded churches, we will, as an EFCA, voluntarily join together as we can corporately impact the kingdom to a greater degree than we can as individual churches alone (Jn. 17; 1 Cor. 16:1-3).

66



Membership and Leadership

67



**CONGREGATIONAL POLITY
IN PRACTICE IN THE EFCA**

68



Congregational Polity (NMT)

November 2008

1. An EFC has the freedom under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to govern its own affairs in accordance with both the mind of Christ and the Word of God.
2. An EFC develops a local church polity that fits within the following parameters of congregationalism:

69



- a. The membership includes only those who have a personal faith in Christ (a believers' church).

70



- b. The collective membership in a duly called meeting is the highest authority, under Christ, in the local church, exhibiting both a willingness to be scripturally accountable to the elected leadership and encouraging elected leadership to be mutually accountable to them as the ultimate authority in the local context. Moreover, members and leaders unitedly subscribe to a relationship covenant based on Matthew 18, giving priority to biblical patterns of conflict resolution and exercising biblical discipline within the context of Christian love and cultural sensitivity.

71



- c. Congregationalism is that form of government wherein the highest authority under Christ in a local church resides in the corporate understanding of the mind of Christ and in which a realistic process and reasonable opportunity exists by which that understanding is determined and carried out, especially as it affects such matters as:

72



-
- 1) Determination of membership.
 - 2) Selection or appointment of the principal governing board (elder, deacon, etc.).
 - 3) Selection of the senior pastor or senior directional leader(s).
 - 4) Approval or alteration of constitution/bylaws.
 - 5) Approval of an annual church budget.
 - 6) Approval of any major purchase or dissolution.



73

-
3. An EFC has as its local polity a form of congregationalism that fits the size and demographics of the congregation.
 4. An EFC teaches that congregationalism includes the involvement of the entire body in ministry.
 5. An EFC entrusts much of the decision-making to godly leaders who are trained, trusted and allowed to lead.



74

II. The Ordinances of the Church

A. The Nature of the Ordinances

1. Their Source: The Ordinances Are Mandated by the Lord Jesus



75

II. The Ordinances of the Church

A. The Nature of the Ordinances

1. Their Source: The Ordinances Are Mandated by the Lord Jesus
2. Their Purpose: The Ordinances Visibly and Tangibly Express the Gospel



76

2. Their Purpose: The Ordinances Visibly and Tangibly Express the Gospel

a. The Ordinances Are Not the Means of Salvation

b. When Celebrated by the Church in Genuine Faith The Ordinances Confirm and Nourish the Believer

77



We recognize that the interpretations of Scripture on the relevant points regarding the two positions on baptism differ with one another and are in some ways incompatible. We allow different interpretations, not because we think Scripture is intrinsically ambiguous on the matter, nor because we think Scripture provides so little information that it is unwise to hold any opinion, but because some of us think the credobaptist position is in line with Scripture and that the paedobaptist position is mistaken, and some think the paedobaptist position is in line with Scripture and that the exclusively credobaptist position is mistaken. In other words, both sides hold that Scripture speaks to the matter, but each side holds a view that excludes the other. However, we do not believe that our differing views on this matter (among others) should prevent our unity in the gospel in full local church fellowship. It is in this sense, and only in this sense, that the Statement of Faith "allows" both views.

78



B. A Description of the Ordinances

1. Baptism

a. Baptism as a Believer's Profession

79



B. A Description of the Ordinances

1. Baptism

a. Baptism as a Believer's Profession

b. Baptism as the Church's Affirmation

80



B. A Description of the Ordinances

1. Baptism

- a. Baptism as a Believer's Profession
- b. Baptism as the Church's Affirmation
- c. Baptism as God's Promise

81



B. A Description of the Ordinances

1. Baptism

- a. Baptism as a Believer's Profession
- b. Baptism as the Church's Affirmation
- c. Baptism as God's Promise
- d. Baptism and the Holy Spirit

82



B. A Description of the Ordinances

1. Baptism

- a. Baptism as a Believer's Profession
- b. Baptism as the Church's Affirmation
- c. Baptism as God's Promise
- d. Baptism and the Holy Spirit
- e. What About Infant Baptism?

83



2. The Lord's Supper

- a. The Lord's Supper Is a Remembrance of Christ's Death

84



2. The Lord's Supper

- a. The Lord's Supper Is a Remembrance of Christ's Death
- b. The Lord's Supper Is a Communion with Christ's Life

85



2. The Lord's Supper

- a. The Lord's Supper Is a Remembrance of Christ's Death
- b. The Lord's Supper Is a Communion with Christ's Life
- c. The Lord's Supper Is a Fellowship in Christ's Body

86



2. The Lord's Supper

- a. The Lord's Supper Is a Remembrance of Christ's Death
- b. The Lord's Supper Is a Communion with Christ's Life
- c. The Lord's Supper Is a Fellowship in Christ's Body
- d. The Lord's Supper Is a Foretaste of Christ's Coming

87



C. A Summary of the Ordinances

88



In summary, our EFCA Statement on the ordinances affirms:

1. Christ has given his church two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the practice of these ordinances is an essential distinguishing mark of a church;

89



-
2. these ordinances are signs, that is, visible and tangible expressions, of the gospel, and as such they serve to strengthen our faith—"confirming and nourishing the believer";

90



-
3. the signs (water in baptism, the bread and grape juice or wine in the Lord's Supper) must be distinguished from what they signify (God's saving work in the gospel and Christ's presence with us);

91



-
4. the practice of these ordinances does not save us, and we receive spiritual benefit from them only when they are celebrated in "genuine faith" in Christ.

92



5. the ordinances serve to separate the believer from the world and to give a visible designation of those who belong to the body of Christ.

93



Our Statement denies that:

1. either baptism in water or participating in the Lord's Supper is the instrumental cause of regeneration;

94



2. the grace of God is automatically and effectually conveyed through the administration of the ordinances themselves.

95



In addition, our Statement does not prescribe the "time" or "mode" of baptism (allowing for both credo- and paedobaptist practices) nor does it define the precise manner in which Christ is present in the Lord's Supper (allowing for a variety of historic Evangelical views).

Thus we deny baptismal regeneration and the doctrine of transubstantiation.

96



III. Conclusion: The Church and the Gospel

The Church and Worship

97



Regulative Principle – everything done in a corporate worship gathering must be mandated from Scripture. This mandate will be an explicit biblical command or a necessary implication of biblical truth.

Normative Principle (Richard Hooker, and Martin Luther before him) – everything done in a corporate worship gathering is allowed except that which is explicitly forbidden by Scripture.

99



All of life is worship, which simply means when we come together, we engage in worship in a corporate fashion. What then should we do when we gather for corporate worship? Edmund Clowney (“Presbyterian Worship,” *Worship: Adoration and Action*, D. A. Carson, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 117), provides a succinct summary of the New Testament teaching on this subject. He writes that the New Testament indicates, by precept and example, what the elements of corporate worship are.

100



-
- ❑ Corporate prayer is offered (Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 2:1; 1 Cor. 14:16)
 - ❑ Scripture is read (1 Tim. 4:13; 1 Thess. 5:27; 2 Thess. 3:14; Col. 4:15-16; 2 Pet. 3:15-16)
 - ❑ Scripture is expounded in preaching (1 Tim. 4:13; cf. Lk. 4:20; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 4:2)
 - ❑ Gathering of the church (Acts 18:7, 11; cf. 19:8-10)
 - ❑ Teaching of the Word is linked with table fellowship (Acts 2:42; 20:7; cf. vv. 20, 25, 28)
 - ❑ Songs of the new covenant people both praise God and encourage one another (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:15; 1 Cor. 14:15, 26; cf. 1 Tim. 3:16; Rev. 5:9-13; 11:17f; 15:3-4)
 - ❑ Giving to the poor is recognized as a spiritual service to God and a Christian form of "sacrifice" (2 Cor. 9:11-15; Phil. 4:18; Heb. 13:16)

101



-
- ❑ Reception and distribution of gifts is related to the office of deacon (Acts 6:1-6; Rom. 12:8, 13; cf. Acts 20:4; Rom. 16:1-2; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:19-21) and to the gathering of believers (Acts 2:42; 5:2; 1 Cor. 16:2)
 - ❑ Faith is publicly confessed (1 Tim. 6:12; 1 Pet. 3:21; Heb. 13:15; cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-3)
 - ❑ People receive God's blessing (2 Cor. 13:14; Lk. 24:50; cf. Num. 6:22-27)
 - ❑ Holy kiss of salutation is commanded (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26; 1 Pet. 5:14)
 - ❑ People respond to praise and prayer with the saying of "Amen" (1 Cor. 14:16; Rev. 5:14; cf. Rom. 1:25; 9:5; Eph. 3:21; etc.)
 - ❑ Sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper are explicitly provided for -
 - Confession is linked with baptism (1 Pet. 3:21)
 - Prayer of thanksgiving is linked with the breaking of bread (1 Cor. 11:24)

102



Here is the best book on a biblical theology of worship:
David Peterson, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992).

Here is one of the best chapter-length treatments of a biblical theology of worship, Carson's introductory chapter "Worship under the Word," pp. 11-63:

D. A. Carson, ed. *Worship By The Book* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002).

Here is a very helpful book that attempts to root what is done in the corporate setting to the gospel, with a helpful historical overview of church's implementation:

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

103



Here is a helpful book that attempts to root what is done in the Scripture (the regulative principle) but with a broader understanding and application of it:

John Frame, *Worship in Spirit and Truth: A Refreshing Study of the Principles and Practice of Biblical Worship* (Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 1996)

Here is a helpful, practical "how-to" of corporate worship written by a corporate worship leader:

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

In addition to these book-length treatments of "worship," there are other good, brief articles in dictionaries and encyclopedias, and though one needs to exercise caution, there are also some very good pieces that can be found on the web.

104



The Church and Discipline



The New Testament church took seriously the call to purity/holiness, and thus faithfully administered discipline when it was necessary (Matt. 18:15-18; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 5:1-5, 9-13; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; Gal. 2:11-14; 6:1; 2 Thess. 3:6-15). Discipline in the church is part of being a disciple (Heb. 12:5-11).

The purpose of *formative discipline* is conformity into the image of the Son; it is the God-given means and Spirit-prompted power leading to sanctification.

- ❑ Self-discipline (spiritual disciplines) (Prov. 16:32; 17:27; 19:11; Rom. 8:2; 1 Cor. 9:25; Gal. 5:23; 1 Tim. 4:7; 2 Tim. 1:7)
- ❑ Corporate in the Church (Eph. 4:11-12; Tit. 2:15; cf. the "one anothers": Rom. 14:19; 15:14; Gal. 5:14; Eph. 4:1-3, 31; 5:18-21; Col. 3:16; Heb. 10:24-25; Jms. 4:11; 5:9).



106

The purpose of *corrective discipline* (redemptive and restorative) is 1) the restoration (to holiness, godliness, purity, right behavior) and reconciliation (with God, and with other believers) of a believer who has sinned or is sinning, 2) to keep sin from spreading to others and defiling them, and 3) to protect the purity of the church and the honor of Christ, who purchased the Church with his own blood, and thus is its Head.

The Bible lists various sins that require discipline.

- ❑ Specific sins (Mk. 7:21-22; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:11; 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Tit. 3:10).
- ❑ Any and all sin (Matt. 5:23-24; Gal. 6:1).



107

Four classifications of sins/offenses requiring discipline

- ❑ Violations of Christian love – private offenses against a brother or sister (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15).
- ❑ Violations of Christian unity – divisive actions which destroy the peace of the church which betray the work of the gospel (Rom. 16:17; Gal. 2:11-14; Tit. 3:10).
- ❑ Violations of Christian law or morality – breaking the moral/ethical standards set forth in the Word of God (Matt. 7:21-22; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Jude 4).
- ❑ Violations of Christian truth – rejection of essential doctrines of the faith (1 Tim. 1:3-7; 6:3-5; Tit. 1:10-14; 3:10; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 2 Jn. 7-11).

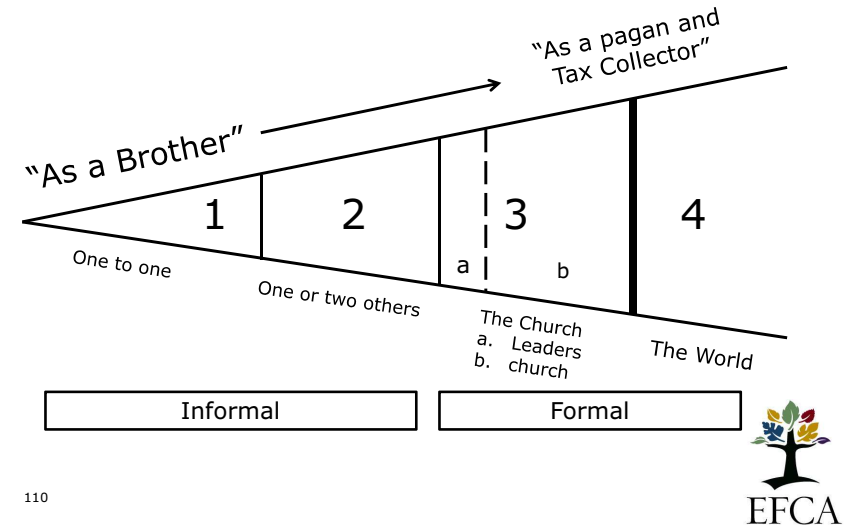


108

1. If one has been offended, he/she is to go personally to the person who offended him/her, one to one (Matt. 18:15; cf. Lk. 17:3-4; 2 Cor. 7:8-13; Gal. 2:11; 2 Thess 3:14-15; Jms. 5:19-20).
2. If the issue is not resolved, the offended person is to take "one or two others along" to address the issue again (Matt. 18:16; cf. Dt. 19:15. The same thing is to be done with an elder, 1 Tim. 5:19).
3. If the issue is still unresolved, the circle of those seeking to bring resolution widens to the church (Matt. 18:17a). Elders/Overseers/Pastors (Eph. 4:11-16; Heb. 13:17). Church (1 Cor. 5:1-5, 9-13; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; 2 Thess. 3:14-15; cf. also Rom. 16:17; Tit. 3:10).
4. If the person remains unrepentant before the church, the body is to "treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector" (Matt. 18:17b; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:5, 9, 13; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15; Tim. 1:20; Tit. 3:10).



Corrective Discipline



The Missional Church



Tim Keller, "The Missional Church" June 2001

This is a difference between living in Christendom and in post-Christendom.

We don't simply need evangelistic churches, but rather missional churches.

Elements of a Missional Church

1. Discourse in the vernacular.
2. Enter and re-tell the *culture's* story with the gospel.
3. Theologically train lay people for *public* life and vocation.
4. Create Christian community which is counter-cultural and counter-intuitive.
5. Practice Christian unity as much as possible on the local level.



Ryan Kelly, The Gospel Coalition roundtable discussion on the mission of the church.

Missional could mean or imply:

- ❑ Cultural engagement, preferably of the hipster-flavor
- ❑ Social justice, cultural transformation, and love of neighbor
- ❑ Entrepreneurial and aggressive church expansion
- ❑ Anything but the church-growth, attractional, programmatic model of evangelism
- ❑ A serious and constant awareness of our 'sent-ness'
- ❑ Simply gospel proclamation – what older evangelicals called witnessing or evangelism but perhaps a slightly more thoughtful and/or natural version of it
- ❑ Thoughtful gospel proclamation + any of the above

113



Three suggestions –

1. Insisting on a definition of missional or asking for specifics of one's view of the mission is not curmudgeon fundamentalism – it's still needed.
2. Especially we younger evangelicals have to give a more sober and careful hearing to our fathers in ministry when they warn us with historical examples of when the church's deeds eclipsed, or became, her gospel.
3. Partly influenced by the need to protect the gospel (see #2), but mostly based on the Bible itself, it seems to me that there is warrant for prioritizing gospel proclamation over other important commands Jesus gives his followers.

114



The Church exists by mission as fire exists by burning.

Emil Brunner (1889-1966)

115



The Emerging Church



Church in the Present Tense: A Candid Look at What's Emerging

- The 'metanarrative' or grand stories of the world and our place in it are called into question. This means our grasp of reality is always partial, incomplete, fragmentary. This leads those in the movement to emphatically promote tolerance and enthusiastically participate in dialogue – religious, political, and otherwise.
- Second, emerging Christians tend to be theologically pluralistic and suspicious of tidy theological boxes. They believe that God is bigger than any theology and that God is first and foremost a storyteller, not a dispenser of theological doctrine and factoids. Theology for them, therefore, is conceived as an ongoing and provisional conversation. Emerging Christians are also allergic to thinking that fixates on who is going to heaven and who is going to hell, or on who's on the inside and who's on the outside. They stress the importance of right living (*orthopraxy*) over right believing (*orthodoxy*).

117



Third, emerging Christians believe the church must change if it is to speak meaningfully to a postmodern culture. So, like the prophet Amos, the rhetoric of emerging Christians can be shocking, alarming, and hyperbolic. They are frequently given to dramatic overstatement. But it should be kept in mind that, at its best and most sincere, the aim of the rhetoric is to rouse us (the church) from dogmatic slumber, to get us to see old things with new eyes, or sometimes to see completely new things. At its worst, however, the rhetoric of emerging Christians can be sloppy, unnecessarily misleading, obnoxiously jargon laden, and incoherent.

Fourth, participants in the emerging and altworship movements are passionate about the present. The gospel, they want us to realize, is about the here and now and not a ticket to secure a place in the there and then of heaven. This passion for the present manifests itself in four overlapping foci: community, transformation, worship and social engagement.

118



The Church and the Kingdom

1. The church is not the Kingdom.
2. The Kingdom creates the church
3. The church witnesses to the Kingdom
4. The church is the instrument of the Kingdom
5. The church is the custodian of the Kingdom

George Eldon Ladd, "The Kingdom and the Church," *A Theology of the New Testament*, rev. ed. (Eerdmans, 1993), 109-119.

120



Stephen J. Wellum, "Editorial: Reflecting on the Kingdom of God" *SBJT* 12/1 (Spring 2008), 2-3.

1. The kingdom of God refers to God's *kingly rule*, and it is especially tied to God's *saving reign*.
2. Scripture begins with the declaration that God, as Creator, is the sovereign ruler of the universe. In this important sense, the entire universe is God's kingdom.
3. Given the Fall, everything changes. The rightful rule of God over the entire creation is now rejected by the human race. . . . the OT makes a distinction between the sovereignty of God over the entire creation and the coming of his *saving reign in the context of a rebellious creation*.

121



4. As the OT unfolds, God's kingdom, in this *saving sense*, is revealed in a number of ways.
5. The prophets hold out hope. The overall pattern of renewal is seen as a recapitulation of the past history of redemption: a new Exodus; a new covenant; a new Jerusalem; a new Davidic king to rule in a glorious and eternal kingdom.
6. It is against this background that the NT announces that, in Jesus, the long awaited kingdom has come and that the rule of sin and death has been destroyed. Thus, through Jesus' life and cross-work, he has *inaugurated the kingdom of God* over which he now rules and reigns. And, as the ascended King, he commands all people to repent and to enter that kingdom of life. But even though the kingdom has come, it still awaits its consummation.

122



Barry Joslin, "Is the kingdom of God the same thing as the church? If not, are they related?" "The *SBJT* Forum," *SBJT* 12/1 (Spring 2008), 107-109.

"In short, the church is not the kingdom, yet the two are inseparable. The sovereign, redemptive rule of God has broken into this age in the ministry of Jesus Christ, and creates the church by plundering the devil's dominion and loosing many from the bonds of their captivity. The church is the instrument and custodian of the kingdom, and witnesses to the kingdom of Christ until it has been preached to all the nations. Then our King will come (Matt 24:14)."

123



D. A. Carson, "What are the most common errors that people make when it comes to understanding and proclaiming the kingdom? From "The *SBJT* Forum," *SBJT* 12/1 (Spring 2008), 104-107.

124



-
1. *First*, some forms of theology inject a temporal barrier between “kingdom” and “church”: the church belongs to this dispensation, and the kingdom to the next.
 2. *Second*, sometimes the inverse error is promoted. . . . Even if there is some sense in which God rules over his church in a different way than he rules over everyone else—and we shall see that that is the case—the two words “church” and “kingdom” belong to different categories and should not be treated as synonyms.
 3. that is the *third* arena where errors about the kingdom are not uncommon: tensions between the biblical descriptions of inaugurated eschatology (the kingdom has come) and futurist eschatology (the kingdom comes at the end).



-
4. A *fourth* arena of reductionism is found where Christians overlook the fact that in some passages “kingdom” is a sweeping category that leaves nothing out from the arch of its reign—nothing in heaven or on earth, no human being redeemed or otherwise—while in other passages the “kingdom” is that subset of God’s sweeping, providential sovereignty under which there is forgiveness with God and eternal life. Not everyone falls under this latter “reign” or “kingdom.”
 5. Increasingly during the last couple of decades, two vociferous groups focus on a *fifth* emphasis which, if it were well integrated with everything else the Bible says about the kingdom, would not be problematic, but which, when it is taken almost on its own, makes “kingdom” an adjective that blesses whatever I want blessed. Thus we hear a lot today of “kingdom ethics”:
- In short: serious Christians will want to avoid reductionism. We must carefully study the sweep of “kingdom” uses, pay close attention to the immediate context, and faithfully emphasize what all of Scripture declares to be matters “of first importance.”

