2009

Ecclesiology

Don Fanning

Liberty University, dfanning@liberty.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgm_bib_doc

Recommended Citation

http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgm_bib_doc/9

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for Global Ministries at DigitalCommons@Liberty University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bible Doctrines by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Liberty University. For more information, please contact scholarlycommunication@liberty.edu.
Since the Church is the Bride of Christ, there is nothing on earth dearer to the heart of God
The German designation *kirche*, is derived from the Greek word *κυρία*, the neuter adjective of ("Lord"), meaning "belonging to the Lord.

*church* also translates the Greek word *εκκλησία*, which is derived from *ἐκ*, meaning "out of," and *κληρίζω*, which means "to call," hence, the church is "a called-out-group."

- *εκκλησία* appears 114 times in the New Testament, 3 times in the gospels, and 111 times in the epistles. In the gospels it appears only in Matthew 16:18 and 18:17 in a prophetic sense.
- It is used non-technically to describe any meeting or assembly (Acts 7:38; 19:32), as well as the term for NT churches.
Aspects of the Church

• Local (visible) church
  • Group of believers identified as a local assembly
  • Without a building, they met in homes (Rom. 16:5; Philemon 2)
  • Came together for worship (1 Cor. 11:18), fellowship (Acts 2:45–46; 4:31), instruction (Acts 2:42; 11:26; 1 Cor. 4:17), and for ministry (Acts 13:2; 15:3; 20:28).
  • The result was that people were continually being saved (Acts 2:47)

• Universal (invisible) Church
  • He promised to build it (Matt 16:18)
  • All those born of the Spirit and, by the Spirit, placed into the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13; 1 Pet 1:3, 22–25)
  • The Body for whom Christ died (Eph 5:24; Acts 20:28)
  • He is the Head and gives it direction (Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:18)
Formation of the Church

- Future in Matt 16:18
- Manner of formation (1 Cor 12:13): work of Spirit baptizing believers into Christ. Eph 1:22-23 identifies Church with Body of Christ
- Still future in Acts 1:5
- Began in Acts 2:1-4
- Confirmed in Acts 11:15, “as at the beginning”
- Church began at Pentecost
**Figures of the Church**

- **Body**: illustrates unity and universality. Christ is the Head (Eph 1:22-3) Who gives diversity of gifts (members) (1 Cor 12:13) and gifted leadership to mature her (Eph 4:11-16).

- **Bride** (Eph 5:23) Illustrates the great affect of Christ and the exalted position of the Church.

- **Building**: the wall of separation abolished between Jew and Gentile (Eph 2:11-18); Foundation laid by apostles (2:20); Each piece is fitted together (2:21); Grows as under construction (1 Pet 2:5)

- **Priesthood**: 2 Pet 2:5,9; Rev 1:9 As priests we can intercede with boldness (Heb 4:14-16) and be dedicated to service

- **Flock**: Relationship of trust and fellowship (Jn 10:26-27; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:3). The flock is ever growing, Jn 10:16.

- **Branches**: Christ is the root, believers are the branches in Jn 15:1-16, which shows vital union with Christ
Image as Body of Christ

- Christ is the HEAD of the Body (Col 1:18; Eph 1:10)
  - Authority to direct and control (Col 2:9-10)
  - Nourishment of motivation and security (Col 2:19)
- INTERCONNECTION of believers: building up, serving and mutual sharing
- FELLOWSHIP of believers in commitment and love (benefiting others)
- UNIFIED Body—Corinth was a divided church (1 Cor 11:17-19)
- UNIVERSAL Body—All believers everywhere are united (Col 3:11)
- EXTENSION of Christ’s ministry—through Great Commission (Mt 28:18), even greater scale (Jn 14:12)
Distinct from Israel: The Church is neither the continuation of, nor synonymous with Israel (Acts 3:12; 4:8, 10; 5:21, 31, 35; 21:19). See also 1 Cor 10:32.

Distinct from the Kingdom:
- Universal Kingdom: Christ rules the universe (Psa 103:19; 139:7-10)
- Kingdom on earth (Matt 6:10– the prayer of believers)
- Kingdom of heaven (occurs 32 times in Matthew) refers to the heaven-reign of God throughout ages
- All are distinct from any parallel with the Church
Functions of the local church

- **Worship**
  - *proskuneo*, which means “to bow down” or “prostrate”
  - *latreuo*, has a basic meaning of “priestly service” of sacrifice (Rom 12:1)
  - *sbomai*, means “to reverence or fear God” (1 Tim. 2:10; 5:4; 2 Pet. 1:3; 3:11)

- **Instruction**: for maturity (2 Tim. 3:16–17); antidote to false doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3); produces love (1 Tim. 1:5); spiritual nourishment (1 Tim. 4:6); godliness (1 Tim. 4:6–16); submission (1 Tim. 5:17; 6:2); and a proper focus on life (1 Tim. 6:17). in order to reproduce himself (2 Tim. 2:2; cf. 1 Tim. 4:14, 16; 6:20).

- **Fellowship** – *koinonia*: “sharing, participate”. Acts 2:42, sharing of goods (Rom 15:26); prayer (Acts 4:24-31)

- **Ministry**: evangelism and mutual service (“one another”)

- **Organization**: Leadership responsible were elders and deacons

- **Ordinances**: Baptism and Lord’s Supper
Leaders of the local church: Elders – Pastors

- **Terms used:**
  - Presbyters, *presbuteros*, 69 times in NT, “mature” – dignity of office
  - Overseer, *episkopos*, 6 times in NT, “watch over” – function of office

- **Qualifications:** 15 qualities (1 Tim 3:1-7; Tit 1:5-9)
  - Character, Family, Relationships, Ministry capable, Maturity

- **Duties.** The duties of the elder involve shepherding the flock (Acts 20:28), teaching (1 Tim. 3:2), ruling or general leadership (1 Tim. 5:17), and guarding against error (Tit. 1:9).

- **Number.** A plurality of elders is mentioned frequently (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1; Tit. 1:5), though one is leader or spokesman (Acts 15).
Deacons

- **Term used**: *diaconos*, “minister” or “servant”
- **Office**: Highly suggested in Acts 6:1-6 where 7 were appointed to facilitate the ministry of apostles or church leaders by relieving them of material obligations.
- **Qualifications**: 8 characteristics, mostly similar to elders.
- **Deaconesses?**: Rom 16:1 appears to be a descriptive term, rather than a specific office. In the context of 1 Tim 3:11, the term is “women,” *gunaikas*, 8 of 11 times in NT is clearly “wives”. Women’s ministry and requirements given in 1 Tim 5:9-16.
Government of the local church

- **Episcopal**: led by *episkopos*, “bishop” (Methodists, Anglican, Lutheran, Catholic). Arose in 2nd cent, based on image of James and Timothy/Titus.

- **Presbyterian**: led by *presbuteros*, “elder”, (Presbyterian and Reform) elected representatives of congregation with one teaching elder (1 Tim 5:17) and Acts 11:30; 15:2, 4; 20:17.

- **Congregational**: led by consensus opinion based on two principles: autonomy and democracy (Baptist, Bible, Congregational, Independent). Based on Priesthood of all believers, congregations elected deacons (Acts 6:1-6) and elders (Acts 14:23); church decided on discipline (1 Cor 5:12; 2 Cor 2:6-7); sent out missionaries (Acts 11:22), etc.
Evaluation of church government

- **Episcopalian** is based on apostolic continuity, which has no biblical basis (Mt 16:18-19) rather was unique to them (Luke 9:1)
- **Presbyterian** has support in appearance of multiple elders, but no external authority
- **Congregational** finds its support in the many congregational decisions called for.
Two “Ordinances” of the church

Catholics have held to seven sacraments: baptism, the Eucharist (Lord’s Supper), confirmation, penance, extreme unction, holy orders, and marriage.

Terms: *Sacrament*, “sacred”, implies a mysterious quality. *Ordinance* means “obedient rite”

1. Lord’s Supper
   - *Transubstantiation*, “change of substance” (RCC)
   - *Consubstantiation*, “with substance” on consumption (Lutheran)
   - *Reformed view*: emphasize the “spiritual presence of Christ” in the elements imparting a form of grace to recipient.
   - *Memorial view*: Elements are figurative only, objects to provoke an image of Christ’s real sacrifice. The focus is memory (1 Cor 11:25-26); proclaiming His death (11:26)
Second “Ordinances” of the church

Meaning: obligated practice (Mt 28:19) which means IDENTIFICATION (Ro 6:4-5)

Views of baptism:
1. Means of saving grace
2. Sign and seal of covenant
3. Symbol of our salvation

Mode of baptism
1. Pouring or affusion: an allowed method in 2nd Cent
2. Sprinkling or aspersion from analogy of OT ritual cleansing in Temple (Num 8:5-7)
3. Immersion from baptizo, “to dip, immerse” which best visualizes Rom 6
4. Infant baptism is suppose to replace circumcision in new covenant
Purposes of the church

- **Evangelism**: a going to others with good news (Mt 28:19), practiced by all (Acts 8:4), resulting in many believers (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 8:12)
- **Fellowship**: commitment to believers in church (Ro 12:5, 10, 16; 13:8) in unity (Acts 2:46; 4:31)
- **Teaching**: essential to edification and maturity (Acts 11:26; 15:35; 2 Ti 2:2; He 5:12)
- **Worship**: To love God with all, heart, soul, mind (Mt 22:37); church prayed (Ac 12:5); read Scripture (Ac 4:24); Singing (Eph 5:19)
- **Service to others**: 41 commands are to be done to “one another”; spiritual gifts give purpose (1 Co 12-14)