

## Theology 3.1 – Theology of the Church [Ecclesiology]

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These notes originated from my class at Western Seminary taught by Dr. Gary Tuck. These are my notes of the curriculum he provided, and don't necessarily reflect all the content he discussed nor does it necessarily capture completely his thoughts on the topics. I have taken the liberty to add my own commentary and insight where I felt it was reasonable and warranted.

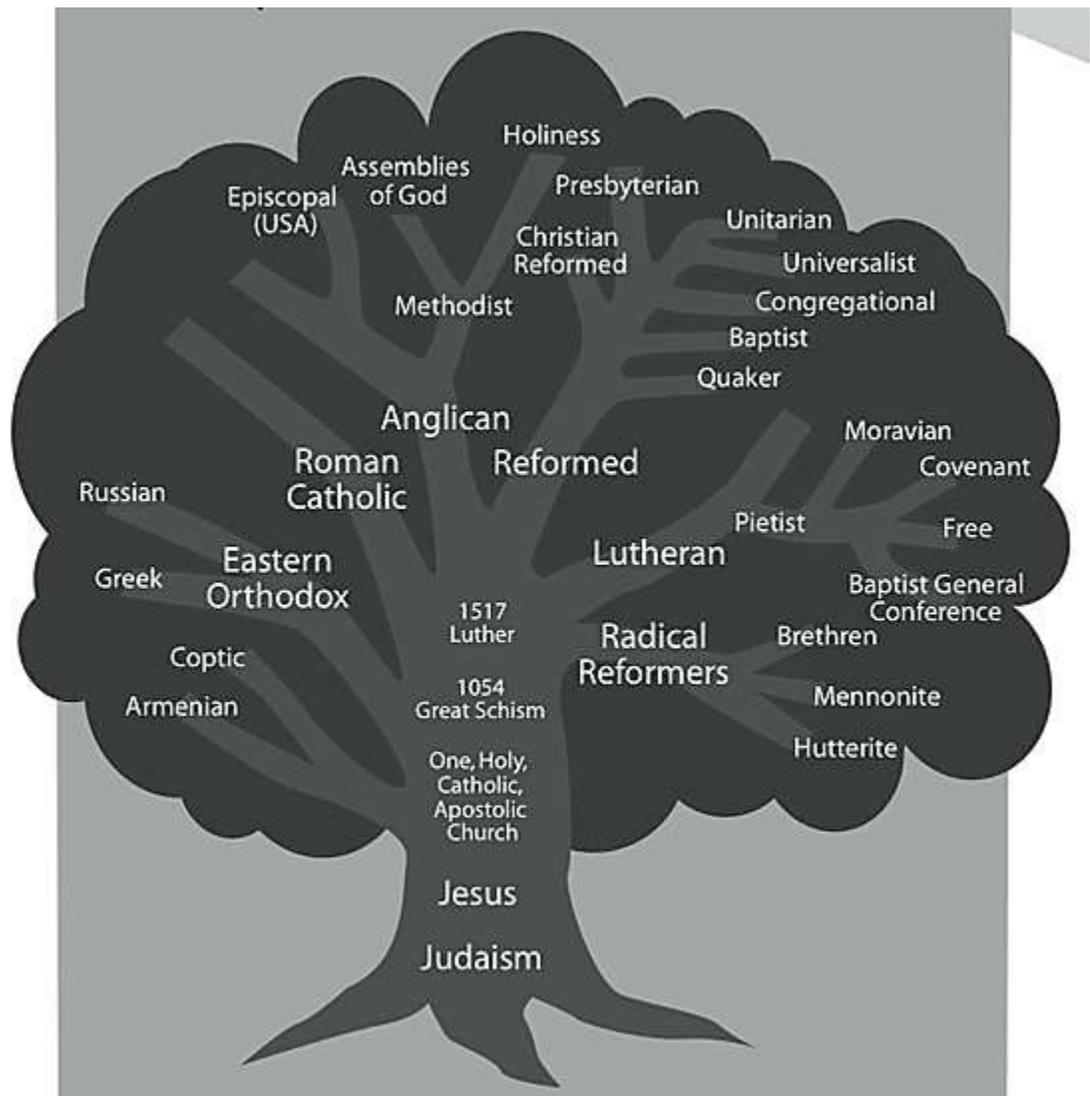
**The New Testament Church in Jesus is the “Community of the Spirit” – it is the mystical Bride/Body of Christ. The Church is God’s chosen vehicle to change the world through the imperfect service of the faith community. It is one of God’s wonders that He chose to work through Fallen humanity to be His caretakers, complete the calling of Gospel expansion, and rule the world as His stewards. The study of the Church in theological terms is “Ecclesiology” from the Greek term “Ekklesia” meaning a public assemblage or congregation called together by a herald. In the New Testament the Church is assembled by the Spirit through faith in Jesus as the Spiritual family of God. Wherever the Spirit unites Christians together, the mystery of the Church in worshipping God and proclaiming His truth about Jesus is displayed.**

- 1. Introduction: What is church? Why do so many Christians today seem to avoid it? Is the church as we now know it really what Jesus loves and had in mind when challenging His disciples to preach the Gospel and make disciples of the world? What are the primary Biblical passages that speak to the community of faith? When have you ever heard preaching on the topic of the character, function, and makeup of the Church? These and other such questions will be explored in this section. It is our hope to present a more complete and balanced discussion of the Church and its mission as Ambassadors of the Gospel.**
  - a. This discussion is about the “*theology of church,*” and what God has spoken through Scripture about it. Please see the “Introduction to Theology” content for more development on what theology is and how it is useful as a study to help understand and be obedient to God.**
  - b. The church should always be seen in terms of its “cardinal doctrines” – these are the primary statements of faith that serve to identify and unify believers through the Church Age as we await the return of our Lord. These include the “Nicene Creed” and the “Apostles’ Creed” which call for “one holy catholic church” – catholic here is not capitalized as it means one whole or universal church sealed and empowered by the Spirit, not merely the organization or cultural phenomenon that practices a means of worship. (See the creeds pages 8-11 of the introduction to theology content.)**
    - i. Somehow the church needs to become aware of its nature as a united whole – the Bride of Christ. Instead of focusing on our differences, we need to focus on what unites us as Christians. We need to get past the differences of:**
      - 1. Christian liturgical practices.**
      - 2. Social and political forms and integration.**

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3. Organizational and leadership structure.
  4. Minor theological disagreements.
- ii. Somehow there is a flow from the Old Testament to the New Testament of life in the congregation that needs to be understood. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament, this is an extension of God’s redemptive plan through history and not the invention of a new faith.
  - iii. Churches often seem too inclined to place themselves into competitive situations with other local church bodies, rather than finding ways to cooperate and collaborate. But a unified approach won’t happen if we don’t view the church as something universal and greater than the assembly within their own walls. Along with this is a respect and profound wonder of the unity amid diversity that is the Church.
  - iv. See “Christian Family Tree” diagram below:



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- c. **This Christian Family Tree is a graphic reminder of the origin and radiation of faith. These are different faith expressions of Christianity, or different traditions in the faith community. All that hold to the creeds and affirm the necessary indwelling of the Spirit in true believers are members of the Church through the blood of Christ. We should be careful not to denigrate or divide what Christ died to accomplish in unifying His Bride. [Refer to the introduction of Theology “Theological Safeguards” pg 5ff].**
- d. **Corporate church services are opportunities for God’s people to gather together in an extended family encounter with God. Gatherings are intentional opportunities to meet with and engage people to move together into fresh expressions of faith. To this end, preaching is not merely a monologue where people go and receive information, or an event where they go to be entertained. The heart of corporate service is: 1) worshipping God... it is a Spiritual encounter with God, and the 2) equipping of the disciples for their individual ministry.**
- e. **A more intimate expression of corporate church service is found in home church fellowships as a faith community. In this form of gathering, the church is intentionally engaged in a dialogue that is interactive and participatory. In these encounters people are engaged in the lives of others and relational intimacy develops. In this environment: 1) we are known and accepted by our peer family warts and all; it is all too easy to enter into corporate church services and disappear afterward. In home fellowships, there is immediacy, intimacy, and accountability. 2) We are fed and nurtured; home studies are necessarily dialogues where small groups get together to study Scripture and work out their faith. 3) Genuine worship occurs; as we pray with and for one another and seek God will and purpose for our lives.**
- f. **How should we “do” church? It is crucial to understand that the Lord of the Church [Jesus] loves us individually and corporately, and sees what we will ultimately become as the process of sanctification continues throughout our faith journey. When we’re honest with ourselves and others we tend to see and often become overcome by our inadequacies and shortcomings; while God on the other hand, sees the person we will be when we enter eternity. He sees us as His perfect son and daughter, rather than the imperfect individuals we know we now are.**
- g. **The Bible is uniquely prepared to speak into virtually all aspects of church life:**
  - i. **How do we promote genuine love of our brothers & sisters as the Church? The epistles of 1 Corinthians and Ephesians are focused on the salient aspects of ecclesiology in building up the church in love.**
  - ii. **How do we develop Godly leadership in the body beyond programmatic methodology? The “pastoral epistles” addresses this.**

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- iii. **How do we discipline and redirect the church when individuals within it and/or leadership of it get off tract? Acts and the address to the 7 churches in Revelation speak to this.**
  
- h. **Some Scriptural thoughts on the history of ecclesiology:**
  - i. **Matt 16:18 “I will build my Church [ekklesia] ...” the Apostle Matthew wrote this text some 30 years after Pentecost.**
  
  - ii. **Acts speaks into the state of the church in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, Luke wrote this text some 30-40 years after Jesus’ resurrection and Pentecost. Luke writes about the distinctions of Jew and non-Jew, and the need for unity and acceptance. Even after so many years after Pentecost, this was still a big deal for 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians and obviously has application for the Church throughout history.**
    1. **Christians initially were primarily “Messianic Jews” - that is, Jews who accepted Jesus as their Messiah and Lord. Their mission initially was to the Jewish community declaring that their prophesied Messiah had come. There are 84 hits in Acts NASB mentioning the Jews [see Acts 11:19 - So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone].**
    2. **There are 249 verses and 276 times the Jews are mentioned in the NT.**
    3. **Acts 2 shows that 3,000 Jews responded to Peter’s preaching at Pentecost. His message was that the Messiah had come, and the Jews to whom He came not only refused to believe Him but also killed Him. The proof of His Resurrection and Pentecost bore testimony proving Jesus was the Messiah.**
    4. **Acts 2 and 10 – Jesus is proclaimed as King (Messiah) and the Gospel (good news of His coming) demonstrated that Jesus was not just King of the Jews but also the King of creation, and therefore of all humanity. 10:34 recounts the prophecy regarding the Messiah – where David prophesies that the “Spirit of the Lord is upon me” ... and Yahweh the Suzerain said to His anointed King (Jesus) “sit at my right hand” – it is important that Jesus took His place at the right hand of the Father – the position of strength and rulership.**
    5. **Acts 11:19 speaks to Jews alone about the Gospel, who were largely non-responsive. Did they really understand the Gospel at that time? Probably not. It wasn’t until Saul of Tarsus [Paul] preached in terms that both Jews and Gentiles could understand that the Gospel message caught fire.**
    6. **Acts 13:43—14:19; 15 speaks to the early evangelism of Paul and Barnabas to the Jews and the initial Gentile contacts. This occurred in the 4<sup>th</sup> decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century. Circumcision and other Jewish rites of identity were still a big deal**

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to the Jewish Christians [AKA Messianic Jews], who saw themselves as the continuation of the Jewish synagogue, not as a new sect or divergent faith.

7. Romans 8 and 1 John 3 speaks to Spiritual life... as does Ephesians 2 where we are made 'alive'. This is Christological Grace – life from death... a place in eternity rather merely temporally on earth. In this new community, the Temple of God is no longer in Jerusalem, but instead within the hearts of the faithful (John 4:21-26).
  8. 1 Peter 2:9 – Christians are a chosen race, a holy priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God – all these refer to a community of Grace, the Church.
  9. Remember that John Baptist was the last in the line of the traditional Jewish prophets who came specifically for the Jews (Matt 3:2ff etc.). The prophetic role for the Church is to make straight the way of the Lord... this is “Word Ministry.”
2. **Main Idea: the people of God, people of the light, the heavenly community/congregation** [See 1John 4:4-6 (“Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”)] **We don’t look different outwardly except for things that tend to enhance social status (clothes, language-accent, education, employment, house, car, etc.). The Christian community was the 1<sup>st</sup> that deliberately obscured social status, preferring identifying with Jesus. We have much in common with everyone else. But we were dead and now live, have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness to light. Our eternal destiny is blessed; theirs (Jews) remains cursed [unsanctified]. All that is soteriological [salvation theology] is based on Christological grace, with eschatology ramifications.**
- a. The “CHURCH” is a “Bifurcated entity” [being divided and separated] - the two parts are “Organism” and “Organization.”
    - i. Organism - is the organic unity of believers mystically joined through the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Organism being alive in the Spirit is already perfected. When God sees those believers who are indwelt disciples He sees the sons and daughters He loves who are already perfected in the Spirit though living out a life on Fallen earth and sin-cursed flesh.
    - ii. Organization - is the socio-political structure that allows the corporate organism to congregate. The organization being an institution of Fallen humanity longs for perfection along with creation. The organization has little intrinsic value apart from allowing the Organization to function properly.
    - iii. It is thus useful to designate Church [capital C] as being the organism; and church [lower case c] as being the organization.

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- b. There is a crucial corporate element - we individually belong to an Organic community, the Church being the corporate body which has an eternal identity in the Spirit. It is this Organic corporate entity that is in view in the metaphors of temple, body, and bride. The work of the Church is then the equipping of the saints for ministry. The work of the church is to allow the group to gather effectively where we may meet with God and where transformational life is encouraged.
  - c. It is unfortunate that when most people think of “*church*” they think of the Organizational component. It is further unfortunate that a disproportionate amount of church activity goes to maintaining the organization, rather than building up the Organism.
  - d. Col 1:13 (He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son); 1 Pet 2:9 (you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION).
3. Relation of the church to Israel – there is continuity and discontinuity: This is the big theological issue for Ecclesiology. Need to define carefully “Israel”, “Jew” mindful that Jews are *in* church, but is Israel?
- a. What is the nature of continuity and discontinuity with Jewish faith expressions?
    - i. Romans 1-8 is clearly about sin and salvation.
    - ii. Romans 9 launches a monologue (in 57 AD) about the Jews and the covenants... emphasis on plural here is critical.
    - iii. It is not about physical descent (genealogy), but spiritual response that differentiates God’s people beginning with Abraham in faith, not Moses and the Law.
  - b. What is the relationship of Israel [national] and Jew [individuals]?
    - i. Jewish identity hails from the tribe of Judah from the times of the divided kingdom. The northern kingdom fell 1<sup>st</sup> in 722 BC to the Assyrians who interbred what they didn’t destroy, thereby mixing the Abrahamic bloodline. The southern kingdom fell in 586 BC with the Jews who weren’t slaughtered going off into exile in Babylon, though maintaining their bloodline identity.
    - ii. Israel comes from Jacob who was renamed Israel and was the inheritor of the Abrahamic covenant. Ishmael was excluded, as was Esau... this demonstrates the veracity of choice or election in determining the people of God.
    - iii. One can argue that the Jews who received the Messiah as Lord inherited the identity as the people of God, with Gentiles being grafted in to the rootstock. Therefore it isn’t necessarily individual Jews who compose Israel in the context of inheritors of God’s faithful promise, but all of those who believe in Jesus.

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- iv. **Ecclesiology intersects Eschatology [end times theology] in terms of how you see Israel and the future of Israel. In the Old Testament or Sinai Covenant, the promise was the nation being blessed in the land, which was valid as long as you were physically alive. In the New Testament or New Covenant, the promise is blessing in eternity – a much superior promise and blessing. Where the OT was temporal and material, the NT is eternal and Spiritual.**

### 4. Identity of *the* church

- a. **Reformed theology – deals mostly with the theological concepts about Soteriology (salvation), and secondarily about ecclesiology (church) and eschatology (end things). Theological positions are constructs that incorporate a wide variety of thoughts and issues both about God and humanity. Though there are significant differences, there are also some overlaps.**
  - i. **Reformed theology typically goes with premillennial eschatology.**
  - ii. **Covenant theology typically goes with amillennial eschatology.**
  - iii. **Reformed theology is typically thought of as Calvinism defined by the acronym TULIP, however Arminianism and Lutheranism are two other forms of reformed theology. The differences between Calvinism and Arminianism may be seen as follows:**
    - 1. **T = Total depravity –**
      - a. **Calvinism: Humanity can make no decision for good apart from the calling of God. God is completely sovereign – this questions the existence of free will, and at worst makes God the author of the Fall and for evil in general.**
      - b. **Arminianism: Depravity of sin clouds judgment and the Holy Spirit is necessary to quicken the choice to do good, such as accepting Grace. Wesley called this “Prevenient Grace” given to all to allow one to respond to God’s offer.**
    - 2. **U = Unconditional election –**
      - a. **Calvinism: Salvation of humanity is strictly the purview of God as Sovereign Lord who creates some for heaven and others for hell. The choice is God’s and is final, and man has no role to play in it... no free will.**
      - b. **Arminianism: Salvation of humanity is God’s work in man, but man must cooperate with God. Humanity has a role to play... modified free will.**
    - 3. **L = Limited atonement –**
      - a. **Calvinism: Only the elect are atoned for, the rest are doomed to hell since before the beginning of time.**
      - b. **Arminianism: Christ’s salvific act benefits all of humanity, and sparks the opportunity for good in man to respond to God’s offer of grace. While God**

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knows [prescience] who will respond and who won't, it is man's choice to make.

### 4. I = Irresistible Grace –

- a. **Calvinism: Humanity cannot resist God's call to saving faith. Some are called, and some are not – the choice is part of God's sovereign plan. Once called, you cannot fall from grace.**
- b. **Arminianism: God's call goes out to all, and the Spirit enables humanity to know and to choose, but the choice is man's to make and he bears the resultant responsibility. It is possible that some may fall from grace, though the question would arise if they had been saved in the 1<sup>st</sup> place.**

### 5. P = Perseverance of the saints –

- a. **Calvinism: Since all salvific activity is God's, once called you have no choice but to persevere. If you fall away it likely means you were never really called.**
  - b. **Arminianism: Free will makes it possible for some to choose to persevere in their faith or to fall away, though the later may be said to have never been called. Humanity has a part to play in pursuing God.**
- iv. **The main reformed alternative to TULIP Calvinism is Arminianism - the main difference being that humanity is seen to have a part to play in their salvation based upon the dignity of humanity being made in the Image of God. Arminians hold that we are able to hear and respond to God with our "free will" through prevenient Grace [the internal nudging of the Spirit] that is essentially common grace, which gives us the opportunity and responsibility to hear and respond to God instead of being compelled to believe. Wesleyan theology is the primary Arminian representative in modern thought.**
  - v. **Dispensationalism as a thought process has both elements of ecclesiology and eschatology – it is both premillennial and reformed. Dispensationalism argues that God worked differently through redemptive history through the covenants He made with humanity. The point being that people can't respond to God other than what He has called His people to be obedient through His revelations through time.**
- b. **Terms (this is especially a NT theology, but not exclusively):**
    - i. ***Ekklesia* is the primary NT word – Matt 16:18, Paul (62x<sup>1</sup>), Acts (23x) [so that by the 60's the ekklesia was the Christian group whereas the synagogue was the Jewish place of assembly]; an assembly was not necessarily religious: see Acts 19:40f<sup>2</sup>. This was an**

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<sup>1</sup> 1Cor – 22; 2Cor – 9; Eph – 9; Rom – 5; Col – 4; Rev – 20 (15x in chap 2-3); 1Cor 14 – 9; Eph 5 – 6; 10 diff chap in 1Cor.

<sup>2</sup> we really are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion. <sup>41</sup>And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

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organized gathering and hence had some common identity, purpose, agenda, and leadership; “assembling with regard to purpose” ... for mutual defense, to make war, to worship, to ask for idols, for the anointing of Aaron, for erecting the tent of meeting, etc.

- ii. *Synagogue* is an Old Covenant word meaning to “gather;” James 2:2; Acts 14:27 (“gathered the church”; although scarcely distinguishable from above, except that synagogue always had a Jewish connotation in NT. It was the regular word for Jewish house of worship in gospels [34x] and Acts [19x]; but never used in Paul; Rev 2:2; 3:9). Synagogue came into Jewish practice during the exile when God fearing Jews gathered to retain their identity as God’s people in foreign cultural settings.

### 5. Relation to Israel - Fulfillment of Biblical Covenants:

- a. No longer welcome in the old Jewish synagogues, these new “Christians” formed their own gatherings. This is where Messianic Jews would gather – it was based upon what they were familiar with in the traditional Jewish synagogues. It combined worship, prayer, and Scripture reading. They were not overtly trying to start a new faith group. Instead they were living out their faith in the new revelation with a new faith community in continuity with their OT roots.
- b. Overview of covenants, Covenant Theology:
  - i. *Diethekke* – Greek term for “last will and testament; compact, contract, treaty;” but also as translation of “covenant.”
  - ii. *Birit* – Hebrew term for an agreement between persons; but especially a covenant typically between a Suzerain (God or great King) and a vassal (humanity or local king). In these covenants the Suzerain held all the cards and dictated terms... your choice was to accept it or else. All the power for blessing and enforcement comes from the Suzerain. This is typical of the Noachian, Abrahamic, Sinai, and Davidic covenants God made with His people (see chart next page). In terms of the nation under covenant obligations with Assyria, the Southern Kingdom [Samaria] failure to abide by their covenant relationship with the Assyrians, which led to their being crushed in 722 BC.
  - iii. Covenant types included: 1) unconditional, conditional; 2) uni-lateral or bi-lateral; 3) promise or contract; 4) unbreakable or breakable.
  - iv. These words are *never* used of a single, all-encompassing covenant as many scholars today assume.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Luke 1:72f “And to remember His holy *covenant*, the oath which He swore to Abraham our father”; Rom 9:4 “who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and *the covenants* and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises”; Eph 2:12 “you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to *the covenants* of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.”

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- v. **Biblical Covenants – Noah, Abraham, David, New Covenant (unconditional promise appropriated by faith and obedience); Sinai (conditional bilateral based on obedience and works):**

	References in which the word 'Covenant' [tyrIB.] actually occurs	Conditional <sup>4</sup>	Unconditional
<i>(Noah)</i>	<i>Gen 6:18; 9:9-17</i>		✓
Abraham	Gen 15:18; 17:2-21 <sup>5</sup>		✓
Moses	Exodus 19:5; 24:7-8; 31:16	✓	
<i>(Palestinian)</i>	<i>Deut 29:1</i>	X	X
David	<i>(2 Sam 7; 1 Chron 17); Ps 89<sup>6</sup></i>		✓
New	Jer 31:31		✓

- vi. These all are Suzerain-vassal (i.e. power/authority disparity), as God is party to each.
- vii. Covenants were always singular and specific between parties. When expressed in the plural form it speaks to the succession of covenants over time, rather than one all-encompassing covenant. Thus in New Testament terms, we see God's Covenant played out in dispensations in redemptive history.

### 6. Theological aspects of covenant:

- Works** (conditional salvation of Adam upon obedience, judgment upon disobedience) – Adam was innocent and neutral before the Fall. There was no positive substantial ascribed to him. As such, he was not righteous although as part of creation he was pronounced good.
- Redemption** (eternal – Father and Son agreeing to redeem humanity). Redemption is at the heart of God and the Gospel, it courses throughout Scripture as God's plan is progressively revealed throughout redemptive history.
- Grace** is God's free gift to humanity... God's free gift for those who were afforded blessing they did not merit. While God desires that none may perish, some are purposely chosen for God's redemptive purposes and not necessarily for their intrinsic worthiness... Jonah is an example of an unwilling prophet, while Jesus is the Messianic example of the "suffering servant songs" in Isaiah (42:1-7; 49:1-9; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12; 61:1-3). Main components of the suffering servant songs are:

<sup>4</sup> Necessarily implies bilateralism; hence, 'breakability.' Unconditional likewise implies *unilateralism*, 'unbreakability.'

<sup>5</sup> See also Gen 26:3; 35:12 – extension of covenant to Isaac, Jacob.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Chron 21:7; Jer 33:21

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- i. God's righteous servant [Messiah], an individual who restores God's people - 49:5; who is known for His sinless character - 53:9; the sheer magnitude of His work - 42:4. In the NT John 12:38, 41; Acts 8:32-35 identifies Jesus as God's Messianic servant.
  - ii. A pious remnant that the faithful Messiah rescues - 10:20-22. Though Scripture maintains that the Way to God is prepared for all humanity, it is not a universal redemption. Though God does not wish any to perish, humanity must accept the provision God provided for their salvation.
  - iii. Isaiah's prophecy combined the Davidic Messiah [King] with the Suffering Servant [priest] who would redeem and rein over humanity.
- d. Historical background of Covenant Theology:
- i. Switz, Zwingli-Bullinger, Calvin, Cocceius, Westminster Confession (1646); many aspects of church life were carry-overs from Roman Catholicism – infant baptism, etc.
  - ii. They saw the Church as being God's covenant people with a radical continuity with OT Israel (replacement as God's people); while expressing a discontinuity in minimizing the uniqueness of national Israel (personal replaces national identity). Covenant theology is commonly associated with (and almost a necessary extension of) Amillennial Reformed.
  - iii. Covenant theology is no less superimposed on the Bible than is Dispensationalism. In other words, both read their systems into Gen 1-3... they are guilty of eisegesis [using theology to read meaning into Scripture] rather than exegesis [using Scriptural hermeneutics to draw out the author's intended meaning to inform their theology].
  - iv. The early days of Protestantism were not unlike the early days of Christianity. All the church was Catholic... including an Amillennial and Post millennial and a covenant view of theology in terms of continuity with Israel.
    1. Calvin's theology of baptism carried over from the Catholic tradition – "Pado" [infant] baptism was the norm, and though Calvin emphasized the value of believer's baptism he didn't discard pado-baptism.
    2. As reformed theology separated from Catholicism, Calvin's successors adopted TULIP and "believer's baptism" as norms for the covenant community.
    3. Israel with regard to millennial thought:
      - a. A-millennial and Post-millennial have no future mandated need for national Israel. Their theology is "either/or" with regard to Israel and the Church, as well as the spiritual and physical natures.

- b. Pre-millennial has a future role for national Israel – this is a “both/and” approach. They also hold to both a physical and spiritual redemption. They see a merging of the Spirit world and the physical world. In the OT Eden and the Holy of Holies is where heaven and earth intersected, it was where God came close to His people. On the other hand, the new Eden will be greatly improved and heaven and earth merged into something new. The new heaven and earth is a radical improvement over the previous system. This new physical or material reality is an extension of God’s Temple being the Hearts of His people. God is no longer distant, He is imminent; contact is no longer sporadic, but constantly available as the Spirit indwells believers.

### 7. Identity of Israel in relation to Abraham and the Sinai Covenant:

#### a. *Defining* what Scripture reveals about ‘Jews’ and ‘Israel’

- i. Genesis shows Israel’s *natural* descendency from Abraham in physical succession; but also in terms of *faith (= spiritual)* descendency ... by “election.”
  1. It is clear that Isaac was chosen, but not Ishmael; the promise was linked to election. The ‘miraculous’ conception of Isaac was an initial sign... what is impossible for humanity is possible for God. This is an example of “Both-And” theology!
  2. The people of Israel were the descendents of Jacob who were redeemed miraculously by God from Egypt. At the time, Egypt was the most powerful earthly nation. Again, what is impossible for humanity is possible for God. Redemption of the nation of Israel was for the sake of Abraham and is a sign of God’s faithfulness in keeping His covenant. Exodus 2:24; 3:6,15f; 4:5; 6:3, 8; 32:13 ... every mention of Abraham in Exodus *all* refer to the Abrahamic Covenant.
- ii. The nature of a Suzerain-Vassal relationship is a conditional covenant.
  1. There are a number of key features that bear on the overall argument of the book of Deuteronomy. First and perhaps foremost is the fact that the form of the book follows that of the second millennium BC Hittite Suzerain/Vassal Treaty. This form implies some seven or eight elements which are reflected in the book of Deuteronomy:
    - a. Preamble - Identifying the author of the treaty, or to use the biblical term of Covenant (*berith*; 1:1-4).
    - b. Historical Prologue - “mentioning previous relations between the two parties involved; the past benefactions by the suzerain are a basis for

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- the vassal's gratitude and encourage future obedience" (1:5—4:43). Because the Suzerain is gracious to his people, the people love him and obey him.
- c. **General Stipulations** - "a call for wholehearted allegiance to the king" (4:44—11:32). Loyalty was a necessary part of the Suzerain's mandate.
  - d. **Specific Stipulations** - "detailed laws by which the vassal state could give concrete expression of its allegiance to the king" (12:1—26:15).
  - e. **Divine witnesses** - "a long list of the *Supernatural* [gods] called to witness the covenant." This is a feature which by the nature of Israel's God would not be duplicated in the same way, but which may be reflected in calls on "heaven and earth" (30:19; 31:28).
  - f. **Blessings and curses** - these are the agreed to sanctions for compliance and/or noncompliance with the treaty (27—28). This is "stick and carrot" thinking - you do what's right and acceptable and you'll be blessed. Do otherwise at your peril.
  - g. **Arrangements for the Deposit** of a copy of the Covenant in the possession of both parties and its Periodic Reading by the vassal before the Suzerain and rededication (31:9-13, 26). This ongoing feature speaking of "Succession Arrangements or Covenant Continuity" for the two entities. In which are included the invocation of witnesses and directions for the disposition and public reading of the treaty (31—34)."
- iii. "Israel" comes not from Moses or the Sinai covenant contrary to many 'history of Israel' scholars, but rather from Abraham/Isaac/Jacob-Israel and God's covenant specifically with them. Thus the Abrahamic Covenant does involve *physical* descendency. Yet it is *not* by physical by circumstance, but rather spiritual (faith) descendency.
  - iv. Messiah is descended from Israel, not church (Rev 12:1-2). As the promised as son of David, Messiah is the successor of the Davidic Monarchy [Davidic covenant]. Indeed, this is the very meaning of "Christ." He is the "king of Israel" as Jesus confessed to Pilot, thus Christians are necessarily "Messianic."
- b. The identity of "Israel" as it relates to the NT is much debated. If *national*, the church cannot be "new Israel." If *spiritual*, then the Church can be and seems necessarily to be the new Israel.
    - i. Israel's election as a nation is composed of the chosen (faithful remnant) and the non-elect (faithless individuals... Rom 9:6). The Church [Organism] is comprised of the faithful ones only, though there will always be faithless people hanging on with the faithful in the organization [church] as evidenced by the story of the wheat and tares.

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- ii. The preponderance of Israelites, especially the ruling class has been in defiant rebellion (unbelief) against God since AD 30 - their rejecting and then killing their rightful Messiah was an act of open rebellion to God's rule. However, Scripture indicates that the nation is destined ultimately (eschatology) for mass conversion, so that the preponderance will submissively believe (Ezek 37; Zech 12—13; Ro 11:23-31; Rev 11:13; 7:4-8). This is an aspect of God's faithfulness, not humanity's worthiness.
- iii. In Luke-Acts there is no mention of "church" prior to Acts (5:11). But "Israel" continues to be mentioned! An indication that Luke saw the two as being different.
- iv. In time and in eternity... Rom 11 (grafting in branches, see v. 23) – what part of Israel is being grafted in? Is it Spiritual? – no; is it National? – yes.
- v. Matt 15:22-28... a Gentile expresses faith by acknowledging Jesus as the "Son of David" and herself as a dog. And this was written into the church's scripture some 30 years after Jesus.
- vi. National (Israel) corresponds to material, outer, historical. In contrast, non-national is faith-based and hence spiritual. "Spiritual Israel" are those who were God's people by faith, not merely those born of the blood line or culture.
- vii. But the Bible uses the term, "remnant," but never "spiritual Israel" – Romans 9:6 "they are not all Israel who are from Israel": as not all descendents of Abraham (i.e., Ishmael) are the "seed of Abraham" (i.e., elect, heirs of the Abraham Covenant). So "not all blood descendents of Jacob will inherit the Abrahamic Covenant."
- viii. It is important that Romans 9 speaks of Israel in past tense, Romans 10 is written in present tense, and Romans 11 is written in future tense. This is not readily discernible in most translations.
- ix. Thus the remnant is a faithful portion of the nation and will ultimately be all that remains of the nation, so that the entire nation will be both faithful and Christian (Rom 9:6; Gal 6:16). The faithless majority of historical national Israel will be destroyed.
- x. The Israel that was judged is the same Israel that is to be restored, over and over in the OT prophets (Zech 8:13). This is the remnant that continues while the worthless faithless disappear.
- xi. Critical to this debate is the matter of hermeneutics (as also the corresponding eschatological debate) - *"to allegorize or not to allegorize, that is the question."* It depends on the genre and how the meaning is revealed... see the lengthy sections on hermeneutics for much more on this.

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- xii. One of the key arguments of A-millennial covenant theology is that Jesus replaces Israel – thus He is deemed the “true Israel.” The author of Acts has a high Christology, but doesn’t hold to this suggestion.
- c. Conclusion - Is the church an extension or progression of Israel? What are the continuities & discontinuities; and what are the similarities & dissimilarities of Israel & the Church:
  - i. Church is an extension of Israel in a “non-national or cultural” way. The designation of Church [Organism] from church [organization] is important. The continuity is based upon God’s redemptive purposes for restoring humanity. The discontinuity is the replacement of Law by Grace.
  - ii. Israel still looks forward to the coming of Messiah, just as Christians look forward to His return.
  - iii. God has graciously delivered Israel from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant – from Law to Grace. Many theologians hold to the necessity of Law *and* Grace... however that is not what the NT authors wrote. Hermeneutically, this is “*eisegesis*” [reading meaning in] rather than “*exegesis*” [drawing meaning out] of Scripture.
  - iv. Israel corporately rejected Jesus as her Messiah – Israel should have recognized Him and obeyed Him... those who did are the chosen community of faith; those that didn’t are now rejected. In so doing God has extended NC grace *directly* to Jews and non-Jews, forming a new corporate entity the Church [organism], whose unifying trait is not national or ethnic, but rather by allegiance to (= faith in) the King of Israel, the Messiah Jesus.
  - v. Acts 13:22 – Luke differentiates between Israel and Jesus... the promise is 2 Samuel 7.
  - vi. Faithful Israel in the OT were the “People of God”... the faithful in the Church are now the “People of God.” Ultimately God will have “one people” – and integrated family of faithful humanity... no longer Gentile or Jew - but fundamentally Christian.
  - vii. The Presence of God necessarily brings holiness... manifest in the OT by the physical temple in Jerusalem and specifically the Ark of the Covenant where God has His footstool on earth, being the place where heaven and earth intersected. In the NT the presence of God is in the temple of the human heart of faithful Christians... the place where heaven and earth not only intersect, but where God lives.
  - viii. 1 Peter 2:10 – the Church is now the people of God and have superseded national Israel. As Grace is superior to Law, so Christian is superior to Jewish.
  - ix. Ephesians 2:11 says the same thing – Gentiles now have an identity that redefines what we are... and the future holds a merger of the old and new people of God.

### 8. Church in Relation to its Savior:

- a. *Israel's Messiah*: the term “Son of David” means King, and specifically with regard to the line of the Davidic covenant.
  - i. In the Gospels - Son of David occurs in several places including the Gentile woman, Matt 15:22; the sign over cross (*INRI*); the discourses to Israel in Acts 2—7; 13; and the accusation of Jews: Ac 17:3, 7.
  - ii. But in the Epistles - there is a theological objection that seems to arise because Paul doesn't employ this term. Since Paul was a Pharisee, why is this term not emphasized in Paul's epistles? A related question is why is “Christ” not translated, defined, explained, but used often like a ‘nick-name’ [Jesus Christ] in Paul? Paul seems OK to link Jesus and Christ together without explanation, and to use the terms independently. Paul obviously has a “High Christology” - a high and elevated view of Jesus as Messiah and Lord. So what's going on?
  - iii. Dr Tuck's answer: Paul was on the front side of a historical divide and his unique mission included evangelizing both Jews and Gentiles. For both groups his primary message was the identification of Jesus as Messiah... both God and Lord of creation.
    1. For the one group (Israel) “Messiah” already had a well-defined meaning, so that the attachment of the two words, “Jesus” with “Messiah” (as “Jesus Christ”) could not possibly have failed to have the sense “Jesus the Messiah.”
    2. For the other group (Gentiles) “Messiah” was a new technical term, a title which he would undoubtedly have defined at great lengths, as witnessed in Galatians 3:14-18, 29. This was associated also with Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant (cf. Acts 17:3, 7) where the Jews recognized Paul's assertion as royal, but where also Luke's Gospel & Acts retained the issue of Messiahship for a largely Gentile readership (Luke 22:67-23:3).
    3. It is most likely that to Paul, and especially toward his Gentile audience, the term ‘*Christos*’ was regarded as an imperial role not unlike ‘Caesar.’ The Caesars claimed to be ‘lord’ (*kurios*), and their title was linked with their name: Julius Caesar (Augustus, Tiberius, etc). Thus one of his strategies was to link “Jesus” and “Messiah” unforgettably and inseparably conveying power and authority even greater than the Roman Emperors as Jesus was Lord of Heaven as well as earth.
    4. Paul succeeded in convincing first-century believers that Jesus is the Messiah and that he is the Savior of Gentiles as well as Jews. Thus, when we read the

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text we have forgotten or overlooked what Paul and his readers *assumed* as true and did not need an elaborate upon the explanation that Jesus is the Son of David destined to rule Israel, as well as the Son of God destined to rule all of heaven and earth. (See Acts 1:6.)

5. Where Paul preached the Gospel, the initial responders were Jews who Paul reached in the synagogue. The early church relied on Jewish converts who knew the Scriptures to teach the Gentile converts from Paganism who did not. In time the Gentiles became the larger of the two groups... not unlikely because the places Paul preached were primarily Gentile representing probably 90-95% of the local culture. In time these Christians became their own distinct culture – with an identity, faith, morals, ethics, practices and behaviors different from their past. Ultimately, though with difficulty in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, Gentile Christians and Messianic Jews became a united faith.
  6. OT prophesied that Israel’s Messiah would not only reign over Israel, but pour out blessings on the whole world, including Gentiles. This was their Eschatology or end time’s theology. This Jesus is the King of creation though He came to the Jews who were uniquely prepared to identify Him. Now the blessing Messiah brings is open for all to enjoy.
  7. The Jews understood Messiah as King, but Paul had to get through to the Gentiles to teach them the threads of redemptive history ultimately culminated in Jesus.
- b. Church is the Bride of Christ (Eph 5:21-33; Rev 19:7; 21:2, 9-10) = this means marriage, an unbreakable bond of unity with images of “bone of bones, flesh of flesh” and the two become one. This conveyed unconditional commitment with the deepest intimacy and pleasure. This is a picture of an ultimate blessing, not of sexual union... that would have been a Pagan notion.
- i. This recalls Yahweh’s OT relationship as husband over Israel. One of the affirmations of Jesus (John 8:58) and the apostles (Rom 10:9) is Jesus’ identification with Yahweh.
  - ii. In the OT the husband was the ‘lord’ (king) of the household, and his wife was his queen. When they became Christians, they ruled their home as regents [steward/vassals] of Jesus.
  - iii. Where Yahweh was the “Lord” of Israel, Jesus is “Lord” of the Church.
- c. Church is the Body of Christ:
- i. The Church is an Organism... an “integrated Organic unity” functioning not merely in collective motivated self interest as Israel did, but in fundamental dependency and

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integrated purpose with God, where serving God and being a blessing to one another was their ideal. This was an entirely new manner of living together in community.

- ii. A point to observe: As “Christ” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew “Messiah,” both these terms have a strong Israel flavor about them inasmuch as the OT Messiah is Israel’s Savior-King.
- iii. The notion that Jesus is to “marry the church” refers back to the household above where Jesus is King - the protector, provider, leader, and the body over which he is the head.

### d. The Church in terms of Christ’s First and Second Comings: Material and Spiritual

- i. If Christ is the “seed of the woman” (Gen 3:15) and “seed of Abraham” (Gen 12:2-3, 7, *et passim*), then he must be the answer to the Gen 3 curse, which involved the entire nature of humanity both material and spiritual. He is the One who will crush the Serpent’s [Satan’s] head.
- ii. His redemption must likewise be the solution to both, as it seems consistent with the nature of God expressed in Scripture to consistently do more rather than less than He promised to. That is the explanation why the OT did not predict two distinct comings of Messiah, but rather a “coming one” where there would be a wholeness to his ministry – and why He comes in two comings (advents) is because there are two phases... the Spiritual first [and arguably the better] and material second. As Christians it is wrong not to long for the end times, but it is probably more wrong not to savor the Spiritual Life that is our New Covenant birthright.
- iii. The church today lives uniquely between these two comings - the “now and the not yet,” where we are now redeemed spiritually but not yet materially. In the OT Israel had neither; but the millennial-eternal saints will have both.
- iv. The Spiritual redemption is the necessary precursor of the material redemption. It would make no sense to have a redeemed creation without a redeemed humanity to rule it. The Spiritual is also arguably the better of the two as the immediacy and the transformational aspects prepare us for the proximal aspects of life in the presence of God. It could be no other way.

### e. The Church in Relation to the world

- i. Standard of conduct of the Church is crucial – Purity has both individual and corporate elements: 1 John 5:18; 1 Cor 5:9
  - 1. John writes and thinks in terms of black and white (either/or). The key in making sense of this is thinking in terms of the inner/outer man.

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2. **The outer man is under judgment... it has been cursed and will be destroyed. The innerman is under Grace... it has been delivered from judgment with a promise of blessing and eternity.**
  3. **This is why Paul teaches about the need for purity – ethical, moral, and spiritual in the church. It is not acceptable for a Born-again believer to continue living in sin... in the state of ongoing unrepentant sin. It is not a question that Christians will never ever sin again... we of course will, but that we'll never be under the bondage to sin and the resultant judgment that we're otherwise due. Not only do we not have to live sinful lives or remain under the curse of sin, we are not entirely comfortable if/when we do sin. This is the gift of conviction by the Spirit, when responded to in faith we move from conviction to remorse, to repentance, to restitution and restoration, and finally to reconciliation. Conviction and reconciliation are gifts from God, the middle stuff we do in faithful submission.**
  4. **Paul taught that those who knowingly live in sin... that is who live ongoing sinful lifestyles such as the man who shacked up with his father's wife should be treated as an outsider. If they change their ways, we should welcome them back. But if they continue in sin, they probably are not true believers as God wouldn't allow a true believer to continue in sin.**
- ii. **Other-worldliness of Believers - Phil 3:20f; Col 3:1-4; 1 J 5:19; 2 Cor 5**
1. **We are a community reflecting the pure identity of our Lord. As His ambassadors, we have a calling to live life in a manner worthy of our King.**
  2. **The things that were important to Jesus, need to be important to us.**
  3. **Living in Truth and Spirit is not a fantasy but a birthright.**
  4. **Loving God and others (Great Commandment), evangelism and discipleship (Great Commission) are the demonstration of our priorities and obedience.**
  5. **Living such a life allows the Spirit to convict others of their need for our Savior... but shame on us when we live no differently than the world around us. To be attractational people have to see something in us that compels them to want to have what we have and become like us.**
- f. **The Church in Relation to state: Rom 13; 1 Pet 2; Matt 22:21; Roman Catholic, European Protestant, Eastern Orthodox – Messiah as our Priest-King**
- i. **Christians have done a poor job through the ages in honoring our calling, and the complexity of differing church expressions have only muddied the waters. Often nations/states have ascribed a religious position to justify and support its political**

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vision: The Church of Rome was Roman Catholic. The church of England was Anglican Communion. The church of Holland was Dutch Reformed, Etc. However, instead of living a life of grace and love, too much energy was spent trying to prove the other wrong and ourselves right. We are called to unity, not to division.

- ii. While His Kingdom is not of this world... we are to live in the world as His ambassadors. As in other-worldliness we are to continue His calling, not our own ideals. Much evil has been done under the name of Christ... He does not approve.
- iii. Since we live in this world while we await the next, we ought to live such a life as would bring conviction to others... and to be a blessing to all.
- iv. Authority has been placed over us by God's express purpose or at least His consent. As such we live a life worthy of His calling. We need to be obedient to the laws as they don't conflict with our Christ given convictions. While the world has a low threshold standard, ours is much greater and builds upon it.

### 9. Christian Identity Metaphors:

- a. **Body** – especially in relation to head: Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 10:16-17; 12:12-27 (*soma* 18x!); Eph 1:23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4, 12, 16; 5:23, 30 (9x in Eph); Col 1:18, 24; 2:19; 3:15 (35x in Paul). Paul further gives preferential honor to the less visible; he tends to emphasize corporate life, as a super-Organism or “vital organic unity” such as a flock of birds or a school of sardines that seem to move seamlessly in an organized choreographed dance. Such movement is spontaneous and reflexive - this is what it means to “Being Christians” not merely acting like one. Being a Christian drawn to God is like a moth being drawn to a flame - we do it naturally, even in spite of ourselves.
- b. **Bride** especially in relation to groom-husband: Eph 5:23-32 (Jesus); Rev 21:2, 9; 22:17 (New Jerusalem). Point of the Bride metaphor is that there is no one that a man (OT – Lord) loves more than his wife. A good husband will go to great lengths to please his wife... demonstrating his love, concern, and commitment. Such a wife will have no difficulty following her husband. The problems in our households start with men not being Christ like.
- c. **Temple** (in relation to cornerstone): 1 Cor 3:9-11; Eph 2:20-22; 1 Pet 2:5  
“Temple” is the earthly throne of God. He is heavenly and His temple is his outpost head quarters in his vassal's land. This is where the priest approaches God to present the people's tribute to honor His covenant and plead for forgiveness because we have failed to be the obedient servants He expects us to be. It is significant that the curtain in the Temple was torn from the top down... only the Sovereign Suzerain can modify a covenant – this demonstrated forcefully along with the physical and spiritual wonders occurring at Christ's death that the Old Covenant had been cancelled, and a new one had been installed.

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- d. **Household (= family):** Eph 2:19 (*oikeios*); Gal 6:10 this is God’s family – we are each God’s own sons or daughters, and we all are heirs to His Kingdom.
  - e. **Farms & nurseries:** 1 Cor 3:5-9 the teaching here is especially about the relationship of Christian leaders to at-large believers in the congregation. All growth comes from God – whether physical or spiritual it is a gift. Ministers are the workers – the planters & cultivators are the clergy, the crops in the field are the laity – James 3.
10. Church leadership is expected to have a greater knowledge and an informed and well developed theology. Our challenge as leaders is not to “dumb down” the message, but to present it in a way that is attractational, convicting, and edifying.
- a. Too many leaders strive to entertain or to dole out measures of truth or wisdom. This leads to insipient and listless life in the body.
  - b. We need to challenge people to live transformational lives in the power of the Spirit [Grace], not in human strength [Law].
  - c. Leaders do a disservice to the congregations when they don’t give them an elevated view of God and life in His service. It is wondrous to partner with God and see Him work in us and through us.
  - d. You cannot give what you don’t have - if your relation to God is not vital and alive, you can’t ignite transformational life in your congregations.
11. Sacraments - these are Christian Identity Markers [AKA “ordinances”] of the Church. These Sacraments are practiced in all churches, but are held in a particularly higher significance in the Roman Catholic and the High Church Protestants. The question is whether there is an intrinsic value to each of these sacraments as the high church avows? Or do the sacraments convey a more symbolic or even a more arbitrary or discretionary meaning? How does God look at these events? Is there a conforming physical element with spiritual ramifications? Or is the value dependent upon the individual situation or circumstance? The answer is yes and maybe to all. It is safe to say that each Sacrament has a place in the life of the Church and deserves a measured and reverent response when practiced. The question for all of these sacraments is ultimately “Spiritual” and not “methodological” or “formulaic” – the details of the practice are less important than the inner decision which launches true Spiritual life. The problem has always been that as humans we can observe the outward event, but we cannot really know what is going on inside a person’s heart and mind. However, God knows exactly what is going on, and ultimately that is what matters. That is also probably the best place to leave it. Sacraments include:
- a. **Baptism** (Rom 6; Col 2:11-12; 1 Pet 3:21; Matt 3:11; John 1:25-33; 1 Cor 1:13-17; Luke 12:50)
    - i. Is seen as a onetime event denoting the initiation (beginning) of a believer’s commitment into the faith community.

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1. In the Biblical faith community examples, the baptism was immediate upon their profession of faith.
  2. In modern practices we expect a certain amount of teaching and doctrine to ground the new believer before their public profession of faith. This is part of counting the cost of discipleship. This may be months even year after the initial profession of faith.
  3. Part of the distinction between the Biblical and modern practice is that coming to faith meant something then that it doesn't necessarily mean now - it changed your life then, functionally and relationally as life was all about the community. The modern experience tries to walk a line between the two and focuses on individuality.
- ii. Cleansing of the heart (innerman) symbolically represented by external cleansing by water (outerman)... (1 Pet 3:21; Acts 22:16)
  - iii. Identification with Jesus – cultural identity in Scriptural times as presently in many countries (Muslim, Japan, India) meant you were cut off from your family and community in favor of a new family and community. It cost them significantly, and was an important decision consequently (1 Cor 1:15; 10:2; Rom 6:3ff).
  - iv. Identification with the specific [local church] and general [extended Church] community of faith... initiation into the body life in a particular faith community with the adoption of a new value system – Luke 12:50; Ac 2:38,41; 8:12,36-38; 9:18; 10:47; 16:15,33; 18:8; 19:5; 1 Cor 12:13).
  - v. Modes of Baptism:
    1. Sprinkle v. immersion – both have been applied and both have a Scriptural background. The baptism form was most like immersion, but was more likely vertical dunking rather than backward dunking.
    2. Adult believer v. infant – who is always on the defensive? Sprinklers and infant Baptists never charge the immersion as illegitimate – John 3:23; Ac 8:38; Rom 6:4; rather the believer's baptism group tend to denounce the infant ceremony. Both are acceptable, both have historical and Scriptural backing.
    3. Sprinkling for an infant can mean dedication by the parents to raise them as Christians. Immersion should mean that the person is of the age of consent and commits to entering the community of faith. Both have a place in church practice.
    4. Spirit baptism – the water form is an outerman example of an innerman transformation (Ac 1:5; 1 Cor 12:13). Does the filling of the Spirit happen

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automatically at the initial faith decision? Or is it a separate event requiring the laying on of hands? Both are supported by Scripture and historical practice. However, there is no Scriptural basis for receiving “more” of the Spirit. When the believer comes to genuine faith, the Spirit indwells them. From that moment they have all the gifting of the Spirit they need, though it may take time for it to work out in their life.

- vi. **Baptism is a ceremony that has an assigned meaning – this indicates an intrinsic value. It is a celebration of life... it is the recognition of an individual being born into the Life in the Spirit and entrance into the community of the Spirit. We need to teach the Biblical meaning ascribed to Baptism – edify per Romans 6.**
- vii. **Baptismal intrinsic value - Catholics hold to a baptismal regeneration that washes away original sin – does this event have any required Spiritual affect? Is it a necessary aspect of spiritual formation... or is it an outward confession of an inward experience to the community of faith? Both the Catholic Church and the Church of Christ hold that innerman regeneration (Spiritual Life) occurs with the rite of Baptism. They also hold that it is a required event that must occur in their own church with their own clerics officiating to be saved. They take a very legalistic works approach that necessitates a very specific manner in which the rite is performed for it to have value. This contention however, is not well supported by Scripture.**
- viii. **Trinitarian prayer formula value - is there some requirement to uttering the mantra “in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”? It is what Scripture said we should do, though there is no indication than any of the above occurred or was required for the thief on the cross beside Jesus. His profession of faith was sufficient.**
- b. **Communion - the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11:20-34; Luke 22:14-20; John 6:53-56; Matt 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25)**
  - i. **Passover was the sacramental rite practiced by the Jews in remembrance of God’s miraculous redeeming work in the plagues against Pharaoh and Egypt. Passover was the 10<sup>th</sup> plague and the Passover miracle was a sign and a covenant marker carried over into the NT. The prevailing attitude of most Christian practitioners is that communion is the appropriate sign of the New Covenant replacing Passover. The preparation of the meal of lamb/bread (body), and wine (blood) maintains a connection through time for all of God’s people. Instead of once a year in the case of Passover, the communion rite is intended to be more frequent.**
  - ii. **Sacred meals in ancient religions have a long and revered history, for Pagans as well as Jews and Christians (see Dictionary of Paul His Letters on Lord’s Supper). The number of OT feasts also indicates that God loves to celebrate with His people, and that these**

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events are tangible reminders of God's past and present action on the part of His people.

- iii. Periodic vs. weekly – it is up to the faith community to determine the regularity of the expression... the point is to make it solemn and contemplative, not routine and automatic. High Church [liturgical] practices hold that communion is necessary “Spiritual Food” required to sustain the life of the Spirit in believers. Though this idea is not well supported by Scripture, I really think they get the holiness right in approaching God in the common elements of cup and bread. However, the warning not to partake of Communion [Lord's Supper] in an unworthy manner attests to its importance in the life of the believer and the faith community (1 Cor 11:28-29). We need to maintain a reverent and humble acceptance of what God has done on our behalf... knowing we don't deserve Grace and could never earn it on our own.
- iv. Symbols are important... the bread, and the wine – how are these different? How are they the same? What is the relation of symbols to reality (transubstantiation (Roman Catholic), consubstantiation (Lutheran), etc.)? The Old Covenant Passover “Seeder” was primarily about meat, bread, and wine. The bitter herbs and unleavened bread tied them to the original Passover event, however the wine being a Messianic symbol. The New Covenant is primarily bread and wine... the Messiah has arrived and His death as Atonement for Sin for humanity is the new more wondrous Passover. For the Christian the Bread [Body of Christ] when broken is the new staple of Kingdom life. Bread = Body of Jesus... however it really stands for the Word of God which is true Spirit food. Wine = blood... atonement... together this is “True Food.”
- v. Connecting the past to a hopeful future – 1 Cor 11:26 (“*as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes*”). We need to find a way to keep this ceremony fresh, relevant, and impactful. If done too often it becomes rote, and worse trite and bland. Press the Messianic message that Grace was inaugurated at His 1<sup>st</sup> coming, the hope of the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming needs to be not merely enticing but compelling. Encourage people to use their imagination to “see” what could be. The Spirit invites us to enter into His realm and taste the sweetness of His fruit.
- c. Foot washing (John 13:1-17): the Mennonite Brethren practice this ritual ceremony... it is not reinforced anywhere else... too bad! It is an important symbol of humility and forgiveness of one another. Especially in our American culture... we are too independent and self sufficient... this rite connects us to community in a unique way.
- d. Catholic “sacraments” – include Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of sick (Last rites), Holy Orders, Matrimony. Though the focus has always been on the priest “performing the rite properly” because there was inherent value in the proper performance

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rather than in the heart [faith] of the believer, it has still engaged their faith community in a special and somber way.

### 12. Organization of a church:

#### a. Membership:

- i. In *the* Church – the mystical Body of Christ indwelt by the Spirit of unity:
  1. Faith = spirit baptism with verbal confession (Ac 16:31; Rom 10:9f)... faith in the heart needs to have some outward expression of what is happening inwardly. However the inward phenomena has the intrinsic value, ... hence, this is a non-national matter, equally accessible to Gentiles as to Jews.
  2. Water baptism: symbolic confession complementing verbal expression.
- ii. In *a* church as a local organization/organism hybrid.
  1. It is useful to have an organism and organization mindset – the distinction is the Spiritual-innerman vs. the worldly/outerman.
  2. Have to decide if you want to be an open community where any can attend and claim membership with minimal participation beyond attendance and giving; or a covenant community where membership requires classes and commitment to the local group.
- iii. The former [Church] is the ideal, but the latter [church] although has its problems, also has some advantages in a fallen world with some safeguards:
  1. A membership covenant spells out expectations and requirements, as well as discipline and expulsion. In our litigious society, there is some advantage of enforcement in a covenant.
  2. The covenant stipulates a process for learning and participation... it means something and costs you something to join.
  3. In our society it is too easy to leave one church and attend another, covenants help create personal responsibility and some discipline and transparency.
- iv. Internal discipline in a community: Matt 18:15-20; Gal 6:1-2; 1 Cor 5:1–6:5; 1 Tim 1:20; 5:19-25; Ti 1:13; 3:10-11.
  1. As a faith community there is a standard of conduct, values, ethics, and morals that we ascribe too if not imperfectly display. Scripture demonstrates that we cannot tolerate those who knowingly and deliberately sin.
  2. As a covenant community there is an agreed upon structure for discipline and known consequences for perpetual disobedience.

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3. We need to differentiate between subversive behavior of the “wolves in sheep’s clothing” and the garden variety of sinful living or misconduct. The former when identified needs to be expelled from the community. The latter’s continued misconduct may disprove the validity of their faith... as with the tares and the wheat parable.
  4. There will always be sin in the congregation... Christian’s will disobey and fail, but the standard should be consistent and the goal when sin is disclosed is to promote health, growth, healing, repentance and restoration.
  5. There will always be in the congregation a mixed group:
    - a. The faithful mature who walk in the Spirit.
    - b. The confused or weak that walk inconsistently.
    - c. The damaged and abused that require triage.
    - d. The disingenuous who seek their own benefit at the expense of the faithful.
  6. We need a faith-based standard that is lovingly encouraged and supported.
  7. We need discernment to differentiate the two groups:
    - a. The subversive - wolves from the sheep.
    - b. The unregenerate - tares from the wheat.
  8. We need faithful pastors and leaders who model Christian life in love.
- b. **Spiritual Leadership (Eph 4:11; Phil 1:1; Acts 14:23; 1 Tim 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-4; Heb 13:17; Jas 3:1); Foundational officers: Eph 2:20; 3:5**
- i. **Apostles (too common to list verses: oh, ok, just a couple – 1 John 1:1-3) – these were the 1<sup>st</sup> hand observers of Jesus and His ministry who were the authoritative teachers and writers of Scripture.**
    1. While the apostles didn’t survive past the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, the apostolic ministry continues where the Spirit gives wisdom, strength, insight, and powerful communication to further the Gospel especially where it is not known.
    2. There can be no new authoritative revelation binding God’s people in conflict with scripture – this is the way anti-Christ’s and their cults continue to deceive the faithful.
  - ii. **Prophets – Acts 11:27; 13:1; 15:22; 21:9, 10; 1 Cor 12:28f – The only place the NT prophet is mentioned apart from apostles is Acts. What does it mean that this is so**

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rarely seen outside Acts? What is the reasonable association of prophets and prophecy in 1 Cor 12—14: 12:28; 14:1. Broad and narrow senses?

1. Ephesians 2 & 3 reveals that the church is built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets. The office of apostles and prophets is often debated as to what form both continue into modern times, it is clear however that both were the standard in Biblical times.
  2. Prophetic ministry [as with apostolic ministry] is an ongoing tradition of “Word ministry” it is making clear God’s truth and making straight God’s path to His people in every generation. The message is alive as is the Spirit that fuels it... making it “new” or relevant to each generation and each culture and setting. It is one who speaks God’s message as His mouth piece.
  3. Prophets receive the message through the Spirit both directly and indirectly by Scripture study and prayer. Then they deliver the message in a way that serves to equip the saints. What does ‘equipping’ (*katartismo.n*; Eph 4:12) mean? “We speak for God to them: what to believe, how to behave.”
- c. Gifts of the Spirit – Rom 12:6 – these are categories of “word” and “deed” ministry... all such gifts are given for the edification and building up of the faith community. These are unusual manifestations of Grace bestowed by the indwelling Spirit [Refer to Theology 3.2 “Life in the Spirit”].
- i. Prophecy – includes all word ministry in serving the Kingdom of God 1<sup>st</sup> and foremost – as the church in edifying and equipping the faithful through preaching and impactful teaching to shepherd God’s people. It is speaking “Wisdom” and “Knowledge” (1 Cor 12:8).
  - ii. Discernment of Spirits (1 Cor 14:29) requires knowing God so intimately that our mind and hearts are so closely aligned that we perceive the things that are from God.
  - iii. Serving (Rom 12:7, 2 Cor 5:18) – refers to meeting the needs of the church so the body is healthy and alive and represents God’s Kingdom to the world. All the serving admonitions are 1<sup>st</sup> within the church, and then as outreach to the community. When serving is done in this manner the church is attractational... people desire to be a part of it because of the way we love each other.
  - iv. Teaching (1 Cor 12:28-29) – is a form of word ministry that does not necessarily include preaching or evangelism. This is the work of grounding the faithful so they may stand as mature disciples.
  - v. Evangelism (2 Tim 4:5; Acts 21:8) - preaching the Gospel message to expand God’s Kingdom.

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- vi. Exhortation – the gift of encouragement to see what a person may become, and moving them along in their Spiritual growth.
- vii. Social Justice - giving, mercy, and service are things all saints are expected to do cheerfully as a “love offering” to God which is voluntary in the New Covenant, as opposed to “tithing” which is compulsion and mandatory in the Old Covenant. Social justice in the NC sense has to do with people who God has given the means and desire to strategically develop the Kingdom of God on earth.
- viii. Leadership (1 Cor 12:28) – some people are called and gifted to organize and lead God’s people. This is distinct from but may also include pastoral ministry which is characterized by shepherding.

### 13. Church Body:

- a. There are 2 broad categories of Spiritual Gifts – Word and deed; and there are two categories of the church – Organism [Church] and organization [church].
  - i. The Organism is the “Bride of Christ” – the mystical fellowship of all believers unified by faith in the Holy Spirit by the blood of Messiah. These are the people of God.
  - ii. The organization is the institution of corporation of the church – it is the mechanical methodology that allows the Body to meet corporately.
  - iii. The Organism is part of the innerman that enjoys already the “now” of Spiritual redemption and perfection. The unity of believers in faith God sees as the children He loves.
  - iv. The organization is part of the outerman that along with creation is part of the “not yet” that waits expectantly for the perfection to come at Jesus’ 2<sup>nd</sup> coming. Like all institutions of humanity this part is flawed and fallen.
  - v. A good question to ask in any “church” setting is how much energy, effort and expense goes toward the advancement of the Organism, and how much goes to the maintenance or development of the organization. Far too much “ministry activity and expense” goes to the organization, and far too little goes to the Organism. Self analysis – what percentage of our own personal resources [time, human, and capital] goes to word ministry [discipleship & edifying], outreach [evangelism], and mercy [social justice].
- b. Operational officers (see “Leadership” document):
  - i. Elders/Bishops/Pastors – are the most Spiritually mature, the most gifted preacher/teachers in word and prayer ministry, and the leaders of the faith community.

1. Elders are the successors to Apostles, who in Biblical times and throughout most of the church era were all male. It is not known whether this was a “cultural response” or a “Spiritual mandate” for leadership. The question has been lumped under the mandate of “Headship” - as Christ is the head of the Church, so the husband is the head of the household. Much evil and confusion has resulted from a rigid application of this disputed concept as mandate.
  2. There is no evidence Paul or any other ever appointed a woman as an elder, though there were women deaconesses, teachers, prophetesses, and possibly apostles. The prominence of Mary and Martha point to how Jesus dealt with the matter.
  3. Elders were Spiritual leaders who ministered alongside the apostles in Acts – 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-2; 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9.
  4. The case for female elders is difficult to make as there are no NT statements referencing female elders. The lack of evidence suggests for some an “argument from silence” suggesting there may have been no female elders.” However, for others to presume this is a mandate is not only unwise but also not supported by Scripture.
  5. Paul’s mention of Junia [presuming this was a female, but this is uncertain] in Rom 16:7, as “*outstanding among the apostles*” is one loud exception, but to make the case from this that Paul was open to female apostleship is surely somewhat weak. No doubt Paul was indicating great respect and according a very high esteem for this and also for other women leaders. However, to suggest she was of the “first order of apostles” or that she would have been regarded as an apostle apart from Andronicus is reaching beyond the evidence.
    - ii. Deacon/deaconess: 1 Tim 3:8-13 (v. 11 suggests female deacons, cf., Rom 16:1); Ac 6:2-6. The office of deacon was supportive to the role of pastor/elder. It is possible these may have been elders’ assistants. These were mature believers who were mainly involved with organizational ministry, though they were spiritually mature, gifted, equipped for ministry, and taught as well.
      - i. Internal organization: - the “politics of church organization” as well as theological differences form the basis of much of the denominational differences.
- 14. Denominations have 2 “Catholic” and 4 main “Reformation” branches [from an article “Celebrating Jesus Together” by Thomas Bokenkotter]:** After two millennia of Christian history, the search for greater unity among Christians is at a crossroads. The 20th century saw the rise of the ecumenical movement as first Protestants, Orthodox and then Catholics began to show interest in breaking down the historic barriers between the Churches. The ecumenical movement that emerged made some real gains, thanks to a new spirit of cooperation toward unity on both sides of the wall separating Protestants, Orthodox and Catholics.

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- a. **Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox:** When we look at the Christian family tree [see diagram on page 2], we see that until the 16th century it had basically only two large branches: the Western and the Eastern Churches. Already by the fifth century the Western Churches had come more or less under the rule of the Bishop of Rome [Roman Catholic], while the Eastern also known as the Orthodox Churches were, for the most part, under the rule of the patriarchs who occupied the main “sees” [center of regional influence] of Alexandria, Constantinople, Jerusalem and Antioch. While culturally, politically and socially quite disparate, the Western and Eastern Churches were able to maintain some form of communion during the first millennium with only a few exceptions. However, a definitive schism occurred after 1054 when the issue of papal sovereignty, which had long bedeviled the relationship of East and West, finally came to a head and the church officially split.
- b. **Lutheran Churches:** These originally took root in Germany and Scandinavia. They modified but generally retained traditional Catholic liturgical forms, putting equal emphasis on preaching and sacraments. On October 31, 1999, the Vatican and the Lutheran World Federation signed a "Joint Declaration on Justification" that lays to rest the major issue that sparked the Protestant Reformation - “salvation by faith versus salvation by works.” In the Declaration, the fruit of 30 years dialogue, both Lutherans and Catholics acknowledge that the salvation of humanity comes from God alone as Grace not by merit. The signing of this Declaration was a historic step in ecumenism.
- c. **Reformed Churches:** This second branch stemming from the Reformation embraces those most heavily influenced by the theology of John Calvin, John Knox and Ulrich Zwingli. It includes the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists.
  - i. **Congregationalists:** espouse a Church polity that insists on the independence and autonomy of each local congregation and democracy in governance. They also favor a form of worship centered on long sermons, while celebrating the Lord’s Supper less frequently. (This tradition of non-liturgical worship became especially characteristic of the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists and Baptists.) In 1957 the Congregationalists joined with the Evangelical and Reformed Churches in the United States to form the *United Church of Christ*.
  - ii. **Presbyterians:** follow a Calvinist Church order that gives elected laypersons (called elders) a right to participate in the work of the priesthood (presbytery). They join the pastor/minister(s) and deacon(s) in the preaching, teaching and sacramental ministry of the congregation. The United Presbyterian Church, then the largest American Presbyterian body, adopted a Book of Confessions in 1967 that included many historic creeds, including the Nicene and Apostles Creeds. It merged in 1983 with other Presbyterian bodies to form the *Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.*
  - iii. **The Church of England (Anglicans):** The third Western branch grew from the Church of England, which emerged from Henry VIII’s 16th-century break with the pope. The *Episcopal Church* is a body of the Anglican Communion, which includes the Church of England and other self-governing Anglican Churches. Like the Church of England, the Episcopal Church is known for its great latitude in doctrinal and disciplinary matters.
    1. Also emerging from the Church of England, yet no longer in full communion with it, are the **Methodists and the Quakers**. The *United Methodist Church* traces its roots to the dynamic preaching of John Wesley, a Church of England clergyman aided by his brother Charles, also a clergyman and a talented author of hymns. John Wesley held long, unritualistic, outdoor services that climaxed when the individual was inspired to make a personal commitment to Christ.
    2. Wesley was also devoted to the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and celebrated it regularly. The relations of the two Wesleys and their followers with the Church of England remained undefined, and only after their death did the Methodist Church emerge as a completely independent Church. Methodist Churches spread widely in the United States even during the lifetime of the Wesleys. Methodism has traditionally manifested an active concern with both evangelism and social justice issues.
    3. Like the Methodists, the *Quakers* originated from a fervent preacher, in this case, George Fox (d. 1691). His magnetic personality, immense spiritual power, selfless devotion and patience under persecution won him a large following whom he loosely organized into the so-called “Meetings.” Without traditional liturgy, creeds or sacraments, Quakers rely on an “Inner Light” and the direct experience of God for guidance and empowerment. They are especially noted for their deep commitment to the Holy Spirit, social betterment and pacifism.

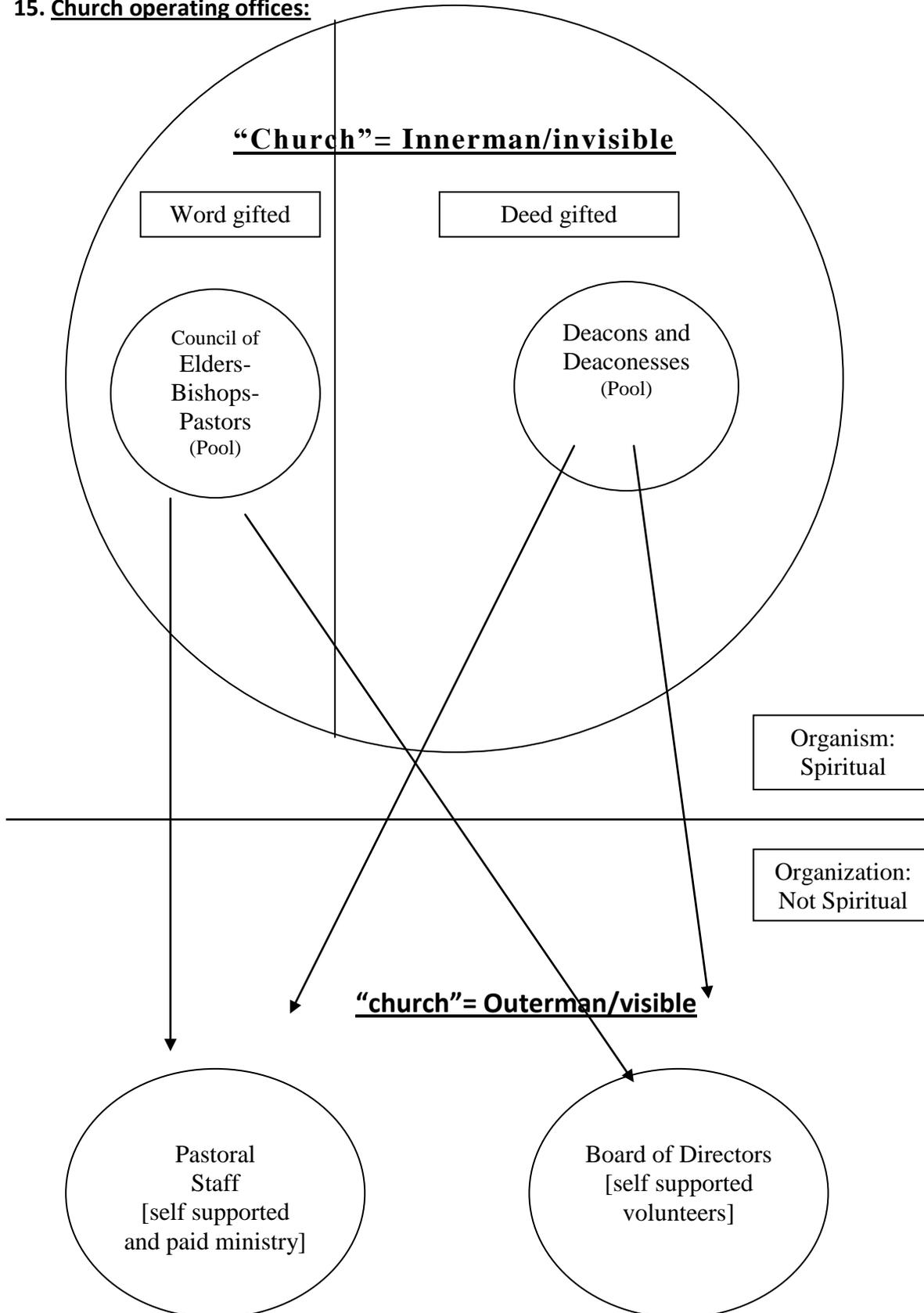
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- iv. **Anabaptists:** The fourth branch of the Reformation, the Anabaptists, formed the most radical section of the 16th-century Reformation and were given their name because they denied that infant Baptism was true Baptism. The Anabaptist movement from the start embraced a number of separate groups that espoused a wide variety of views including strong anti-government and apocalyptic views. In the United States they include the **Amish** and the closely related **Mennonites**, many of whom are known for their communal and extremely anti-modern life-style. Church of the **Brethren** is also included here.
1. Loosely associated at the beginning with the Anabaptist movement, the **Baptists** are the largest Protestant community in the United States. (They share roots with the Reformed Churches, too.) Billy Graham is their most well-known preacher. Many of them were pioneers in the quest for religious liberty. Perhaps the most famous of these, Roger Williams, founded a Baptist Church at Providence, Rhode Island, in 1649, an event usually regarded as the beginning of American Baptist history.
  2. Baptists were in the forefront of the Protestant world missionary movement that began in the 18th century, and Baptist preachers were also in the vanguard as the frontier was carried westward in the United States. Baptists cherish the autonomy of the local congregation.

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## 15. Church operating offices:



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**16. Mission & Ministry (How does the church do both evangelism and equipping? What is the strategy to do each?) What it is and what it is not Biblical?**

- a. Clergy – there was a Biblical mandate for a paid [supported] ministry – the worker being worth their wages. Paul and others were clearly partially supported by a fellowship to extend evangelism and discipleship, and supplemented this with their own work efforts (tent makers).**
  - i. Clergy-Laity dichotomy – the text suggests that all believers are both “priests and ministers” though some were set apart for service like Luke and John Mark.**
  - ii. The Biblical norm was home churches built upon the synagogue precedent, where groups met on the Sabbath [Saturday]. Some larger communities could support synagogues that had congregational sponsorship and even their own meeting hall.**
  - iii. In the middle ages churches were supported by the governments who built the structures and paid for the clergy out of taxes. Church and state were joined for mutual benefit, unfortunately it led to leadership and spiritual abuse.**
  - iv. There is no support for the current church paradigm of extensive property and buildings to house occasional ministry use, with a lavishly paid ministry staff and a congregation that are consumers rather than active participators. Successful ministry Scripturally has always been in terms of “growing love and dependence upon God in community” [Great Commandment] and “Evangelism & Discipleship” [Great Commission].**
  - v. Ministry focus – are you using the ministry to mature disciples? Or are you merely using people to get work done? The former is Biblical, the latter is not.**
- b. Mission – what is the relationship of God’s directives... what has He commanded His people?**
  - i. We were created and then commanded to rule and manage Creation – Gen 1:27.**
  - ii. Our rule was short lived and usurped by Satan – Gen 3.**
  - iii. The result of the Fall is that creation and humanity are “sin-cursed”... in which we will struggle all the days of our lives.**
  - iv. The result of Redemption is that Satan is thrown down... “you will crawl in the dust”... “your head will be crushed” by Messiah. Though Satan is no longer a Heavenly Archangel [Lucifer before his Fall], he is now relegated to the earth he usurped.**
  - v. The Good news of redemption is pronounced with the blessings to be bestowed on God’s faithful, and the curses to be bestowed upon Satan and the wicked (Deut 27 & 28)... God intends to rescue humanity and remedy the Fallen state.**
  - vi. Jesus wilderness temptation demonstrates the problem of Satan’s deception:**

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1. Hunger – satisfy your physical need with supernatural means.
  2. Throw yourself down – put yourself in a position you don't need to be in and expect a supernatural intervention.
  3. The world is yours for free – you don't need to suffer and die... I'll give it to you – this was not Jesus' mission... He came to suffer and die.
  4. At His physically weakest point Jesus is faced with shortcuts to avoid any personal pain or harm. However, this was not His mission. He ratified the same mission in the Olive Garden prayer... “not my will but Yours be done Father.”
  5. Jesus' death was necessary to save humanity and seal Satan's doom. We are now free of the Fall curse and we are now adopted as part of God's intimate family. Eternity is now beckoning... this world is no longer our tomb.
- c. Evangelism and Discipleship are the crux of Jesus' Great Commission:
- i. What is the message? Jesus is the Messiah (= savior: His life called attention to His being the Messianic God/man; and His resurrection proves it) – Jesus is the King of Universe forever; He is the only sure access and source of true Spirit life = Spiritual.
  - ii. The Cross was the required vehicle to bridge the gulf the Fall created between humanity and God, the empty tomb was the necessary proof. We remain born in the Spirit but living out a material life until His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming. We are the elect... 2 Tim 2:10 (I endure all for the elect); He is the Hope of salvation... Col 1:5; 1 Thes 5:8 (*hope*).
  - iii. We as His disciples are His “Witness”... in Acts these were the eye-witness of resurrection: we are not that kind of witness but we still are expected to testify of the hope we have based on the Lord we know. Acts demonstrates how ‘church growth’ occurs – preach the Word!
  - iv. Discipleship means passing along “Biblical Literacy” – how to study Scripture, the basics of theology and doctrine; “Spiritual Formation” – the heart of Christianity is a vital living relationship with God who desires relational intimacy; “Leadership Development” – we need to purposefully develop the next generation of disciples and church leaders.
- d. Mercy & Justice are means to help “Repair” the breach in humanity caused by the Fall.
- i. Matt 5:13-16 Salt/Light - our *being* in community deliberately caring for others changes the social order. Some theologians argue that Christians must reclaim the world as the kingdom of god before Jesus will return [see “end times” eschatology].

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- ii. **Matt 25:31-46 sheep & goats - feeding, clothing, offering cup of cold water in my name... all this refers to Christians taking care of Jesus' Body – the Church. Although social justice is important to God, that is not what is going on here. Rather it is a call to live as the Kingdom of God on earth – to be the example that Israel failed to present. When people see the Church being the people of God it will be attractional.**
  - iii. **Love your neighbor (Good Samaritan Luke 10) – this is a reaching out beyond your immediate community, to meet the needs of those who God places in your path in faith believing. It is another view of how the Kingdom of God is expanded on earth.**
  - iv. **Jesus' mercy miracles – were 1<sup>st</sup> Jews and then Gentiles - this reflected His mission in general.**
  - v. **Relation of 'Great Commission' to World Repair (environment, justice) – which is primary and what are God's expectations in our addressing social evils? (Nothing close to the Gen 1:28 commission is even hinted in NT.) We can't solve all these problems on earth now... but Messiah will. The purpose of the Millennium is to demonstrate that Jesus can make even Fallen/sin-cursed earth a paradise... but wait until you see the New Heaven and Earth! While we can't solve all the problems, we can be strategic and Kingdom of God minded in advancing the Gospel.**
  - vi. **Is there a difference between individual Christians taking on such concerns and the church doing so? Between church and Para-church doing so? As long as the reason is clear that we are building bridges to the advancement of the Kingdom of God, all is good... 1<sup>st</sup> to Christians in need, and then 2<sup>nd</sup> to community at large. This is the message of Scripture... God's people are first, then the nations.**
  - vii. **All our work needs to be advanced in Jesus' Name and according to His principles. It is definitely not about us... if we are advancing our priorities we are little good to the Kingdom of God.**
- e. **Spiritual gifts: definitions, categories (offices, sign, word/deed), 1 Pet 4:10f; Rom 12:5-7; Eph 4:11; 1 Cor 12—14: notice that all have an affirmative command... especially prophecy; with only one negative [re: tongues] because its abuse divided the church rather than uniting it as the Gifts were intended to do. Seeking an ecstatic state of being such as tongues is not our priority. There is nothing wrong with it, and Paul asserts they he engages in it. The issue is advancing the Kingdom of God, and not our personal pleasure.**
- f. **Worship: is always in relation to faith and to our King. However our worship priorities are primarily Word proclamation, then music and other corporate life joys. Worship has as its end and focus a more intimate experience with God which builds Spiritual vitality... a very good thing!**

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17. Gender issues – the place of men and women in the Church. It is extremely unfortunate that this has become such a divisive issue in the church [organization] because it is impossible in the Church [organism]. Humanity is created men and women... as one flesh [entity]. Different theologies:
- a. **Complementarian = equal but different...** this position holds that men and women were created purposefully different to complement one another and to complete one another.
    - i. This theological distinction has often placed women in a supporting position to men in Church as well as in society.
    - ii. These theologians presume the patriarchal standard presented in Scripture is to be fixed throughout time by God.
  - b. **Egalitarian = equal but different...** this position holds that men's and women's roles are culturally and historically derived by social convention rather than fixed for all time.
    - i. Scripture of the Old Covenant and New Covenant are more progressive than the general societies surrounding God's people through time. Women have enjoyed a much improved position in the Scriptural mandates than what was common elsewhere in history.
    - ii. In many cultures, women were not much more than property in male dominated society, but this is not the role Scripture teaches.
  - c. This distinction is important as it argues to determine what role women should have today in the church and in society.
    - i. Is it acceptable that women should preside in leadership over men?
    - ii. Is the appropriate role for women in a supportive position where they are not leading or teaching men?
    - iii. Is a woman senior pastor an acceptable NC practice, or should she have a male in a leadership role over her? Should a woman be an elder in the church? There are Biblical references to women who were leaders over men and society - as Judges [Miriam & Deborah]; as prophets [OC & NC]; and as apostles [NC], etc.
  - d. We need to define the question carefully, correctly, so that we can evaluate arguments both individually and cumulatively, so that we can decide whether the case has been made for or against Egalitarian or Complementarian.
    - i. Biblical evidence inclines decidedly toward a masculine leadership prescription as well as practice. The not-uncommon rehearsals of prominent women in the Bible does not 'prove' what many Egalitarians purport that they do. In fact, if they have presented the strongest evidence that can be found of Jesus' liberal respect toward women, it seems to

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argue fairly powerfully for his affirming some degree of limitation of permission to take the highest level of church leadership.

- ii. Traditional restriction had women as teachers limited to other women and children. The “Old School” approach disdains any sort of leadership role by women in corporate worship services, including women serving communion, making announcements, presiding over meetings, etc.
  - iii. There are some books that deal with this discussion including: Sumner (*Men and Women in the Church*), Webb (*Slaves, Women and Homosexuals*). Webb concedes that the Scripture does not articulate egalitarianism, but he asserts Paul would write differently today. He argues we should take Paul for what he *would* say rather than what he *did* say! Sumner tries to navigate a mediating position of “headship” which means neither “source” nor “authority.” 1Tim 2 is too locally specific to be of use for us to consider as a standard.
  - iv. There is no question the world to which Scripture was written was decidedly Patriarchal and Parochial – slavery, rights for children, etc. were archaic if not barbaric in their practices. Slavery was not ended in the West until the past 150 years, and it still exists in the East and in some developing countries. The Scriptural case for social justice issues including equal rights for all humanity is strong... including women and unborn children. Scripture always championed advancing the rights of the underprivileged and disenfranchised.
  - v. Gal 3:28 certainly indicates egalitarianism at some level (as does Gen 1:27). ‘Equality of person’ concept. There is also no discernible difference in gifts distribution between the sexes.<sup>7</sup>
  - vi. Leadership and followership are necessarily Complementarian. Biblical leadership is always shepherding - “walking with” rather than authoritarian - “commanding.”
- e. Hermeneutics and cultural relativity - all we can effectively accept as reliable is what the text actually says... not what we would like to think it say. Exegesis [drawing out the truth] versus eisegesis [reading in your theology] is a problem placing the position of Complementarian in the strongest position and the burden of proof on the egalitarian position.
- i. What is the meaning of 1 Tim 2:15 – see 5:14: women generally should be wives/mothers (Tit 2:4-5); men never get to bear children... seems to speak to Complementarian.
  - ii. The typical disposition of modern ‘pastors’ is that both men and women should be submissive to each other, to elders, to Scripture, to the Spirit.

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<sup>7</sup> All are equally sons of Abraham. The passage is about access to Abrahamic blessing, salvation. There is nothing in the epistle about leadership roles in church ministry.

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- iii. Relation of Women to Men and wives-to-husbands (compare Rom 16:7 with Titus 2:3-5)<sup>8</sup>
- iv. Relevance of fact that there are few leading women in OT/NT:
  - 1. 1 Cor 11:2-16 (restricted permission); 14:34-38 (prohibition)
  - 2. 1 Tim 2:11-15 (prohibition; context: 2:1, 8f; 3:1ff); 3:1-13
  - 3. Meaning of *didaskein kai authentein*<sup>9</sup> (1Tim 2:12; and the concepts of preaching/teaching; the different meeting *places* of the church)
- f. It is perhaps more helpful to differentiate roles by giftedness rather than by decree.
  - i. There are known situations where women are more word-gifted than their husbands – such as Priscilla and Aquila – Ac 18:2,18,26; Rom 16:3; 1Cor 16:19; 2Tim 4:19).
  - ii. It is reasonable to suggest that the Spirit will confer gifting as He chooses, and we should expect such giftedness to be given its voice in our community.
  - iii. “Christian art from the first and second centuries portray women administering the Lord’s Supper, teaching, baptizing, and leading in public prayer. For example, the Catacombs of Priscilla display a fresco in which the leader and all the participants are women.” From an article evidently referencing Stanley J. Grenz and Denise M. Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 39).
- g. Were past generations overly influenced in their biblical interpretation by surrounding patriarchal culture? Is our generation overly influenced by an opposite culture?
  - i. It is clear that cultural relativity has an impact on how we thing “normative truth” looks like.
  - ii. It is reasonable that submission in love to one another and subordination to authority has an equal call to both men and women and to one another.
  - iii. It is clear that Christians are called to stand their ground in support of those who do not have a voice in society – this includes the most vulnerable... the unborn.

### 18. Concluding thoughts:

- a. Now and not yet tension in the New Covenant:

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<sup>8</sup> “Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles”; “Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.”

<sup>9</sup> This may speak of domineering rule. However, is not domineering forbidden by all leaders? See Luke 22:24-27; 1Pet 5:3. So how meaningful is this if all that is prohibited is domineering teaching over men? Is such permitted over children? women? by men (elders)?

## Theology 3.1 – Theology of the Church [Ecclesiology]

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- i. **Now** – the Spirit has been poured out and we have the assurance of eternity as our inheritance.
  - ii. **NOT YET** – the redemption of creation, the arrival of God’s glorious inheritance (Eph 1:18), impressive tree, loaf (Matt 13:31-33), bride-wife (Eph, Rev).
  - iii. **ALREADY** evident –
    1. Heavenly community (Phil 3:20f) in a hostile world (persecution).
    2. Salt, light – we are by nature a change element in society... refreshing and preserving at the same time.
  - iv. **The ministry of the saints (Eph 4:11):**
    1. What is the acceptable role for men and women... no one seems to care about who is sweeping the floors, involved in choir or childcare, etc.... so why make such a big deal out of teaching or preaching?
    2. How does “whatever you do, do unto the Lord” play out? Is it 24/7, or Monday-Friday? 8-5??? Seems obvious it should be so written into our nature that it is exhibited all the time, not just when we are “on” in front of others.
    3. What is the responsibility of pastors? To equip the saints for what? Such equipping is not limited to one sex... it is both men and women walking in the light, being salt, teaching and preaching, discipling and evangelizing. Exodus 17:8-16 example?
- b. Our ‘ministry’ in the world is distinctively spiritual:**
- i. New Covenant teaches us this... where all work then is prayer-driven.
  - ii. Today is a day of little visible consequence of the church in society, we are typically outwardly unimpressive: Matt 13:31-33; consider the Corinthians’ error and Paul’s corrections – power and weakness... 1Cor is commonly regarded as one of the most ‘ecclesiological’ epistles.
- c. What is the Christian **MISSION** – is the Great Commandment... love God and others; and the Great Commission – evangelism and discipleship.
  - d. What the Christian’s mission is not – save the environment, feed the homeless... though these are good things to be involved in, isn’t our primary calling... but an excellent secondary calling in which we affirm the first.
  - e. There is no good reason we can’t do both, but the Great Commandment and Great Commission are certainly our priority.

## Theology 3.1 – Theology of the Church [Ecclesiology]

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- f. If you can't do your ministry without a title and pay, there is something wrong. You probably don't want to hire somebody to do ministry who is not doing it as a volunteer first.
- g. You don't need title and pay to pray, to study, to exhort, or to teach. Luther had to work around the institutional church. Are we coming to that again? Are we headed to a new reformation because of our spiritual blindness, our organism indifference and organizational dependence?
- h. If we target 'seekers' in our evangelism mission statement, shouldn't we preach the gospel? If we target believers as our discipleship mission, shouldn't we preach like Jesus? Shouldn't we teach like Paul? What about John 21:15-17?

**19. SPIRITUAL POWER:** New Covenant should inform us to focus on the spiritual [innerman] rather than the material & the visible [outerman].

- a. Such a focus will deliver us from the seduction of earthly perspectives of human, 'political' power... be it sexual, financial, or whatever the distinction.
- b. Our dynamic engine and fuel is the Spirit... the same as that which raised Jesus from the dead and came on the 120 at Pentecost. It is what indwells us today and drives all ministry to advance the Kingdom of God.
- c. We must not let ourselves stoop to something so puny and insipid as organizational muscle and domineering willfulness and voting blocs as eternity beckons. Such are the priorities of the kingdom of men, which is dead and passing away.
- d. Much evil is done in the name or excuse of "ministry" – we need to do better. The Church should set the standard for moral and ethical treatment of one another, not resort to the corporate standard of the world. Shame on those who settle for less or fail their calling.