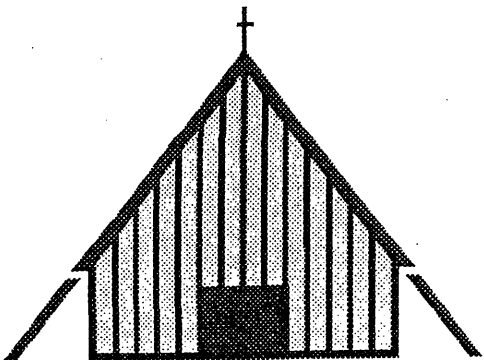
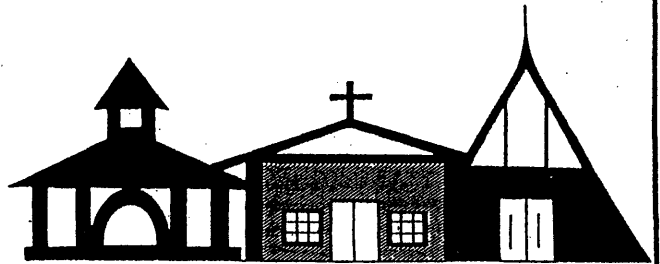
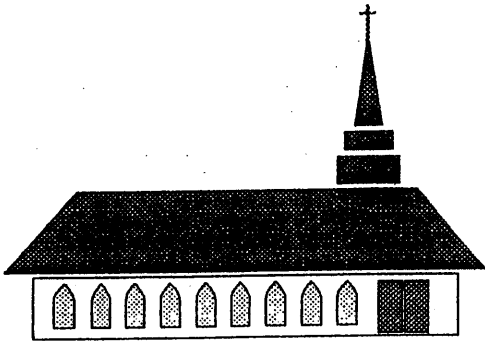
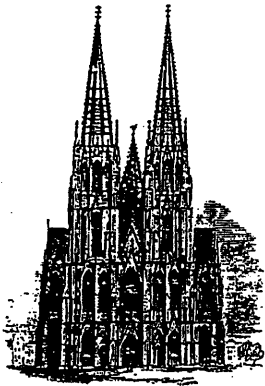
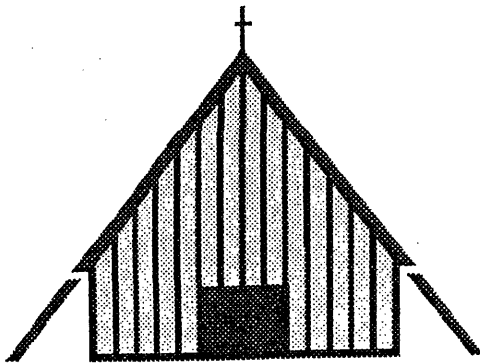
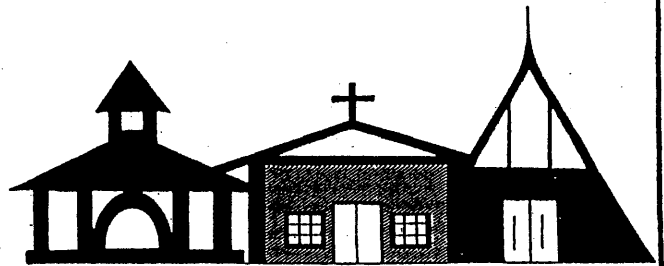
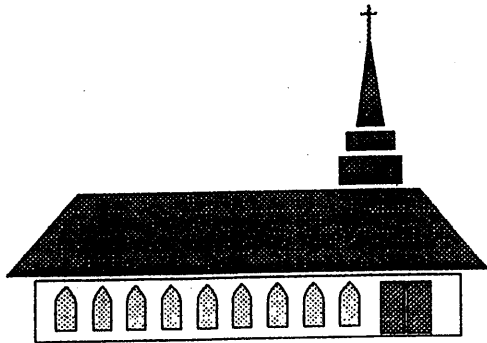
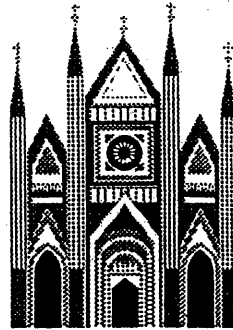
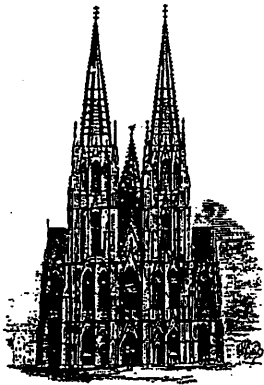


The Truth about the Church



Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

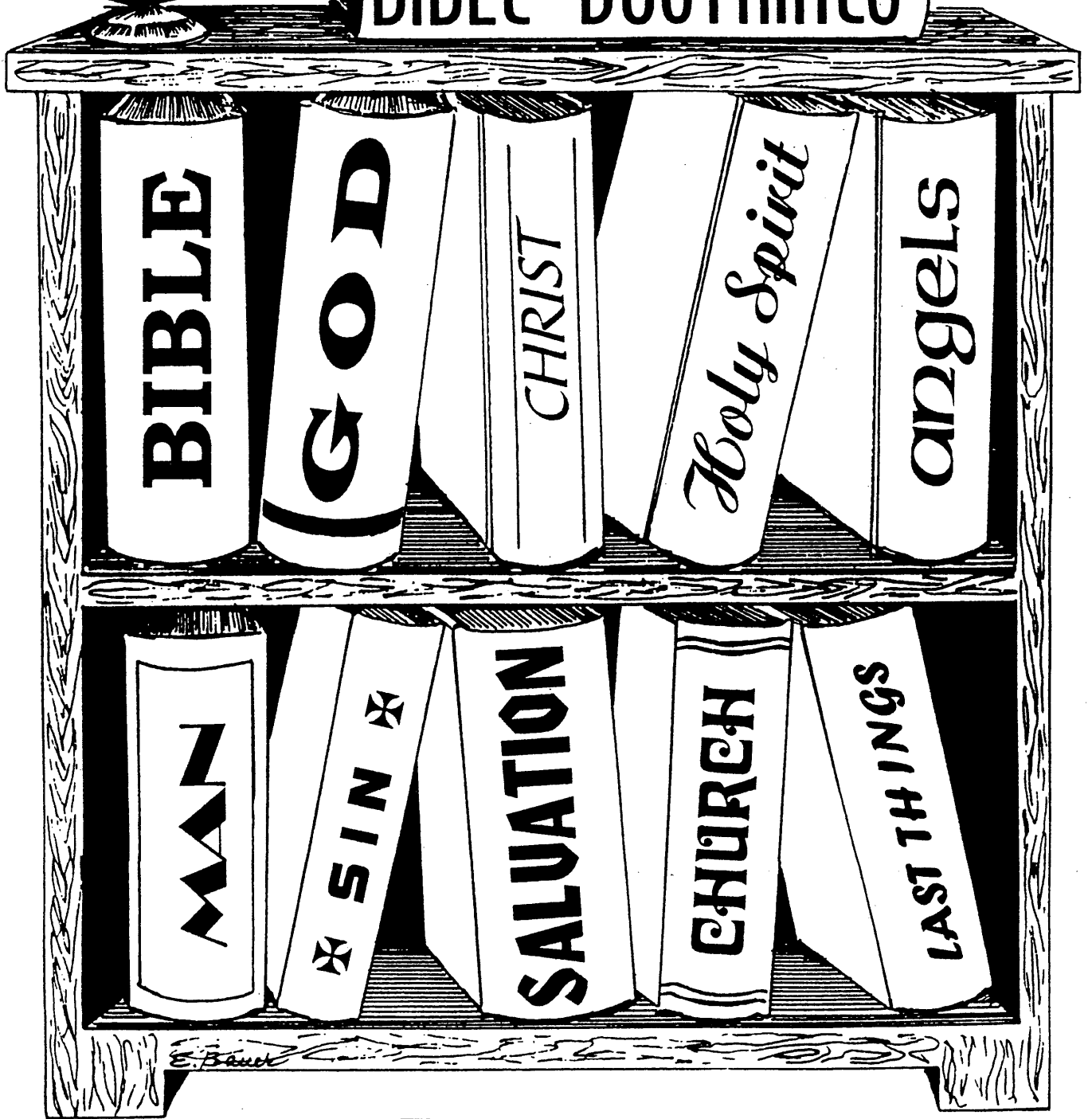
The Truth about the Church



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BIBLE DOCTRINES



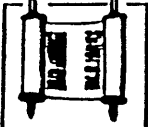
Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.




ECCLESIOLOGY AND

BIBLE


DOCTRINE

Bible ①  A UNIQUE OF THE CHURCH
EPH. 3:3-6

God ②  AN ETERNAL FOR THE CHURCH,
EPH. 1:1, 4-5

Christ ③  THE LIVING OVER THE
CHURCH, EPH. 1:21-23; COL. 1:18

Holy Spirit ④  THE INDWELLING IN THE
CHURCH, EPH. 2:22

Angels ⑤  THE HOLY OF THE CHURCH
HEB. 1:14

Man ⑥  THE REDEEMED IN THE
CHURCH, EPH. 5:25-27

Sin ⑦  ITS EVENTUAL IN THE CHURCH
EPH. 5:25-27

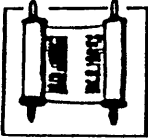
Salvation ⑧  THE INIMITABLE FOR THE
CHURCH, EPH. 2:8


Last Things ⑨  THE ETERNAL OF THE
CHURCH, EPH. 2:5-7

ECCLESIOLOGY AND


BIBLE


DOCTRINE

Bible ①  A UNIQUE PLACE OF THE CHURCH
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Salvation ⑧  THE INIMITABLE PRESENT FOR THE
CHURCH, EPH. 2:8

Last Things ⑨  THE ETERNAL PROMINENCE OF THE
CHURCH, EPH. 2:5-7

THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD "CHURCH"

The Incredible History of a Common Word

1A. The development of the terminology:

It would be difficult to find a more interesting and less controversial word in the English language than that of "church." Below are some entries in standard reference works.

1b. The English word: church

1c. Its usage:

Smith's Bible Dictionary, 452.

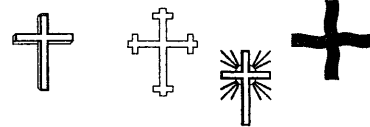
II. The word *ἐκκλησία* is no doubt derived from *ἐκκαλεῖν*, and in accordance with its derivation it originally meant an assembly called out by the magistrate, or by legitimate authority. This is the ordinary classical sense of the word. But it throws no light on the nature of the institution so designated in the New Testament. For to the writers of the N. T. the word had now lost its primary signification, and was either used generally for any meeting (Acts xix. 32), or more particularly, it denoted (1) the religious assemblies of the Jews (Deut. iv. 10, xviii. 16, *ap.* LXX.); (2) the whole assembly or congregation of the Israelitish people (Acts vii. 38; Heb. ii. 12; Ps. xxii. 22; Deut. xxxi. 30, *ap.* LXX.). It was in this last sense, in which it answered to *קְהָל יִשְׂרָאֵל*, that the word was adopted and applied by the writers of the N. T. to the Christian congregation. The word *ἐκκλησία*, therefore, does not carry us back further than the Jewish Church. It implies a resemblance and correspondence between the old Jewish Church and the recently established Christian Church, but nothing more. Its etymological sense having been already lost when adopted by and for Christians, is only misleading if pressed too far. The chief difference between the words "ecclesia" and "church," would probably consist in this, that "ecclesia" primarily signified the Christian body, and secondarily the place of assembly; while the first signification of "church" was the place of assembly, which imparted its name to the body of worshippers.

THE USAGE OF THE TERM "CHURCH"

1. A LOCAL CONGREGATION



2. A DENOMINATIONAL GROUP



3. THE UNIVERSAL BODY OF BELIEVERS



4. THE PLACE OF WORSHIP



1d. A local congregation: e.g. Wall Lake Baptist Church

2d. A denominational group: e.g. the Episcopalian Church

- 3d. The universal body of Christians: e.g. Christ is the Head of the church
- 4d. A building used for religious worship: e.g. the church building fund

Smith's Bible Dictionary even suggests a 10-fold usage for the term "church," 459.



2c. Its etymology

1d. Greek: **kuriakos**

The study of the origin of the word "church affords one of the more interesting and intriguing etymological studies of the theological term.

The word Church is employed to designate (1) the place in which Christians assemble to worship (possibly 1 Cor. xiv. 19); (2) a household of Christians (Col. iv. 15); (3) a congregation of Christians assembling from time to time for worship, but generally living apart from each other (Rom. xvi. 1); (4) a body of Christians living in one city assembling for worship in different congregations and at different times (1 Cor. i. 2); (5) a body of Christians residing in a district or country (2 Cor. i.); (6) the whole visible Church, including sound and unsound members, that is, all the baptized professors of Christianity, orthodox, heretical, and schismatical, moral or immoral; (7) the visible Church exclusive of the manifestly unsound members, that is, consisting of those who appear to be orthodox and pious; (8) the mystical or invisible Church, that is, the body of the elect known to God alone who are in very deed justified and sanctified, and never to be plucked out of their Saviour's hands, composed of the Church Triumphant and of some members of the Church Militant (John x. 28; Heb. xii. 22); (9) the Church Militant, that is, the Church in its warfare on earth — identical therefore with the Church visible; (10) the Church Triumphant, consisting of those who have passed from this world, expectant of glory now in paradise, and to be glorified hereafter in heaven. The word may be fairly used in any of these senses, but it is plain that if it is employed by controversialists without a clear understanding in which sense it is used, inextricable confusion must arise. And such in fact has been the case.

F. M.

Smith's Bible Dictionary, 452.

THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE ENGLISH WORD "CHURCH"

CHURCH (Ἐκκλησία).—I. The derivation of the word Church is uncertain. It is found in the Teutonic and Slavonian languages (Anglo-Saxon, *Circ, Circe, Cyric, Cyricea*; English, *Church*; Scottish, *Kirk*; German, *Kirche*; Swedish, *Kyrka*; Danish, *Kyrke*; Dutch, *Karke*; Swiss, *Kirche*; Frisian, *Tzierk*; Bohemian, *Cyrkeu*; Polish, *Cerkiew*; Russian, *Zerkow*), and answers to the derivatives of Ἐκκλησία, which are naturally found in the Romance languages (French, *Église*; Italian, *Chiesa*; old Vaudois, *Gleisa*; Spanish, *Iglesia*), and by foreign importation elsewhere (Gothic, *Aikklésjô*; Gaelic, *Eaglais*; Welsh, *Eglwys*; Cornish, *Eglos*). The word is generally said to be derived from the Greek κυριακόν (Walafrid Strabo, *De Rebus Ecclesiast.* c. 7; Suicer, s. v. κυριακόν; Glossarium, s. v. "Dominicum;" Casaubon, *Exercit. Baron.* xiii. § xviii.; Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.* v. xiii. 1; Pearson, *On the Creed*, Art. ix.; Beveridge, *On the Thirty-Nine Articles*, Art. xix.; Wordsworth, *Theophilus Anglicanus*, c. 1; Gieseler, *Eccl. History*, c. 1; Trench, *Study of Words*, p. 75).

GREEK

Kūros (Κῦρος) = "power", "might"

Kúrios (Κύριος) = "Lord"

Kuriákos (Κυριάκος) = "belonging to the Lord"

Scotch	German	Saxon	English
Kirk	Kirche	Circe	Church

"A group of individuals belonging to the Lord"

1 Cor. 11:20 When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper.

Rev. 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.

Lk. 22:25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

Rom. 14:8-9 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

2d. Scotch: *Kirk*

3d. German: *Kirche*

4d. Saxon: *Circe*

2b. The Jewish term: **synagogue**

Js. 2:2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

2 Thess. 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

Hebrews 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*. and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

3b. The Greek term: **ekklesia** "a called out assembly"

CHURCH. The English word *church*, like the Scotch *kirk*, is supposed to be derived from the Greek *δικος κυριακος*, the *Lord's house*, and is usually employed in our version of the Scriptures as a translation of *ἐκκλησία*, an *assembly*. The original term, derived from *ἐκ*, *out of*, and *καλεω*, *to call*, denoted any kind of convocation or assembly of men *called out from among other men*. In this general sense it is applied in the Scriptures not only to a *lawful court of judicature*, Acts xix. 39, but also to a *disorderly multitude* brought together by Demetrius, v. 32, and making an uproar in the theatre. But its predominant import, as used by the sacred writers, is to denote a *religious society or congregation*, and in this sense its leading applications are the two following. It stands

1. For the whole collective body of the saints or peculiar people of God, redeemed out of every nation, kindred, and tongue, and usually denominated the **CHURCH CATHOLIC OR UNIVERSAL**.

2. For a *particular society* of Christians professedly devoted to God according to the rules of the Gospel, believing in Christ as their Saviour, subjecting themselves to him as their spiritual Lord and Ruler, voluntarily agreeing together to partake of the privileges, discharge the duties, and support the means of Christian faith, fellowship, worship, and discipline, and usually meeting together in one place for public religious exercises. Such a society may be called a *particular visible Gospel church*, of which there is frequent mention in the New Testament.

Another sense of the word occurs in popular use, and among ecclesiastical writers, viz. that of a particular denomination of Christians, distinguished by peculiar doctrines, ceremonies, modes of government, &c.: as the Romish church, the Greek church, the Episcopal church, the Presbyterian church. It is strenuously contended, however, by many, that there is no foundation in the Scriptures for this latter application of the term, inasmuch as the *thing* to which it is applied is not recognized as having an existence. "Properly there are," says Campbell, "in the New Testament but two original senses of the word *ἐκκλησία* which can be called different, though related. One is, when it denotes a number of people actually assembled, or accustomed to assemble together, and is then properly rendered by the English terms, congregation, convention, assembly, and even sometimes, crowd, as in Acts xix. 32, 40. The other sense is to denote a society united together by some common tie, though not convened, perhaps not convenable, in one place.

THEOLOGICAL DICTIONARY,

CONTAINING

DEFINITIONS OF ALL RELIGIOUS TERMS;

New American, from the latest London Edition.

REVISED, AND IMPROVED BY THE ADDITION OF MANY NEW ARTICLES, AND THE WHOLE ADAPTED TO THE PRESENT STATE OF THEOLOGICAL SCIENCE AND OF THE RELIGIOUS WORLD.

BY THE REV. GEORGE BUSH, A. M.

CORRECTED TO 1836.

Philadelphia:

PUBLISHED BY J. J. WOODWARD.

1c. An assembly of townspeople, called out by a herald:

Acts 19:32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

Acts 19:39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

Acts 19:41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

- 2c. Gathering of the Jewish people in their assembling in the wilderness:

Acts 7:38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and *with* our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

- 3c. A group of Christians living in a certain place:

1 Cor. 1:2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

1 Thess1:1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians *which is* in God the Father and *in* the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rev. 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

- 4c. The church universal to which all believers belong:

Mt. 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Eph. 1:22-23 And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, ²³ Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Col. 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

Heb. 12:23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

2A. The definition of the church:

1b. A called-out assembly:

2b. The universal church:

3A. The distinctiveness of the church:

With the decline of classic dispensationalism and the rise of progressive dispensationalism, which makes the church simply an "outpost of the kingdom," it is important to mark the difference between the church, Israel and the kingdom. A most helpful discussion of the topic is found in *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, Paul Enns, 1989, pages 351-353.

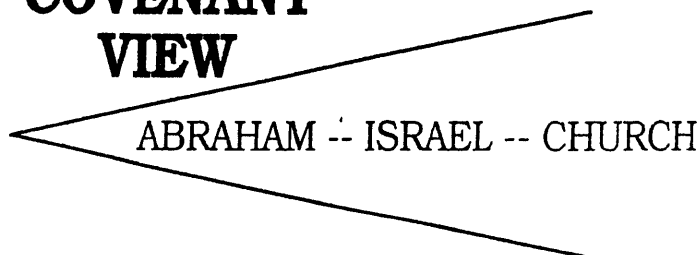
The issue of the distinctiveness of the church may be summarized thus:

1b. The church is distinct from Israel:

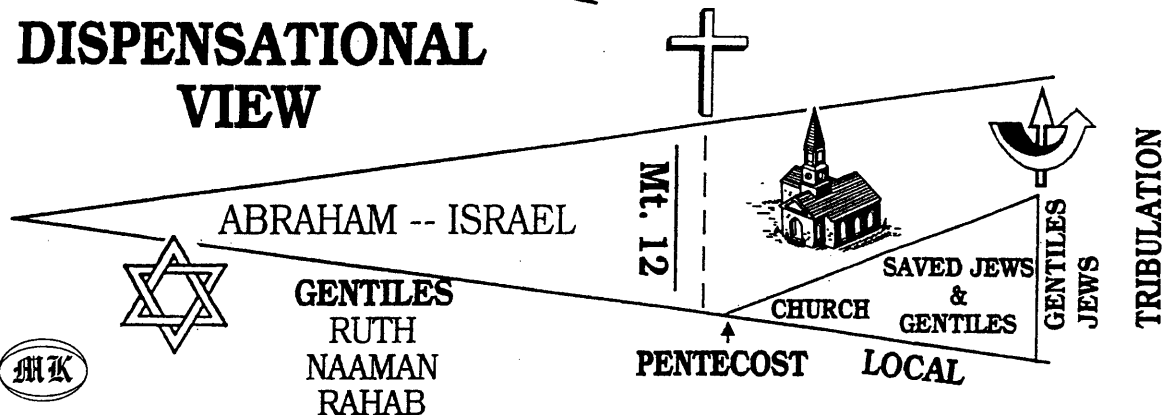
Rom. 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH

COVENANT VIEW



DISPENSATIONAL VIEW



Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.



- 2b. The church is not spiritual Israel continued and enlarged:

Heb. 12:22-23 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, ²³ To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

Mt. 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

- 3b. The church is distinct from the kingdom:

Nothing is more crucial to ecclesiology and eschatology than a proper understanding of the various facets of the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God.

- 1c. Kingdom of heaven: sphere of profession

- 1d. General sovereignty:

Dan. 4:26 And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.

- 2d. Present age:

Mt. 13:1-54 mysteries of the kingdom

- 3d. Future age:

2 Tim. 4:18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

- 2c. Kingdom of God: sphere of possession

- 1d. General sovereignty:

1 Tim. 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be* honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Ps. 103:19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

2d. Present age:

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

3d. Future age:

Lk. 13:29 And they shall come from the east, and *from* the west, and from the north, and *from* the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

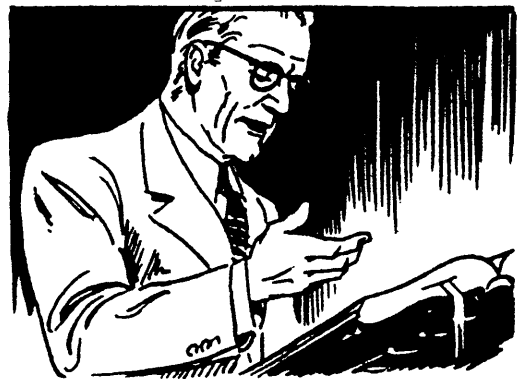
Lk. 21:31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

4b. The church is not merely a *particular* group or merely a *universal* group

While some deny the local church and others the universal church, the N.T. clearly teaches both (Mt. 16:18; 18:17).

	KINGDOM OF HEAVEN	KINGDOM OF GOD
General Sovereignty	Dan. 4:26	1 Tim. 1:17; Ps. 103:19
Present Age	Mt. 13:1-54	Rom 14:17
Future Age	2 Tim. 4:18	Lk. 13:29; Lk. 21:31

The Case for the Singularity of Elders

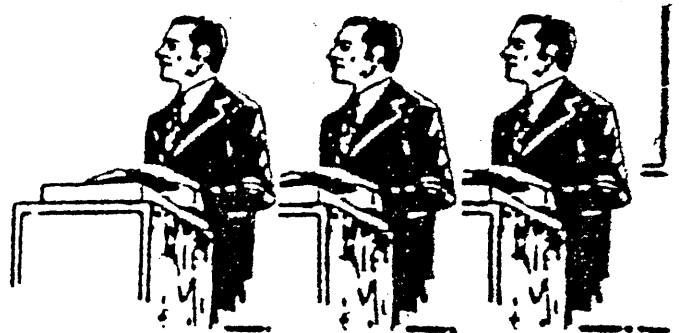


Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

THE CASE FOR THE SINGULARITY OF ELDERS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. The argument from the qualifications of church officers.....1
2. The argument from the messengers of the seven churches.2
3. The argument from the nature of the pastorate.....4
4. The argument from the reference to individual pastors5
5. The argument from the recipients of the Pastoral Epistles.....6
6. The argument from the beginning of the Asiatic churches7
7. The argument from the symbolism of the Chief Shepherd and the flock.....9



**THE EXECUTIVE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH:
Is the Singularity of Elders Biblical?
OR The Case for the Singularity of Elders**

Mary, one of my students, came into my office in tears. A girl friend with whom she had spent the weekend had told her how wrong she was to be a Baptist. Baptist, her friend insisted, are unbiblical because they only have one pastor per church, whereas the New Testament clearly stipulates a plurality of pastors for each church. Mary was confused. She thought her church was right, but her friend's arguments seemed so convincing. Could I help her?

Mary's friend is not alone in rejecting the single leader concept. With increasing frequency we see the acceptance of the calling for a plurality of elders within the local church. Dr. John MacArthur, Jr., writes: ". . .the biblical norm for church leadership is a plurality of God-ordained elders. Furthermore, it is the only pattern for church leadership given in the New Testament. Nowhere in Scripture do we find a local assembly ruled by majority opinion, or by one pastor."¹

So, also, in his book *Teaching and Learning*, Professor Ron Chadwick says: "Apparently each of the New Testament churches had a plurality of elders. While we would agree that the pastor is to be one of those elders, the New Testament is conveying to us that there be more than one elder for the church in each geographical location."²

He concludes, "Whether the elders in a given local church are the ordained, paid, professional staff or whether lay elders are also considered, the norm of the New Testament requires a plurality of leadership."³

I answered Mary the best I could by suggesting some of the following points on the number of pastors. As these helped her, perhaps they will help others who are questioning the correctness of our Baptist position.

While the New Testament appears to allow for plurality of pastors in each local church, it does not necessitate this. Furthermore, the position of a single pastor in each local church is not inconsistent with the evidence of the New Testament, as will be shown. In light of biblical testimony, the single pastor position seems to have the best support.

1. The argument from the qualifications of church officers.

It is a basic rule of biblical interpretation that when interpreting a matter of doctrine, the interpreter should first locate the key doctrinal passage and begin his exegesis there. The undisputed doctrinal passage on the number and qualifications of church officers is 1 Timothy 3. This passage must form the starting point for one's understanding of the issue. Here are given the qualifications for the only two church officers mentioned, bishops (pastors) and

deacons. Both the “office of a bishop: (1) and the “office of a deacon” (13) are mentioned in the singular. However, when these officers are related specifically to the local church, the bishop is mentioned in the singular (“a *bishop* must be blameless,” 2), while deacons are referred to in the plural (“Likewise must the *deacons* be grave,” 8, cf. 11-12).

Paul sees each church as having one bishop but several deacons. Were a plurality of bishops and deacons in view, one would expect verse 2 to read, “Let bishops be blameless, husbands of one wife,” in parallel construction with verse 13, which reads, “Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife.” Only forced exegesis can make this passage teach a plurality of bishops.

Since the Holy Spirit distinguishes between a plurality of deacons and a singularity of bishops functioning in the local church, it is natural to see some special significance in that and make the same distinction.

2. The argument from the messengers of the seven churches.

A good case for the singularity of pastors can be made from Revelation 2 and 3. The seven letters of the Apocalypse are addressed to seven “angels” (Rev. 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14). These “angels” (*angelos*—literally “messengers”) have been variously interpreted as actual angels or messengers sent to John on Patmos or renown prelatial bishops or the pastors who presided over the churches.

The word *angelos* can mean an angelic being or a human messenger. It is used in the latter sense, for example, in James 2:25, in reference to the two spies who came to Rahab the harlot, who “received the messengers.”

It is difficult to conceive of letters written to angels. In the first place, an angel gave these seven revelations from heaven (Rev. 1:1). Were they sent right back to heaven? Furthermore, the address of angels is not generally known. As Ellicott observes concerning the angel interpretation, “It is difficult to reconcile words of warning and reproof (as in chap. ii. 4,5) and of promise and encouragement (as in chap. ii. 10), with such a view.”⁴

There is also no evidence that messengers were sent to John from the churches. Besides, the message was sent to the messengers not by them (“Unto the angels of the church at Ephesus write. . .Rev. 2:1). Trench wonders why *angelos* was ever interpreted as the messengers sent to the churches:

But in answering a letter by a messenger, you write by, you do not usually write to him; nor is it easy to see where is the correspondency between such messengers, subordinate officials of the Churches, and stars; or what the mystery of the relation between them would be; or how the Lord should set forth as an

eminent prerogative of his, that He held the seven stars, that is, the seven messengers, in his right hand (Rev. 2:1). The scheme breaks down at every point, and among many lame and feeble shifts must needs be regarded as the lamest and feeblest of all. I again repeat my conviction that in these Angels we are to recognize the bishops of the several churches. So many difficulties, embarrassments, improbabilities attend every other solution, all which disappear with the adoption of this, while no others rise in their room, that, were not other interests, often no doubt unconsciously, at work, it would be very hard to understand how any could have ever arrived at a different conclusion.⁵

Albert Barnes, after a very thorough discussion of the various interpretations of the term *angelos*, states:

The conclusion then, to which we have come is, that the "angel of the church" was the pastor, or the presiding presbyter in the church; the minister who had the pastoral charge of it, and who was therefore a proper representative of it. He was a man who, in some respects, performed the functions which the angels of God do; that is, who was appointed to execute his will, to communicate his message, and to convey important intimations of his purposes to his people. To no one could the communications in this book, intended for the churches, be more properly entrusted than to such an one; for to no one now would a communication be more properly entrusted than to a pastor.⁶

The best interpretation sees the *angelos* as God's messenger to the church. The personal words of warning ("I have somewhat against you" 2:4); reproof ("Remember from whence thou art fallen" 2:5), censure ("I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest and art dead" 3:1; "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot" 3:15), and encouragement ("Fear none of these things" 2:10) best fit the pastor of each local church rather than an holy angel.

Church history tells us who some of these pastors were. For example, the church of Smyrna was pastored by the distinguished apostolic father, Polycarp. Polycarp was bishop of Smyrna at the time when Ignatius of Antioch passed through that city on his way to suffer martyrdom at Rome around A.D. 108. His ministry lasted nearly 50 years in Smyrna and he was martyred in A.D. 156.⁷

Polycarp was personally ordained by the Apostle John and the words addressed, probably to Polycarp's predecessor at Smyrna, concerning tribulation, martyrdom and a crown of life (Rev. 8:10) are wonderfully fulfilled in Polycarp's life. As Ellicott notes, "Polycarp is the living example of the language of the epistle."⁸

Whatever the situation might have been in the early church, at the end of the first century each church is seen to be headed by one responsible individual, the pastor, who according to these letters is charged with the oversight of the congregation and accountable to God for it.

Seiss explains why the word messenger is used for the pastor:

From this peculiarity in these Epistles, we may also trace something of the nature and responsibility of the ministerial office. It is not a lordship, but a service; not a service to be commanded of man, but of God. It is the business of the angel to hear for the Church, receive for the Church, and to answer for the Church, which has been committed to his care. He is its chief, its guardian, its watchman, the under-shepherd of the flock. He is to receive the word at the mouth of the Lord, and at the hands of His inspired servants, and to present it faithfully to his people, and to see that it is accepted, observed and obeyed according to the true intent of its divine Author.⁹

3 The argument from the nature of the pastorate.

Closely related to the matter of the number of pastors in the local church is the question of the names for the pastor and the nature of the pastorate. Biblically, the titles of pastor, bishop, and elder refer to the same office in the local church. The elders of Ephesus (Acts 17:20) are charged by Paul to be bishops whose function is to feed (shepherd, pastor) the flock (20:18). In 1 Peter 5:1-2, Peter exhorts the elders to feed (shepherd) the flock and take the oversight (bishopric). Paul admonishes Titus to ordain elders in each church (Titus 1:5) and stipulates that these individuals, also known as bishops (1:7), must meet certain qualifications.

The same spiritually mature individual (elder) who is entrusted with the responsibility to feed the flock through teaching (pastor) is given the responsibility to oversee the flock (bishop).

The term elder (*presbyteros*) speaks of the dignity of the office, the term bishop (*episcopos*) refers to the duties of the office, and the term shepherd (*poimen*) relates to the ministry of feeding and protecting.

Various problems exist because of the nomenclature for pastor used in the New Testament. Some churches have a pastor but also a board of elders. Since the terms pastor, elder and bishop are applied to the same persons, and therefore indicate the same office, it is best to reserve the name elder for the leader or pastor of the church and speak of his spiritual helpers by their biblical name of deacons. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the prince of Baptist preachers, had elders in his church, but as Charles Wagner points out in his incisive analysis, "It should

be understood that Spurgeon considered his elders the way the Baptist church today would consider deacons."¹⁰

Others suggest that there should be teaching elders and ruling elders in every church. However, every pastor is to be a teacher (Eph. 4:11, pastor-teachers) and the office of the pastor involves both ruling and teaching. This ruling is to be done not in a dictatorial fashion but by example (1 Peter 5:3).

A passage commonly cited to show support for the teaching elder and ruling elder as two separate individuals is 1 Timothy 4:17, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine."

Homer Kent correctly remarks:

This verse does not give sufficient warrant for the Reformed view of two classes of leaders, those who ruled and those who taught. Every elder engaged in teaching (3:2). However, some would do so with more energy and excellence than others. The differentiation in this verse is between those who do the work perfunctorily and those who labor to the end of strength in performing their function.¹¹

It has been argued that the term elder is of Jewish derivation, where it was used of the governing body of the synagogue. Since each synagogue had a plurality of presbyters, the same system must have been adopted by the early Jewish-Christian congregation. Even if this controversial derivation could be shown to be correct, that "the existing structure of the synagogue with its plurality of elders is paralleled by the New Testament church organization," it should be pointed out, that even in the synagogue there was a "head of the synagogue" known as the *archisynagogos* (ruler of the synagogue). "The plurality in this case would not forbid the predominant leadership of one elder."¹²

4. The argument from the reference to individual pastors.

The New Testament repeatedly makes reference to local churches. In each case in which the pastor of the local congregation is mentioned by name, there appears to be one pastor/bishop/elder responsible for the congregation. There might have been a plurality of pastors in each church, but the evidence points to one dominant individual in each case:

PASSAGE

1 Tim. 1:3
 Acts 15:13
 Col. 4:17; Phile. 2
 Phil. 2:25
 Titus 1:4

PERSON

Timothy
 James
 Epaphras
 Epaphroditus
 Titus

PLACE

Ephesus
 Jerusalem
 Colossae
 Philippi
 Crete

It can be argued, of course, that not all of these individuals were pastors in the contemporary sense of the word. James was an apostle. Timothy and Titus were apostolic messengers appointed and sent by the Apostle Paul. However, in essence, they functioned as pastors. Epaphras most certainly was the pastor at Colossae. Paul wrote of him as “a most faithful minister of Christ” profitable for them in Colossae (Col. 1:7). That does not exclude other pastors in Colossae, but it is strange that they are not specifically mentioned as equals and coworkers in the same locality. When pastors are mentioned by name, they appear to be the leaders of the church. Wagner underscores the prominence which James enjoyed in Jerusalem:

In a consideration of the church and its development in Acts 15, James seems to come to the forefront and is perhaps the nearest thing in the early church to what we consider a pastor today. By no stretch of the imagination could he simply be considered a moderator. After several of the congregation speak, including Peter, Paul and Barnabas, James exerts his “pastoral leadership,” sums up the situation and makes a spiritual judgment (Acts 15:19-21).¹³

After citing other cases of James’ pastoral leadership, Wagner concludes:

It is no coincidence that James as a singular person is identified with the local church at Jerusalem. It must be conceded that while there were many elders in the church and while the apostles still had a degree of authority there, we begin to see signs of one man’s coming to the forefront in a place of leadership (not a dictatorial hierarchy) and being recognized as such.¹⁴

5. The argument from the recipients of the Pastoral Epistles.

Three of Paul’s epistles are known as Pastoral Epistles. First and Second Timothy and Titus are sent to apostolic delegates who are functioning as pastors in two churches. As Guthrie observes, “In I Timothy and Titus the apostle means to give his two close associates written instructions about methods of procedure in their respective churches for which they are temporarily responsible.”¹⁵ Second Timothy is likewise written to encourage Timothy in the task of pastoring. Timothy and Titus labored in a transitional period by apostolic commission rather than the calling of a local church. Nonetheless, they were pastor-teachers in

local churches. It should be noted that each pastoral epistle is addressed to one pastor only, rather than a plurality of pastors, which should have been the case if plurality were the norm. If each local church had several elders, one would expect Paul to give Timothy's and Titus' co-pastors if not equal time then at least special greetings. The situation of the Pastoral Epistles with complete lack of instructions or greetings to co-pastors can best be explained by suggesting a single pastor in these congregations.

6. The argument from the beginning of the Asiatic Churches.

Of the seven churches of Asia Minor addressed in Revelation 2-3, only the beginning of the church of Ephesus is known (Acts 18:18-19; 19:10). Paul spent three years at Ephesus. Many people of that city responded to the gospel (Acts 19:18) and from there the gospel spread throughout most of Asia (19:26).

Under the prolonged ministry of Paul "mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed" (19:20) so that "many that believed came and confessed and showed their deeds" (20:18). It is safe to assume that there were thousands of believers worshipping in dozens of house churches. Thus it is understandable how Paul could summon the elders of the church (Acts 20:17). The church would here be a reference to all believers in Ephesus, organized into house churches, each with its own elder. That this is not an unusual usage for the term church is seen from Acts 9:13 (NIV), "Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace."

It is correct that elders are addressed in the plural in certain localities such as Ephesus, Jerusalem (Acts 16:4) and Philippi (Phil. 1:1), but these are large cities where the Word of God had prospered and where there might well be several house churches. Or it might mean that some churches had a plurality of elders at first while others did not. Strong makes an interesting observation on this point:

In certain of the N. T. churches there appears to have been a plurality of elders (Acts 20:17; Phil. 1:1; Tit 1:5). There is, however, no evidence that the number of elders was uniform, or that the plurality which frequently existed was due to any other cause than the size of the churches for which these elders cared. The N. T. example, while it permits the multiplication of assistant pastors according to need, does not require a plural eldership in every case; nor does it render this eldership, where it exists, of coordinate authority with the church. There are indications, moreover, that, at least in certain churches, the pastor was one, while the deacons were more than one, in number.¹⁶

The evidence could be used both ways, in support of singularity or plurality. However, the doctrinal passage speaks of one bishop and several deacons in the local church and by the end of the New Testament this is precisely the situation

in the seven churches. Furthermore, when a plurality of elders is seen in a local church, it can be satisfactorily explained.

We know, for example, that Paul ordained elders in every church (Acts 14:23) and instructed Titus to do likewise (Titus 1:5). But were these elders to minister in the churches in which they were ordained or were they sent from there as missionaries?

We know how the church at Ephesus began, but what about Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea? Is it not reasonable to suppose that these churches were established by elders which Paul ordained in Ephesus? Some knowledge of the beginning of the church of Colossae is possible. Guthrie suggests that Epaphras, the founder of the church, was saved under Paul, ordained and sent by him:

From the reference to Epaphras it would seem reasonable to suppose that the church originated as a result of his ministry. In i. 7 Paul says, "As you also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ," which suggests that he was responsible for the instruction of these Christians. In iv. 12, 13 he is described as "one of you," i.e. he was a Colossian, and Paul testifies to his great zeal for his own people and for the neighbouring Christians in the Lycus valley. Although no definite statement is made to this effect there is strong probability that Epaphras was converted to Christianity as a result of Paul's ministry at Ephesus (cf. Acts xix.10).¹⁷

It is certainly possible that the elders which were ordained in every church by Paul, Titus and others stayed in these churches to minister as a plurality. It is more probable that they were sent from there, like Epaphras, to the surrounding area, to reach out in missionary and evangelistic work. Only thus can it be explained how these six churches of the Apocalypse were established. This method of evangelism explains how a few individuals could "have turned the whole world upside down" (Acts 17:6).

It should be observed that at times the term elder could be used in a non-technical sense such as it most certainly is in 1 Timothy 5:1 ("rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father") when in verse 17 it is employed in a technical sense.¹⁸ Perhaps the reference to elders in the church in James 5:14 is such a non-technical usage, referring to older, spiritually mature men. It could be a reference to the pastors in the entire locality or in the local church. In no case does the New Testament yield absolute proof of a plurality of elders in a given local church, nor does it therefore demand that each local church today must have a plurality of pastors to be scriptural.

7. The argument from the symbolism of the Chief Shepherd and the flock.

In 1 Peter 5:4 Christ is pictured as the Chief Shepherd who has charge over his flock. In John's Gospel he presents himself as the "good shepherd" (10:11) and speaks of the fact that there is just "one fold and one shepherd" (10:16). As Christ, the "one shepherd" is the only head over the universal church, "the one flock," so the pastor as the under-shepherd, is the only shepherd over the local church and solely responsible for it (1 Peter 5:2-3; 1 Peter 2:25).

If the symbolism holds true, and we are convinced it does, as there is just one universal shepherd there should be only one local shepherd. The symbolism does not prove the singularity of pastors but certainly points to it.

Many of our churches have a type of plurality of pastors with assistant pastors, pastors of visitation, evangelism, Christian education, youth, etc. Perhaps the terms are not the best and a pastor of evangelism, for example, might better be referred to as the director of evangelism. However, Baptist churches have historically had one man who bore the responsibility of the oversight, which would be true even in those churches that have assistant pastors for specific areas of ministry. This leadership by one man appears to be biblically sound and practically wise.

The frequent charge that a single leader becomes a dictator should be countered with the observation that a group of leaders can likewise abuse their power. The answer is not the multiplication of the number of leaders but to stress the nature of the leader. His task is not to lord but to lead by example (1 Peter 5:4). The issue is this: What is the biblical pattern for leadership in the local church? Even those churches who advocate a plurality of pastors have to conclude that people look up to one leader.

Stabbert and Johnson, who have written a most forceful defense of the plurality of elder position, suggest the practicality of one leader even amid a plurality:

It may be nice, where several pastors are working together, to have a chairman who can superintend the internal affairs of the board. As an equal and perhaps as one who has the specific gift of leading or administration (Rom. 12:8; I Cor. 12:28), he could keep the team functioning in an orderly manner and provide insights as to how they might work together more effectively.¹⁹

Even Gene Getz, the mentor of many of the assemblies with a plurality of elders, admits that in the assemblies which he started in Dallas, there is present a strong pastor/leader. He says of these assemblies that their success is due in part to:

. . . a strong leadership pastor/leader, the man in the pulpit, the one who sets the tone for the ministry. What upsets many people is the

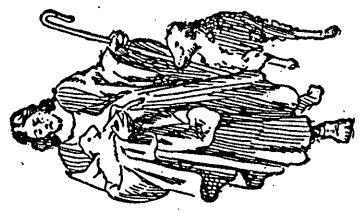
claim by some that certain successful churches don't have such a leader. I maintain they all do. He may be "laid back" in style, but he still leads.²⁰

When the major proponents of the plurality of elders view make such admissions, they are simply realizing the headship of one individual in the local church, a man called of God, His messenger to that church. The idea that a church functions better with one overseer is exactly what Baptists have historically believed and what they believe the Bible teaches. Christ as Chief Shepherd has called an under-shepherd for each flock. He leads them by example. He feeds them with the Word. He rules them, not as a dictator, but as a delegate from the Lord; and for his faithfulness, he deserves double honor on earth and has reserved an elder's crown in glory.

ENDNOTES

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- ² Ronald P. Chadwick, *Teaching and Learning: An Integrated Approach to Christian Education* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1982) 115.
- ³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴ Charles John Ellicott, *A Bible Commentary for Students* (London and Edinburgh: Marshall Brothers, Std., n.d.), VIII, 539.
- ⁵ Richard Chenevix Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1862), 82-83.
- ⁶ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1966), 1551.
- ⁷ M'Clintock and Strong, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Pub., 1894), VIII, 361.
- ⁸ Ellicott, *op. cit.*, 542.
- ⁹ J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964) 69.
- ¹⁰ Charles U. Wagner, ". . .and He gave some. . .Pastors" (Tacoma, WA: Northwest Baptist Seminary Press, 1977) 18.
- ¹¹ Homer A. Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958), 181-182.
- ¹² Merrill C. Tenney, *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), II, 267.
- ¹³ Wagner, *op. cit.*, 5.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ Donald Guthrie, *The Pauline Epistles: New Testament Introduction* (London: The Tyndale Press, 1963), 236.
- ¹⁶ Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (New York: A.C. Armstrong and Son, 1896), 510.
- ¹⁷ Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 161.
- ¹⁸ A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1931) IV 583, 587.
- ¹⁹ Bruce Stabbert and Dennis Johnston, *Team Ministry a Case For Plurality in Church Leadership* (Monograph, 1977), 103.
- ²⁰ Larry Richards and Gene Getz, "A Biblical Style of Leadership?" *Leadership* (1981, Vol. II No 2), 77.

ποιμήν
Poimen - Shepherd



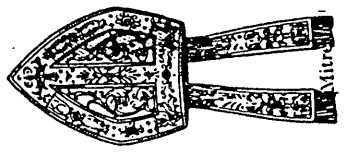
Acts 20
1 Peter 5

Ministry

Function

Provide
Protect

ἐπίσκοπος
Episcopos - Bishop



Acts 20
1 Peter 5
Titus 1

Mission

Duties

Oversee
Administer

πρεσβύτερος
Presbuteros - Elder



Acts 20
1 Peter 5
Titus 1

Maturity

Person

Lead by
example

TEXT

TRIAD

THRUST

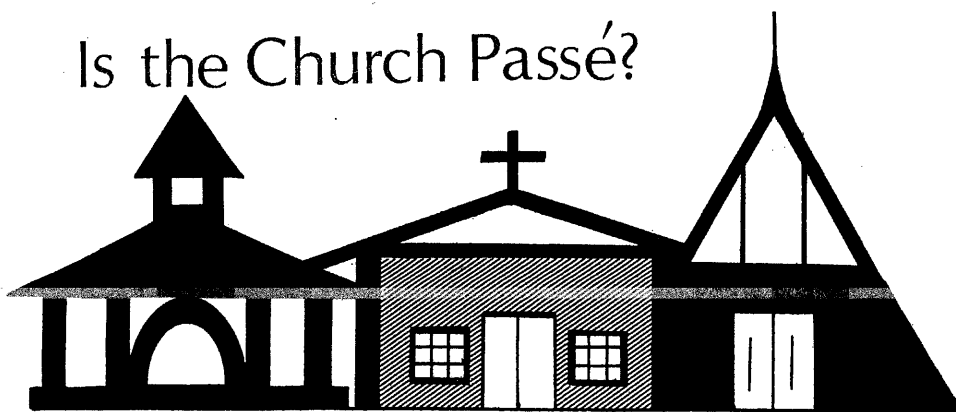
TASK



Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

**THE EXCELLENCY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH:
Dare We Forsake the Local Church?**

Is the Church Passé?



● **The Local Church: Peripheral Or Primary?**

It is the:

AAdministrator of the Two Ordinances

Body of the Risen Lord

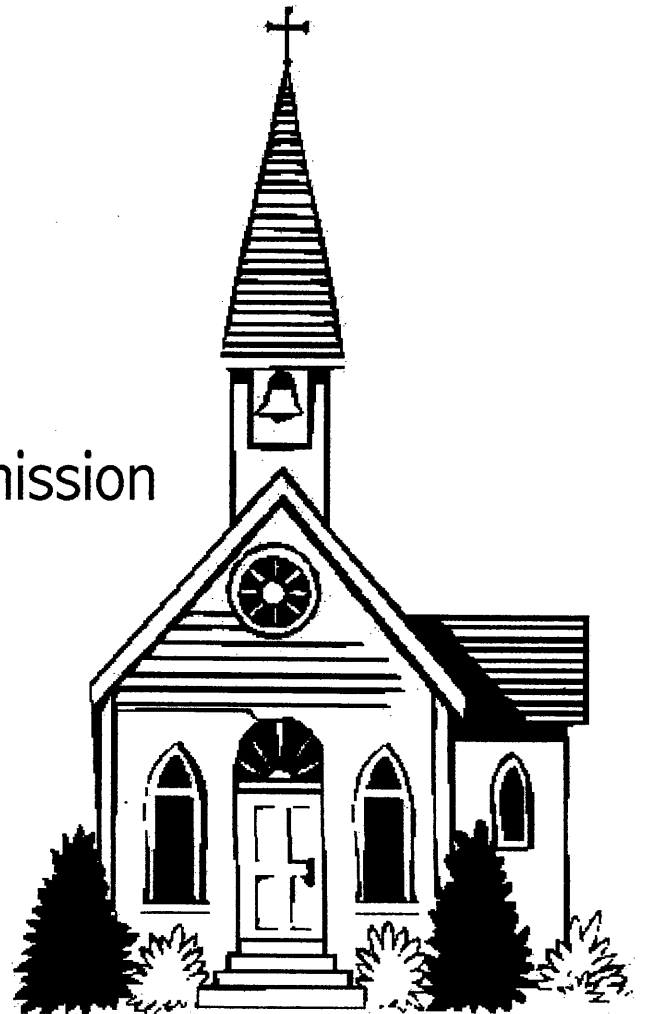
● **C**enter of Biblical Edification

Discharger of the Great Commission

Executor of Church Discipline

Flock of the Chief Shepherd

Ground and Pillar of Truth



ARK

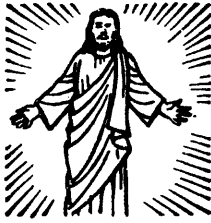


**THE
LOCAL
CHURCH:**

**THE
ADMINISTRATOR
OF THE
TWO
ORDINANCES**

Acts 2:41-42 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls. ⁴² And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

1 Cor. 11:17, 18, 22, 33 Now in this that I declare *unto you* I praise *you* not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. ¹⁸ For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. ²² What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise *you* not. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.



JESUS

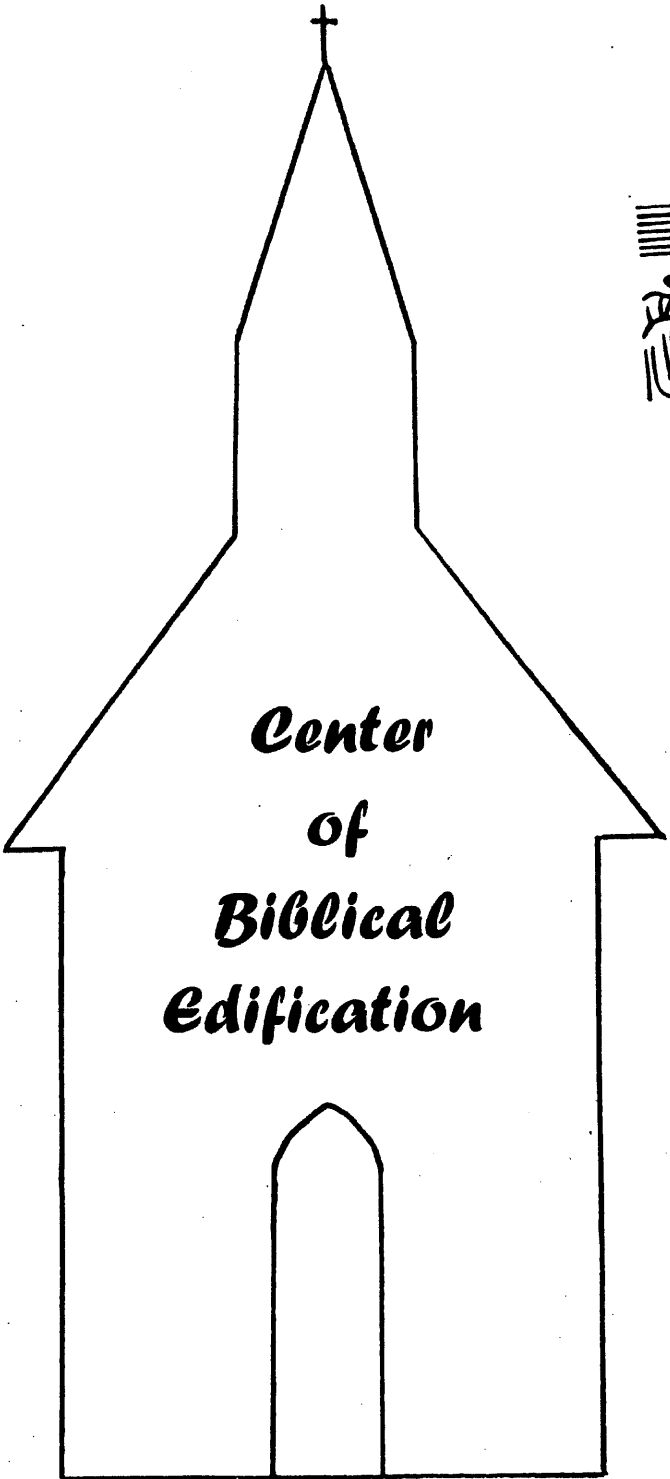


**THE
LOCAL
CHURCH:**

*Body
of the
Risen
Lord*

Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4-6 And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, ²³ Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Col. 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.



*Center
of
Biblical
Edification*

**THE
LOCAL
CHURCH:**

Heb. 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*. and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.



**THE
LOCAL
CHURCH:**

***Discharger
of the
Great
Commission***

Acts 13:1-3 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ² As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. ³ And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.



**THE
LOCAL
CHURCH:**

**Executor
of
Church
Discipline**

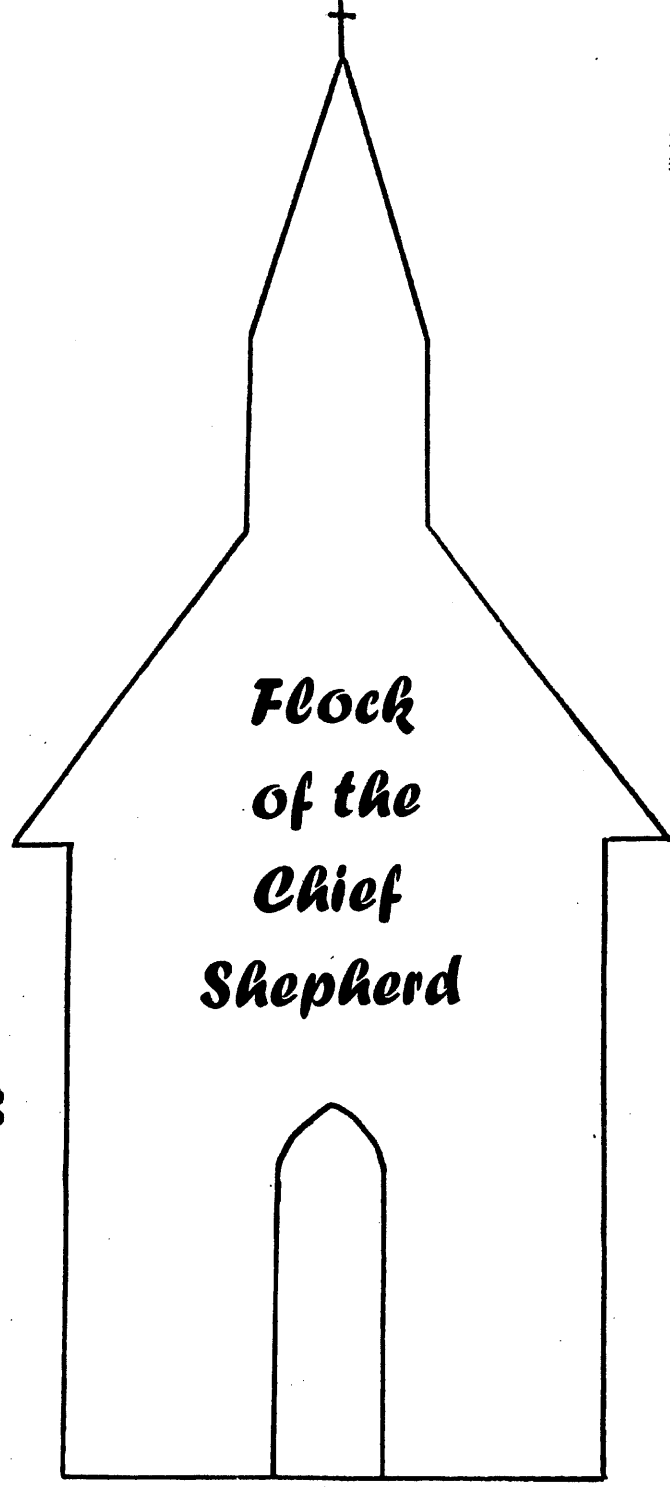
Mt. 18:15-17 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. ¹⁶ But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. ¹⁷ And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

THE FOUR STEPS OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

from Matthew 18:15-20

The following steps of Church discipline are our guide for dealing with a brother who is walking in a disorderly conversation. The process has in view, restoration and is committed to involving as few people as necessary. It should, therefore, be entered into carefully and prayerfully.

Step #1	verse 15- "go and tell him his fault . . . alone"	IF "the brother hears you"	THEN "You have gained your brother."	ELSE Step #2
Step #2	verse 16- "take with you one or two more"	IF The brother hears you,	THEN The brother is restored.	ELSE Step #3
Step #3	verse 17- "tell it to the church."	IF The brother hears you,	THEN The brother is restored.	ELSE Step #4
Step #4	verse 17- "let him be to you like a heathen."	It is in this step, sadly, that a brother must be removed from fellowship, but always with the hope that he will see his sin and be repentant unto fellowship.		

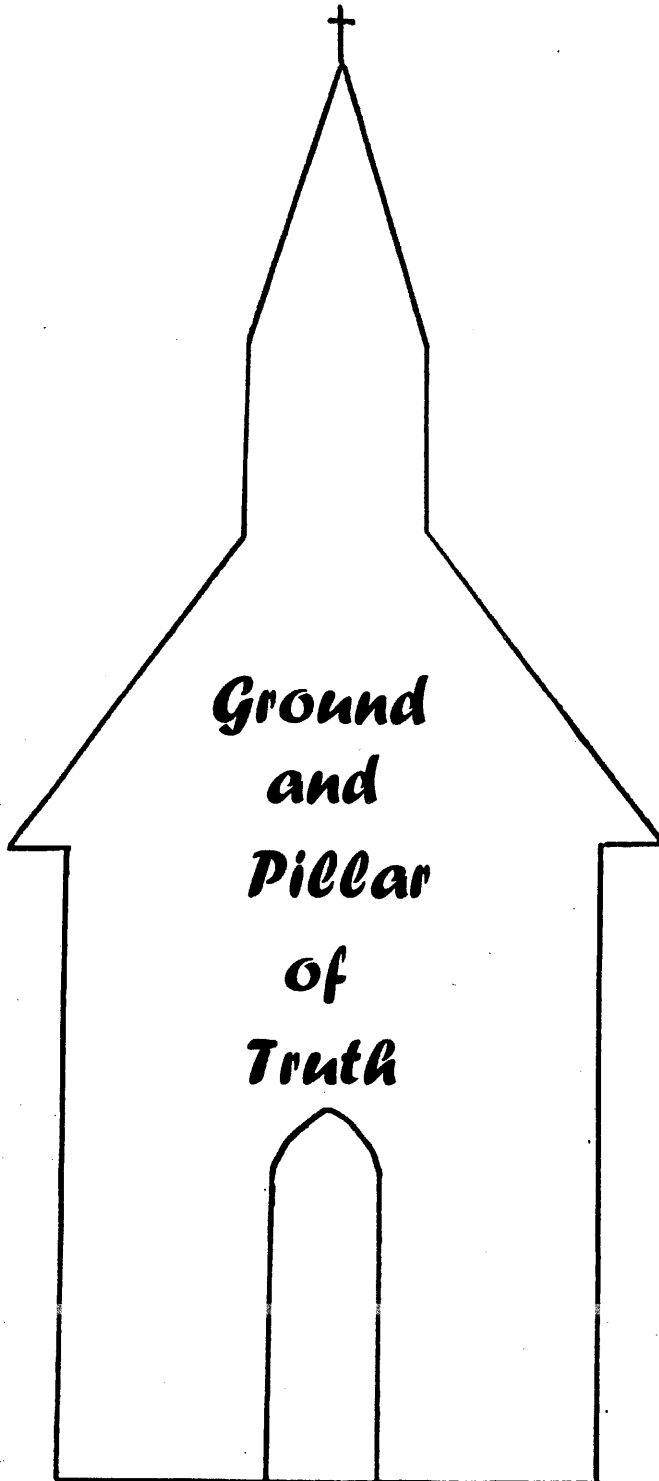


THE LOCAL CHURCH:

*Flock
of the
Chief
Shepherd*

1 Pet. 2:25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

1 Pet. 5:1-4 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: ² Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; ³ Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. ⁴ And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.



**THE
LOCAL
CHURCH:**

*Ground
and
Pillar
of
Truth*

1 Tim. 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

FUNDAMENTALISM

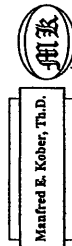
Positively
Declares the
Truth

Negatively
Defends the
Truth

Expounds the Truth	The System	Exposes Error
Upholds the Fundamentals	The Spirit	Uphraids Falsehood
Stands for Sound Doctrine	The Stand	Separates from Denials

The Fundamentals of the Faith are:

1. Inspiration of the Scriptures
2. Virgin Birth
3. Deity of Christ
4. Substitutionary Atonement
5. Physical Resurrection and Return



*What the Bible Says About
A Godly Attitude Toward...*

H | E | R | E | S | Y

TRY THEM

I John 4:1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

MARK THEM

Romans 16:17, "Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them."

REBUKE THEM

Titus 1:13, "this witness is true. Wherefore, rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith."

HAVE NO FELLOWSHIP

Ephesians 5:11, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

WITHDRAW THYSELF

II Thessalonians 3:6, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye received of us."

RECEIVE THEM NOT

II John 10-11, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

HAVE NO COMPANY WITH HIM

II Thessalonians 3:14, "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed."

THE BIBLICAL PATTERN FOR SEPARATION

IN GENESIS

SEPARATED FROM

LIGHT



DARKNESS

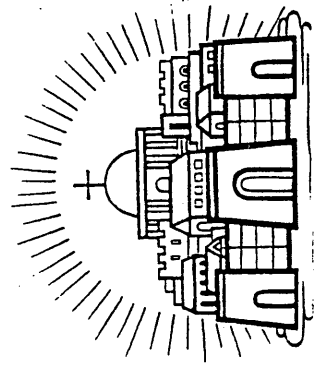


IN REVELATION

SEPARATED FROM

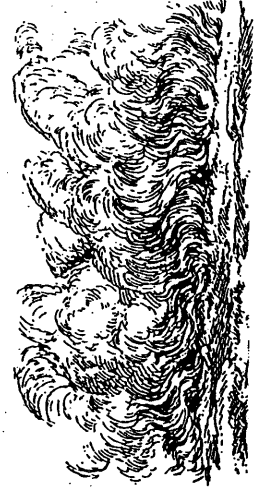
SPIRITUAL LIGHT

NEW JERUSALEM



SPIRITUAL DARKNESS

LAKE OF FIRE



Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

THINGS WHICH BECOME SOUND DOCTRINE

1**INERRANCY OF THE BIBLE****2****TRIUNITY OF GOD****3****SINLESSNESS OF THE SAVIOUR****4****PERSONALITY OF THE SPIRIT****5****REALITY OF ANGELS****6****UNIQUENESS OF MAN****7****PERVASIVENESS OF SIN****8****COMPLETENESS OF SALVATION****9****DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE CHURCH****10****LITERALNESS OF THE FUTURE**

TEACHING TRUTH BY DECLARING DOCTRINES

1. Deliver the truth to others:

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. 2 Tim. 2:2

2. Divide the truth from error:

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the **word of truth**. 2 Tim 2:15

3. Discern the truth in others :

But thou hast fully known my **doctrine**, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience. 2 Tim. 3:10

4. Discover the truth in the Scriptures :

All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for **doctrine**, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 2 Tim 3:16

5. Declare the truth continually:

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and **doctrine**. 2 Tim 4:2

6. Demand the truth from teachers:

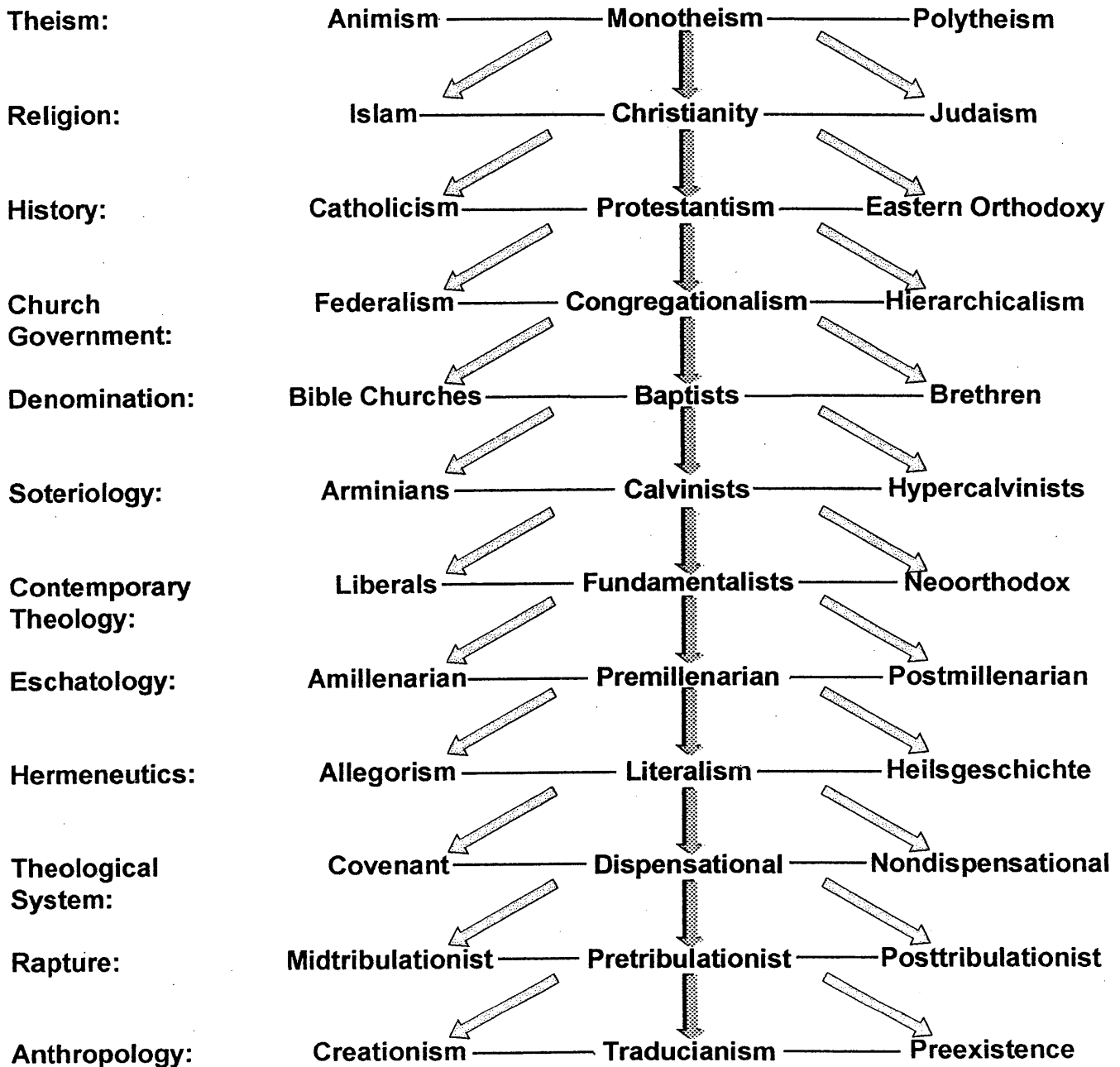
For the time will come when they will not endure sound **doctrine**; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 2 Tim 4:3

7. Defend the truth forcefully:

I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the **faith**: 2 Tim 4:7



WHAT'S IN A NAME? ~OR~ WHY WE BEAR THE NAME "BAPTISTS"



Theological names or designations are shortcuts in theology to convey a set of principles or beliefs in one word. A person holding a certain position may not care for the term used to designate that view, but for the sake of convenience will employ it to avoid excessive explanation or verbiage. Occam's Razor is applicable here: multiplicity ought not to be posited without necessity.

Distinctives of the Evangelical Free Church of America

*"In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, charity.
In all things, Jesus Christ."*

— Chrysostom

1. The Evangelical Free Church of America is inclusive not exclusive.

The great heritage of EFCA people around the world includes the fact that fellowship and ministry opportunities in the local church are based solely on one's personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and trusting in Him alone for salvation. Membership requires commitment to sound doctrine as expressed in our Statement of Faith. However, a person is not excluded from membership because he or she does not agree on every fine point of doctrine. Within the EFCA, there is allowance for legitimate differences of understanding in some areas of doctrine.

2. The Evangelical Free Church of America is evangelical but not separatistic.

The EFCA was born out of a heritage of commitment to the authority and inerrancy of Scripture. We have deep convictions based on the authority of God's Word, but we do not draw battle lines over minor points. Nor do we make minor issues of doctrine a test of fellowship in the local church. We are evangelical. We believe in separated living and personal holiness, but we are not separatists.

3. The Evangelical Free Church of America is ecumenical in spirit though not in structure.

We believe in the spiritual unity of the Church though not necessarily in structural union. We join with other Christians and other denominations of like, precious faith in common goals and ministries to accomplish the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. But we believe that there is strength in diversity and that it is important to preserve our distinctives. We recognize that union

in structure does not guarantee unity of spirit. Our foremost concern is unity of spirit with our Lord, with each other and with other Christians.

4. The Evangelical Free Church of America believes in liberty with responsibility and accountability.

We believe in Christian liberty, but freedom always has its limitations. Responsible Christians do not abuse freedom. The apostle Paul wrote forcefully about Christian liberty in the Book of Galatians. He shattered the legalists with the doctrine of grace. But in First and Second Corinthians and Romans, the apostle also rebuked believers when liberty was abused. He declared boldly the principles of Christian liberty, but spoke with equal forcefulness about Christian accountability. The EFCA desires to preserve our freedom in Christ. We encourage our people to be responsible, godly men, women and young people who desire to live under the control of the Holy Spirit in obedience to the principles and precepts of God's Word, and in harmony with God's will for life as revealed in the Scriptures.

5. The Evangelical Free Church of America believes in both the rational and relational dimensions of Christianity.

We believe the Scriptures must be applied to our individual lives with warmth of heart, warmth of message and warmth of concern. We believe it is essential to have solid, biblical content in our doctrinal understanding of faith, but it is equally important to have a dynamic, vital relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ the Son and to live by the power of the Holy Spirit. Sound Christian doctrine must be coupled with dynamic Christian experience. Ours is a ministry of love and spiritual reconciliation.

6. The Evangelical Free Church of America affirms the right of each local church to govern its own affairs.

The EFCA is committed to a congregational form of government as stated in Article 10 of our

By Any Other Name?

by
Kevin T. Bauder, D.Min.

A RUMINATIONS Publication

While driving through one of the Dallas suburbs the other day, I came across a church I had never seen before. The sign in front of the building read _____ Community Church, but at the bottom of the sign appeared tiny initials which identified this church with a well-known Baptist fellowship. Only hours later, I heard of another new Baptist church being formed in our neighborhood. Once again, the congregation planned not to use the Baptist name.

This trend away from the name *Baptist* has been growing for several years. It rests upon two premises: (1) people nowadays don't much like traditional churches, church names and especially denominations; and (2) the name itself isn't that important, as long as your beliefs and practices are good. Therefore (so the reasoning goes), it is worth abandoning the name in order to attract a wider hearing.

I dispute the second premise. Names *are* important, so important that if we didn't already have them we would be forced to invent them. Names are a kind of shorthand that identify us with something. When a man starts a business, for example, he chooses a name that will identify what the business does. When a woman is married, she takes her husband's name in order to identify herself as his wife. When we claim religious names like Baptist, evangelical, fundamentalist and even Christian, we are identifying ourselves with some historic body of belief and practice.

When we call our church a Baptist church, we are saying that we affirm certain doctrines which we believe to be essential to the functioning of a new Testament church. We are saying

that the New Testament is our final and sufficient authority in all matters of church faith and order. We are saying that only born again, baptized believers are qualified for church membership. We are saying that every believer ought to be baptized, and that single immersion in water is the only valid baptism. We are saying that each believer is a priest who exercises soul liberty before Christ. We are saying that churches are governed under Christ by congregations, not by monarchies, oligarchies or hierarchies. We are saying that church and state are separate institutions, and that the state may never use its authority either to establish or to impede the church. These are not tangential doctrines; these are doctrines that define what the church is and how it functions.

When a person asks me what kind of a church I attend, I could respond by reciting all these doctrines. But I don't have to. There is a label that has been used for centuries to describe people who believe just as I do. That label is *Baptist*.

Now, someone may say, "I believe the same way you do; I just don't want the name *Baptist*." Actually, that person does not believe the same way I do. True, he may agree to the same doctrines that I agree to, but more than doctrinal agreement is involved in identity of belief. What more, you ask? Identity of belief also demands identity of emphasis. It is one thing to agree that certain doctrines are *true*; it is a different thing to agree about *how important* those doctrines are.

If one reads the New Testament asking such questions as, What is the church? How is it constituted? What is it for? How does it operate?, the answers that one gets are exactly those teachings that set Baptists apart from other Christians. These teachings are not optional or incidental or secondary or non-essential. They are the substance of the New Testament's teaching on the church. These are the most important truths that distinguish us from other believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. If we value these teachings to the same degree that Scripture values them, then we shall want to be known for our belief in them. To put it bluntly, it is not enough simply to believe "baptistically" (whatever that could mean); we shall desire to be known as

Baptists. If we believe these doctrines and hold them to be important, then we are being dishonest if we attempt to pass ourselves off as just another Community Church.

I won't try to tell you that denominational names don't reveal people today: they do. I will simply observe that Scripture instructs us to be instant in season and out of season. In other words, we maintain our convictions and our message whether they are popular or unpopular. We can always draw a bigger crowd if only we will trade off some part of the truth. And when I say "trade off the truth," I don't necessarily mean that we deny the truth: we might simply deemphasize it.

Doubtless, someone will argue that most people don't know what the name *Baptist* means, anyway; so why bother? Why bother, indeed! There has never been a time when most people did understand what the name meant. Through much of our history, our opponents have sought to misrepresent the convictions which the name *Baptist* stipulates. We've always had to offer some explanations and make some defense of our principles. The ignorance of the masses has never provided a compelling reason to abandon precision in what we say, even when we are saying it about ourselves.

If we knew of a medical doctor who was suddenly calling himself a chiropractor or a homeopath, we would expect the whole medical community to object that he was lowering the standards of his profession. Chiropractic and homeopathy may be either good or bad, but they are different things from medicine. The medical man who calls himself a homeopath is trading away an accurate description of what he is for a description of something that he is not. In the same way, the "baptistic" church that calls itself a community church is lowering its standards and refusing to be known for precisely those beliefs which make it different from other churches. A New Testament church is emphatically *not* a "community church." The community church concept is grounded in an old congregationalist notion that includes unbaptized and even unregenerate members of the community within the parameters of the visible church. Nothing

could be more contrary to the New Testament's teaching on church membership, nor to historic Baptist belief and practice.

We did not invent the name *Baptist*. It was given to our spiritual ancestors by their enemies: enemies who imprisoned them, exiled them, whipped them, beheaded them, drowned them and burned them because people on both sides took doctrine seriously. The name was given in mockery to denote those who held to the same beliefs that Baptists hold today. It still stands for the great Biblical teachings which we hold dear.

I am a Baptist, and I am proud to be known as a Baptist. The name *Baptist* identifies me with a great heritage of Scriptural preaching. It places me in the mainstream of those who gave their lives for religious liberty. It connects me with men and women who would rather suffer and die than deny the truth of Scripture. And it proclaims to anybody who will listen that the truths for which they died are the same truths that I believe today.



Additional copies of "By Any Other Name?" may be ordered for ten cents apiece from:

RUMINATIONS

2112 El Capitan
Dallas, TX 75228

**THE EMERGENCE OF THE CHURCH:
Did the Church Really Start at Pentecost?**

- 1A. The Commencement of the Church:
- 1b. In relation to time:
- 1c. Positions concerning the commencement of the church:
- 1d. Covenant theology:
Somewhere in the O.T., around the time of Abraham.
- 2d. Southern Baptists:
John the Baptist, somewhere during the pre-cross ministry of Christ.
J. M Carroll, *The Trail of Blood*
- 3d. Ultradispensationalism
Some time after the conversion of Paul.
- 4d. Bullingerism:
At the close of the Book of Acts. Only the Prison Epistles refer to the church.

While the above are the four main positions about the commencement of the church, there are several other suggestions that have received credence among Christians:

**WHEN DID THE CHURCH BEGIN?
OR
THE CORRECT AND CORRUPT CONCEPTS
CONCERNING THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CHURCH**



① ABRAHAM ② JOHN THE BAPTIST ③ MINISTRY OF CHRIST ④ PENTECOST ⑤ PAUL'S CONVERSION ⑥ PAUL'S IMPRISONMENT

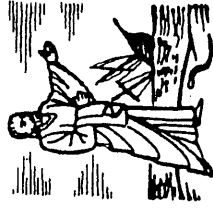
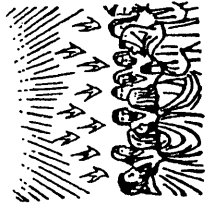
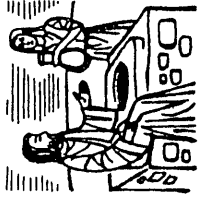
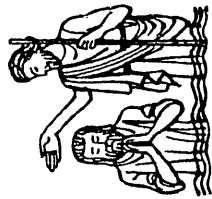
2,000 B.C.

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- ②
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WHEN DID THE CHURCH BEGIN?

OR

THE CORRECT AND CORRUPT CONCEPTS CONCERNING THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CHURCH



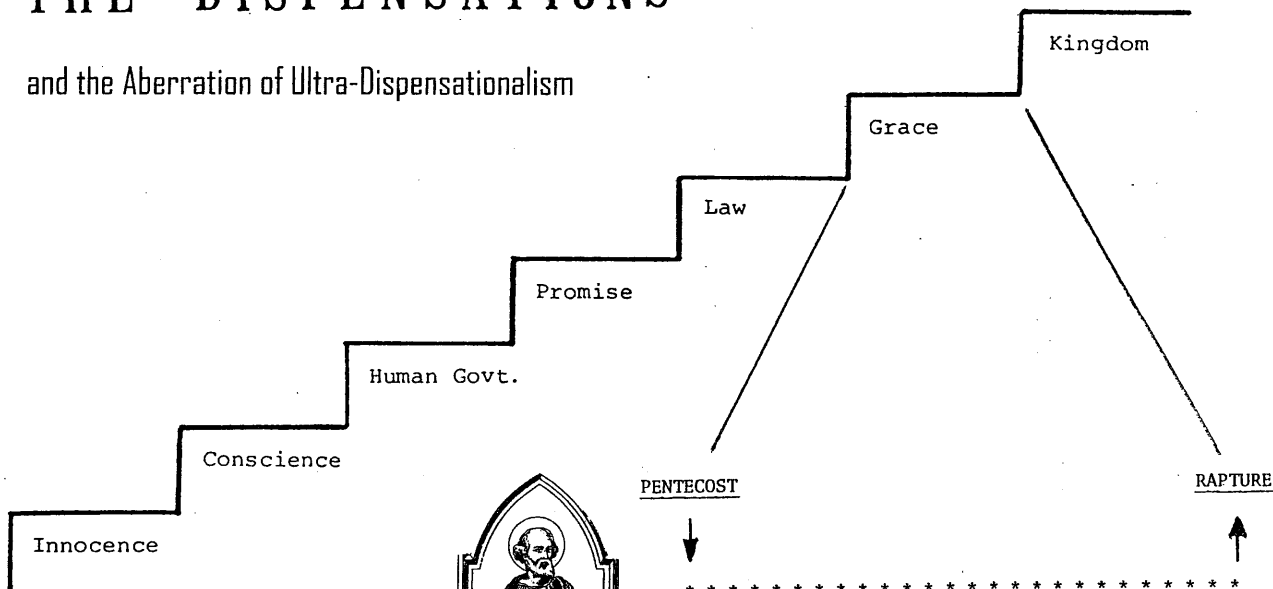
① ABRAHAM ② JOHN THE BAPTIST ③ MINISTRY OF CHRIST ④ PENTECOST ⑤ PAUL'S CONVERSION ⑥ PAUL'S IMPRISONMENT

2,000 B.C.

- ① Covenant Theology
- ② Southern Baptists
- ③ John R. Rice
- ④ Dispensationalists (GARBC)
- ⑤ Ultra-Dispensationalists
- ⑥ Bullingerites

THE DISPENSATIONS

and the Aberration of Ultra-Dispensationalism



PENTECOST

RAPTURE

 * JEWISH CHURCH * CHRISTIAN CHURCH *
 * BRIDE OF CHRIST * BODY OF CHRIST *
 * PETER * PAUL *



PENTECOST

RAPTURE



 * JEWISH CHURCH * CHRISTIAN CHURCH *
 * BRIDE OF CHRIST * BODY OF CHRIST *
 * PETER * PAUL *



- 2c. Passages concerning the commencement of the church:
The scriptural proof is most convincing that the church began at Pentecost. It is most perplexing how such a matter, clearly taught in the Scriptures, can be of great controversy among genuine believers.

1d. Promise of the church:

During the ministry of Christ the church was still future because promised that He would build His church.

Mt. 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

2d. Promise of baptism:

At the time of Christ's ascension, He predicted the baptism of the Holy Spirit which efficaciously inaugurated the church. The disciples were to wait in Jerusalem for the fulfilled promise of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.



3d. Day of Pentecost:

On the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon believers and filled them. Peter in Acts 11 also speaks of this occasion when they were baptized by the Holy Spirit.

4d. Baptism of Pentecost:

Acts 11:5-16 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. 16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

5d. Baptizing into the body:

The body of Christ is formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit which occurred on the Day of Pentecost.

1 Cor. 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

6d. Church is the body of Christ:

The church is clearly identified with the body of Christ by the Apostle Paul

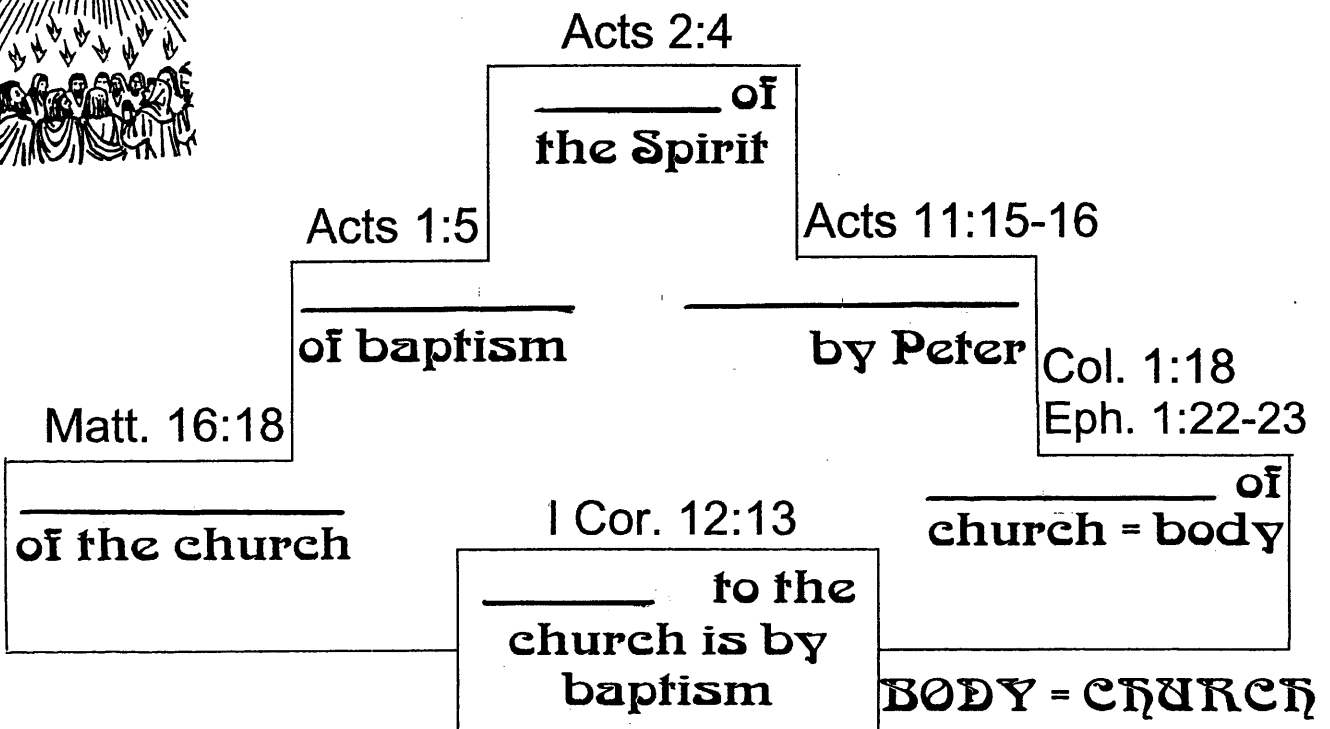
Eph. 1:22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

Col. 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Therefore, since the only way to enter the church is through the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit, and that occurred on the Day of Pentecost, the conclusion seems obvious that the church, the body of Christ, began on Pentecost.



The Commencement of the Church



2b. In relation to Christ:

- 1c. He builds it:
Mt. 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.



Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

- 2c. He is the chief cornerstone:
1 Pet. 2:6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.
- 3c. He is the foundation:
1 Cor. 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
- 4c. He is the head:
Eph. 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

3b. In relation to the Holy Spirit:



He is the agent of forming it:
1 Cor. 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

4b. In relation to the Day of Pentecost:

- 1c. The Holy Spirit's baptizing work makes the body of Christ:
1 Cor. 12:13
- 2c. In the Old Testament and Gospels, the Spirit nowhere baptizes.
- 3c. The church could not be started before Pentecost because it would be
(1) lifeless
(2) headless
(3) functionless
(4) giftless

2A. The continuation of the church:

Inexplicably, the major voice of Christianity has taught in recent years the heretical doctrine that the Church Age is over and we are now going through the Tribulation. Many of us are familiar with the Family Radio network, based in Oakland, California. The radio station is known for its superb Christian music but Camping's teaching ministry is marked by excessive speculation and spiritualizing. He wrote three publications before 1994, predicting that the rapture would be September of that year.

More recently, he has espoused the grievous error that the church age has ended and every believer must therefore depart from the local church. The Holy Spirit has departed from the church, so that no gospel can be effectively preached within the local church any longer, and salvation is therefore impossible in and through the local church.

Numerous voices have been raised to protest against Harold's horrible hermeneutics and doctrinal deviations, to no avail. Below are two short but adequate refutations of Camping's error concerning the end of the church age. His major book, entitled *The Church Age and Beyond*, can be ordered free of charge from him. His phone number is 1-800-534-1495.

Bible Presbyterian Church Resolution 66:15

On Harold Camping's Opposition to the Visible Church

Mr. Harold Camping of the Family Radio network, based in Oakland, California, has been teaching that the "church age" has ended and that therefore believers ought to be leaving all local churches. Mr. Camping and Family Radio must repent of this false and destructive teaching.

The Holy Scriptures teach us that we must not forsake "the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but [be] exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

Even when the Jewish synagogues were quite leavened with hypocrisy and unbelief, our Lord set the example for us, going "about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues" (Matthew 4:23), and "as his custom was," entering the synagogue on the Sabbath day (Luke 4:16). He did not leave the visible church of his day.

In 1 Corinthians 11:26 we read, "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." The plural pronoun "ye" emphasizes the importance of the church's observance of Christ's ordinance when congregated as a branch of His body, and not in private or isolation as individuals or families. Also, the phrases "as often as" and "till he come" emphasize the perpetual nature of this ordinance and of the holy convocations of His people on earth. We are to continue to gather with as many of the body of Christ as we can to worship our Lord "in spirit and in truth" and to remember Him in the use of the sacraments.

Mr. Camping's allegorical method of interpretation is a grievous error which led him to believe Christ would return in 1994, and now to oppose the visible church.

We appreciate the years of service which Mr. Camping and Family Radio have given to spreading the true Gospel of Christ and the Reformed faith. But, we warn all believers against Mr. Camping's erroneous method of interpretation, call upon everyone to withdraw support from Family Radio until such a time as it should repent, and call upon Mr. Camping and those who are promoting such schism to repent from this sin.

Adopted by the 66th General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church,
meeting in Lakeland, FL, August 1-6, 2002.

c/o Family Stations, Inc.

Oakland, CA 94621

Dear Mr. Camping:

We write to you with great grief, but with a sense of necessity because of your persistence in teaching things contrary to that which is in accord with both the Word of God and the historic Christian faith. We call upon you, Mr. Camping, to repent of your repeated false teaching that "this is the end of the Church age", that God is now "guiding groups outside of the churches into truth for this 'latter rain' period", and even that "the Gospel has never been sent out with more purity than it is being sent out now" by groups like Family Radio, cf. Open Forum, July 11, 2001. This extends even to asserting that it is not necessary for believers to meet in churches, cf. Heb. 10:25, but that "through Family Radio we can have this kind of fellowship", cf. Open Forum, July 12, 2001.

The Scriptures are clear that Christ will build His church despite the power of the evil One, Matt. 16:18. His order is not just that the Gospel be preached to all the nations, but that disciples be made of all the nations by way of baptism and teaching, Matt. 28:18-20. This assumes the existence of the church, for without its ministers there will not be baptisms and the official teaching and preaching of the Word of God, cf. II Tim. 2:2. This order is to continue until the end of the age, Matt. 28:20. Further, there is to be glory given to God in the church unto all generations, Eph. 3:21. This cannot be fulfilled if, as you affirm, "it may be that now God is finished with the church."

We are deeply grieved that, once again you wantonly contradict established Christian teaching that has been held for nearly two millenia. "I believe the holy, catholic church" is part of the biblical confession known as the Apostles' Creed. Protestant confessions have unequivocally affirmed that despite the power of error and wickedness "there shall be always a church on earth to worship God according to his will." (Westminster Confession of Faith, XXV:V). These affirmations come from the clear teaching of the Word of God. For example, it is impossible to speak of how "it is necessary for one to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth", II Tim. 3:15, if, at some point prior to Christ's return, God is "finished with the church" and it is no longer necessary for believers to be part of the Church. Such a teaching is both false and dangerous to the souls of those who are meant to receive the means of grace through the Church. It is public teaching that even contradicts part of the "Statement of Belief" of Family Radio, i.e. "We do affirm and declare our belief in the Christian faith and do set forth the following... Christ's great commission to the Church to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, baptizing and teaching those who believe." (emphasis ours). Further, it contradicts part of the stated purpose of Family Radio, which is to "help local churches by encouraging regular attendance, membership, and personal involvement.", cf. "Introducing The Ministry of Family Radio" brochure.

For the honor of Christ, and for the good of your hearers, we again earnestly plead with you, Mr. Camping, to publicly repent of this serious divergence from the historic Christian faith, and that you publicly retract such statements. We believe it is correct to say that your teaching has, at this point, become heretical, i.e. a self-chosen opinion that creates schism in the body of Christ, denies clearly revealed truth, and accepts and promotes error, cf. 'Heresy' in Baker's Dictionary of Theology, p. 268. It is a grief to us even to think that you may need to be regarded as one who must be rejected after a first and second admonition, cf. Titus 3:10f., because of warped teaching that endangers the souls of many.

We send this letter with prayer that you will respond in a manner that is faithful to the Word of God and to the teaching of the historic Christian faith.

Yours with deep concern,

Michael Montemarano, clerk

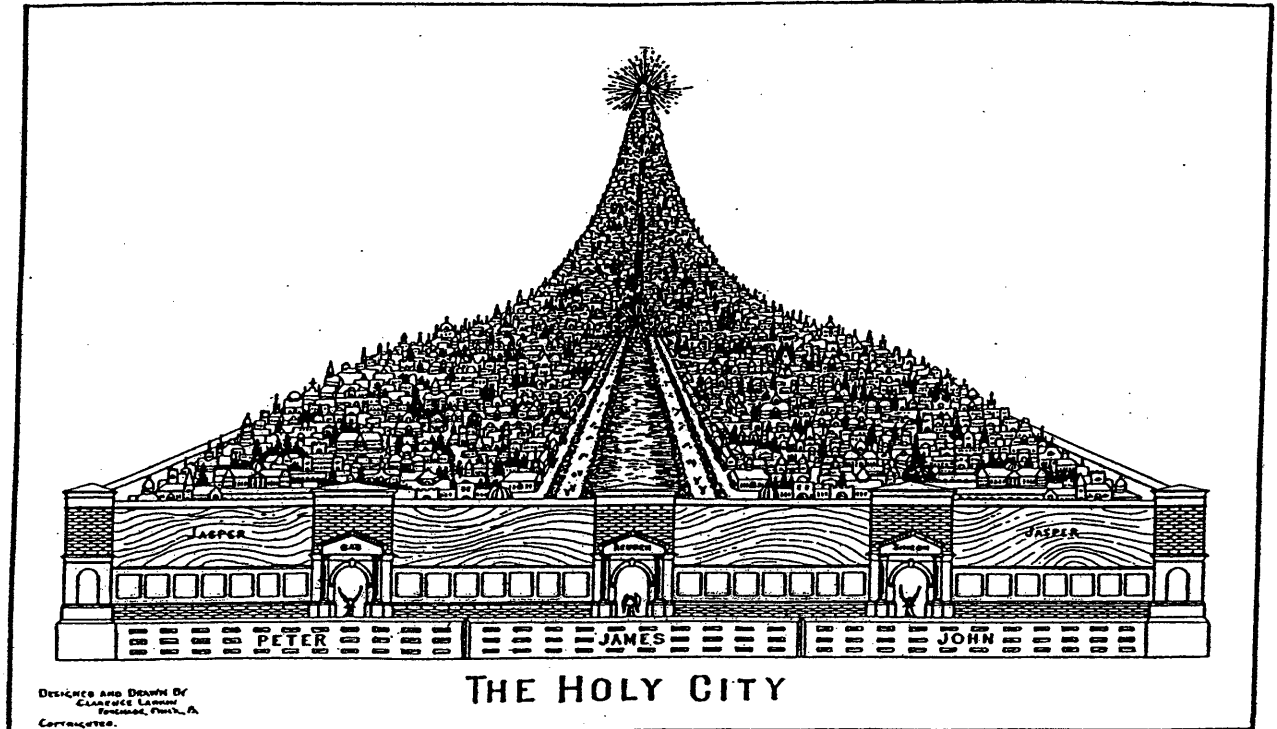
For the session,

Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Franklin Square, NY

3A. The consummation of the church:

It has been noted that the church definitely started on the Day of Pentecost. Upon its conclusion, when the last believer is added to the church on earth and the final building block is added to the city in heaven, the Savior will return and take us to His Father's house, where He is preparing presently the heavenly Jerusalem. The rapture is just the commencement for the believer and the glorious future that awaits fulfillment. The climax of the Church Age is the rapture, when the body of the redeemed will be gathered by the Savior and taken to the home He has prepared for us, His Bride. The church will continue to exist for all eternity as a separate entity, enjoying the presence of the Savior and the blessings He provides, in the company the Triune God, the redeemed through all the ages and the holy angels.

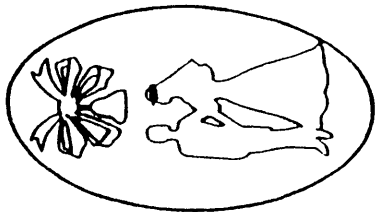
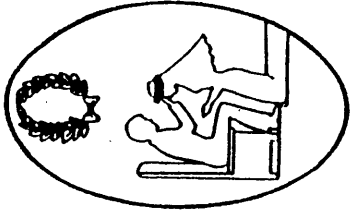
Heb. 12 22-23 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.



Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational Truth*, p. 148.

Rev. 21:1 – 22:6

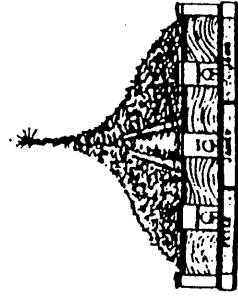
The Future and The Saint



3 1 Cor. 3:11-4:5

4 Rev. 19:7-8

CELEBRATION



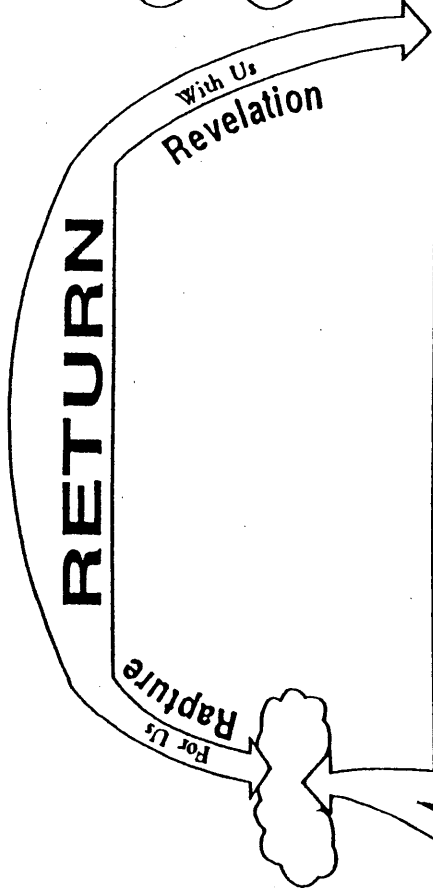
THE HOLY CITY
NEW JERUSALEM

1 Phil. 3:20

5 Rev. 19:4-16

7 Rev. 22:1-5

6 1 Cor. 6:2-3



Church
2 1 Thess. 4:13-18

Tribulation

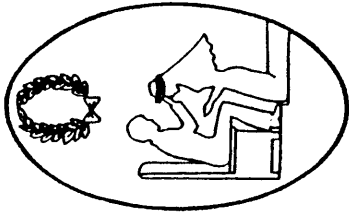
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Eternity

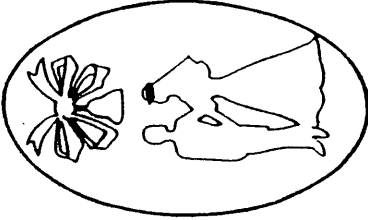
Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.



The Future and The Saint

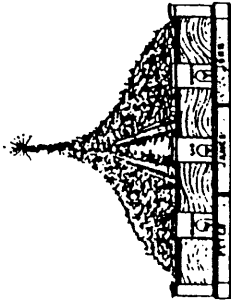


3 Rewards for the Believer
1 Cor. 3:11-4:5



4 Rejoicing at Marriage of the Lamb
Rev. 19:7-8

CELEBRATION

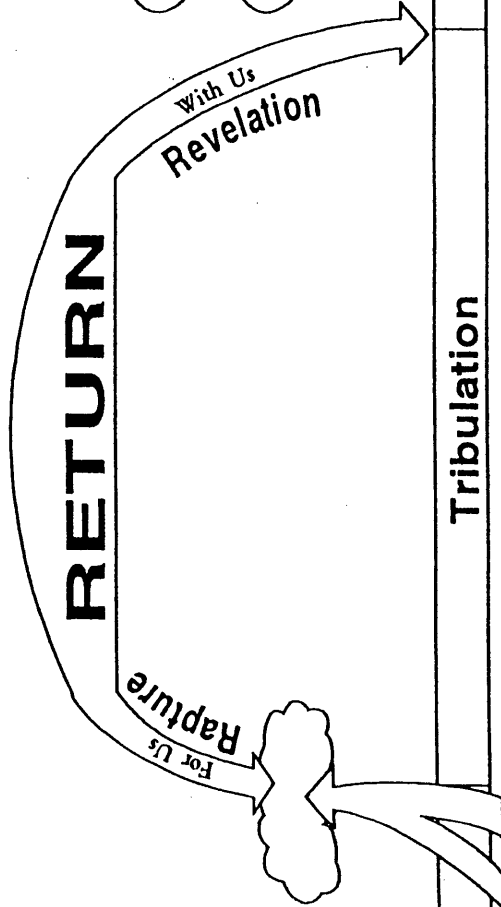


THE HOLY CITY
NEW JERUSALEM

7 Residence in the New Jerusalem
Rev. 20:1-5

5 Return with Christ
Rev. 19:4-16

6 Rule with Christ
1 Cor. 6:2-3



1 Readiness of the Saints
Phil. 3:20

2 Rapture of The Church
1 Thess. 4:13-18

Church

Tribulation

Millennium



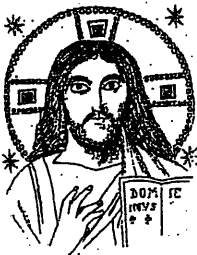
Eternity

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.



Three Entities Out of Place

(not yet in their final position)

	Now	Then
<p>The Jew</p> 	<p>Scattered among the</p> <p>Ezekiel 37</p>	<p>Settled in the</p> <p>Jeremiah 31</p>
<p>The Church</p> 	<p>Separated from Her</p> <p>John 14:1-4</p>	<p>Secure with Her</p> <p>Ephesians 5:27 Rev. 19:7-9</p>
<p>The Savior</p> 	<p>Seated at the Father's</p> <p>Psalm 110:1 Rev. 3:21</p>	<p>Seated on the Throne of</p> <p>Psalm 2:7 Luke 1:32</p>

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