

Biblical Missiology: What is the Church?

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What is the Church?

Theology – This is what we believe

- It must be exegetically determined

Philosophy – This is what we think

- It must be exegetically derived

Methodology – This is what we do

- It must be exegetically defensible

Our methodology is subservient to our philosophy. Our philosophy to our theology.

Church

- kirk (scottish)
- kyriokos (belonging to the Lord)

1689 Baptist Confession

• **The Church**

The universal Church, which may be called invisible (in respect of the internal work of the Spirit and truth of grace) consists of the entire number of the elect, all those who have been, who are, or who shall be gathered into one under Christ, Who is the Head. This universal Church is the wife, the body, the fullness of Him Who fills all in all.

All people throughout the world who profess the faith of the Gospel and obedience to Christ on its terms, and who do not destroy their profession by any errors which contradict or overthrow Gospel fundamentals, or by unholy behaviour, are visible saints and may be regarded as such. All individual congregations ought to be constituted of such people.

The purest churches under Heaven are subject to mixture and error, and some have degenerated so much that they have ceased to be churches of Christ and have become synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless Christ always has had, and always will (to the end of time) have a kingdom in this world, made up of those who believe in Him, and make profession of His name.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. In Him, by the appointment of the Father, is vested in a supreme and sovereign manner all power for the calling, institution, order, or government of the Church. The Pope of Rome cannot in any sense be head of the Church, but he is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, who exalts himself in the church against Christ and all that is called God, who the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.

In the exercise of the authority which has been entrusted to Him, the Lord Jesus calls to Himself from out of the world, through the ministry of His Word, by His Spirit, those who are given to Him by His Father, so that they may walk before Him in all the ways of obedience which He prescribes to them in His Word. Those who are thus called, He commands to walk together in particular societies or churches, for their mutual edification, and for the due performance of that public worship, which He requires of them in the world.

When we talk about the Church

- **Universal church and the local church**
- **Invisible Church and the Visible Church**
- **Three different things**
 - Invisible Church (universal)
 - Visible Church (universal and local)
 - The local Church (visible)

- **Church Triumphant and Church Militant**

John Gill

The church militant consists of persons in the present state, which is said to be, as an army with banners, Cant. 6:4, this is made up of such who become volunteers in the day of Christ's power; who put on the whole armour of God, and fight the good fight of faith; and in this state it will continue to the end of the world.

How do we identify the Church?

- Attributes of the True Church
 - una
 - sancta
 - catholica
 - apostolica

- Attributes of the True Church
 1. One
 2. Holy
 3. Universal ('catholic')
 4. Apostolic

The Church's Oneness

- John 10:14-16 -one fold
- John 17:20-23

The Church's Holiness

- John 17:15-19
- 1 Corinthians 3:16-17
- 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

The Church's Catholicity

- Not just geographically, but socially, and continuously
- Matthew 28:19

The Church's Apostolicity

- Acts 2:42

- Ephesians 2:20

How do we See the Church?

In other words, the invisible church is simply the church as God sees it. The visible church is the Christian community throughout the world as we see it, represented by the world's many individual local churches where the Word of God is rightly taught. (Robert Reymond)

1689 Baptist Confession

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Westminster Confession

This catholic church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible. And particular churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them (TWC, XXV/iv)

Three Marks of a True Local Church

- True preaching and teaching of the Word
- Right administration of the ordinances
- Faithful exercise of Church discipline

9 Marks of a Healthy Church

1. Expository preaching
2. Biblical theology
3. A biblical understanding of the of Good News
4. A biblical understanding of Conversion
5. A biblical understanding of Evangelism
6. A biblical understanding of Church Membership
7. Biblical church discipline
8. A concern for promoting Christian discipleship and growth
9. Biblical leadership

ekklesia

- ek – out of
- kaleo – to call
- "In antiquity it denotes the popular assembly of the competent, full citizens of the ancient Greek city to conduct civil business" (DNNT, vol. I, p. 291).
- Those called out of a larger body and assembled together for the transaction of business.

Those called out of a larger body and assembled together for the transaction of business. Four truths suggested:

1. There is a call – "called out"
2. There is a community – "larger body"
3. There is a congregation – "assembled"

4. There is a commitment – “business”