

A SURVEY OF EPHESIANS

What Is A Church?

A Short Confession of Faith, 1610 - John Smyth

Such faithful, righteous people, scattered in several parts of the world, being the true congregations of God, or the Church of Christ, whom he saved, and for whom he gave himself, that he might sanctify them, ye whom he hath cleansed by the washing of water in the word of life; of all such is Jesus the Head, the Shepherd, the Leader, the Lord, the King, and Master. Now although among these there may be mingled a company of seeming holy ones, or hypocrites; yet, nevertheless, they are and remain only the righteous, true members of the body of Christ, according to the spirit and the truth, the heirs of the promises, truly saved from the hypocrites the dissemblers.

English Declaration at Amsterdam, 1611 - Thomas Helwys

That the church off Christ is a compainy off faithful people I Cor. 1.2. Eph. 1. 1. seperated fro the world by the word & Spirit off GOD. 2 Cor. 6, 17. being kint vnto the LORD, & one unto another, by Baptisme. I Cor. 12.13. Vpon their owne confessio of the faith. Act. 8. 37. and sinnes. Mat. 3. 6.

That though in respect off CHRIST, the Church bee one, Ephes. 4. 4. yet it consisteth off divers patriculer congregacions, even so manie as there shall bee in the World, every off which congregacion, though they be but two or three, have CHRIST given them, with all the meanes off their salvacion. Mat. 18. 20. Roman. 8. 32. I Corin. 3. 22. Are the Bodie off CHRIST. I Cor. 12. 27. and a whole Church. I. Cor. 14. 23. And therefore may, and ought, when they are come together, to Pray, Prophecie, breake bread, and administer in all the holy ordinances, although as yet they have no Officers, or that their Officers should bee in Prison, sick, or by anie other meanes hindered from the Church. I. Pet. 4. 10 & 2. 5.

That as one congregacion hath CHRIST, so hath all, 2. Cor. 10. 7. And that the Word off God cometh not out from anie one, neither to anie one congregacion in particuler. 1. Cor. 14. 36. But vnto everie particuler Church, as it doth vnto al the world. Coll. 1. 5. 6. And therefore no church ought to challeng anie pæerogative over anie other.

The London Confession of 1644 - Seven Particular Baptist Churches

That Christ hath here on earth a spirituall Kingdome, which is the Church, which he hath purchased and redeemed to himselfe, as a peculiar inheritance: which Church, as it is visible to us, is a company of visible Saints, called & separated from the world, by the word and Spirit of God, to the visible profession of the faith of the Gospel, being baptized into that faith, and joynd to the Lord, and each other, by mutuall agreement, in the practical injoyment of the Ordinances, commanded by Christ their head and King.

That being thus joyned, every Church has power given them from Christ for their better well-being, to choose to themselves meet persons into the office of Pastor, Teacher (s), Elders, Deacons, being qualified according to the word, as those which Christ has appointed in his Testament, for the feeding, governing, serving, and building up of his Church, and that none other have power to impose them, either these or any other.

The Second London Confession, 1677 - A Particular Baptist Confession based on the Westminster Confession.

The Catholick or universal Church, which (with respect to internal work of the Spirit, and truth of grace) may be called invisible, consists of the whole number of the Elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

All persons throughout the world, professing the faith of the Gospel, and obedience unto God by Christ, according unto it; not destroying their own profession by any Errors everting the foundation, or unholyness of conversation, are and may be called visible Saints; and of such ought all particular Congregations to be constituted.

In cases of difficulties or differences, either in point of Doctrine, or Administration; wherein either the Churches in general are concerned, or any one Church in their peace, union, and edification; or any member, or members, of any Church are injured, in or by any proceedings in censures not agreeable to truth, and order: it is according to the mind of Christ, that many Churches holding communion together, do by their messengers meet to consider, and give their advice in, or about that matter in difference, to be reported to all the Churches concerned; howbeit these messengers assembled, are not entrusted with any Church-power properly so called; or with any jurisdiction over the Churches themselves, to exercise any censures either over any Churches, or Persons: or to impose their determination on the churches, or Officers.

The New Hampshire Confession, 1833 - New Hampshire Baptists.

We believe that a visible Church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by his laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his word; that its only proper officers are Bishops or Pastors, and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

The Southern Baptist Convention, 1925 - Based on the New Hampshire Confession.

A church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by his law, and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by his word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Its Scriptural officers are bishops or elders and deacons.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION STATEMENT OF FAITH, 1963

VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local body of baptized believers who are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ, committed to his teachings, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.

This church is an autonomous body, operating through democratic processes under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In such a congregation, members are equally responsible. Its Scriptural officers are pastors and deacons.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages.

Matt. 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42, 47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephes. 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:11, 21; 5:22-32; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 3:1-15; 4:14; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Rev. 2-3; 21:2-3.

ABSTRACT OF PRINCIPLES, 1858 -

XIV. The Church

The Lord Jesus is the Head of the Church, which is composed of all his true disciples, and in Him is invested supremely all power for its government. According to his commandment, Christians are to associate themselves into particular societies or churches; and to each of these churches he hath given needful authority for administering that order, discipline and worship which he hath appointed. The regular officers of a Church are Bishops, or Elders, and Deacons.

A Survey of Ephesians

Study of Titles

I. Some not found in Scriptures - What would Paul think of these titles?

1. Clergyman - the word is derived from the Latin, Clericus, (a priest). Used to denote chosen by lot and distinguish preachers as a class from the so-called Laity.
2. Rector - the word is derived from the Latin, regere, (to lead straight, to rule). Implies three things expected of the preacher. (1) He must be a man qualified to lead. (2) He must be a straightforward man. (3) He must be a man clothed with authority. The title is used by the Church of England, Episcopalians, and sometimes by Catholics as applied to the parish priest.
3. Parson - it is the Old English way of saying "person". They pronounced person "parson" just as they pronounced clerk "clark".
4. Reverend - from the Latin word revereri (to fear). It occurs one time in our English Bible (Psalm 111:9) and is here applied to God.
5. Doctor - originally this was an academic title indicating that the bearer of it was sufficiently versed in a certain branch of knowledge to teach it. The degree is sometimes conferred when there is little learning and less merit.

II. Some titles found in Scriptures

1. Apostle - to send forth - authorized to go. One who had seen Jesus and received his commission from Jesus. Matther 10:2; Mark 6:30; John 13:16. Luke used the word 34 times. Paul mentions it 28 times. The Christian missionary in the Greek world. They received their authority by being in touch with the truth. (Page 4-5 textbook by W. C. Vaughan). (Apostolic succession might also be considered.)
2. Prophet - A gift to inspire and interpret divine truth. A forth-teller: Preaches. A For-teller: For God. A Fore-teller: includes both. Not limited to prediction; but speak out for God's religious instructions.
Terms: (1) man of God. (2) servant of Jehovah. (3) messenger of Jehovah. (4) interpreter. (5) man of the Spirit. (6) watchman. (Ex. 7:1; Amos 3:7; Mal. 3:1, Isa. 43:27; Hosea 9:7; Jer. 6:7; Ezek. 3:17.)
Difficult to say if this was a definite office in New Testament Church.
Scripture: Matt. 10:41; 23:34; Luke 11:49; Acts 11:27; 13:1; 15:32; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11; Rev. 18:20; 22:6-9.
3. Evangelist - a bringer of good tidings. Mentioned in the Scripture only three times. (1) Acts 21:8, (2) 2 Timothy 4:5, (3) Ephesians 4:11
The last reference seems to imply a distinct office. Another view is that it was a spiritual gift and there are several facts to support this view:
(1) Philip held the office of Deacon and was called an evangelist.
(2) Timothy held the office of Bishop or Elder but was told to do the work of an evangelist.
(3) Paul held the office of Apostle, yet refers to himself as doing the work of an evangelist.
(4) In Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus he gives in detail the qualifications for the bishop-elder office and also for the office of

deacon, but gives none for the office of evangelist.

- (5) We find New Testament record of men being ordained to the office of deacon (Acts 6:3) and to the office of elder (Titus 1:5) but no record of their being ordained to the office of evangelist.

4. Teacher - 2 Timothy 1:11 Paul applies it to himself. Refers to the office of the preacher - Acts 13:1; 1 Cor. 12:28-29; and Eph. 4:11. Word close to function of pastor. (house and lot were sold.)
5. Pastor - Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 2:25; Jeremiah 2:8; 3:15; 10:21 and 17:16. Bishop - overseer - shepherd. Preacher - 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11; 2 Peter 2:5. Preaching. (Page 91 - textbook by W. C. Vaughan).
6. Elder - In its primary sense it referred to a person of advanced age but because filling a high office carried with it, like old age, the idea of honor and dignity the word came to apply to persons in high official position - among the Jews, members of the Sanhedrin - in civil government, and leaders of the church.

The word occurs about 65 times in the New Testament, referring about fifteen times to the pastoral office.

The term appears as a synonym for bishop or pastor but never for deacon. (1 Timothy 5:17).

Matt. 15:2; 26:3, 59; Mark 14:43; Acts 4:5; 14:23; 1 Timothy 5:1, 17, 19; Titus 1:5; Heb. 11:2; James 5:14; Rev. 4:4; 1 Peter 5:1.

7. Bishop - (episkopos) Means an overseer. Numbers 4:16; 31:14; Ps. 109:8; Isa. 60:17. Since one of the duties of the pastor of a New Testament church was that of overseeing and superintending its affairs it was quite natural that one of the titles of the officers should be bishop.
- Overseer - Phil. 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 2:25
Oversight - 1 Timothy 3:1; Acts 1:20.

Called Elder in Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7.

Called Pastor in Eph. 4:11; 1 Peter 2:25.

Three Views:

- (1) The office of bishop is in direct unbroken apostolic succession and is divinely vested with apostolic power and superior authority. This view is held by Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, and the High Church element of both the Church of England and the Episcopal Church in this country.
- (2) The office is not by apostolic succession but is recognized on the ground of expediency. This view is held by the low church element in the church of England and in the Episcopal Church, by Methodists, Moravians, Lutherans, and some other small congregations.
- (3) There is no such distinct office, but the word Bishop, along with presbyter, pastor and teacher is used to designate any man set apart formally to the gospel ministry. This view is held by Baptists, Congregationalists, Disciples, Presbyterians, and others.

The terms, Bishop, Elder, etc. are different designations for the incumbent of the same office. As the church developed there was need for visitation, establishing new work, work outside the church and the like. Therefore, several different terms originated.

(Information taken from the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, S. A. Newman, Jeff. D. Ray, Davis Dictionary of the Bible, Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, W. Curtis Vaughan, and others).

This is not meant to be exhaustive study but I hope it will assist you in a helpful understanding of the titles mentioned.

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