



Goahead Theological Seminary & College

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Churchology

The Greek word for ecclesiology is "ekklesiologia" (Greek: Εκκλησιολογία). The Latin and English word for ecclesiology also derives from Greek.

This field of study, within the field of systematic theology in Christian theology, explores the essence of the church.

It studies the relationship between Christ and the church, the role of salvation, church organization, governance, and the Christian church in relation to worship.

It is closely related to practical theology within systematic theology, and is closely related to pastoral theology, liturgy, church administration, and missiology, all of which are fields within practical theology.

Etymology

The root of the word ecclesiology (Greek: Εκκλησιολογία) comes from the ancient Greek word *ekklesia* (ἐκκλησία, [ekklēsia]), meaning "congregation, church," and *logia* (-λογία), meaning "speech," "understanding," or "logic." This is a combined term used in the names of sciences or bodies of knowledge.

What is a church?

The Chinese character for "church" is 教會, but on its own, it has no meaning. A church is not just a place of teaching; it has a deeper meaning. In the original Greek, the word *ekklesia* means "those called out from the world." In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *Kahal* also means "to call." This clarifies the meaning. One thing to be clear about is that "church" does not refer to a building. Even if a magnificent building exists, if there are no worshippers inside, it is not a church. On the other hand, even if there is no building and the believers gather underground or outdoors, if they gather in the name of Jesus and worship, that is a church.

The word "church" means a group of people who follow Jesus. In Acts 11, we see that the first believers in Jesus in Antioch were called "Christians."

In the Old Testament, the word "kahal" referred to the Israelites' gathering for worship. In the New Testament, the word "ekklesia," as previously mentioned, means to be specially chosen and called out from the world. Just as Abram was called out from Ur of the Chaldeans, God called us out of the world, living as worldly people, and made us His sons and daughters.

The word "church" has several other meanings, including referring to a specific place where believers gather (Acts 5:11; Acts 11:26; 1 Corinthians 11:18; 1 Corinthians 14:19, 28, 35). The church teaches a group of believers who have gathered from an individual's belongings. In ancient times, wealthy



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people would use their homes as churches. For example, see Romans 16:5, 23; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2. The church is collectively referred to as all believers, whether on earth or in heaven, who are mystically united with Christ. For example, see Ephesians 1:22; Ephesians 3:10, 21; Ephesians 5:23-25; Colossians 1:18, 24.

- The church is also referred to by other terms, such as “the body of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 1:23, Colossians 1:18).
- The church is referred to as “the temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Peter 2:5).
- The church is referred to as “the Jerusalem above” (Galatians 4:26).
- The church is referred to as “the holy place” (Acts 7:33).
- The church is referred to as “the new Jerusalem” (Revelation 21:2).
- The church is referred to as “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15).

A. Definition of the Church

- ① **Lutheran:** The church is the "congregation of the holy people (congregatio sanctorum)" and the "congregation of the called out (congregatio vocatorum)."
- ② **Reformed:** The church is defined as a mystical spiritual unity with Christ as its head. They distinguish between the visible church (the earthly church as an organization, worldly and constantly in need of reform) and the invisible church (the heavenly church as an organic entity, universal and perfect). While the invisible church is the true reality, the visible church is also important.

B. Understanding the Nature of the Church

- ① **Roman Catholicism:** Emphasizes the Church as an external, tangible organization. The visible Church, centered around the Vatican, is the true Church.
- ② **Eastern Orthodoxy:** Emphasizes both visible and invisible aspects, but places greater emphasis on the external organization.
- ③ **Orthodox Protestantism:** Sees the essence of the Church not in the administrative structure but in the communion of saints (Communio sanctorum). The Church is a living, organic union of people gathered together in Christ. It places greater emphasis on the invisible Church.

C. All. Attributes of the Church

① Unity

Roman Catholicism seeks unity in the external administrative structure of its churches worldwide. However, Protestantism emphasizes organic unity, with Christ as its head and believers as its body (Ephesians 1:22-23).

② Holiness

Roman Catholics seek holiness in the external elements of the church, such as doctrine, teachings, worship, and discipline. However, Protestant churches, believing that their members are distinguished as children of God



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and therefore holy through the righteousness of Christ, seek holiness in an internal, spiritual sense (1 Peter 2:9).

③ Catholicism

Roman Catholicism seeks universality in its external organization. However, Protestant churches find the church's universality in Christ's history of salvation (2 Corinthians 5:19), the spread of the Gospel (Matthew 28:19-20), and the universality of the saved, transcending time and space. In other words, they find universality in the invisible elements of the church.

④ Apostolicity

Roman Catholics claim apostolic authority, claiming that the Pope is the successor of the Apostle Peter. However, Protestant churches believe that the church possesses apostolic authority by following the teachings of the apostles (Ephesians 2:20).

⑤ Livingness

The church is the body of Christ, who is life (John 11:25), its members possess life (1 John 5:11-12), and the church is alive because it preaches the gospel of life.

⑥ Infallibility

Roman Catholics claim that the Pope's teachings are infallible, and therefore their church is also infallible. However, Protestant churches believe the invisible church is infallible, while viewing the visible church as an imperfect entity in constant need of reform.

D. Three Marks of the Church

① **Preaching the Word:** The primary purpose of preaching the Word is to establish the believers within the church firmly in the Word. The New Testament epistles were written for this purpose, and the apostles and prophets also proclaimed the Word with the same purpose. Furthermore, preaching the Word

② **Proper Administration of the Sacraments:** The Roman Catholic Church recognizes seven sacraments, while Protestant churches recognize only baptism and the Lord's Supper as sacraments. The proper administration of the sacraments adds grace to the lives of the church and its members.

③ **Discipline:** If believers are not properly disciplined when they commit a transgression, the church can lose its holiness. This is an area that has been virtually lost in the modern church, resulting in the church increasingly being criticized by the world. Therefore, appropriate discipline is absolutely necessary for the church. is for the purpose of evangelization. Preaching the Word to unbelievers is the special mission of the church (Mark 16:15).

E. Functions of the Church

① **Worship:** Regularly gathering together for worship is the proper duty of the saints (Hebrews 10:25, 1 Corinthians 14:26).

② **Education:** Believers must be properly nurtured in the Word of God and established as Christians (2 Peter 3:18).



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- ③ **Building up:** The body of Christ must be built up by building up virtue among believers (1 Thessalonians 5:11).
- ④ **Missions:** We must do our utmost to expand the kingdom of God (Acts 1:8).

Baptism

1) Definition of Baptism

It is a sacrament of washing with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is an act of spiritually pledging and sealing one's commitment to becoming a person of God. It also signifies the washing of rebirth, renewal by the Holy Spirit, and the washing away of sin. It is also a sign of union with Christ. Roman Catholics consider baptism a means of salvation. However, Protestant churches, while emphasizing its significance, do not consider it a means of salvation.

2) Forms of Baptism

- ① **Baptists:** They emphasize the etymological interpretation of the Bible and only recognize baptism by immersion, in which a person is completely immersed in water and then emerges. They believe baptism best represents the death and resurrection of Christ.
- ② **Reformed View:** They view baptism as essentially "washing and purifying." Therefore, they believe no specific form is required, and they recognize all forms, including immersion, sprinkling, and pouring.

3) Infant Baptism

Even within the Orthodox Church, Baptists deny the legitimacy of infant baptism, arguing that infants cannot have faith and that infant baptism is neither commanded nor preceded in the New Testament. Conversely, most Protestant churches, excluding Baptists, recognize infant baptism. Their rationale for this is that they believe that circumcision in the Old Testament has been replaced by baptism and Passover by the Eucharist.

4) Eucharist (Holy Communion)

The following are various views on the Eucharist.

① Transubstantiation

This is the official doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. It asserts that after the priest offers the prayer of consecration, the elements of the Eucharist (bread and wine) are transformed into the substance of Christ (body and blood). This is why the remaining bread is called the Eucharist and revered. During the Eucharist, only the bread is offered to the congregation, and the priest drinks the wine on behalf of all. The Eastern Orthodox Church also adheres to the doctrine of transubstantiation, but provides both bread and wine to the congregation. Protestant churches reject the doctrine of transubstantiation.

② Memorialism

This theory, championed by Zwingli, asserts that the Eucharist is merely a memorial, as Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). It is widely adopted by Baptist churches today.

③ Consubstantiation



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This is Luther's view, a middle ground between Zwingli and the Roman Catholic Church. It holds that the elements of the Eucharist (wine and bread) do not change, but Christ is truly present. This is the position of the Lutheran Church today.

④ Spiritual Presence

This is Calvin's position, a middle ground between Zwingli and Luther. While Christ's presence exists, it is not a physical presence; rather, his power and efficacy are present through faith. Therefore, it is also called virtualism. This theory is adopted by many orthodox churches today.

The Nature of the Church

What is the nature of the church?

Protestantism and Catholicism have different positions on this. The Catholic Church claims that the church is an external, tangible institution. However, it is important to note that in Catholicism, the external, tangible church does not refer to a number that includes all believers, but is divided into two types: the "teaching church" and the "learning church." The teaching church is comprised of the Pope, cardinals, archbishops, priests, and others, and teaches that the papacy has been passed down in an orderly manner since the Apostle Peter was the first Pope. The learning church refers to the general congregation, and they are taught to obey the "teaching church," that is, the church leadership. If we briefly look back at church history, the doctrine of Catholicism emerged from the orthodox theologian Augustine through the natural theology of Thomas Aquinas, and the Reformation came about through John Wycliffe, Jan Hus, Martin Luther, and John Calvin.

Reformationism is not a byproduct of Catholicism. The Reformation, a movement to correct Catholicism's erroneous doctrines with biblical faith, spread like wildfire throughout Europe in the 16th century. Catholicism strictly separates church leaders from ordinary believers, not considering them on the same level. Meanwhile, Protestantism, following the Reformation, teaches that "the church is an invisible, organic spiritual community where God's chosen believers are spiritually and mystically united with Christ."

1. The Diverse Characters of the Church

A. The Militant Church and the Triumphant Church

The church on earth is called the "Church Militant." This is because the saints on earth are soldiers of the cross, fighting their way through this arduous and arduous path. They must battle Satan, the enemy of God's kingdom, and battle the sin within their hearts, daily charging toward their true nature. That's why the church on earth is called the "militant church." This is different from the "Church Triumph," the church we will experience in heaven when we ascend to the kingdom of heaven and fully commune with the Lord. In heaven, all fighting is over, and there is no more fighting. It is a place where joy and blessings from God endure forever, so there is no need for battle. However,



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the concept of the militant church is gradually disappearing, and it has given way to a life of abandoning weapons and letting down one's guard.

B. Visible and Invisible Churches:

We also consider the church as being divided into the visible and invisible church. The reason we use the term "invisible church" is because the church is essentially a spiritual community, and our physical eyes cannot discern who is saved and who is not. Therefore, we collectively refer to all truly saved believers as the "invisible church." In the Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger Catechism, Question 61, the question, "Are all who hear the gospel and come to church saved?" is answered, "Not all who hear the gospel and come to church are saved, but only those who belong to the invisible church." Here, the "invisible church" refers to those who have been born again.

However, this invisible church also has aspects of the visible church, as it is a visible community that confesses its faith and acts as Christians during church sacraments and the proclamation of the Word. However, the invisible and visible churches are not always parallel, and sometimes a member of the invisible church may not be a member of the visible church. This means that today's churches are reluctant to accept true, biblical believers, and that there are no true churches worthy of faithful attendance. While churches are numerous, truly biblical churches are rare. As churches increasingly focus on pleasing the ears of their audiences rather than proclaiming God's Word in its entirety, the true nature of the church is fading away, and true believers are lost and lost. These days, true believers who belong to the invisible church—are increasingly alienated from the visible church, leading to a growing number of believers worshipping at home.

2. The Attributes of the Church

The term "attribute to the church" refers to the invisible church, but in Catholicism, on the contrary, it refers exclusively to the tangible church. This stems from Catholic theology, which prioritizes the external over the internal.

A. Unity of the Church:

Catholicism spearheads the ecumenical movement, asserting that Catholics scattered throughout the world must become one.

Protestantism, however, emphasizes unity within the visible church, where people fellowship and worship in the Word. Catholicism collaborates with various denominations to carry out missionary work. For example, the organization known as ECT (Evangelicals and Catholics Together), founded in 1993, embodies this principle.

Originally founded by Catholic leaders, this missionary organization now includes many Protestant pastors, transcending doctrine and collaborating with Catholicism on missionary work. However, the Catholic and Protestant concepts of justification are as vastly different as heaven and earth. How can they collaborate on missionary work



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while ignoring this core Christian doctrine poses a serious problem? So, while Protestant pastors like Colson and Packer remain active, Reformed pastors like John White joined and then promptly left. This trend of discarding doctrine like a worn-out shoe is becoming commonplace these days.

B. Holiness of the Church:

Catholicism emphasizes outward holiness through the institution of the church, emphasizing external divinity in various worship ceremonies and moral concepts. Protestantism, on the other hand, emphasizes the holiness of the hearts of individual believers, rather than the institution of the church. Protestantism strives to cultivate holiness of thought, with the goal of glorifying God through a holy life.

C. The Universality of the Church

Catholicism emphasizes its heritage dating back to the apostolic age and the widespread global presence of the Church. However, Protestantism emphasizes the invisible, internal Church, with its members scattered throughout the world, rather than its buildings. Therefore, we can see two contrasting attitudes: Catholicism's emphasis on external aspects, and Protestantism's emphasis on internal aspects.

Three Characteristics of the Church:

A true church should possess the following three characteristics, but these distinctions are increasingly disappearing in today's churches. These three characteristics are as follows:

1. Proclamation of the Word: A true church must proclaim the Word. A church without this proclamation, such as the Quakers, cannot be considered a true church. Even if the proclamation of the Word is not biblical, it cannot be considered a true church. Reference may be made to John 8:31-32, 47, John 14:23, and 1 John 4:1-3. Even if the church on earth cannot be perfect, the fundamental core doctrines of Christianity must be accurately conveyed. It goes without saying that the church that most accurately teaches the Bible is the true church, and such a church is the best church.

2. Administration of the Sacraments:

If the Word is preached but the sacraments are not, there is no true church. There are two sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both are inseparable from the Word. The sacramental service must be accompanied by the Word. The sacraments must be administered by a legitimate minister and attended by believers. References include Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:42, and 1 Corinthians 11:23-30. The Catholic Church claims seven sacraments: baptism, confession, confirmation, mass, marriage, ordination,



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and apostolic absolution. However, the Bible commands only two sacraments: baptism and the Eucharist (Matthew 28 and 1 Corinthians 11). Meanwhile, some Christian denominations claim to have no sacraments. This is evidence that they do not practice according to the Bible.

3. Implementing Discipline:

Is there discipline for church members who misbehave? Even if churches today preach the Word and administer the sacraments, few have proper discipline. This is a major weakness. Discipline is absolutely essential to maintaining the purity of the church and preventing doctrinal misinterpretation. Neglecting it can lead to the erosion of truth and a fall into syncretism. Most churches today clearly demonstrate this truth. Matthew 18:18, 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 13, 1 Corinthians 14:33, 40, and Revelation 2:14-15 command discipline in the church. We have seen three characteristics of the church above. The right proclamation of the Word is the mission of the prophets, the sacraments are the office of the priests, and discipline is the office of the kings. To be created in the image of God means to be created with knowledge, holiness, and righteousness. Knowledge signifies the office of a prophet, holiness the office of a priest, and righteousness the office of a king. Christ also possesses these three offices. As a prophet, he saves God's people through the Word and the Holy Spirit. As a priest, he bore the cross to pay the price for the sins of the chosen people on earth, and after his ascension, he intercedes for us, the saints. As king, all things in nature obeyed him during his earthly ministry, and now, in heaven, he rules the world and governs the saints.

Church Political Forms

- ① **Papacy (absolute monarchy):** The Roman Catholic Church. Since the Reformation was a reaction against papal authority, Protestant churches do not recognize papal rule.
- ② **Episcopalism (aristocratic government):** The Roman Catholic Church, Anglican Church, and Methodist Church of the early Middle Ages.
- ③ **State Church (each church is part of the state church and is governed by the state church):** Dutch Church, Eastern Orthodox Church
- ④ **Erastianism (viewed as an organ of the state and subject to state interference):** German Church, Church of England, Church of Scotland, Chinese Three-Self Church
- ⑤ **Congregationalism (centered on the congregation, mutual independence between churches, decisions made by majority vote of the congregation):** Baptist Church, Congregational Church
- ⑥ **Presbyterian Church (representative government):** Presbyterian Church, Reformed Church
- ⑦ **Non-church politics:** Quakers, Darbyites, and other mystical sects; non-church politics is not considered desirable by orthodox Protestant churches



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Church Structure

There are various opinions on the structure of the church, varying from denomination to denomination.

1. Quakers and the Darby Sect

Their argument is that "any church political system is inevitably corrupt and incompatible with the spirit of Christianity, and therefore no church political system is recognized." Therefore, instead of the given Scripture, special revelation is recognized. Instead of the man-made church political system, a system given by God through revelation is introduced. Instead of sermons, exhortation is given through the Holy Spirit's words spoken on the spot. This is a form of worship where several people gather together, and one person receives a revelation through the Holy Spirit and then delivers that word to the congregation. There is no other revelation beyond the given Scripture.

2. The Erastian Church

They claim that the church is a social institution subordinate to the government. They assert that no church official has the right to govern the church, and that all church officials must govern the church under the direction of the government. The state governs the church, exercising discipline and, in some cases, excommunication. This sect denies the independence of the church and its headship as Christ. History reveals that the Westminster Confession of Faith suffered considerable hardship in the 17th century due to interference from these Erastians. This doctrine was originally advocated by Thomas Erastus, an English physician, and is named after him.

3. Anglican Church

The Anglican Church believes that Christ, the head of the church, has vested ecclesiastical jurisdiction solely with the leaders of the church, the successors of the apostles. It teaches that ordinary church members have no right to interfere in church affairs. The current political system of the Church of England falls into this category.

4. Current Roman Catholicism

Similar to the Anglican Church, but even more strictly, it believes that bishops are the apostolic successors, and teaches that the Pope, as the direct successor of Peter the Apostle, is the infallible head of the Church on earth. As the representative of Christ, the Pope has the right to decide on doctrinal matters, to uphold worship, and to conduct church government.

5. Congregational Church

This is also a form of independent church. Each local church is believed to exist completely independently of other churches, and the right to govern the church rests entirely with the congregation. Church officials are merely symbolic figures, with no right to perform any work beyond that delegated by



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the congregation. Congregational churches were significantly numerous during the First Awakening in New England in the 18th century.

6. National Church

All local churches are local churches of a single church within that country. Therefore, the state dictates worship. When doctrinal or disciplinary issues arise, the state intervenes to resolve them, even convening a general assembly. Even when a general assembly is convened, the state holds sole authority to decide the case.

7. Politics of the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches

A. Christ is the head of the church and the source of all authority.

The statement, "Christ is the head of the church," is incorrect in two senses.

In an organic sense. The church is a body, and all saints are organic members of that body. Christ breathes life into it and governs the church through his Spirit. Reference may be made to John 15:1-8; Ephesians 1:10, 22-23; Ephesians 2:20-22; Ephesians 4:15; Ephesians 5:30; Colossians 1:18; Colossians 2:19; and Colossians 3:11.

In the sense that He is the one with authority to rule as the king of the church, we can see in Bible verses such as Matthew 16:18-19, Matthew 23:8,10, John 13:13, 1 Corinthians 12:5, Ephesians 1:20-23, Ephesians 4:4-5, 11-12, and Ephesians 5:23-24 that Christ is always present in the church by establishing the church, providing what is needed, establishing staff, giving them the necessary authority, and speaking through those staff.

B. Christ exercises His authority through His Word.

Christ rules the church not by force, but by His Word and Spirit. All believers are bound to obey His Word unconditionally. Since Christ is the sole King of the church, His Word is, in an absolute sense, law itself, and obedience is the responsibility of the believers. All church officials are clothed with this authority and must therefore submit to the Lord's authority.

C. Christ, the King of the Church, bestows authority upon the Church.

Christ granted the Church the authority necessary to lead the Church He established. He granted authority to all the members of the Church, but especially to the officers. It is important to note that while the congregation elects its officers, the authority of these elected officers is not delegated by the people, as in the congregational church, but is given by the Lord. Therefore, those who serve in the church should not please people, but please God, and they are responsible to God.

D. Governing authority resides in each church.

Governing authority in each local church resides in its church council, and its higher bodies, such as presbyteries, synods, or general assemblies.



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Church staff

can be divided into permanent and temporary staff.

1. Temporary staff

A. Apostles:

The apostles, including the Twelve Apostles and Paul, possessed specific qualifications:

- 1) They received a direct mission from God or Christ. Mark 3:14, Galatians 1:1
- 2) They witnessed the resurrection of Christ. 1 Corinthians 9:1
- 3) They recognized that they were moved by the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 2:13, 1 Thessalonians 4:8
- 4) They could confirm their message with signs and wonders. 2 Corinthians 12:12, Hebrews 2:4,
- 5) They bore witness to God's blessing for their labors. 1 Corinthians 9:1, 2 Corinthians 3:2, Galatians 2:8

B. Prophet: The word "prophet" also appears in the New Testament: Acts 11:28, Acts 13:1-2, Acts 15:32, 1 Corinthians 12:10, 1 Corinthians 13:2, 1 Corinthians 14:3, Ephesians 2:20, Ephesians 4:11. They were people who conveyed the given word of God.

C. Evangelist:

The word "evangelist" appears in the New Testament (Acts 21:8, Ephesians 4:11, 2 Timothy 4:5, etc.).

Philip, Mark, Titus, and Timothy all belonged to the category of evangelists. They accompanied the apostles.

2. Position that does not change

A. Elder

In Acts 11:30, 14:23, 15:2, 6, 22, 16:5, 20:17, 21:18, the terms elder and pastor are used interchangeably. Acts 20:17, 28, 1 Timothy 3:1, 5:17, 19, Titus 1:5, 7, 1 Peter 5:1-2, the two offices are often used interchangeably, but elders primarily focus on administration, while pastors focus on caring for the church.

B. Teacher

Initially, there was no teaching position because there were apostles. However, later, the position of teachers to teach doctrines correctly became necessary. Ephesians 4:11, 1 Timothy 5:17, 2 Timothy 2:2, etc. speak of this. As heretics infiltrated, there was a need for those who could professionally teach doctrines. The messengers of the seven churches in Minor Asia were precisely these teachers. Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18, 3:1, 7, 14, etc.

다. Deacon



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Deacons appear in the New Testament. Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:8, 10, 12, and Acts 6:1-6 describe the first seven deacons of the early church. The word "deacon" is a compound word of three words: dia, con, and os, and has the root meaning "one who works in the dust."

3. Calling Job in Church

There must be two callings in the permanent ministry of the church: an external calling and an internal calling.

To become a permanent member of the church, one must first possess both an internal calling and an external calling. An internal calling does not mean hearing a voice from heaven. Rather, it means possessing a heart that loves the Lord, a desire to serve faithfully in a position, and possessing these qualities. This can be considered an internal calling.

It goes without saying that simply having the desire to serve isn't enough; one must also possess the necessary qualifications. An external calling refers to a church's recognition of one's faith and personal qualities, appointing one as an official. These two callings are essential for serving as an official. When a church appoints a worker, assessing these qualifications is crucial, but simply having the desire to serve isn't enough.

Furthermore, it's not true that someone who doesn't know the Bible can become a leader simply because they appear to have a good character. Conversely, even if they know a lot about the Bible, if their heart remains unchanged, they cannot become church officials. We must remember that the seven deacons of the early church in Acts 6 were all filled with the Holy Spirit. In other words, they were men of character who knew the doctrine of the faith and loved the Lord. These men were appointed by the apostles to take charge of the church's work. (Acts 6:2-6, Acts 14:23, etc.)

4. Appointment and Ordination

The ceremonies for conferring positions in the local church are the appointment and ordination ceremonies. Appointment and ordination are always performed simultaneously. For example, one does not first receive an appointment and then later receive ordination when the opportunity arises. Ordination is followed by laying on of hands, but ordination is a prayer for the gift to perform the ministry and has nothing to do with salvation. Some people try to link ordination with salvation, but this is a mistaken notion. Salvation is not achieved by simply laying hands on someone's head; it is achieved solely through the grace of God, a higher dimension. That's why someone like Saul, who was anointed as the first king of Israel by Samuel and anointed with oil, never received salvation. The same goes for baptism. Many people misunderstand baptism as a means of salvation or as a seal of salvation, but baptism does not automatically bring salvation, nor does it guarantee salvation. Baptism is merely an outward sign of the inner self's repentance



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and rebirth, mystically uniting with Christ. Therefore, if baptism is received without the inner self being reborn, it has no meaning.

In the Old Testament, kings, priests, and prophets were ordained with oil, but in the New Testament, hands were laid on the head, as seen in Acts 6:6, Acts 13:3, and 1 Timothy 4:14. However, it is true that the original meaning of the laying on of hands is now being forgotten and it is becoming nothing more than a ritual.

Church Offices

Depending on the political system adopted, each church has different offices.

① **Baptist Church, Congregational Church:** Originally, the offices were limited to pastors and deacons, but elders are also recognized.

② **Presbyterian Church:** The offices consist of pastors, elders, and deacons. The pastors and elders form a church council to handle overall church affairs. Major matters are ultimately decided through congregational meetings involving all baptized members. Elders have the authority to govern, while pastors have both the authority to govern and the authority to preach.

③ **Methodist Church:** The bishop is at the top, and superintendents oversee each local parish. While Methodist churches typically have only pastors, deacons, and lay leaders, Korea has also introduced the offices of elders and deacons.

④ **Non-church:** Because Methodist churches are non-church, no official positions are needed. Everyone is often referred to as "brothers" or "sisters."

⑤ **Other denominations:** They adopt various versions of the positions outlined above.

In Korea, most denominations recognize elders due to the familiarity of the Presbyterian Church's ministry structure, historical reasons, and the treatment given to those who transferred from other denominations due to a change of name. However, denominations other than the Presbyterian Church tend not to grant elders administrative authority. The title of deaconess, a position granted to both men and women in the Methodist Church, was appointed as a courtesy to women in denominations that did not ordain women as elders. In Korea, this position spread across all denominations and became the deacon position we know today.

While a church's unique ministry may not necessarily constitute heresy, if it's unfamiliar or deviant, it may be problematic and warrants careful consideration. In particular, if such a church adopts an attitude that seems to deny the historical legitimacy of the established church, it could be considered heretical.

Church Disciplinary Meetings

In the church, with Christ as its head, there are several disciplinary bodies to govern the congregation. Each local church has a church council. When three or more church councils meet, there is a presbytery. When three or more presbyteries meet, there is a general assembly. The general assembly is the



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body responsible for the assembly. These bodies differ from worldly power structures. Their sole purpose is to build up the church, the body of Christ, that is, the congregation. The church council is comprised of pastors and elders. If there are fewer than two elders, it becomes a quasi-church council. Pastors, as representatives of the church, are under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, are ordained by the presbytery, and receive guidance from the presbytery. Elders, as representatives of the congregation of a local church, are ordained by the church council and receive guidance from the church council. The election of staff members such as pastors, elders, and deacons is conducted by a two-thirds majority vote at the general assembly (congregation) of baptized members.

If a dispute arises between church members in a local church, the matter is addressed by the presbytery, which is the higher body. Presbytery, synod, and general assembly have established mechanisms to handle such matters. The presbytery must respectfully listen to the content of both parties' lawsuits and handle them fairly, without favoring either party's interests. The problem stems from this. Sometimes, presbytery inspection committees or courts favor only one side, leading to unresolved church disputes that worsen and ultimately lead to the tragic outcome of church division. If a church is independent and not affiliated with any denomination, it faces difficulties in these situations. With no higher court, there's nowhere to appeal, and each individual church must navigate the situation on its own, making the task quite arduous.

When several general assembly's meet, they form a denominational council. For example, the conservative Presbyterian and Reformed churches in the United States joined together to form the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) in 1975, or the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Amsterdam, Netherlands in 1948, which was formed by the union of several denominational assemblies with relatively liberal ideologies. Even today, from a Reformed perspective, organizations like the World Council of Churches (WCC) and its affiliated NCC, which represent liberalism, conflict with NAPARC, which advocates for a correct belief in the Bible, and each is going its own way. While the WCC has around 130 member denominations, the conservative Reformed denomination NAPARC has only seven. Among them, the Dutch denomination CRC lost its regular membership in NAPARC after liberalization. Many Korean members of the CRC founded the Korean Christian Presbyterian Church (KCPC) and are now attending church. American members withdrew from the CRC and formed the Allied Reformed Church (ARC), a denomination currently active in the church. Thus, the church, headed by the Lord, is increasingly disobeying the Word and experiencing the pain of division.

The Authority of the Church

Jesus Christ founded the church and bestowed upon it the necessary authority and power. He gave this authority to act as king, head of the church, and to rule over the people spiritually in the spiritual realm. He gave his



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disciples the power to "bind" and "loose." Matthew 16:18 states, "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you lose on earth will be loosed in heaven." This means that the authority to decide what is permissible and what is forbidden in the kingdom of God was given to the apostles, and that authority was given to the church of God. While church officials are elected by the congregation, we must remember that their authority does not come from the congregation, but from Christ, the head of the church.

1. The Nature of the Church's Authority

The authority Christ bestows upon the Church is:

A. Spiritual.

The Church's authority is purely spiritual. This does not mean that it operates only invisibly and spiritually, but rather that Christ rules over both our souls and bodies. For example, while the ministry of deacons is largely physical and visible, the pastor's work is intangible and spiritual, ministering through the Word. Therefore, while violence is forbidden to restore order in a single church, when Christianity is threatened by evil forces, we must fight with force, like the medieval Crusades or, like the Reformers, as soldiers of the cross. However, violence arising from administrative or financial issues is prohibited within individual churches. Any disputes should be resolved peacefully and graciously through church discipline. The authority of the church should always be exercised under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in obedience to the Word, and in accordance with the Word.

2. Types of Church Authority

Just as Christ has three offices: king, prophet, and priest, the church has three offices.

A. authority to teach

The church has inherited the truth, and it has the solemn responsibility and authority to preserve the truth revealed in the Word, passing it on to future generations, combating the tide of unbelief, and defending the truth. This is evidenced by 1 Timothy 1:3-4, 2 Timothy 1:13, and Titus 1:9-11. The church must preach the gospel purely, leading sinners to repentance, so that all nations may hear it. This authority is found in 2 Corinthians 5:20, 1 Timothy 4:13, and 2 Timothy 2:15. Furthermore, the church has the authority to create confessions of faith and creeds to accurately convey the doctrine of faith. Third, the church has the authority to train pastors. 2 Timothy 2:2

B. Judgment

The church has two types of authority.

1) power to control



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God is not a God of confusion, but of peace (1 Corinthians 14:33). All things in the church must be done in an orderly and respectful manner, and he has established rules to govern the church.

2). The church has given the power to discipline

Discipline must be exercised for the purity of the church. Matthew 16:19, Matthew 18:18, John 20:23, 1 Corinthians 5:2, 7, 13, 2 Corinthians 2:5-7

3). power of salvation

When Jesus sent out his disciples, he gave them the authority to cast out demons while preaching the Word. Some possessed this authority, proving that their words were the Word of God. This gift ceased with the completion of the Bible, and today it is primarily limited to helping the poor. Acts 4:34 shows that the early church recognized the poor as objects of relief and worked for them. The New Testament emphasizes the importance of helping the poor. Acts 11:29, Acts 20:35, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, 2 Corinthians 9:1, 6-7, 12-14, Galatians 2:10, 1 Timothy 5:10

means of grace

There are only two means of grace: the Word and the sacraments.

1. Word

The Word is the most important means of grace. To say the Word is a means of grace refers to the written words of Scripture, not to some new, special revelation. Many people claim to have received some kind of revelation, but this does not constitute true faith. The Word, as a means of grace, can work through all believers, not just in the church, but everywhere. On the other hand, the statement that the sacrament is a means of grace means that the Word must accompany the sacrament ceremony, and that through the Word and the sacrament, we receive the grace to realize God's love. The Word can be testified anywhere, but the sacrament ceremony must be performed by a qualified clergyman, and the sacrament ceremony is an event that is only performed in the church.

A. The Relationship Between the Word and the Holy Spirit

Pelagius and the rationalists of the 18th and 19th centuries believed that repentance would result from simply hearing the Word of God with the intellect, without the help of the Holy Spirit. Antinomians also taught that the help of the Holy Spirit was all that was needed, that the proclamation of the Word from without was not necessary, and that the voice from within, the light within, was important. However, biblical teaching teaches that the Word is a tool of the Holy Spirit, and that without the Holy Spirit's work, no matter how much the Word is preached, it cannot bring about repentance in sinners. The Word bears fruit only when it works in concert with the Holy Spirit.

B. The Relationship between the Law and the Gospel

The law and the gospel should not be viewed as antagonistic. We cannot know the gospel without the law, and we cannot know the law without the gospel.



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The law tells us to believe the gospel, and the gospel aims to fulfill the Old Testament law in our lives. This demonstrates the intimate relationship between the law and the gospel, or grace. Without the law, sinners would not know they are sinners and therefore would not know the need for the gospel. The New Testament places considerable importance on the law, as evidenced by the following passages: Matthew 5:17-19, Romans 13:10, Ephesians 6:2, James 2:8-11, and 1 John 3:4.

C. The Role of the Law

The law's role in this world is to restrain sin and encourage good, but it also accomplishes three more significant things. First, it makes people aware of their sinfulness (Romans 3:20). Second, it helps them realize their inability to keep the law and directs them to Christ, their tutor (Galatians 3:24). Third, it provides guidance for life. The law is the rule by which we live.

D. The Role of the Gospel

The gospel serves to clearly reveal the path to salvation presented by the Old Testament law through the revealed word of Christ.

It exhorts sinners to come to Christ in faith and repentance, and promises all the blessings of salvation, present and future, to those who truly believe and repent. The gospel is the power of God that leads all believers to salvation.

2. Sacraments

We have examined the Word as the means of grace, and now we must examine the sacraments. In the Catholic Church, there are seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, mass, marriage, ordination, confession, and final unction. However, there are only two biblical sacraments: baptism and the Eucharist. Baptism corresponds to circumcision in the Old Testament, and the Eucharist corresponds to Passover in the Old Testament. When God made a covenant with Abraham, he circumcised him by cutting his foreskin. Now, it is a sign that they have become God's people. Abraham did not become God's people because he cut his foreskin. He had already been born again and lived a life of faith obedient to God, and circumcision was simply a sign that he had become God's people. On the night the firstborn sons of Egypt were killed, the Israelites applied lamb's blood to their doorposts, and not a single life was lost. The angel of death passed by. That's why it's called Passover. The angel of death passed by because he saw the blood of the lamb on the doorpost. Not because the blood of the lamb had any great power, but because it symbolized the blood of Jesus Christ, who was to come, on the cross. He saw faith in the blood of Christ and passed by. In place of the Passover, the Holy Communion is observed in the New Testament era. The Holy Communion is a ceremony in which we remember Christ's death on the cross for us, strengthen our faith, and pledge to live faithfully before the Lord. The words of 1 Corinthians 11 remind us of Christ's death, in which His flesh was torn, and His blood was shed for us. We receive the bread with a firm resolve to be faithful to the Lord. We also receive the cup. They also receive the cup. Only



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those who understand the meaning of the Lord's death can participate in the Eucharist, so children are not allowed to participate. Regarding this Eucharist, the Catholic Church teaches that the bread and wine change into the Lord's body and blood. This is called transubstantiation. They teach that Jesus dies every time they receive the Eucharist. However, the Bible states that the Lord "offered his own body once for all." This means that what was offered multiple times was replaced with a single offering. In the Old Testament, the same sacrifice was offered repeatedly. Meanwhile, Lutherans assert that during the Eucharist, Jesus' blood and body coexist on the table. This is called consubstantiation. However, the Reformed Church advocates the mystical doctrine of God, or the "spiritual presence doctrine." That is, they teach that during the Eucharist, "God's mysterious grace, through the bread and cup and the Word, confirms our mystical union with Christ." This is called the mystical doctrine. There are open and closed Eucharist services. Some churches allow all members of other churches, regardless of denomination, to participate. Some churches only allow biblical believers, that is, those who profess the same faith, to participate. This is called a closed communion service. Most Reformed churches adopt a closed communion service, while liberal churches adopt an open communion service. Those who have committed secret sins, are under trial, or have not repented of their sins are prohibited from participating in the communion service, even if they are baptized members of the church. 1 Corinthians 11 warns us that some people died after participating in the communion service without discernment, that is, without preparation.

Baptism is a ritual performed by the pastor of one's church, but it merely serves as an outward sign of the inner being's rebirth. It has nothing to do with salvation itself. Baptism does not automatically grant salvation.

Furthermore, even if an unregenerate person falsely professes faith and is baptized, such baptism is ineffective and offers no blessings. Baptists do not baptize children because they still do not understand the doctrine of faith. However, the Reformed Church baptizes children. The basis for this is in Genesis 17, when God made a covenant with Abraham, not only with Abraham but also with Abraham's children, and so, based on this word, infant baptism is performed even if only one of the parents is a believer. Currently, the parents pledge to pray for and with the child before God and the congregation. When the child turns 15 and becomes acquainted with the world, they return to the congregation and stand before God to confirm their faith. This is called confirmation.

Baptism is not necessarily a prerequisite for salvation. This means that even without baptism, a person can be saved if their inner self has been reborn. All sacraments are officiated by a clergyman, and no non-cleric can officiate. John Nelson Darby, the founder of dispensationalism, emerged in England in the 1880s and founded the Plymouth Brethren, a brotherly church. He rejected all the established church structures and practiced a system of rotating communion among members, a practice unbiblical. Fortunately,



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today's dispensationalism has corrected this practice, eliminating the practice of individual members presiding over the service.

Heresies in Ecclesiology

- ① **Montanism:** Montanism was a heretical movement that, while based on direct revelation and prophetic activity, waged strong opposition to the secularization and institutionalization of the church. They baptized even the dead and emphasized the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, their pursuit of separation from the established church strengthened their authority.
- ② **Donatism:** They insisted on strict church discipline and pure membership. They rejected clergy they deemed unworthy. They also refused to receive the sacraments from clergy who had defected due to persecution and then returned. Those who joined their denomination were required to be rebaptized, and they rejected established churches, claiming that theirs was the only true church.
- ③ **Mormonism:** Mormons claim that the church was valid only until 1830, after the death of John the Baptist. After that, they teach that only their own sacraments are valid.
- ④ **Seventh-day Adventists:** They call their church the "Remnant Church." They claim that their leader, Ellen G. White, was blessed with the Spirit of prophecy and that they are the only true church of the last days, the one that will receive salvation. In addition to their own basic confession of faith, they also require confessions of faith regarding the "seventh-day Sabbath," the Spirit of prophecy, the Remnant Church, and tithing. They also adhere to baptism as a rule. Communion is administered after a foot-washing ceremony.
- ⑤ **Jehovah's Witnesses:** They define members of established churches as followers of the devil. They claim that they alone are among the 144,000 chosen by God and will reign with Christ in heaven and on earth. They sever ties between the state and the church, refusing military service and other means.
- ⑥ **Those who claim salvation outside the church:** Some people claim salvation outside the church. However, orthodox theology is firm: there is no salvation in other religions, only in Christianity. And there is no salvation outside the church. Of course, this church refers to the invisible church. However, the visible church is also crucial for salvation. However, some misguided people, in denying the visible church, go so far as to deny the church itself, that is, the invisible church. Non-church adherents often hold the attitude that "I only need to believe in God in my heart, so what's the point of a formal church?" This is a very dangerous sight. Even if the institutional church is unpalatable, it's even more difficult for a believer to maintain their faith if they leave the church itself.



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Characteristics of Heretics in Ecclesiology

- ① They claim that they alone are the chosen and saved group of the last days.
--> This is a common characteristic of all heretics.
- ② They claim that established churches are unsaved and under the power of Satan.
 - * They have doctrines designed to emphasize their own uniqueness. For example, they claim that 144,000 are saved, and their special view of marriage is different.
 - * They teach that even basic ethics must be transcended for the sake of their own church.
 - * They also have an exclusive stance, recognizing only certain local churches.
- ③ They deny the history and tradition of the 2,000-year-old church, claiming they have replaced it.
- ④ They claim that they alone have inherited the history and tradition of the 2,000-year-old church.
- ⑤ They either completely deny the institutional church or emphasize it exclusively.
- ⑥ They either become overly obsessed with the sacraments or advocate for their abolition.
- ⑦ They tend to insist on baptism as the sole baptism.
- ⑧ They require those who wish to join them to be baptized again.

(신학적으로 인정할 수 있는 정도의 김명도신학 연구원장의 주장을 인용했으며,
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