

Class Outline and Overview

- 1. Class Introduction: The Church as a Counterculture**
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 - a. God's Covenant People... the Israel of God
 - b. Biblical Language and Metaphors for the Church
 - c. The Visible and Invisible Church
 - d. The Attributes of the Church: Unity; Holiness; Catholicity; Apostolicity
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 - c. The Church's Mission: Worship, Nurture, Witness
 - d. Church Planting and Global Missions
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 - d. Biblical Worship
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 - g. Concern for Sanctification, Growth, and Spiritual Fruit
- 6. The Marks of a Healthy Church Member**
 - a. Is Membership Really Necessary?
 - b. Converted
 - c. Committed
 - d. Contributing
 - e. Praying
 - f. Gospel-Focused
 - g. Student of God's Word
 - h. Receptive to Correction and Discipline
 - i. Ready to Follow
- 7. The Church as an Essential Element of the Gospel**
- 8. Class Conclusion: Loving the Church for Which Jesus Died**

The Church: Growing Roots for Eternity in God's House Today
Pastor Aaron Garber

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Class Introduction – The Church as a Counterculture

- 1. Growing Roots for Eternity in God's House Today (Psalm 92:12-13)**
- 2. Class Overview and Outline**
- 3. Modern challenges for developing a warm, abiding love for Christ's church and a deep, penetrating ecclesiology:**
 - a. Churches are full of sinners
 - b. A rampant, Western individualism that ultimately redefines love
 - c. Skepticism about institutions
 - d. Skepticism about authority
 - e. Bad church experiences
 - f. Underestimate the "ordinary means of grace" given through the church
 - g. Biblical illiteracy
 - h. Marketing and Consumerism
 - i. Weak eschatological expectation
 - j. Misplaced notion of relevance
- 4. The Irrelevance of Relevance... and Vice Versa**
 - a. Worshiping at the Church of Relevance
 - b. Why such an emphasis on relevance?
 - c. What is the result of such marketing strategies and emphases on relevance?
 - d. What is the answer to our dilemma?
- 5. The Church as a Counterculture**
 - a. Biblical References
 - i. Matthew 5:13-14 (the salt of the earth)
 - ii. 1 Peter 2:9-12 (sojourners and exiles)
 - iii. Hebrews 12:22-24 (the city of the living God)
 - iv. John 18:36 (Jesus' kingdom not of this world)
 - v. John 17:14-17 (Jesus' people not of this world)
 - vi. Philippians 3:20 (Our citizenship is in heaven)
 - b. Implications for the church today:
 - i. Our worship gatherings are other-worldly
 - ii. Our power is other-worldly
 - iii. Our people are other-worldly

The Nature of the Church: God's Covenant People... the Israel of God

1. The Church as a Counterculture (continued from last week)

- c. Biblical References:
 - i. Matthew 5:13-14 (the salt of the earth)
 - ii. 1 Peter 2:9-12 (sojourners and exiles)
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 - i. Our worship gatherings are other-worldly.
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 - iii. Our people are other-worldly.

6. God's Covenant People... the Israel of God

- a. The church in the Old Testament
- b. The church and Israel in the New Testament:
 - i. Galatians 6:15-16 (the Israel of God)
 - ii. Ephesians 2:11-22 (Christ has made us both one)
 - iii. Romans 11 (Israel and Gentiles branches of same tree)
 - iv. 1 Peter 2:9-10 (the church is a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession)
 - v. Revelation 3:12 (the temple and the new Jerusalem)
 - vi. Revelation 1:6 & 5:10 (a kingdom of priests)
- c. The covenant of grace – a single covenant for all God's elect

7. Implications for the church today

- a. We don't look for the fulfillment of God's covenant promises to take place in the nation-state of Israel, but in and through the church.
- b. God's OT covenant promises are ours.
- c. God has not rejected Israel... a remnant remains... Jewish people are still being saved.
- d. The church was never, and never will be, distinguished merely by ethnicity.
- e. We are a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19; Revelation 5).
- f. In light of the Abrahamic Covenant, we know that God will continue to use his church to be a blessing to the nations.

The Nature of the Church: Biblical Language and Metaphors for the Church

8. God's Covenant People... the Israel of God (continued from last week)

- a. The church in the Old Testament
- b. The church and Israel in the New Testament:
 - i. Galatians 6:15-16 (the Israel of God)
 - ii. Ephesians 2:11-22 (Christ has made us both one)
 - iii. Romans 11 (Israel and Gentiles branches of same tree)
 - iv. 1 Peter 2:9-10 (the church is a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession)
 - v. Revelation 3:12 (the temple and the new Jerusalem)
 - vi. Revelation 1:6 & 5:10 (a kingdom of priests)
- c. The covenant of grace – a single covenant for all God's elect
 - i. Thus Calvin seamlessly transitions from church to Israel as if he's talking about one and the same people, living under one and the same promise – because they are!
 - ii. There is a fundamental unity between God's people in both the Old and New Testaments.
 - iii. The church does not displace or replace Israel, but instead enlarges Israel. The church is the Israel of God – in the church we find the fulfillment of God's covenant promises.
- d. The covenant of grace – a single covenant for all God's elect (*I will be your God, you will be my people*)
- e. Implications for the church today
 - i. We don't look for the fulfillment of God's covenant promises to take place in the nations/state of Israel, but in and through the church.
 - ii. God's OT covenant promises are ours through Christ!
 - iii. God has not rejected Israel... a remnant remains... Jewish people are still being saved.
 - iv. The church was never, and never will be, distinguished merely by ethnicity.
 - v. We are a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19; Revelation 5).
 - vi. In light of the Abrahamic Covenant, we know that God will continue to use his church to be a blessing to the nations.

9. The Nature of the Church: Biblical Language and Metaphors for the Church

- a. The Nature of the Church: First, what the church is; then (and only then!), what the church does.
- b. God frequently teaches by metaphor.

10. God's Temple (The Household of God)

- a. Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:5-6; 1 Peter 2:4-5, 4:17
- b. Closely related image is that of the church as "Jerusalem." See Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 21:2, 9-10.
- c. Doctrine: *The church is not a part of God's plan, it is God's plan. From the Garden of Eden in Genesis, to the New Jerusalem in Revelation, God's plan has always been to establish for himself a dwelling (temple/house) in which his people will live in communion with himself and one another. The church is that temple on earth. It is the present form of the future reality toward which all of God's redemptive purposes move. The church is "a holy temple in the Lord... a dwelling place for God by the Spirit" (Eph. 2:21-22).*
- d. Applications:
 - i. There is no ordinary possibility of salvation outside of the church (WCF XXV.2).
 1. John Calvin: *They therefore are insane who, neglecting this means, hope to be perfect in Christ, as is the case with fanatics, who pretend to secret revelations of the Spirit; and the proud who content themselves with the private reading of the Scripture, and imagine they do not need the ministry of the church. From her womb we are born, by her milk we are nourished, by her spirit we are animated... Whoever is separated from the Church is separated from the promises to the Church. Nor can he who forsakes the Church of Christ attain to the rewards of Christ... Beyond the pale of the Church, no forgiveness of sins, no salvation, can be hoped for... the paternal favor of God and the special evidence of spiritual life are confined to his peculiar people, and hence the abandonment of the Church is always fatal. (Institutes 4.1.4)*
 - ii. True biblical piety is always corporate and ecclesial (it is churchly).
 - iii. Because we now dwell in the presence of our holy God, personal and corporate holiness is absolutely essential.
 - iv. God's covenant promise (presence) is being fulfilled through the mission of the church.

The Nature of the Church: Biblical Language and Metaphors for the Church

11. God's Temple (The Household of God)

- a. Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:5-6; 1 Peter 2:4-5, 4:17
- b. Closely related image is that of the church as "Jerusalem." See Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 21:2, 9-10.
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12. The Family of God

- a. Scripture: Ephesians 2:19; 1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 4:17; Romans 8:15-17
- b. Doctrine: *Both Paul and Peter tell us that the church is the "household of God." It is, in other words, God's family. God is our Father. Jesus is our brother (Hebrews 2:11,17). And, our union with Christ by faith makes us co-heirs with him of the Father's blessings (Romans 8:15-17).*
- c. Applications:
 - i. Because the church is the household of God we rightly refer to one another as brothers and sisters, and our bond in faith runs deeper than even the blood bond of our biological families.
 - ii. Our family identity trumps our differences of opinion, nationality, ethnicity, age, and class.
 - iii. As a family we live under the protection and rule of our glorious Father who disciplines us in love (Heb. 12:6-8) and provides for us with every spiritual blessing.

- iv. And again – there is no ordinary possibility of salvation outside the church. Edmund Clowney: *Since salvation is only in Christ, there is a sense in which there is no salvation outside the church of Christ, for those whom the Spirit unites to Christ, he unites to all others who are in Christ. When he makes God our Father, he makes us brothers and sisters in the family of God. All who know God's salvation know it as members of the body of Christ* (from *The Church*, p. 57).

13. The Body of Christ

- a. Scripture: Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:11-12, 5:23; Colossians 1:18
- b. Doctrine: *This imagery emphasizes the corporate nature of the church. Her members are united together under Christ the head. The Christian life can never truly be lived outside the context of the local church body. As Paul says, "For the body does not consist of one member but of many" (1 Cor. 12:14).*
- c. Applications:
 - i. Our corporate union within a local church body is inseparably tied to our union with Christ.
 - ii. Union with Christ necessarily involves membership within his body.
 - iii. God gives each member of the body specific gifts for building up the church. We each need one another. We each have a part to play (1 Cor. 12).

The Nature of the Church: Biblical Language and Metaphors for the Church & The Invisible and Visible Church

14. A Pillar and Buttress of Truth

- a. Scripture: 1 Timothy 3:15
- b. Related Scripture: Mt. 16:18; Eph. 6:17; 1 Tim. 1:3; 4:11, 13, 16; 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:13-14; 3:16; 4:2; Titus 1:9;; 2:1;
- c. Doctrine: *The figure is expressive of the fact that the Church is the guardian of the truth, the citadel of the truth, and the defender of the truth over against all the enemies of the Kingdom of God (Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology, p. 558).*
- d. Applications:
 - i. The truths of God's Word are delivered, mediated, and confirmed to God's people through the church.
 - ii. Take special care regarding where your truth comes from.
 - iii. Because the church is a pillar and buttress of truth, Satan, the "liar and father of lies" (John 8:44), is bent on destroying the church.
 - iv. Truth can be known, God's Word is true, and because the local church is a repository for gospel truth it has a most high calling to speak prophetically to a world without answers.

15. The Bride of Christ

- a. Scripture: Ezekiel 16; Matthew 22:1-2; John 3:28-30; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-32; Revelation 19:7; 21:2.
- b. Doctrine: *The marriage imagery applied to Christ's church is rich and abundant throughout both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament Israel is God's bride whom he loves and with whom he makes his covenant (Ezek. 16:8). When Israel fails to love God and instead worships other gods, she becomes a harlot, committing spiritual adultery against her bridegroom (Ezek. 16:32; Hosea 1:2). The glorious New Testament bridal passages (such as Eph. 5:25, "husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church," and Rev. 19:7, "his Bride has made herself ready") have deep roots within the Old Testament. All of these passages conspire together to present a picture of God's church as deeply cherished by God.*
- c. Applications:
 - i. Since the church is the bride of Christ, sin and worldliness within the church is always ultimately spiritual adultery (Ezekiel 16; James 4:4).
 - ii. As the bride of Christ the church and her members must be constantly preparing for the return of our bridegroom (Revelation 19:7).

- iii. We must love our local church because Christ himself has loved her and died for her (Eph. 5:25).
- iv. God is jealous over us and God cherishes us.
- v. Since marriage is always covenantal, the church, as the bride of Christ, is God's covenant community.

16. The Invisible and Visible Church

- a. Scripture: Matthew 13:24-30
- b. Doctrine: WCF XXV
 - i. *The catholic or universal Church, which is 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 fullness of Him that filleth all in all.*
 - ii. *The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children: and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.*
 - iii. *Unto this catholic visible Church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world: and doth, by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them effectual thereunto.*
 - iv. *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.*
 - v. *The purest Churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no Churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, there shall be always a Church on earth to worship God according to His will.*

The Nature of the Church: The Invisible/Visible Church and the Attributes of the Church

1. The Invisible and Visible Church

- a. Scripture: Matthew 7:21-24; 13:24-30
- b. Doctrine: WCF XXV
 - i. *The catholic or universal Church, which is 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 fullness of Him that filleth all in all.*
 - ii. *The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children: and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.*
 - iii. *Unto this catholic visible Church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world: and doth, by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them effectual thereunto.*
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2. The Church Militant and the Church Triumphant

- a. *The Church in the present dispensation is a militant Church, that is, she is called unto, and is actually engaged in, a holy warfare.... She is duty bound to carry on an incessant warfare against the hostile world in every form in which it reveals itself, whether in the Church or outside of it, and against all the spiritual forces of darkness. The Church may not spend all her time in prayer and meditation, however necessary and important these may be, nor may she rest on her oars in the peaceful enjoyment of her spiritual heritage. She must be engaged with all her might in the battles of*

her Lord, fighting in a war that is both offensive and defensive (Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p. 565).

- b. *The Church in heaven is the triumphant Church. There the sword is exchanged for the palm of victory, the battle-cries are turned into songs of triumph, and the cross is replaced by the crown. The strife is over, the battle is won, and the saints reign with Christ forever and ever* (Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p. 565).

3. Excurses on the Relationship between Christian Doctrine and Practice

4. The Attributes of the Church

- a. The Nicene Creed: *I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.*
- b. Unity
 - i. Doctrine: The church is one, existing under the headship of Christ, in communion with Christ and all believers through one and the same Spirit.
 - ii. Scripture: John 17:20-23; Ephesians 4:1-16
- c. Holiness
 - i. Doctrine: The church is made holy by God as he sets a particular people apart for himself.
 - ii. Scripture: Romans 11:16; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:17; Ephesians 2:21; etc.
- d. Catholicity
 - i. Doctrine: The catholic church is the universal church that is made up of all true believers in all places and times.
 - ii. Scripture: Genesis 12:3; Matthew 8:11; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Colossians 1:6; Revelation 7:9; etc.
- e. Apostolicity
 - i. Doctrine: The church is apostolic in the sense that it possesses and maintains the succession of apostolic doctrine.
 - ii. Scripture: John 17:20; Acts 2:42; Galatians 1:6-12; Ephesians 2:19-20

The Attributes of the Church & the Power of the Church

5. The Attributes of the Church (and, how these doctrines make demands upon us)

- a. The Nicene Creed: *I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.*
- b. Unity
 - i. Doctrine: The church is one, existing under the headship of Christ, in communion with Christ and all believers through one and the same Spirit.
 - ii. Scripture: John 17:20-23; Ephesians 4:1-16
- c. Holiness
 - i. Doctrine: The church is made holy by God as he sets a particular people apart for himself.
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 - ii. Scripture: John 17:20; Acts 2:42; Galatians 1:6-12; Ephesians 2:19-20

6. The Real Spiritual Power of the Church & Church/State Relations

- a. Related Scripture: John 18:36; 2 Corinthians 10:3-4; Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13ff; Hebrews 13:17; Matthew 16:18-19

b. *The Nature and Extent of Church Power* (PCA BCO Chapter 3)

3-1. The power which Christ has committed to His Church vests in the whole body, the rulers and those ruled, constituting it a spiritual commonwealth. This power, as exercised by the people, extends to the choice of those officers whom He has appointed in His Church.

3-2. Ecclesiastical power, which is wholly spiritual, is twofold. The officers exercise it sometimes severally, as in preaching the Gospel, administering the Sacraments, reproofing the erring, visiting the sick, and comforting the afflicted, which is the power of order; and they exercise it sometimes jointly in Church courts, after the form of judgment, which is the power of jurisdiction.

3-3. The sole functions of the Church, as a kingdom and government distinct from the civil commonwealth, are to proclaim, to administer, and to enforce the law of Christ revealed in the Scriptures.

3-4. The power of the Church is exclusively spiritual; that of the State includes the exercise of force. The constitution of the Church derives from divine revelation; the constitution of the State must be determined by human reason and the course of providential events. The Church has no right to construct or modify a government for the State, and the State has no right to frame a creed or polity for the Church. They are as planets moving in concentric orbits: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21).

3-5. The Church, with its ordinances, officers and courts, is the agency which Christ has ordained for the edification and government of His people, for the propagation of the faith, and for the evangelization of the world.

3-6. The exercise of ecclesiastical power, whether joint or several, has the divine sanction when in conformity with the statutes enacted by Christ, the Lawgiver, and when put forth by courts or by officers appointed thereunto in His Word.

The Mission of the Church

1. A Brief Reflection on Memorial Day and the Mission of the Church

2. Narrow Church Mission vs. Broad Christian Callings

- a. We must maintain a careful distinction between what God has called *the church* to do versus what God has called *individual Christians* to do.
 - i. The church is narrowly called to serve God in her worship, nurture, and witness.
 - ii. Individual Christians are broadly called to serve God in innumerable acts of love, mercy, justice, political involvement, community involvement, etc.
- b. Why the narrow calling of *only* worship, nurture and witness for the church?
 - i. It is biblical.
 1. Worship: Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 14:26
 2. Nurture: Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-25
 3. Witness: Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 28:3; Romans 10:13-15
 - ii. It helps preserve the uniqueness of the gospel message and the all-important distinction between law and gospel.
 - iii. It helps maintain the boundaries of legitimate church authority (the Reformed Presbyterian doctrine of the “spirituality of the church”)
 - iv. It helps maintain a proper biblical notion of how God’s kingdom comes.
 - v. It helps us to avoid confusing the kingdom of God with the kingdoms of this world.
 - vi. It helps to relieve burnout in pastors and church members.
 - vii. It helps us better delineate the respective roles of the Church vs. the parachurch.
- c. A Case Study: *Our vision is so big it could never be accomplished by a single church, or even a single denomination. Our vision is to see our community transformed and Atlanta become much more reflective of the kingdom of God. This vision includes seeing many more people in Atlanta become believers who truly live out the gospel. It also includes a drastic reduction in some of the greatest ills in our metro area. For example, as part of Unite! (a network of churches from a variety of denominational, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds) we have 2020 outcome goals that include three simple things: that every child is safe from commercial sexual exploitation, that every student has an opportunity to graduate from high school, and that every foster child has a family who adopts him or her.*

The Mission of the Church: Worship, Nurture, Witness

- 3. Update on the PCA's 39th General Assembly**
 - a. National Association of Evangelicals
 - b. The Directory for Public Worship
 - c. Insider Movements
- 4. Narrow Thinking on Church Mission/Purpose: Worship, Nurture, Witness**
 - a. Careful distinction between what God calls the Church to do vs. what God calls individual Christians to do.
 - b. Careful distinction between what the church *must* do vs. what the church *may* do.
 - c. Opposing voices from history:
 - i. Albert Barnes (1798-1870; New School Presbyterian): *[T]he work which God requires [the church] to do... may be to diffuse a definite moral influence in respect to an existing evil institution.*
 - ii. James Henley Thornwell (1812-1862; Old School Presbyterian): *[The Church] is not, as we fear too many are disposed to regard it, a moral institute of universal good, whose business it is to wage war upon every form of human ill, whether social, civil, political, moral, and to patronize every expedient which a romantic benevolence may suggest as likely to contribute to human comfort.... The problems which the anomalies of our fallen state are continually forcing on philanthropy, the church has no right directly to solve.*
- 5. Worship Is the Church's Chief End**
 - a. As the glory of God is God's own chief end, so follows naturally that Christian worship in view of God's glory is the church's chief end.
 - i. John Piper (*Let the Nations Be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions*): *Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exist because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.*
 - ii. Revelation 4:6-11 & 5:9-12 (Worship is the eternal activity and end of the redeemed.)
 - iii. Reformation: Reformed emphasis on true worship vs. idolatry.
 - b. Worship, therefore, is the high point of *practical* Christianity.
- 6. The Father Seeks Worshipers (John 4:21-24)**
 - a. The whole point of our salvation is to make us into worshipers.
 - b. Worship begins with God. The doctrine of God drives worship. Because "God is spirit" (v. 24), because of the nature and identity of God, because of who God is, we are called to worship God in "spirit and truth."

7. Worship in Truth: Scripture provides both the structure and content of our worship.

- a. Worship that is "in truth" is according to Scripture.
 - i. The Regulative Principle (*Westminster Confession of Faith, XXI.1*): *But the acceptable way of worshiping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshiped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scriptures.*
 - ii. *Worship Wars* in the Bible:
 1. Cain vs. Abel (Gen. 4:3-8)
 2. Israelites vs. Moses (Ex. 32)
 3. Nadab and Abihu vs. other priests (Leviticus 10:1-3)
 4. Pharisees vs. Jesus (Mark 7:6-7)
 5. Jews vs. Samaritans (John 4)
 - iii. Distinguishing between elements, forms, and circumstances.
 1. Elements: Scripturally determined and unchanging (prayer; reading and preaching of Scripture; singing psalms, hymns, spiritual songs; sacraments; collection or offering; religious oaths).
 2. Forms: The content and structure through which elements are expressed, regarding which there is considerable freedom (example: prayer may be given through a written or extemporaneous form).
 3. Circumstances: Aspects of worship determined by Christian wisdom and prudence, but not regulated directly by God's Word (microphones, worship times, buildings, etc.).
- b. Worship "in truth" must be filled with Scripture.
 - i. The Bible provides both the structure and content of our worship.
 - ii. *In worship we pray the Bible, sing the Bible, read the Bible, preach the Bible, and see the Bible* (in sacraments).
 - iii. Scripture saturated worship - morning and evening on Sundays - brings a powerful sanctifying impact upon Christians throughout their lifetimes - and it is not to be underestimated!

8. Worship in Spirit: The internal matters of worship (intent, motive, intensity, sincerity, reverence) supercede external matters (building, location, rituals).

- a. Worship that is "in spirit" is from the heart.
- b. Worship that is "in spirit" is simple.
- c. Worship that is "in spirit" is reverent.

The Mission of the Church: Worship, Nurture, Witness

9. Worship in Truth: Scripture provides both the structure and content of our worship.

- a. Worship that is "in truth" is according to Scripture (structure).
 - i. The Regulative Principle (*Westminster Confession of Faith, XXI.1*): *But the acceptable way of worshiping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshiped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scriptures.*
 - ii. *Worship Wars* in the Bible:
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- b. Worship "in truth" must be filled with Scripture (content).
 - i. *In worship we pray the Bible, sing the Bible, read the Bible, preach the Bible, and see the Bible* (in sacraments).

10. Worship in Spirit: The internal matters of worship (intent, motive, intensity, sincerity, reverence) supersede external matters (building, location, rituals).

- a. External form is vitally important, but so are internal attitudes and motives.
- b. Worship that is "in spirit" is from the heart.
- c. Worship that is "in spirit" is simple.
- d. Worship that is "in spirit" is reverent.

11. Nurture and Witness: "Go therefore and make disciples..." (Mt. 18:19)

- a. Christian Nurture: *Making Disciples*
 - i. Always inseparable from the church (Ephesians 4:11-16)

- ii. Always Christ-centered – growing to maturity after the image of Christ (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:9-10)
- iii. Always life-encompassing and holistic. No area of one’s life is untouched by our growth in the Lord.
 1. Doctrine: To grow in doctrine is to grow in our knowledge of God, his ways, and his Word. Scripture repeatedly calls for Christians to grow in our “knowledge of God” (2 Cor. 2:14; 4:6; Eph. 1:17; 4:13; Col. 1:10; 2 Pet. 1:2), and Jesus himself describes the very essence of eternal life as knowing God (John 17:3). Growth in doctrine is essential to Christian formation (Rom. 16:17; 1 Tim. 4:6; Tit. 1:9; 2:1, 10).
 2. Duty: To grow in duty is to grow in our love to God and neighbor. Jesus affirmed that the whole of God’s law can be described in this way, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself (Luke 10:27). Our Christian duty entails our obedience to God’s law, our growth in sanctification, and our love to God and neighbor.
 3. Delight: To grow in “delight” is to grow in our vital relationship with the living God. As God’s people, dead to sin and alive with Christ, we have been called to a living hope (1 Pet. 1:3), we are now no longer “of the world” (John 17:16), and our chief delight is in the Lord (Ps. 37:4). We grow in this delight through worship, prayer, communion, and church life, all the while learning “to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.”

b. Christian Witness: *Going to all nations*

- i. The peak of the church’s witness to the world is found in her corporate Sabbath worship.
- ii. We must therefore maintain a missionary priority on church planting (at home and abroad).
- iii. We must faithfully pass the gospel on to the next generation (Deut. 6; 2 Tim. 1:5)
- iv. We must know the gospel.
- v. We must not be zealous about missions/evangelism... instead we must be zealous in your love to God and neighbor (1 Thess. 2:8)
- vi. We must pray and take risks.
- vii. We must rest in God’s promises (Mt. 16:18; Mt. 24:14).
- viii. We must remember the weight of our calling. Our witness is good news (gospel) to some, bad news (judicial) to others (2 Cor. 2:14-17).

The Government of the Church: Principles of Presbyterian Polity

- 12. Christ is the Head (King) of the Church and the source of all its authority.**
- The only proper ultimate form of church government is monarchical.
 - Jesus is King generally over all things and specifically over his church: Psalm 2; Isaiah 9:6; Zech. 9:9; Mt. 28:18; Eph. 1:20-22; Col. 1:18; Rev. 12:10.
- 13. Christ exercises his authority by means of his royal Word.**
- WSC Q. 2. *What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?* A. *The Word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.*
 - The church is not free to make its own laws, to deviate in any way from Scripture, or to act in place of Christ.
 - The church must interpret and apply Scripture – and in so doing it acts in the name of Christ and under the authority of Christ, but never in the place of Christ.
 - “No creed but Christ, no book but the Bible” vs. Confessionalism
 - The Westminster Confession of Faith holds a place of subordinate authority in our church life (subordinate to the Scriptures, but authoritative nonetheless over our church as part of our church constitution).
- 14. Christ as King has endowed the Church with power.**
- PCA BCO Preface, Preliminary Principles: *All church power... is only ministerial and declarative since the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and practice. No church judicatory may make laws to bind the conscience.*
 - Church power is real power: Mt. 16:18-19 - *And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven* (see also Mt. 18:15-18).
 - Church power is exercised properly in her 1) witness and teaching; 2) regulation of church affairs; and 3) guarding the holiness of the church.
- 15. Christ provided for the specific exercise of this power by representative organs.**
- Two church offices given to exercise ecclesial power: Elder and Deacon. These offices together comprise Christ's total care for the church and her members.
 - Elder: Biblical language for elders include that of elder, bishop/overseer, shepherd/pastor (Acts 20:17,28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1). Elders are ordained to a ministry of oversight, teaching, and shepherding.

- c. Deacon: Deacons are ordained to a ministry of sympathy and service (Acts 6:1-6).
- d. The Doctrine of Ordination
 - i. Charles Hodge: *Ordination is the solemn expression of the judgment of the Church, by those appointed to deliver such judgment, that the candidate is truly called of God to take part in this ministry, thereby authenticating to the people the divine call.*
 - ii. PCA BCO 17-2: *Ordination is the authoritative admission of one duly called to an office in the Church of God, accompanied with prayer and the laying on of hands.*
 - iii. Louis Berkhof: *The officers of the Church are the representatives of the people chosen by popular vote. This does not mean, however, that they receive their authority from the people, for the call of the people is but the confirmation of the inner call by the Lord Himself; and it is from Him that they receive their authority and to Him that they are responsible.... Hence, they are no deputies or tools that merely serve to carry out the wishes of the people, but rulers whose duty it is to apprehend and apply intelligently the laws of Christ.*
- e. Term Office or Perpetual?

16. The power of the Church resides primarily in the governing body of the local church.

- a. Office bearers are chosen by the local church, never appointed by higher courts or offices.
- b. Higher court generally defers to lower court's rulings.
- c. Disciplinary matters are handled first at the lowest level of government.

17. Three major forms of church government

- a. Episcopalian
- b. Congregational
- c. Presbyterian (Acts 15)

The Government of the Church: Principles of Presbyterian Polity

- 18. Christ is the Head (King) of the Church and the source of all its authority.**
 - 19. Christ exercises his authority by means of his royal Word.**
 - 20. Christ as King has endowed the Church with power.**
 - 21. Christ provided for the specific exercise of this power by representative organs.**
 - 22. The power of the Church resides primarily in the governing body of the local church.**
 - a. Office bearers are chosen by the local church, never appointed by higher courts or offices.
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24. Christian Witness: *Going to all nations*

- a. The peak of the church's witness to the world is found in her corporate Sabbath worship.
- b. We must therefore maintain a missionary priority on church planting (at home and abroad).
- c. We must faithfully pass the gospel on to the next generation (Deut. 6; 2 Tim. 1:5)
- d. We must know the gospel.
- e. We must not be zealous about missions/evangelism... instead we must be zealous in your love to God and neighbor (1 Thess. 2:8)
- f. We must pray and take risks.
- g. We must rest in God's promises (Mt. 16:18; Mt. 24:14).
- h. We must remember the weight of our calling. Our witness is good news (gospel) to some, bad news (judicial) to others (2 Cor. 2:14-17).

The Marks of a Healthy Church & Church Member

1. The Historic Reformed Marks of the Church (How do I know a church is a true church?)

- a. The Belgic Confession, Article 29: *The true church can be recognized if it has the following marks: The church engages in the pure preaching of the gospel; it makes use of the pure administration of the sacraments as Christ instituted them; it practices church discipline for correcting faults.*
- b. The pure preaching of the gospel (Romans 10:17)
- c. The pure administration of the sacraments (Acts 2:41-42)
- d. The practice of church discipline (Mt. 18:15-18; Rev. 2:9; 3:9)

2. Nine Marks of a Healthy Church (9marks.org):

- a. Expository Preaching
- b. Biblical Theology
- c. The Gospel
- d. A Biblical Understanding of Conversion
- e. A Biblical Understanding of Evangelism
- f. A Biblical Understanding of Church Membership
- g. Biblical Church Discipline
- h. A Concern for Discipleship and Growth (Sanctification)
- i. Biblical Church Leadership

3. Excursus: Is membership really necessary?

4. The Marks of a Healthy Church Member:

- a. Converted
- b. Committed
- c. Contributing
- d. Praying
- e. Gospel-Focused
- f. Student of God's Word
- g. Receptive to Correction and Discipline
- h. Ready to Follow

Is the Church Essential to the Gospel

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- b. Committed
- c. Contributing
- d. Praying
- e. Gospel-Focused
- f. Student of God's Word
- g. Receptive to Correction and Discipline
- h. Ready to Follow

2. Is the Church Essential to the Gospel?

3. The gospel promises the church.

- a. The Unfolding Covenant of Grace
 - i. Abrahamic Covenant = innumerable people into a great nation (Gen. 12:2; 15:5; 17:1ff)
 - ii. Davidic Covenant = eternal king (2 Sam. 7:12-13, 16)
 - iii. NT fulfillment (Eph. 1:22; 5:23; Col. 1:18): Jesus is the head (king) over his church (nation)
- b. The church is part of the good news of the gospel.
- c. Every eschatological promise that yet awaits fulfillment is a *corporate* (churchly) promise.
 - i. Innumerable multitudes around throne of God (Rev. 7:9)
 - ii. Marriage supper of the lamb (Rev. 19:6-9)
 - iii. The holy city, new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2)
- d. Application: Without denying the profound individual implications of the gospel, we need to remember its corporate, churchly implications as well.
 - i. Our gospel is sometimes anemic, self-centered, quite small and pitiful.
 - ii. The full gospel promises so much more than individual salvation.

4. The gospel creates the church.

- i. Acts 2 is a blueprint for how the gospel creates the church.
 1. Pentecost/H.S. comes with power (2:1-13);
 2. Peter preaches the gospel (2:14-41);
 3. The N.T. church is established (2:42-47).
- ii. Paul speaks of the church structure existing as a direct result of the gospel.
 1. Eph. 2:1-10 - Paul explains the gospel.
 2. Eph. 2:11-22 - Paul explains the churchly results of the gospel (see especially vv. 19-22).

iii. Applications:

1. When we receive Jesus as Savior we are not left as orphans but instead joined to a family.
2. Salvation and church membership go hand in hand.
3. "The gospel creates its own odd community," (Michael Horton, *The Gospel-Driven Life*, p. 194).
4. True evangelism requires churches... Church planting is essential to faithful evangelism.

5. The gospel is made known (made visible) by the church.

- i. The gospel is made visible in our regular Sunday worship (Word/prayer/sacraments/Sabbath observance).
- ii. The gospel is made visible in our love for one another (John 13:35)
- iii. The local church is the place we put into action all that we believe.

6. Gospel transformation (sanctification) happens within the church.

- i. Sanctification is normally unheard of outside of the context of a particular church fellowship (See Rom. 12:9ff; 14:1ff; 1 Cor. 13; Gal. 5:16ff; etc. - all passages spoken within context of church fellowship).
- ii. Trevin Wax (*Counterfeit Gospels*): *If Christ remains committed to us—as broken and messed up as we are—why would we not remain committed to His followers? Why would we bolt out the door when our church experience becomes a hassle? What looks more like Jesus, to hit the road or to stay with a congregation through good and bad? Too many people think that the church’s problems are an obstacle to becoming more like Jesus. Actually, the opposite is true: Commitment to bear with the church’s problems is the method by which we become more like Christ. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was right: “Those who love their dream of a Christian community more than the Christian community itself become destroyers of that Christian community even though their personal intentions may be ever so honest, earnest, and sacrificial.”*