

GIC 101:

Ecclesiology – Study of the Church

“The true Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit are united together in the body of Christ. The Church finds her visible, yet imperfect, expression in local congregations where the Word of God is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered in their integrity; where scriptural discipline is practiced, and where loving fellowship is maintained. For her perfecting, she awaits the return of her Lord.” – EPC Essential #5

One Church

Matthew 16:18 ...on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades *will not overcome it*.

Hebrew term “qahal”- gathering or assembly of people

The Septuagint (the Greek OT) uses the word “ekklesia” for qahal

The NT “ekklesia” is also used for church/congregation/assembly

God has joined the “uncircumcised” with the “circumcised” to be one new man, creating peace between them so we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. (Eph. 2:10-18)

FOR

Ephesians 5:25 Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

Hebrews 11 – 12:1 Tells of all the people of faith who have gone before us, and that they are a “cloud of witnesses”

Definition

The church is the community of all true believers of all time.

Visible and Invisible Church

The Catholic Church holds that only from the unbroken line of succession from the apostles through the bishops of the church can be found the one true visible church of God.

Luther and Calvin affirmed however that there is an invisible church which is the one true church of God, that is only seen and known by Him.

The Visible church is the outward form, the organization, as Christians on earth see it. (where genuine faith is practiced)

Unbelievers can be found in the visible church, and false prophets or wolves in sheep’s clothing (Acts 20:29-30, Matt. 7:15-16)



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BUT

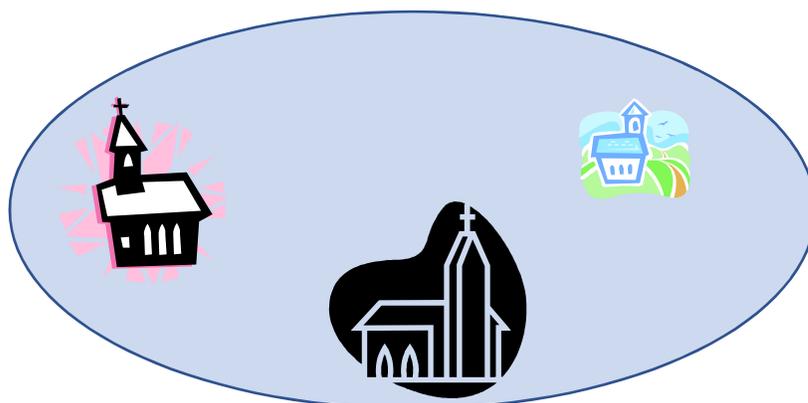
The Invisible church is all the believers who have true saving faith in Christ. “The Lord knows those who are His” 2 Tim. 2:19

Local and Universal Church

In the NT ekklesia (church) could be used for both:

Local gatherings of believers, small churches to larger gatherings of believers (Rom. 16:5, 1 Cor. 1:2, 2 Cor. 1:1, Acts 9:31)

To grouping all believers into one universal church. (1 Cor. 12:28)



Church and the Kingdom of God

- *The Church is not the Kingdom – Acts 8:12,19:8, 20:25, 28:23,31*

Jesus preached the kingdom was near, not the church

The Good News was the kingdom, not the church

- *The Kingdom creates the Church for as people enter the kingdom they join fellowship in the church*
- *The Church witnesses of the Kingdom – Matt. 24:14*
- *The Church is the instrument of the Kingdom*
 - *The Holy Spirit manifests the power of the kingdom, works through the disciples to heal the sick, cast out demons, as HS did in the ministry of Jesus.*
- *The Church is the custodian of the Kingdom – has been given the keys of the kingdom – Matt. 16:19*



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Metaphors for the Church

1 Tim. 5:1-2, Eph. 3:14, 2 Cor. 6:18, Matt. 12:49-50, 1 Jn 3:14-18

- **Eph. 5:32, 2 Cor. 11:2 (NASB)**
John 15:5
- **Rom. 11:17-24**
- **1 Cor. 3:6-9**
- **1 Cor. 3:9**
- **Matt. 13:1-30, Jn 4:35**
- **1 Peter 2:4-8**
- **1 Peter 2:5**
- **Heb 3:6**
- **1 Tim 3:15**
- **1 Cor. 12:12-27**

- Family
- Bride of Christ
- Branches on a tree
- An Olive Tree
- A Field of crops
- A building
- A Harvest
- Living Stones
- Holy Priesthood
- God's House
- Pillars of the Truth
- Body Of Christ



Christ

The church

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Purpose of the Church

Ministry to God: Worship

Colossians 3:16 ...sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Ephesians 5:18-19 ...be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart,

Ministry to Believers: Nurture

Colossians 1:28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

Ephesians 4:12-13 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

Ministry to the World: Evangelism and Mercy

Matt. 28:19 , Acts 11:29, 2 Cor. 8:4, 1 Jn 3:17

We are to be Salt and Light to the World Matthew 5:13-16

Keep These Purposes in Balance

The Sacraments of the Church

Baptism – Matthew 3:11-17, Ephesians 4:4-6

Baptism is the visible sign and seal of entrance into the Church community and therefore is administered individually to new believers making a public profession of faith, once.

Infant Baptism or Pedobaptism is the biblical belief that this sacrament extends corporately to the households of believers which typically would include children, or individually to children or infants of believing parents.

In this view, baptism is thus seen as the functional replacement and sacramental **equivalent** of the Abrahamic rite of circumcision and symbolizes the internal cleansing from sin, among other things.

But only those who are born again from above are members of the **Invisible** Church. – John 3

baptism



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The Sacraments of the Church

The Lord's Supper – Matt. 26:26-30, 1 Cor. 11:17-34

The Lord's supper instituted by Jesus was a fulfillment of the Jewish Passover.

As such, it should be celebrated in much the same way – with frequency and is a symbolic participation in Christ's act of salvation.

Symbolically the bread is Jesus **body**.

Symbolically the wine is Jesus **blood**.

In the Old Testament the Jews celebrated God's rescue from slavery in Egypt, with lamb's blood painted on their doors to protect them from God's wrath.

In the New Testament, this directly refers to a celebration of God's rescue of the church from sin, with the blood of Jesus acting as the means by which God's people are able to be rescued from God's wrath.

During this time Calvin says there is a special **grace** present with us.

The Power of the Church

Spiritual Warfare - 2 Cor. 10:3-4, Eph. 6:12-13

Keys to the Kingdom – preaching and teaching of the gospel of Christ (Matt. 16:16-20) thus “opening the door” of the kingdom of heaven.

(Binding and loosing – referring to Church discipline)

Church Discipline – Matt. 18:15-17

Reconciliation and Restoration

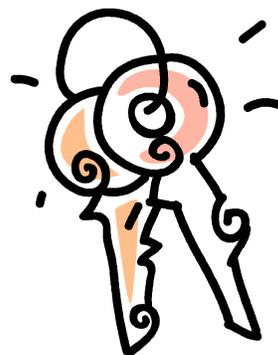
Prov. 13:24, Gal. 6:1, James 5:20

Keep Sin from Spreading to Others

Heb 12:15, 1 Cor. 5:2, 6-7, 1 Tim 5:20

Protect the Purity of the Church and Honor Christ

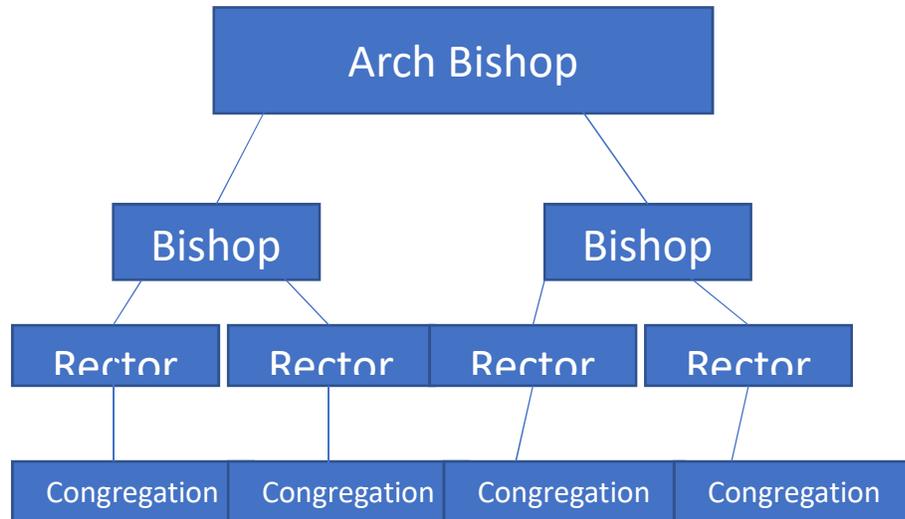
2 Peter 3:14, Eph. 5:27, Rom. 2:24, 1 Cor. 6:6



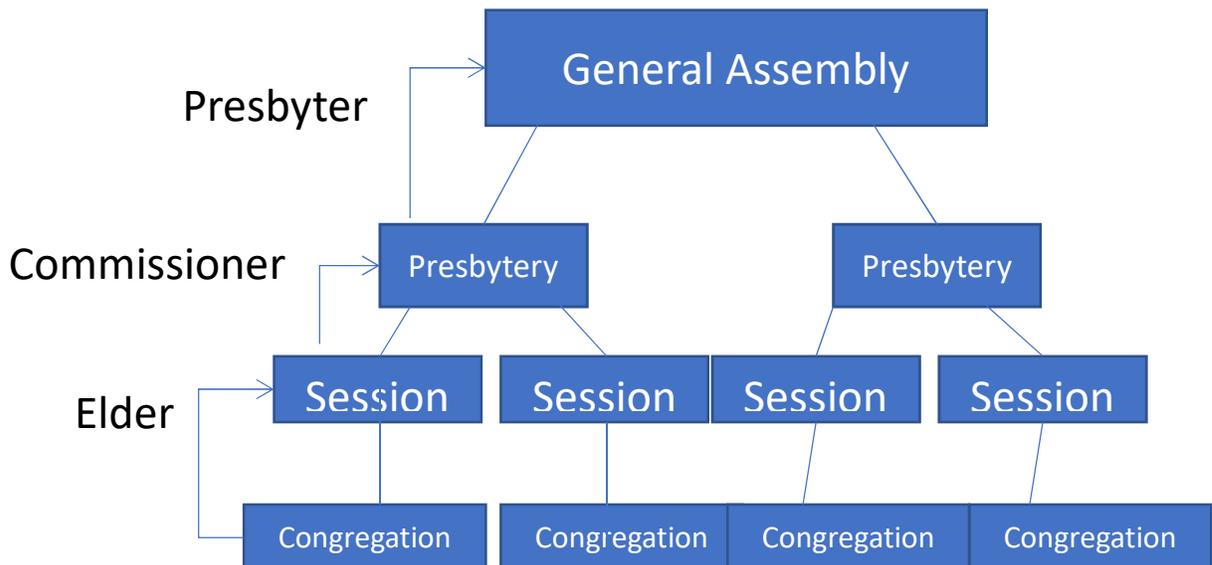
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Governments of the Church

Episcopal

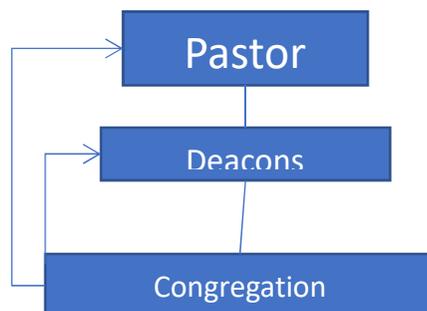


Presbyterian



Ruled by elders – presbytos (Greek for elder)

Single Pastor (Elder)

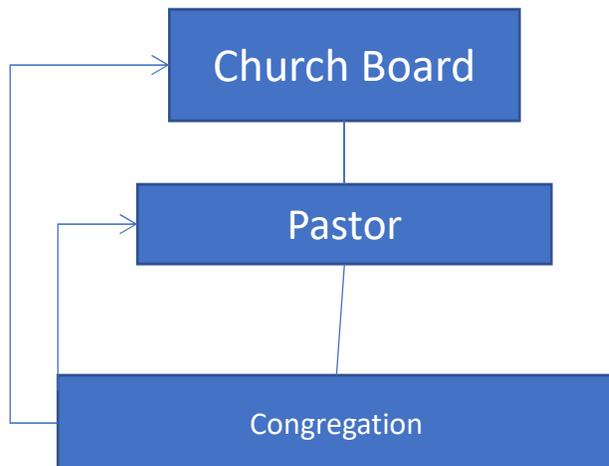


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Congregational



Corporate Board



Church History Timeline (See Handout)

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The Church and Israel

Among Evangelicals there are different view points:

Two Dispensational Views:

1. God has two distinct plans for two different people groups that he has redeemed - Chafer

For Israel – early blessings, yet to be fulfilled

For Church – heavenly blessings to be fulfilled in heaven

2. There are not separate purposes but a single purpose – the establishment of the Kingdom of God – no distinction from the two in the future state in heaven

(The prophecies concerning Israel will still be fulfilled in

the millennium by ethnic Jewish people) – Saucy

Reformed View:

The Church includes both OT believers and NT believers in one church or one body of Christ. Looked forward to Christ, Looks back to Christ

(This still holds that one day a large scale conversion of Jewish people will happen in the future, but they become one with the Church in Christ – grafted back into their own olive tree – Rom. 11:24) (Eph. 2:12-20)

One Israel = One Church = One People of God