

THE CHURCH IN HISTORICAL-THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

I. Some General Notes:

A. The choice of this discussion *(Background)*

B. Defining the term "church" (ecclesia)...a called out company regardless as to how or why it is called out....a gathering of persons for a particular purpose. The English word "church" is derived from an Anglo Saxon root "circe" (kirk) and associated with the Geek word "kurios" (lord). "Ecclesia" is any sort of calling out...."church" is tied to religious ideals.

The term is used to define an institution identified with the Lord. The Lord viewed it as a "body" (Eph 1:22-23) and a "bride" (Ephesians 5:25-27).. As Israel was noted as the "wife of Jehovah", the church is seen as the "bride of Christ"

C. Essential Scriptures: Matthew 16:18, Ephesians 5:22-23, Colossians 1:24

D. In practicality the use of the term is very broad. It may indicate a building, a denomination, a congregation, etc. or have an adjectival use as well. But when we speak of it theologically we are speaking of a called out company...a gathering of parties or persons who in principle are yielded to the Lord and obedient to His Name.

II. The Church of the New Testament (first message)

A. The Redemptive Program of the Lord....Genesis 3 and following to the point of the church in Matthew 1:21 *Jesus*

B. The Promise: Matthew 16:18 "You are Petros, on this Petra I will build my church" The Apostle is Peter, "Petra" is the great weight of his confession "You are the Christ..." The man is very small, the eternal truth is a massive statement of the salvation economy..

C. The fulfillment: Acts 1: the coming of the promised Spirit and the empowering of the witness.

1. This is the founding of the church body politic
2. This is the fulfillment of the church body spiritual.

D. The Order:

- Col 1:24, Eph 5:23*
1. the Head of the company is the Lord
 2. the Apostles are those sent by Him as specific witnesses *Acts 1*
 3. the congregation(s) are gatherings of "believers"...they are called out from many different tribes, cultures, and societies to receive the blessing of salvation through faith in Christ. All who truly believe are part of this "invisible" church in that it cannot be locally identified in masse.
 4. the Leaders are persons appointed by the Holy Spirit in accord with the qualifications and abilities given. *[1 Cor 12, Titus, Timothy]*
 5. the power is the Holy Spirit *, Gal 12*
 6. the commission is to go into all the world with the truth *Acts 1:8*
 7. the challenge is to maintain the purity of Ephesians 5: *25-27*
 8. the expected hope is that one day the church will be complete and in perfect union and harmony with God in glory.

E. The character of the Church

1. The true church
2. A true church

F. Conclusion: The church of the New Testament is marked by:

1. Oneness (John 17)
2. Spread (Acts 1-2)
3. Centrality (Colossians 1:23-24)

G. And the big closing question is not of which church or society you are a member but have you been born into the family of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and are, therefore, called out to be a possessor of eternal life: a personal friend and worshipper of the Lord, knowing acceptance of God's saving grace,

*The church exists
to honor the Lord Jesus
It is called out company
to...*

The Church in Historical-Theological Perspective

III. The Early Church (second message)

A. Some details

1. Review of subject and plan of study
2. The Early Church:
 - a. Time Period: Acts to 312 AD
 - b. Essential Scriptures: Acts 2:41-47, 20:17-32; the Timothy letters. 1 Corinthians 12

B. The Spread of Christianity

1. Apostolic movement
2. Population (demographic) changes
3. Limitations by virtue of a lack of world surface!

C. Development of church practices:

1. The Bishopric and subsequent offices and orders
2. The liturgy (the Didache, etc.)
3. The early creeds: Thomas, Paul
4. Religious literature
5. Development of the "fathers" why no "mothers?"

D. Problems:

1. External: Persecution
 - a. Sanhedrin
 - b. Roman ideology
 - Nero
 - Decius Trajan
 - Diocletian
 - c. Philosophical (Gnosticism, Neo Platonism)
 - d. Societal
2. Internal:
 - a. New Testament warnings
 - b. Schism, moral breaks, personal issues
 - c. Doctrinal error

E. The Edict of Milan --312 AD

1. Politics: Constantine and Licinius
2. Results: Christianity legalized
3. Evaluation

Lessons in Endurance, Indulgence, and the need of the essential.

John
Peter
Thomas
Matthew
Andrew

John 20:28
1 Tim 3:16
1 Cor 8:6

1 Th 23

(Goncalis)

Thomson

20:28
Acts 20, Jude, 2 Peter

Doctrinal
Dissident
Lutheran body

Stand
Together

Emerson

Protestantism
by force
Narrative
False Gospel

John 5:15

John (Admission)
- White, Patmos

In the
spirit
which

#1 (for Christ)
Great enemies are
internal

*Romans 13
relation of
believers to the
civil state.*

Pinebrook 2007

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IV. The Church in the Empire (third message)

*[Rome: the church splits
the great danger zone]*

- A. A sad confession: this is an enormous period of time (313-1500) and can by no means be treated with any degree of fulfillment in this single talk. Some very important points may be gleaned but it will be done in rapid order and a lot of important things will be overlooked because time runs on! If you have individual questions in regard to this I will be happy to discuss them with you to the degree that I know anything about your area of thought. Otherwise----

The politics of the time constitute a crucial issue. Rome collapses as an imperial entity in 476 and the western world has no real political unity until the days of Charlemagne (8th century) and soon loses it after his day. Constantinople is the eastern capitol and is a constant rival to Rome with the result that the church in Rome and the church in Constantinople are virtual enemies...a circumstance that does not enhance Christianity..

This time period is beyond the Bible accounts but a reading of the Revelation letters (chapters 1-3) will prove helpful.

B. The Western Church: Rome (Latin)

Rome

1. A general note on size, significance, prominence and survival after the barbarian assaults.
2. A few very important leaders
 - a. in the church: Leo I, Gregory I, Gregory VII, Innocent III
 - b. in the community: Augustine, Jerome, Alcuin, Bede
 - c. in national leadership: Charlemagne, Otto I,
 - d. the developed political community: The Holy Roman Empire
3. Missionary expansion: Patrick, the Celtic missionaries, Ulphilus

John 21

C. The Eastern Church: Constantinople (Greek)

1. This political division had a great impact on the church at large...the west had no stable government for years but the east had a stable government continuing...the church in the east became very dependent on the state while the church in the west, fending for itself, actually gave the backbone of the state. As a general note the eastern church grew weaker, the western stronger...just as a matter of survival.

2.. A few very important leaders

- a. in the church: Athanasius, The Cappadocians
- b. in the community: Chrysostom, John of Damascus, Eutyches
- c. in national leadership: Leo the Isaurian
- d. in the developed political community: Cyril, Nestorius

3. Missionary Expansion: Cyril, Methodius, etc.

D. Doctrinal Problems and the Great Councils...I can only summarize in the most brief fashion:

1. Nicaea: (325) settled the Arian problem determining the full deity of our Lord
2. Constantinople (381) Settle the Apollinarian problem on Christ's full humanity
3. Ephesus (431) settled the Nestorian issue on Mary's status
4. Chalcedon (451) defined Christ's two natures
5. Constantinople II (553)
6. Constantinople III. (680)
7. Nicaea II (787) settled(?) iconoclasm

These were "ecumenical" councils meaning that they involved the totality of the Christian church in some ways. Well....

E. Missionary Expansion: Pushed very hard by the monastic movement and particular note must be made of Patrick and his followers as well as Francis of Assisi, et al.

F. The Great Division: Eastern and Western Church divide, separate and fight! 1054.....the big issue centers on the Latin term "filioque" but there were plenty of other issues.

G. The External witnesses: hard to evaluate in some cases but here are a few names....

- 1, Wycliffe: Lollards
2. Hus: Bohemians
3. Albigensians
4. Waldensians
5. The German brotherhoods. And many others, but.

H. Development of Church Political power and the weaknesses in almost all political programs.

Iconoclasm

all called by emperor
Keep the scandalous

Monks

Continue reach's
out,
occupy
yourself
with
things of
God

2
Issue of
power
wealth
promises

-5-
A pattern of
two dodges

Church
becomes a
power broker

(Vat head
act)

The Church in Historical-Theological Perspective

IV. The Revival Church (Reformation, etc) Fourth Message

A. Some details:

1. The Time Period is essentially 1400-1700. Once again we can only have the briefest of discussions but some of the related material is crucial to our understanding of the work of the church today.
2. We are well past the Biblical period but try the last chapter of Hosea as an indication of what God wants and what the church might offer today. It is very relevant but one may have to work with it for a few moments to see the point!
3. And please remember what I am trying to say: the called out company is looking for the Lord's return but in the meantime it has a witness to give and history helps us to know where that witness can be most impressive and also where it can be the least.
4. There are three major phases to this unit and all are important so.... *Revival*
FTB 1800 The condition of life

B. The scholastic period: to 1500...some overlap with the previous period.

Scholasticism was a feature of this period in which the "thinkers" tried to discover answers to the needs of a civilization that was broken in many ways with much frustration and poverty. It grew out of the monastic ideals where scholars had some time to think in relative security. Among the great scholars was Anselm who gave an explanation to the work of the atonement that is known as the vicarious view and it is dominant today. Aquinas was one of the big thinkers and the attempts were made to have mankind understand the problems that besieged it. The movement was not reformatory but challenging for the status quo. It was concerned with reality, living and understanding the providential pressures one faced day by day.

- #### C. The reformation period before 1500 had forerunners in the works of Wycliff, Hus, etc. It represented a theological revolution against the unfeeling, superstitious, sacerdotal and synergistic ideas to advance man's salvation. (Sorry--if the terms are unknown I will try to define them) Luther is a prime figure as he rebelled against the disadvantaged position in which much of his people lived under the cold eye of the church. In consensus with other reformers (Calvin, Zwingli, Melancthon, Simons, etc., etc.) he urged a return

Thomas in Easternology

*Confession
Repentance
regret & confession
1-3
Apostles
Confession*

*Condition of life
D We cannot
deliberately
(sacerdotalism
synergism*

*Am anxious
on the Word of
God and the
faithfulness of
Believers*

*don't
carry points
anymore*

*Believe or the
Lord Jesus
Christ*

when we moved
from there

(Puritans thinking)
should / Paul

to Bible reading and study and insisted on the priesthood of each and every believer. It seemed that the church had become the ruler of souls and had, in many ways, replaced the grace of God with the avarice of men.

D. The third segment was the Puritan period where the scholars, etc., attempted to develop ecclesiastical systems that were totally free of what had thought to be wrong in the previous systems. This led to much confusion over individual doctrines and eventually drew followers to Pietism, Mysticism, etc., as replacement theological ideas from the older days.

C. In the long run the emphasis was on a return to the Bible as the guidebook of Christians and that the church should be a servant of the "called out company" rather than the master. It is complicated but we learn a lot from it is we will...and a major thrust is that of listening to the Lord as He has spoken in His Word and then seeking to fulfill it.

3) No system
will guarantee
spiritual health

The church survives ^{survives}
because: the Lord's plan
purpose
performance

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VI. The Modern Church (Fifth Message)

A. Details:

The Period is largely 1700-2000. It is a period that sees great changes in almost every aspect of life and major challenges for the church. Some of the great factors that influence it are:

1. World expansion (finding what the world really is)
2. Giant wars and periods of great depression
3. Increased ability in communication and travel
4. Revivalism (there have always been revivals but....)
5. Missionary enterprise
6. The "one world" philosophies and these leading to the modern ecumenical movement among the ecclesiastical institutions.
7. Progress in science: medicine, cosmology, technology

B. Scripture: Read the warnings in Acts 20 as well as those in 2 Peter and Jude.

C. Theological Disputes:

1. Modernism: the attempt to interpret the Bible in the light of present knowledge
2. Liberalism: the attempt to read or interpret the Bible in a non-obligatory way...the text is not binding, we are "free."
3. Philosophy: Too much for a poor farmer to discuss but the ideas were to find man's path without recourse to a basic truth.
4. Biblical criticism: The study of the Bible to take it apart and discern genuine parts from non-genuine parts (over simplification).
5. Church diversions: How much energy, etc., should be put into societal issues and programs...the role of the social Gospel.
6. The Ecumenical Movement....an attempt to unite "church" bodies in a societal way with little or no regard to doctrine or principle.

D. Developments:

1. Missions: enormous change in movement and maintenance.
2. Para-Church work
3. Eschatological fervor
4. Development of "issue" churches
5. The mega-church move and the rebirth of Pentecostalism.

E. And Message six....the future church....wait until another year!

*Evangelical - but don't
Simplify - be honest
Responses: keep the faith
Theology - watch out
Tolerance - be careful
Society - strengthen
Philosophy: open door
Socialism - be committed*

Emergent Church

7/

#1. Church Growth

- + Seeker churches - direct things that most others uncomfortable
- Megachurches - what it takes to draw a crowd
- Emergent churches - to merge move traditional things that show us down
- Common dangers = losing foundation

The Church in Historical-Theological Perspective

In Summary:

When we view the church in this perspective we realize that the Lord is the One building it and He has shown us His ability in the midst of our failures. Our dependence and expectations are of Him. His presence and interest are guaranteed and His program has not failed nor will fail. It is our joy to know Him and our privilege to serve His purposes. These cautionary notes are needed in the ideal of the advice Paul gave to the churches of his labor and their continuing effect even to our day.

1. Doctrinal soundness is a vital part for any program. Not the splitting of hairs but the understanding of sound doctrine as in the Timothy letters. It is necessary that we know what the Bible teaches rather than developing an idea and hunting it in the Bible.
2. Believers must learn to work, pray, and commit together. Total understanding of every issue is not needed but love, appreciation, and understanding are always in order.
3. A sense of commitment and perseverance is a necessary part...see the book of Nehemiah for a good picture of this.
4. Understand that power, wealth, and prestige can be great foes as they make us feel superior to others and even to God.
5. Love for the work, person, and will of God is an emotional value that sustains the worker and glorifies God in the fulfillment.
6. Ultimately truth will conquer...patience and persistence help us very much.
7. The practical study of God's Word and the application of it to all of life is a necessary activity for all of us.

The testimony of God is here to stay. It has withstood many storms. It is our desire to be with it, in it, and honored by it. No institution known to humanity has done as much for our culture and souls as the church. We should be very thankful to be enabled to be part of it---by the grace of God.

Notes:

This is a sidewise test...parts of it have been used elsewhere...if you see something familiar, good.

here are three parts: Part I talks about events in the Roman system working with papal leaders. The total value of the part is 2 pts. per question...50 points

Part II is complicated. It consists of ten short sentences calling for rather specific answers. You will like it. Each answer is 5 points....50 points altogether.

Part III is more complicated. It has six sections. Each speaks for itself.

- A is worth 25 points
- B is worth 16
- C is worth 20
- D. is worth 20
- E is worth 18
- F is worth 30

That's a lot of points!@

So, if there are some things you don't know there are probably a lot you do. Try hard.

NOTE THIS VERY CAREFULLY:

Have you finished the required readings for the semester _____

Have ;you also done the optional readings for the semester _____

Score for this test:

Points: _____

Grade _____

Previous Test

Readings

Final Grade
