



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

**FACULTY OF ARTS AND DEPARTMENT OF  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**COURSE CODE: CTH 826**

**COURSE TITLE: ECCLESIOLOGY**

**BY**

**DR. (MRS.) ISHOLA, H.T.K**

Reviewed by

REV PHILIP TACHIN, PHD

Edited by:

Prof. A. O Dairo



**CRS826  
ECCLESIOLOGY**

Course Team:

Dr.(Mrs.) Ishola, H.T.K (Developer/Writer)  
Prof. Adewale (Editor) - NOUN  
Dr. Philip Tachin (Reviewer) - NOUN  
Prof. Godwin I. Akper (Programme Leader) - NOUN



## **NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

National Open University of Nigeria  
Headquarters  
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way  
Victoria Island  
Lagos

Abuja Office  
5, Dar es Salaam Street  
Off Aminu Kano Crescent  
Wuse II, Abuja  
Nigeria

e-mail: [centralinfo@noun.edu.ng](mailto:centralinfo@noun.edu.ng)

URL: [www.noun.edu.ng](http://www.noun.edu.ng)

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## **Introduction**

Ecclesiology CRS826 is a three-credit graduate course. This course is offered in the first semester of the second year to students who are offering Christian Theology. There are no prerequisite courses for this course. Ecclesiology however is a course that should be taken as a branch of the doctrine of Church History because the connection between the two courses helps you to appreciate the issues of the church that are involved. Some of the things you would study in this course are things which you might undertake in your third or fourth year of study. This course consists of four Modules with units that have been developed using global and local events.

This Study Guide contains the required information about the entire course. It guides you through the course content and the number of required assignments that you would do. There is also an assignment file. This file prescribes the course requirements as well as the grading system. This Study Guide is intended to help you as a distance learner to aid you in your study of this course at National Open University of Nigeria. The aims and objectives of this course are stated in this Course Guide. This Course Guide will help you to know at the beginning of the course what you should expect from the study of the course, and what you are expected to learn from the course. The Study Guide is not the only resource for you. Its goal is to help you pass the course.

There are other resources that can also help you to pass your course such as text books, the course material itself and facilitation class sessions, which are optional. Another very important use of the Study Guide is the plan and use of time. It states on a weekly basis how you should proceed with your studies. If you pay attention to this plan guide, you will surely complete your study of the course successfully on time before the examination date. Take advantage of the time guide in this Study Guide. It is a sure way to passing your course in flying colours.

This Course Guide tells all that is obtainable in this course and the relevant materials that would help you expand the understanding of the course. This would provide you a guide on how to proceed with your study of the materials and the time frame for a successful completion of the course. This guide will also help to direct you in your tutor-marked assignments and materials for further readings.

It is important to go through this Study Guide very carefully before beginning your study of the course material. The temptation to jump to course materials without going through the Study Guide for the sake of saving time is high but also a wrong decision. Students who go straight and study course materials without first going through the Study Guide

usually end up not doing well at the end of the course. Going through the Study Guide is part of studying the course material. Complete the feedback form at the end and submit it with your first assignment to your tutorial facilitator.

You may ask the student counsellor at your Study Centre about your tutorial facilitator and where to find him/her. I believe this would be helpful if you heed to this useful advice.

### **Course Aims**

The general aim of this course is to introduce you to major issues and developments in the history of Ecclesiology. This will also orientate you towards understanding other courses in Church History such as controversies, liturgy, and the creeds of the churches. You will find these broadly in Church History courses.

The aims of this course would be achieved by:

- Introducing the student to Ecclesiology as a discipline that shapes their thinking on past and current developments in the Western and African churches.
- Ability to contribute to the Ecclesiological debate for the growth of the church.
- Educating and also creating opportunities for students' participation in developing thoughts on Ecclesiology from an African perspective that is biblically sound.
- Helping students apply their faith to a strong church commitment.

### **Course Objectives**

When you have successfully finished the course, you should be able to:

- define Ecclesiology and its genesis;
- account for the historical development of Ecclesiology from the early church to the present time;
- identify issues in Ecclesiology;
- describe ways of engaging in more effectively in developing biblical Ecclesiology.

## **Working through This Course**

You are required to walk through the course content, unit by unit in order to complete the course. It is also a requirement for you to do all the self-assessment exercises for each section of the unit and tutor-marked assignments at the end of each unit. The tutor-marked assignments will form 30% of your final grade while there is a final examination which you will take electronically. This constitutes 70% of your final grade.

## **Course Materials**

The major components of the course are:

1. Course Guide
2. Study Units
3. Textbooks
4. Assignment File

## **Study Units**

There are four modules in this course. Module 1 has five units while modules two and three have four and five units respectively. The modules are designed to cover three major aims of the course.

### **MODULE 1: BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF ECCLESIOLOGY**

UNIT 1: Meaning and Definition of Ecclesiology

UNIT 2: Origin of the Church

UNIT 3: The Church and Her Relationship with Jesus, the Founder of Christianity

UNIT 4: The Purpose of the Church

UNIT 5: The Church's Authority or Leadership

UNIT 6: The Universal Visible or Local Church

UNIT 7: The Universal Invisible Church

### **MODULE 2: TYPOLOGIES AND MODELS OF ECCLESIOLOGY**

UNIT 1 Categories/ Types of Ecclesiology

UNIT 2 Roman Catholic Ecclesiology

UNIT 3 Protestant Ecclesiology

UNIT 4 Eastern Orthodox Ecclesiology

UNIT 5 Christology and Eschatology

- UNIT 6 Pentecostal Ecclesiology
- UNIT 7 African Pentecostal Ecclesiology

### MODULE 3: SACRAMENTS

- UNIT 1 Meaning and definitions of Sacraments
- UNIT 2 Early Christian Rites /Types of Sacraments
- UNIT 3 The importance of Sacraments
- UNIT 4 The application of Sacraments in contemporary Church
- UNIT 5 Soteriology or Salvation
- UNIT 6 Church Discipline
- UNIT 7 Church Discipline is a God-given Duty

### MODULE 4: AFRICAN ECCLESIOLOGY

- UNIT 1: Background of the African Ecclesiology
- UNIT 2: Ecclesiology in African Context
- UNIT 3: Ecclesiology in African Theology of Reconstruction
- UNIT 4: African Protestant ecclesiology

### Textbooks and References

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### **Assignment File**

The Directorate of Examinations and Assessments of the National Open University of Nigeria will mail an assignment file to you through your Study Centre Manager. This assignment file is part of the course. This file contains the assignments that you have to submit to your tutor. These assignments will be marked and recorded and they will count towards your final grade. The assignments must be submitted to your tutor at the stipulated time that he or she decides. The assignments account for 30% of the total course work. At the end of the course you are required to sit for a final semester examination of 3 hours which accounts for 70% of the total marks for the course.

### **Assessments**

There are two kinds of assessment for this course. One is tutor-marked assignment and the other is a written examination. There are 21 units of tutor-marked assignments in all the four modules. You are expected to submit all assignments but only the best four will be counted. Each of these is worth 10% marks and together constitutes 30% of your total course marks. These assignments require application of the information, knowledge and experience acquired in the study.

Unit Title of the Study  
Weeks Activity  
Assignment  
Course Guide 1  
Course Guide Form

Module 1  
Assignment

Module 2  
Assignment

Module 3  
Assignment

Module 4  
Assignment

TMA to be submitted Revision/Examination 16+1 Total 17

### **Summary**

This course is designed to help you gain some insights into a historical study of Ecclesiology. The course begins with a historical study of the genesis and development of Ecclesiology. This course surveys the Ecclesiological development from the early church to the contemporary global theological development within different cultural and philosophical contexts.

## **AN OUTLINE OF THE COURSE MATERIAL**

### **MODULE 1: BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF ECCLESIOLOGY**

UNIT 1: Meaning and Definition of Ecclesiology

UNIT 2: Origin of the Church

UNIT 3: The Church and Her Relationship with Jesus, the Founder of Christianity

UNIT 4: The Purpose of the Church

UNIT 5: The Church's Authority or Leadership

UNIT 6: The Universal Visible or Local Church

UNIT 7: The Universal Invisible Church

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UNIT 1        Categories/ Types of Ecclesiology

UNIT 2        Roman Catholic Ecclesiology

UNIT 3        Protestant Ecclesiology

UNIT 4        Eastern Orthodox Ecclesiology

UNIT 5        Christology and Eschatology

UNIT 6        Pentecostal Ecclesiology

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UNIT 4 The application of Sacraments in contemporary Church

UNIT 5 Soteriology or Salvation

UNIT 6 Church Discipline

UNIT 7 Church Discipline is a God-given Duty

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UNIT 1: Background of the African Ecclesiology

UNIT 2: Ecclesiology in African Context

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## **MODULE 1: BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF ECCLESIOLOGY**

UNIT 1: Meaning and Definition of Ecclesiology

UNIT 2: Origin of the Church

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UNIT 5: The Church's Authority or Leadership

UNIT 6: The Universal Visible or Local Church

UNIT 7: The Universal Invisible Church

### **UNIT 1: MEANING AND DEFINITION OF ECCLESIOLOGY**

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Intended learning Outcomes**
- 3.0 Main Content**
  - 3.1 What is Ecclesiology?**
  - 3.2 An overview of Ecclesiology**
  - 3.3 Why Study Ecclesiology**
  - 3.4 The word 'Church' in the Scriptures.**
- 4.0 Conclusion**
- 5.0 Summary**
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment**
- 7.0 Self-Assessment**
- 8.0 References/Further Readings**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This first unit provides a background to the study of Ecclesiology. It gives the meaning and definitions of ecclesiology. This unit is very important as it sets out the pace for the subsequent units. The unit also discusses the purpose of the church, such as teaching of biblical doctrines, evangelism and provision of place for fellowship for her membership.

#### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Define the term Ecclesiology
- Give reasons why we study Ecclesiology.
- Explain the concept of church as a universal one and as it relates to the scriptures.

#### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

- 3.1 What is Ecclesiology?**
- 3.2 An overview of Ecclesiology**
- 3.3 Why Study Ecclesiology**

### 3.4 The word ‘Church’ in the Scriptures.

#### 3.1 What is Ecclesiology?

Many scholars have different perceptions about ecclesiology. Etymologically, the word Ecclesiology comes from two Greek words meaning "assembly" and "word" combining to mean "the study of the church." The word Church is a derivation of the Greek word *ekklesia* meaning the assembly of God's people (Babalola, D. O. 2010). In the wider usage, the word Ecclesiology refers to a lawful assembly, or a legislative body, especially in Greco-Roman world. However, in the narrower sense, it is the theological study of Christian Church. Also the word is used to describe a community with shared beliefs, such as the beliefs in the Triune God, Salvation, Baptism, healing, the Creed and so on.

Ecclesiology is the study of the church, or the assembly of believers who belong to God. Ecclesiology is crucial to the understanding of God's purpose for believers in the world today because it provides the Church's origin, its relationship with Christ, its role in salvation history, its discipline, leadership and destiny of the Church.

#### 3.2 An overview of Ecclesiology

Today, **ecclesiology** usually refers to the theological study of the Christian Church. The word ecclesiology was an English neologism and was later on coined in the late 1830 and 40s respectively. It was defined as the science of the building and decoration of churches and it is still, though rarely, used in this sense. Ecclesiology is crucial to the understanding of God's purpose for believers in the world today and at the same time relates to such Christian doctrine like Christology, Eschatology, Soteriology, Angelology and so on.

In its theological sense, ecclesiology deals with the church's origin, its relationship to Jesus, its role in salvation, its discipline, its destiny, and its leadership. Since different ecclesiology give shape to very different institutions, the word may also refer to a particular church or denomination's character, self-described or otherwise – hence phrases such as *Roman Catholic ecclesiology*, *Lutheran ecclesiology*, and *ecumenical ecclesiology*.

The roots of the word *ecclesiology* come from the Greek *ἐκκλησίᾱ*, *ekklēsiā* (Latin *ecclesia*) meaning "congregation, church and a combining term used in the names of sciences or bodies of knowledge.

Its first appearance in print, as *ecclesiology*, was in the quarterly journal *The British Critic* in 1837, in an article written by an anonymous contributor who defines it thus:

*Ecclesiology as a science which may treat of the proper construction and operations of the Church, or Communion, or Society of Christians; and which may regard men as they are members of that society, whether members of the Christian Church in the widest*

*acceptation of the term, or members of some branch or communion of that Church, located in some separate kingdom, and governed according to its internal forms of constitution and discipline.*

However, the Cambridge Camden Society in 1845 claimed that they had invented the word *ecclesiology*

...as a general organ of Ecclesiology; that peculiar branch of science to which it seems scarcely too much to say, that this very magazine gave first its being and its name.

*The Ecclesiologist* was first published in October 1841 and dealt with the study of the building and decoration of churches. It particularly encouraged the restoration of Anglican churches back to their supposed Gothic splendour and it was at the centre of the wave of Victorian restoration that spread across England and Wales in the second half of the 18th century.

The situation regarding the etymology is summed up by the Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Modern Christian Thought:

*'Ecclesiology' is a term that has changed its meaning in recent theology. Formerly the science of the building and decoration of churches, promoted by the Cambridge Camden Society, the Ecclesiological Society and the journal The Ecclesiologist, ecclesiology now stands for the study of the nature of the Christian church.*

### **3.3 Why Study Ecclesiology**

- The study of ecclesiology is important and essentially paramount as it gives us a better understanding and our perception of the Church.
- It exposes us to the basic history of the founding of the Church and her founder Jesus Christ
- Ecclesiology is all embracing as it involves other doctrines of the Church which are, the Trinitarian doctrine, Christology, Eschatology, Soteriology, Sacraments, Jesus' relationship with the Church, that is, as the body of Christ. Leadership (Governance in the Church). The worship itself. etc. Some of these shall be discussed later.
- It has impact upon our daily Christian living, especially in the area of self discipline, self denial, sacrifice, etc.
- It grounds our understanding of the Church and as well our understanding of who Jesus is.



### 3.4 Church in the Scriptures.

You will also discover that many people have different perceptions about the Church. Many people face a great deal of confusion about the Church. Some have not had parental examples of Church involvement. Others have recently been saved and are wondering how they could participate in the ministries of the Church, or why the Church is even necessary. Others have visited several churches and may still be looking for their "home church." (Denominational affiliations). Even those who have grown up in a particular local church have heard comments about church differences and divisions. We will be discussing why the church exists and the part each member is to contribute to please the Lord Jesus Christ in His Body--His *ecclesia*.

The Pauline Epistles particularly I Timothy 3:14-15 and 1 Corinthians respectively give us some information concerning the Church: That the Church could be described as:-

- the house of God
- it belongs to the living God
- it is the pillar and support of truth
- It is the bride of Christ.
- It is the flock of God.
- It is the temple of God and of the Holy Spirit I Cor. 3:16, Eph.2: 11-12.
- The Church is referred to as the body of Christ, I Cor. 6:15-16, 10:16-17.
- The Church is an army involved in spiritual warfare or conflicts which is accomplished by the sword and power of the Holy Spirit. Eph.6:10-19
- From the foregoing it is evidenced that the Church is being perceived in diverse ways.

Furthermore, is in the fact that the basic meaning of *ecclesia* from the verb EK-KALEO "to call out." This word is the Greek words *kaleo* (to call), with the prefix *ek* (out). So it is a called out group selected from a larger group by a call. i.e. "*the called out ones*." However, to some minds the word 'Ekklesia' is not limited to just a Christian or theological usage, it is used of any called out assembly whether for sacred purpose or otherwise. The non-theological usage of the term gives us some real insights into the nature of the Church. It is a group of individuals who have been called out of sin, called out of their old life styles, to receive salvation found in Christ Jesus, that is, they are called to Christ, for Christ and by Christ. The above assertion could be linked with how Jesus during His life time and ministry called his twelve Apostles at different time and various places, Mark 1:16-20, Lk. 6:12-16.

In another vein (Dennis McCallum and Gary Delashmutt (2012) assert that, the word church is a poor translation of the word *ekklesia* since it implies a sacred building, or temple. A more accurate translation would be "assembly" because the term *ekklesia* was used to refer to a group of people who had been called out to a meeting. It was also used as a synonym for the word synagogue, which also means to "come together," i.e. a gathering. "Body of Christ" Since believers have been united with

Christ through spiritual baptism, they are sometimes corporately referred to as the body of Christ. (Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:11,13, 18,27; Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:30) The idea seems to be that the group of Christians in the world constitute the physical representation of Christ on earth. It is also a metaphor which demonstrates the interdependence of members in the church, while at the same time demonstrating their diversity from one another. (Rom. 12:4; 1 Cor. 12:14-17)

Ajewole (2011) supports the above by viewing the Church as ‘the composition of those who are called out of the world of sin into the fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ’ Ajewole continues by quoting (Obasanjo 2005) that the Church is ‘the assembly of believers in Christ, which are called out, baptized by the Holy Spirit into His body, and joined to the Lord and to one another by the Holy Spirit’. The latter definition is more encompassing with the emphasis on the activities of the Holy Spirit. A believer is baptized by the ‘Holy Spirit’, join into one body by the same Spirit and so on. A careful and proper examination of the above definitions of the church is that we are exposed to the fact that the Church is the body of Christ and Christ as the head of the church. In essence, we are the church and when often we hear people say am going to church, it simply means the coming together of the called out ones.

Biblical usage: The bible references below gives a better understanding of the scriptural usage of the church

- a. Secular group-- Acts 19:32 &39(political assembly)
- b. Jewish group -- Acts 7:38 (assembly in wilderness at Mt. Sinai)
- c. Church universal (Body of Christ) -- Matt16:18; Eph 1:22-23;5:25
- d. Local church -- Acts 14:23; I Cor. 1:2
- e. Group of churches -- Acts 9:31

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

Ecclesiology, which is the theological study of the church has been carefully defined and its relationship with other areas of the church. The layman and theological meaning of the church is an important aspect of the unit. Its study is imperative as it exposes an individual whether theologians, laity, academia to a better understanding of ecclesiology.

#### **5.0 Summary**

In this unit the meanings and definitions of ecclesiology have been looked into, the overview of ecclesiology through diverse approaches, the Church and her importance in the understanding of ecclesiology. Also the need to study ecclesiology had been highlighted.

#### **6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment**

- 1. Define Ecclesiology.
- 2. What are the reasons for the study of ecclesiology?

## 7.0 Self-Assessment Questions.

1. What is Church?
2. List the different names in which the Church is described.
3. How would you assess the contemporary Church in the light of the various descriptions of the Church in some of the Pauline Epistles?

## 8.0 References/ Further Readings

Ajewole, Bayo (2011) *Management Strategies for effective church leadership*, Lagos. Scanprints.

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## **UNIT 2: ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH**

### **1.0 Introduction**

In this unit we want to look into how the church came into being. Give the appropriate definition of the church and lastly to discuss the purpose and importance of the church.

### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Give both the general and specific definitions of Church
- List the purpose of the Church
- Examine the importance of the Church

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 General Definition**

#### **3.2 Specific Definition**

#### **3.3 Prophecies and Historical Facts**

#### **3.4 The Beginning of the Faith**

#### **3.5 The Arrival of Jesus Christ**

### **3.1 General Definition**

The Church can be defined in two different ways as below: (General and Specific).

#### **3.1 General Definition**

The general definition is linked with the expression of Apostle Paul as contained in these central passages: Eph 3:5-6 *“In the mystery of Christ which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be followers, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel”* Also I Cor. 12:13 says *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit.”* (The Holy Bible, 2003)

Therefore, the two different views on the general definitions are summarised below:-

- a. Covenant theology: The church of Christ in its largest significance is the whole company of regenerated persons of all time and ages in Heaven and on earth. This would include all the O.T. saints as well as the N.T. saints (believers).
- b. Dispensational (Chafer, Scofield): The Church is the whole company of the redeemed of all generations between Pentecost and the rapture.

The above can be substantiated with the following references that:

1. In Eph 3:5, 6 --This one body composed of Jews and Gentiles, something not formerly revealed, but is now revealed. Verses 9:10 demonstrate that he is speaking of the Church.  
I Cor. 10:32 -- There are distinctions between Jews, Gentiles, and the Church these are three separate groups.
3. Matt 16:18 -- Christ's prediction of a future Church "I will build my Church and the gate of hell shall not prevail against it"
4. Eph 5:25-27 -- The true Church could not have existed prior to Christ's death since she must be redeemed by His blood.
5. I Cor. 12:13-14 -- The true Church could not exist until the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost because she can be formed only by the present ministry of the Spirit in baptizing all members into one Body and causing them to drink into one Spirit.

### 3.2 Specific Definition

Specific definition refers to the perspective of the scriptures as regard the definition of the Church from the N.T canon especially the Epistles. The Church is seen as:

1. A *mystery*-- Eph 3:5-6; Col 1:26; Rom 16:25, 26. The definition -- a fresh revelation or something now revealed that was not previously revealed and so previously unknown. The application to the Church would be that the specific nature of the church is new. Jews and Gentiles are now fellow members (common wealth of Israel) of the same body and the Gentiles are fellow heirs with the Jews and share in the promises of the Messiah. Therefore, this means the Church by its nature or its program was not revealed in the O.T. (I Cor. 15:51; Rom 11:25; Matt 13:11, 30, 40-43).
2. The Church is a *distinct body*, separate from Israel Eph 2:14-15, a new man or body I Cor. 12:13, a new body composed of Jews and Gentiles. I Cor. 10:32 refers to three classes of men or groups recognized: (Jews, Gentiles and the Church of God).
3. The Church is not the replacement of Israel nor does it absorb the promises to Israel. The Church has program as distinct from Israel.
4. Time defined -- Rom 11:25 -- At the end of God's dealing with the
5. Gentiles and at Christ's return (i.e. at the last trumpet) for the Church. I Thess. 4:16; I Cor. 15:52

A *parenthesis* between God's two dealings with the nation of Israel—Acts 15: Rom 11:13- 17, 25-29 – reveal that the Jews were broken off and the Gentiles were grafted in. Later, however the Jews will be re grafted at the second coming of Christ.

### 3.3 Prophecies and Historical Facts

**History of Christianity**- did it all really happen? At first glance, the history of the origin of Christianity may seem like nothing more than a fairy tale. Many feel that it's just too implausible, and even intellectually dishonest, for people living in the 21st century to believe that these events actually took place. However, the Christian faith, unlike any other religion, hinges on historical events, including one of pivotal importance. If Jesus Christ died and never rose to life, then Christianity is a myth or a

fraud. In 1 Corinthians 15:14, Paul exhorts his readers to grab hold of this central truth, "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." The evidence for the resurrection is the key to establishing that Jesus is indeed who He claims to be. It is the historical validity of this central fact that gives Christians genuine and eternal hope amidst a hurting world.

Though most of the historical records for the beginning of the Christian faith is recorded in the New Testament accounts, the history of Christianity actually began with prophecy in the Old Testament. There are over 300 prophecies (predictions) that span over a period of 1000 years that are recorded in the Old Testament concerning the coming of a Jewish Messiah.

*Prophet Isaiah prophesied (Isaiah 9:6, for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting father, the Prince of peace), other scriptural references agreed with this prophesy ( Isa7:14;Lk1:30-31,2vs11; )*

A study of Jesus' life, death and background will show that He was undoubtedly the fulfilment of these Messianic prophecies. Thus, even long before Jesus walked on the earth, His mission was made known to mankind through the Word of God.

### **3.4 The Beginning of the Faith**

History of Christianity -- how did it all start? Christianity started about 2000 years ago in Judea (present-day Israel) with Jesus Christ and His faithful group of disciples. During this period, Judea was a cross-cultural Mecca of bustling cities and farms. The emperor of Rome was the ruler. The Jews at that time hated Roman rule. It was but another reminder of the historical oppression they faced as a people in the land of Egypt. The polytheistic cultural beliefs of Rome were also pagan and intrusive to Jewish life. Some Jews saw that their only hope was to conform to this change. Others became religious zealots who formed pockets of guerrilla resistance against Rome. Still others withdrew themselves into the Judean wilderness to study the Jewish law and wait for the eventual coming of their promised Messiah ( the Saviour).

Divergent views are replete on the origin of the Church especially among various authorities and theologians on the commencement of the universal Church. For example, it was held by that the Church began in the wilderness when the Israelites were on their way to the promised land. In essence, they were in the assembly.

Kawl Hanbusch and Wendlend who were both Catholic and non-Catholic asserted that the Church began during the last supper when Christ was having the meal with His twelve Apostles, a day before His arrest for the crucifixion. While others believed that the Church was born during the baptism of Jesus, when a voice was heard from heaven that 'this is my beloved son, hear him'.

Furthermore, it started when Christ began His earthly Ministry in Galilee, teaching, preaching and moving about for His ministerial assignment.

Also, according to De-groot and Herve who were Catholics and non-Catholic Bonsho affer were of the belief that the Church was born when Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles of Christ. Some other schools of thought assert that the Church began on the cross. It was also asserted that when Jesus made a pronouncement to Peter that "upon this rock will I build my Church and the gate of hell shall not prevail against it". (Matt 16:18; Jn. 16:13; 14:16, 17; Jn15:26, 27; Acts 1:8) .This opinion had been interpreted that Jesus was merely referring to the role which Peter was to play later in the early Church.

Other believed that the Church started during the Pentecost, that was forty days after the ascension of Jesus into heaven as He has promised them the decent of the Holy Spirit. (Acts.2). The Holy Spirit is to empower the Apostles and other disciples in the propagation of the gospel. However, Pope Pius the XI summarized all these views by saying that the Church began when Jesus was born and it continued throughout His earthly ministry but on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles with the one hundred and twenty people in the upper room in Jerusalem thus received a public (Universal) confirmation. Hence without the birth of Jesus there would not have been anything like the Church or Christianity. Jesus is the founder of the Church.

### **3.5 The Arrival of Jesus Christ**

We cannot evade the background of Jesus whenever we are discussing about the history of the Church, Jesus is the subject matter, thus the cultural and His religious background is very important. With this cultural and religious backdrop, the ministry of Jesus began. Jesus was a Jew. He observed the Jewish faith (Judaism) and was well acquainted with the Jewish Law. In His early thirties, Jesus travelled from village to village, teaching in the synagogues and healing those who were suffering. Jesus' teaching was revolutionary. He challenged the established religious authorities to repent from their self-righteousness and hypocrisy and realize that the Kingdom of God is rooted in service and love. Jesus' teachings stirred the hearts of people and created instability, something the Jewish religious authorities feared. Soon, a faithful group of men began to follow Jesus and call him teacher. These men became His disciples. Jesus taught His disciples about the will of God and about the "new covenant" God will bring to humanity through Him. Jesus helped them to see that mankind is bound to the pain and futility of life as a result of sin. Due to sin, mankind lost its relationship with God. The purpose of this "new covenant" is to restore those who accept it into a renewed fellowship of forgiveness and love with God. What is this new covenant? Jesus himself would pay for the sins of all humanity by being crucified unjustly on a

Roman cross. Three days later, He would rise to life, having conquered death, to give hope to a hopeless world. Well, it happened just as Jesus taught, and His disciples were witnesses to an amazing miracle. Their teacher, Jesus of Nazareth, died and three days later rose again to become their Messiah. Compelled by a great commission to share the love that the God of this universe had imparted upon them, the disciples began to proclaim this gospel of hope throughout the territory. Thus, from a small group of ordinary men that lived in a small province in Judea about 2000 years ago, the history of the Christian Church began, and the Christian Faith has since spread to the rest of the world. Their gospel message was simple: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). This religion was soon propagated to other parts of the world through the missionary activities in which we are beneficiaries till date.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

The origin of Christianity has many divergent views which were x-rayed in this unit. Scriptural prophecies were inferred by Old Testament (O.T) prophets concerning the Messiah who became the Founder of Christianity. The contemporary church did not come from the blue, but has its origin from Palestine - the present Middle -East.

#### **5.0 Summary**

In the just concluded unit both the general and specific definitions of the church were adequately examined. The beginning of the Christian faith and historical facts about the church and her founder were subjects of discussion.

It ended with the prophecies made by the O.T Prophets as regards the birth of the Christian Church. Christians believe that Jesus is the Messiah prophesied in the Hebrew Bible, referred to as the "Old Testament". The foundation of Christian theology is expressed in the early Christian ecumenical creeds which contain claims predominantly accepted by followers of the Christian faith.

#### **6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment**

1. Narrate concisely how the Church began in the present day Middle-East
2. What was the religious background upon which the founder of Christianity was born?
3. Mention and explain the two general definitions of the Church

#### **7.0 Self-Assessment Question**

Explain any four views as regards the time of the birth of the Church.



How would you explain the differences between the general and specific definitions of the Church?

### **8.0 References/ Further Readings**

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## **UNIT 3: THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH**

### **1.0 Introduction**

In the preceding unit, you are expected to know and understand the purpose and importance of the Church of Christ to its members either in the local or larger communities. The mission of the Church to the cosmos through its agent - Jesus Christ is extensively discussed.

### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this unit you should be able to

- Mention the purpose of the Church
- Discuss the importance of the Church to her members

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 The Purpose of the Church**

#### **3.2 Importance of the Church**

#### **3.3 Tasks and Functions of the Church**

### **3.1 The Purpose of the Church**

When we talk about the role of the church, what do we mean? Is it referring to the role played by contemporary Church or the one been headed by the Apostles? In this work we are referring to only one Church in which Jesus is the head. Although in contemporary society, because the Church has been polarized, there are now denominational affiliations in which many adherents are more conscious and particular of. The role and purpose of the Church has to do with what she offers and the activities to her members. Hence, the purpose or the mission statement for the Church can be ascertained according to Acts 2:42 “They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” According to this verse, the purpose and activities of the Church should be:

1. Teaching biblical doctrine, Evangelism that is the great commission of proclaiming, growing, living and dying for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. Providing a place of fellowship for believers
3. Observing the Lord’s Supper
4. Praying

The Church is to teach biblical doctrine so that we can be adequately grounded in our faith. Eph 4: 14---“then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming”. Since Jesus has risen, He has all authority over heaven and earth (Mat 28:19-20, Acts 1:8). Therefore, Christians have

authority to evangelize and the essence of this is to make disciples. To declare in word and demonstrate in attitude and deed the character of Jesus Christ who lives within His people. To declare the reality of a life-changing encounter with a living Christ and to demonstrate that change by an unselfish, live-filled life.

The Church as well is to be a place of fellowship where Christians could be devoted to one another and honour one another (Rom 12:10), instruct one another (Rom 15: 14), be kind and compassionate to one another (Eph 4: 32), encourage one another (1 Thess. 5:10), and most importantly, love one another (1 John 3: 11).

In addition, the Church is to be a place where believers can observe the Lord's Supper, remembering Christ's death and the shed blood on her behalf. The concept of "breaking bread" also carries the idea of having meals together and sharing of gifts which is another way of the Church promoting fellowship.

Another purpose of the Church is prayer (Acts 2: 42). The Church should be a place that promotes prayer, teaches prayer and practices prayer. Phil 4: 6-7 encourages us not to be anxious of anything but in everything by prayers and petition, with thanksgiving we should present our requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understandings will guide our mind and heart in Christ Jesus.

Another purpose of the Church is to proclaim the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ (Mat 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). The Church is called to be faithful in sharing the gospel through word and deeds. The Church is to be a "lighthouse" in the community, pointing people toward our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In this regard Christians established hospitals, churches, schools, charities, orphanages, homeless shelters, and universities in the areas in which they spread Christianity.

The Church is to both promote the gospel and prepare its members to proclaim the gospel (1 Pet. 3:15). Some final purposes of the Church are given in James 1:27; "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after the orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." The Church is to be about the business of ministering to those in need. This includes not only sharing the gospel, but also providing for physical needs (food, clothing, shelter) as necessary and appropriate. The Church is also to equip believers in Christ with the tools they need to overcome sin and remain free from the pollution of the world. This is done by biblical teaching and Christian fellowship. So, what is the purpose of the Church? Paul gave an excellent illustration to the believers in Corinth. The Church is God's hands, mouth and feet in this world- the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-27). We are to be doing the things that Jesus Christ would do if He was here physically on the earth. The Church is to be "Christ-like", "Christians", and Christ-followers as recorded by Luke the physician (Acts 11:26)

## 3.2 Importance of the Church

### 1. The Mission and the Nature of the Church

The unity of the Church is particularly visible in its collective journey toward a common goal, namely the fulfilment of the gospel commission in the human sphere (Matt 28:18-20; 24:14) and its impact at the cosmic level (Eph 3:10).<sup>33</sup> On the basis of the book of Revelation Adventists traditionally have identified the following as essential characteristics of God's end-time remnant people that distinguish them from God's people those who are in Babylon:

The characteristics of such people, that is, God's people are:-

1. They keep the commandment of God (12:17)
2. They have the testimony of Jesus (12:17)
3. They are characterized by perseverance (14:10) and
4. They have the faith of Jesus (14:12).

These marks of the remnant relate to its corporate identity. In other words, there may be within the remnant individuals who are unfaithful to the Lord. Since they "are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—," the Lord says to them, "I am about to spit you out of my mouth" (Rev 3:16). The Protestant conviction that *ecclesia semper reformanda* ("The church is always in the process of being reformed") also applies to the end-time remnant. Referring to God's end-time remnant people, Ellen G. White comments, "Satan numbers the world as his subjects; he has gained control of the apostate churches; but here is a little company that care resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete" Mission should not only be understood as something that the Church does, as if the Church could still be the Church without accomplishing this most important task.

Moreover, mission, like its union with Christ and its organization, belongs to the essence of the Church. It is not something it does; it is what the Church is. So to the question, what is the Church?, one could say, "The Church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His Church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the Church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvellous light, are to show forth His glory.

The Church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through this the Church will eventually be made manifest, even to 'the principalities and powers in heavenly places,' the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10."<sup>36</sup>

This is a significant theological statement that deserves careful attention. According to it, the Church interacts within two spheres of existence, the earthly and the heavenly. In that interaction it manifests its very nature.

## **2. Mission to the World**

The first thing we should notice is that with respect to the human sphere the Church is "God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. This brief statement suggests several important thoughts. It makes clear that, as we indicated earlier, the Church is of divine origin and therefore belongs to God. It is a new creation of God in a world of sin. Besides, it has a task directly assigned to it by God, namely to be the agency for the salvation of the human race. It is not the effective cause of salvation but the agency of salvation. Its existence presupposes Christ's work of salvation.

Finally, the phrase "the Church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men," raises a question that we cannot explore here, but one thing we should be aware of is that there is no other divine agency for the salvation of humans; it points to the uniqueness of the Church.

Obviously we may distinguish between the Church and its mission and in that respect we say that the Church has a mission to the world. This distinction is useful for analysis and dialogue, but when we look at the nature of the Church it becomes obvious that mission is part of that nature. The Church is or exists in the realization of its mission. Otherwise the Church would have corrupted itself, becoming a human social entity, a type of social club without a heavenly identity.

She also wrote, "The Church of Christ is God's agency for the proclamation of truth; she is empowered by Him to do a special work".

God's purpose for the salvation of humankind is now operative through the Church of Christ.

Next, in order for the Church to reach its goal, organization is of the essence. God's appointed agency "was organized for service. Its mission is to carry the gospel into the world." The Church is not a mystical entity, amorphous or without borders. It has a structure that facilitates the expression of its nature in service to others through the proclamation of the gospel.

Third, the Church is formed by "those whom God has called out of darkness into His marvellous light." Although the Church is God's agency, the effectiveness of its mission is in the hands of God. He is the One who calls men and women out of darkness into His light. The Church is never left to itself in the fulfilment of its mission. The transfer from darkness to light radicalizes the distinction between the Church and those outside of it.

Fourth, the Church exists "to show forth God's glory." The mission of the Church does not only consist in the proclamation of the gospel through the spoken word but particularly through a transformed life. This was Jesus' understanding of the Church as a community of individuals who experienced a transforming revelation of His grace in the mystery of the incarnation (John 1:14). The revelation of the glory of God now

takes place in the transformation of the lives of those who have been joined to the body of Jesus (2 Cor. 3:18).

Fifth, what we just mentioned is possible because "the Church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ." There is a close relationship between the Church and the grace of Christ. In which sense is the Church the repository of grace? Not in the Roman Catholic sense, according to which the priesthood has control over and authority to dispense or distribute the grace of Christ. It is difficult for us as Adventist to accept the idea that the Church is a sacrament. Christ is the only source of grace and the exclusive means to dispense it to humans. We all have access to God through Christ, without the mediation of the clergy. The church is simply and only the repository of grace. This repository should not be conceived as a container filled with grace to be distributed to others, but rather as a living organism in which the richness of Christ's grace is exhibited in the transformed lives of its members. In its own actuality the Church shows forth Christ's glory and grace to the human race.

Sixth, the Church also interacts with the heavenly realm: "Through the Church we will eventually be made manifest, even to 'the principalities and powers in heavenly places,' the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10."<sup>38</sup> The Church's witnessing to the heavenly beings is so formidable that they will eventually see in it a final and full display of God's love. Ellen G. White is referring here to the final and full display of the results of God's love in the life of Church members. We are not dealing here with an abstract understanding of the love of God, but with an evidential and concrete expression of it in the life of human beings. All heavenly intelligences will be fully enlightened with the display of the love of Christ in the mystery of the Church.

The mission of the Church should be clearly focused on these two targets, the earthly and the heavenly. The oneness of the Church is expressed in its common witnessing to the content and transforming power of the sacrificial love of God in Christ.

Any attempt to reorganize the Church should be guided by the fact that ecclesiastical organization must contribute to an enrichment of that common witnessing to the cosmos. It should be understood that organizational structure is not an end in itself, but a means for the service of the Church. It derives its authority from Christ through the Church itself.

Although the Bible does not provide for us an organizational structure, it gives some guidance concerning its role. Organizational structure has to be compatible with the nature of the Church as the body of Christ, existing in intimate union with Him, and deriving its very existence from Him. God's end-time people are one in global extent (Catholic), in the truth and faithfulness.

### **3.3 Tasks and Functions of the Church**

There may be varying opinions about the multiple tasks and functions of the Church, but the following represents what would be its four highest priorities:

1. To proclaim the Gospel throughout the world and make disciples of all kinds of people. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20). "And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

The passages above, often referred to as the 'Great Commission', were among Jesus' final admonitions to His disciples before He ascended to Heaven. Mark's gospel refers to Christ's command for his followers to "go preach the gospel to the world," while Matthew's reflects His emphasis for the Church "to go and make disciples of all nations." The combination of these two elements, evangelism and discipleship, are generally considered as Christ's primary mission for His Church. "Evangelism" is the ministry of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ that will bring men's souls into fellowship with God, while "discipleship" is the training of believers to become disciplined followers of Jesus and His principles.

The mission of the Church is, in reality, a continuation of Christ's earthly ministry (John 14:12). Jesus viewed that redeeming men's souls was His whole purpose for coming to the earth. "For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost" (Matt. 18:11). And in turn, He imparted this same objective to His disciples. He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). The Apostle Paul later confirmed that the ministry of bringing people to God has been imparted to all those who have been brought to Him (the Church). He wrote, "God... has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18). It is the purpose of every believer, not only pastors and clergymen, to bring souls to Jesus Christ.

Perhaps the statement which best summarizes this mission of Christ and His Church, was given as Jesus read from Isaiah's prophecy in Nazareth's synagogue on the Sabbath day. He said, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the LORD" (Luke 4:18-19).

2. To serve as a community of worship and fellowship — to manifest the presence and love of Jesus. "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). God originally made man for His own pleasure, to enjoy His fellowship and worship (Rev. 4:11, John 4:23). Thus, a part of the Lord's purpose of the Church, besides bringing people to God, is to gather His people together and facilitate a corporate environment of worship, to express our love toward Him and one another. Jesus described these as the two highest ideals of Christianity. "And you shall

love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30-31).

The Lord is greatly pleased to receive the corporate love and worship of His children who are joined together in unity and love toward one another (Eph. 4:1-4, 1 John 1:7). His presence is manifested in such an environment, and authenticates our Christian witness in the eyes of the world. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

Sunday church services were originally modelled from the Lord's Day, gatherings of the early Church which included the agape "love feast" (Acts 20:7). They would share a common meal together (Acts 2:46) and then partake in the Lord's Supper — in recognition of the Lord's sacrificial body, and in recognition of His beloved body, the Church. It was a gathering of love to the Lord and toward one another.

3. To mature believers, He prepares them to perform works of the ministry. "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ..." (Eph. 4:11-12).

Another important mission of the Church, by means of its ministers, is to strengthen the body of believers and equip them for works of ministry. The church should be an atmosphere of spiritual edification, where God's Word is taught, where believers are grounded, disciple and led toward maturity. This not only serves to anchor their faith in Christ, but prepares them for service. According to God's plan, each member of the body of Christ is called to serve in some aspect of ministry (Rom. 12:6, 1 Cor. 12:14-31), especially as it pertains toward bringing souls to Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

Even the laity is charged to encourage and spur their brethren on toward the works of ministry, and according to scripture, this is one of the primary reasons of our church attendance. "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:24-25).

To represent the interests of the Kingdom of God in the world, and to influence our society with the ideals of the Lord. "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavour, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matt. 5:13-14).

Jesus used salt and light as metaphoric expression of the influential characteristics of His Church in the world. Historically, salt has always been a



valuable commodity used, among other things, as an antiseptic to withdraw infection. Light, of course, dispels darkness and is an essential element of life. Likewise, the presence of the Church in the world is Christ's antiseptic to sin, an influence of God's righteousness that tends to displace the infection of evil. The Church is intended to represent His interests in the affairs of society. It was never intended to be passive, nor to be confined within four walls of a building, but to be involved as a catalyst of God's high ideals in the world around us.

Christ has intended for His Church to let its light shine to the world- to love, to care for, and to meet needs of humanity, while upholding the redemptive truths and righteousness of Jesus Christ. "And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful" (Titus 3:14). Jesus told His Church, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16)

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

Throughout the unit you have learnt about the roles of the Church, its activities which it offers to its members including, teaching biblical doctrine/ Evangelism, providing a place of fellowship for believers, Observing the Lord's supper and praying, thus, leading to both the numerical and spiritual progress of the body of Christ in this planet earth.

Another important aspect that this unit covered is the purpose and mission of the Church to the cosmos. The church has peculiar nature which is to assist her in the fulfilment of the mission of Christ to the entire universe.

#### **5.0 Summary**

These are the major facts learnt in the unit:

- Apart from the spiritual responsibility of the Church, she shows concern and care for her members by meeting their physical needs (provision of foods, shelter etc), that is one of the roles of the Church, the salvation of man kinds, this she does by radiating her light in a dark world through her deeds and lifestyle.
- The nature of the Church: part of the nature of the Church is to carry out Christ's mission in which the six points are highlighted in the body of the work.
- The Church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ.
- The tasks and functions of the Church are also discussed

#### **6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment**

1. Mention three purposes of the Church
2. Discuss the four major tasks of the Church to the contemporary Society

## 7.0 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are the roles of the local Church to her members?
2. How would you rate the spiritual performance of your local church to her members and as well to those outside the flock but within the same environment?

## 8.0 References/ Further Readings

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## **UNIT 4: CHURCH AND HER RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS THE FOUNDER OF THE CHURCH**

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**
- 3.0 Main Content**
  - 3.1 The Church as a distinctive place of worship**
  - 3.2 The four-fold relationship between Christ and the Church**
- 4.0 Conclusion**
- 5.0 Summary**
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment**
- 7.0 Self-Assessment Questions**
- 8.0 References/ Further Readings**

### **1.0 Introduction**

In the unit an attempt is being made to succinctly discuss the relationship that transpire between Jesus Christ and His Church whom he laid down his precious life on the cross of Calvary.

When the Church is being referred to as the body of Christ, then there is the need to understand the relationship that exists between the two.

By proper examination of the Church, then we can understand the reason why Christ is referred to as the head of the Church, His body. Hence, the dare need to understudy the Church, the word ‘Ecclesiology’ is inevitable. The Church also has a relationship with Jesus who is both the founder of and the bridegroom of the Church, which is discussed extensively.

### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Describe the relationship between the Church and Christ
- Give the acronym used by a theologian to explain the relationship that exists between the Church and Christ
- Highlight the four-folds relationship between the Church and Christ

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

- 3.1 The Church as a distinctive place of worship**
- 3.2 The four-fold relationship between Christ and the Church**

### 3.1 The Church as a distinctive place of worship

Although in the previous unit, a lot of definitions have been discussed to describe the Church. However, an erudite theologian utilized the acronym below to further explain what the Church is. He refers to the Church as WIFE

W = Worship  
I = Instruction  
F = Fellowship  
E = Evangelism. According to Oyinloye (2001)

This agrees with the Pauline description of Christ as the husband while He (Paul) refers to the Church as WIFE. Apostle Paul in one of his Epistles (Eph.5:22-29) agrees with Oyinloye and thus advised that the women are to submit to their own husbands as the Church does to Christ who gave his life for the Church. One can arrive at the following conclusions that the Church is the body of Christ and physically a distinctive place of worship:

- a. That the Church is the togetherness of the called out ones from the Pagan worship, idol worship and from Judaism and who have accepted our Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. They have become regenerated and spiritually renewed.  
It is necessary to add that 'Regeneration' is the work of the Holy Spirit that brings new life to the inner being of believers, and adopts them into the family of God, making them become God's children. Furthermore, it is a turning to God in repentance and faith.
- b. The Church is a body of Christians.
- c. The Church also is the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22/23)

The Church is Christ's body and, as with any other body, each member has his own significant role to play in the growth and well-being of the whole:

However, Dresselhaus (1999) who is quoted by Ajewole (2011) has this conclusion that

*the Church is never a place but always a people. It is never a scared building nor a fold but always a flock and a believing Assembly. The Church is you who pray. A structure of a marble can no more be a church than your clothes of serge or satin can be you. There is in this world nothing so sacred but man, no sanctuary of man but the soul.*

A consideration of the above revealed that Church is more than the physical structure but that the individuals are the Church, the body of Christ.

### **3.2 The four-fold relationship between Christ and the Church**

- a. Christ is the head of the Church (Colossians 1: 18) while the Church is the Body of Christ.
- b. Christ is the vine (John 15: 1-2)
- c. Christ is the Bridegroom (Husband) while the Church is the Bride (II Corinthians, 11 : 2-3)
- d. Christ is the Cornerstone of the Building (II Corinthians 6:16, Mathew 16:18). Having gone thus far, it is however worthy to state that the exact date of founding the church is difficult to determine. But its founding place is believed to be Palestine, the historical land of Israel.

While some theologians are of the view that the Church came into being on the day of Pentecost, others say that it is at the expansion of the Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ, since Pentecost came after the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, and the descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2-14)

### **4.0 Conclusion**

In conclusion, though it is a general belief that the Church simply means a building or a sacred place of worship for the Christians, who are referred to as the ‘called out’ in this unit, we are able to establish the fact that Christ Himself made it plain and clear that the Church is the coming together of Christians, which is simply the Body of Christ, with Christ as the Head of the Church.

### **5.0 Summary**

In summary, this unit has helped us to understand two major views about the Church and its founder (Jesus Christ) these views are:

- Understanding the Church as a distinctive place of worship
- The four-folds relationship as discussed in the unit

It is seen that the Church is actually the assembly of those who believe and worship Christ and that are usually regarded as the called out or the chosen ones. We are the Body of Christ while Christ is the Head of this Body.

We must therefore hold it at the back of our minds that Christians and where they meet for worship are two different things but that these two are so interwoven that it is difficult to actually separate the two especially whenever we try to define the word ‘Church’.

### **6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment**

1. Discuss the four – fold relationship between Christ and the Church
2. Compare and contrast any two definitions of the Church by two authorities.
3. Give the full meaning of the acronym of the word ‘W – I – F – E’

## **7.0 Self-Assessment Questions**

1. What are the responsibilities of Christ that made him to be referred to as the head of the Church?
2. Define Regeneration

## **8.0 References/Further Readings**

Ajewole, Bayo (2011), *Management Strategies for Effective Church Leadership*, Lagos, Scanprint.

Dresselhaus, Richard L. (1990) "The Pastor and Total Church Leadership"  
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## **UNIT 5: THE LEADERSHIP OR AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH**

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**
- 3.0 Main Content**
  - 3.1 The Concept of Authority or Leadership of the Church**
  - 3.2 When and how did the Church Leadership emerge?**
  - 3.3 Types of government in the Church**
  - 3.4 The Qualities of Church leaders**
  - 3.5 How should the Church be governed?**
- 4.0 Conclusion**
- 5.0 Summary**
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment**
- 7.0 Self-Assessment Question**
- 8.0 References/ Further Readings**

### **1.0 Introduction**

When we talk of the leadership of the Church what are those things that readily come to our mind? Are we referring to her organizational structure, either in a single corporate body, or generally within the range of formal church structures, an independent *vehicle* of revelation or of God's grace? Who gets to interpret the doctrines of the Church? Is it the Church's authority instead of dependent on and derivative of a *separate and prior divine revelation external to the organization*, with individual institutions being "the Church" only to the extent that they teach this message? Who are the people that are charged with the responsibilities for the government of the Church? Is it the ordained or the unordained? In the unit you will be exposed to the concept of leadership, when and how did the leadership emerge in the ecclesia. As there are diverse denominational affiliations in our contemporary societies, is there any uniformity in the system, organisation and structure of Church government or polity?

What was the mission and authority of the Apostles? What are the proper methods of choosing clergy such as bishops and priests, and what are their roles within the context of the Church? Is an ordained clergy necessary? Who are the leaders of a church? Must there be a policy-making board of "leaders" within a church and what are the qualifications for these positions, and by what process do these members become official, ordained "leaders"? Must leaders and clergy be "ordained," and is this possible only by those who have been ordained by others? This is the focus of the unit and as well provides answers to the above questions.

## **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the unit you should be able to:

- Give a general definition of leadership
- Understand and explain concisely the meaning of religious leadership
- Narrate the emergence of leadership in the Church
- Mention the theories of leadership
- Discuss the various types of government in the Church
- Highlight the different positions in the contemporary churches in Nigeria
- Identify the qualities that a religious leader should possess

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 The Concept of Authority or General Definitions of Leadership**

### **3.2 The Origin of Leadership in Ecclesia**

### **3.3 Types of Governance in the Church**

### **3.4 Different Positions in the contemporary Churches in Nigeria**

### **3.5 Qualities of a Religious Leadership**

## **3.1 Definition of Leadership**

Although we are more concerned with leadership in the Church, it is also important to give a general definition of the term. This is because leadership is visible in every spheres of human existence whether in religious or secular affairs. Leadership according to Ajewole (2011) is the process of influencing others (followers or subordinates) to work willingly toward the accomplishment of corporate goals to the best of their capabilities.

In the same vein Ajewole (2011) quoting Cole (1986), leadership is construed as a dynamic process in a group where by one individual influence to contribute voluntarily to the achievement of group task in a given situation. Against this backdrop Hagher (2002) opines that to lead means to direct by going forward. The image implied is of the Leader charting a course by being out in front and also having people intentionally coming behind him, following his lead.

Having dealt with the general concept of leadership it will not be out of context to give religious definition of term. Thus in giving the concept of leadership in the religion perspective, John Maxwell (2002) opines that leadership remains one the glaring needs of the Church, thus defining the concept of Christian leadership may be the difficult. This is because leadership is the most critical problem facing the Church today. Infact, Ogunkunle (2004) felt, as there many definitions so are many persons. But how do we define leadership as it relates to Christian or religious organisations. It is worth noting that religious leadership is a phenomenon of social significance in many societies and many ages. However, such significance is largely determined by the several factors, which may include the type of organisation, whether they are new



religious movement or established or stable groups. The type of doctrines, type of religious leader and their groups affirm the practice they subscribe, just as much as their orientation to the world they find themselves and the response of the society to religion and their organisations.

To further define religious leadership, Igboin who cited Gillian Lindt views

*Religious leadership as a process by which leaders induce followers to act for certain transcendental goals that embody the values, motivation and aspiration of both leaders and followers. Such leadership involves the exercises of power in religious collectivities but its domain is more limited than that of power.*

To round up this section, John Maxwell (2002), asserts that leadership is influence in which God who is the greatest inventor, has called every believer to lead others. This is evidenced in the Old Testament in which the different people were called to lead, for example, Moses, Joshua and David etc. However, being a leader does not mean one has to be bossy or pushy or in control, it is to influence. It is to display a broken boldness. Thus, leadership ability determines a person's level of effectiveness.

Another area of importance is to succinctly highlight theories of leadership, this has been the contributions of Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopaedia. The theories are as follows:

- The trait theory, which attempt to describe the characteristics or qualities or attributes of effective leadership;
- The behavioural theory, which is an examination of the behaviour of the leaders;
- Situational and contingency theory. This is premised on the belief that different situation calls for different leadership. It is also argued that what a leader does is to, to a large extent, dependent on the peculiar situation in which he functions;
- The function theory. This relates to how leader's behaviour contribute to organisational accomplishment;
- Transactional and Transformational theory; and
- Environment leadership theory among others.

### **3.2 Origin of Church Polity/ Leadership**

The Church's authority or leadership was not a complex one, both during the ministry of Jesus Christ and the apostolic age. After the ascension of Christ, the leadership of the Church was solely left in the hand of the Twelve Apostles. James became the head of Jerusalem council to resolve the issue of circumcision between the Jews and the Gentiles who had just be converted in the new faith (Christianity), Act 15. The scripture also refers to the election of the seven Deacons as the need arouse (Act 6). Stephen the first martyr was one of those elected into such office. It was decades apart that Apostle Paul in his writings to Timothy whom he called his son that he addressed the issue of qualifications that must be possessed by a Bishop and Deacon respectively.

It should be further pointed out that in the earliest history of the Church, there was not a clear distinction between bishops and priests as there is in the modern Church; this developed a little later. Timothy and Titus were two of the “overseers” St. Paul appointed to help him govern the Churches and to them he wrote his ‘pastoral epistles’ on how best to care for their respective charges.

“O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you.” (1 Tim 6:20)

In Addition, leaders are to realised that they are accountable to God over the subjects under them while those under them are to be obedient and submissive. Paul according to tradition wrote to the Jewish Christians in Diaspora in the Epistles to Hebrews:

*Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you.*  
(Hebrews 13:17)

In essence, the origin of Church polity as stated by Cairn (1981) is been credited to Christ because he chose the twelve Apostles who later were the leaders of the infant Church. The Apostles later on used their initiatives for the development of the other offices in the Church and under the leadership or guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In a nutshell, the genesis of ecclesiastical leadership has been traced back to Apostle Peter who was succeeded by the Bishop (college of twelve Apostles. Peter was recognized as earthly leader based on his confession to Jesus as recorded in the Gospel and Jesus’ pronouncement to Simeon Peter “upon this rock would I build my Church.....” (Matt.16:18)

### **Peter as Head of the Apostles**

Jesus established Peter as the head of the college of Apostles. Matthew 16:14-16

*Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesare'a Philip'pi, he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?"  
And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Eli'jah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."  
He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"*

Some object that the rock on which Jesus will build his Church is not Peter (Latin for rock) based on the use of two different Greek words for rock. The problem with this objection is that the Greek is itself a translation: the original words of our Lord were most likely in Aramaic, in which there is only one word for rock. St. Paul has preserved the original word he used: *cephas* (cf. 1 Cor 15:5).

### **3.3 Types of Governance in the Church**

When we talk of governance in the Church, it simply means various ways or means through which the Church is governed either in the early period of her existence or in the present age. It also connotes the form of administration, system, structure, and

organisation of the Church. In the discourse below the following system of governance in the Church will be our focus

### **Who is a Presbyterian?**

A Presbyterian is an equivalent of an elder. Although this was not mentioned during the Apostolic age, however James was noted to have headed the Council at Jerusalem during the resolution of Christian Gentiles and Jews on the issue of circumcision. Act 15. Who is a Presbyterian if one may ask? The Presbyterian consists of elders both teaching and ruling from a local Church Council within an ecclesiastical province. These are both teaching and lay appointed elders who are also regarded as rulers/elders. (Akper, 2007) There is a uniqueness in the Presbyterian churches, who following their Scottish forebears, reject the traditions surrounding overseers and instead identify the offices of bishop (*episkopos* in Greek) and elder (*presbuteros* in Greek, from which the term "presbyterian" comes). The two terms seem to be used interchangeably in the Bible (especially when we compare Titus 1.5-9 and I Tim. 3.2-7). Their form of church governance is known as Presbyterian polity. While there is increasing authority with each level of gathering of elders ('Session' over a congregation or parish, then presbytery, is possibly a synod, then the General Assembly), there is no hierarchy of elders. Each elder has an equal vote at the court on which they stand.

Elders are usually chosen at their local level, either elected by the congregation and approved by the Session, or appointed directly by the Session. Some churches place limits on the term that the elders serve, while others ordain elders for life.

Presbyterians also ordain (by laying on of hands) ministers of Word and Sacrament (sometimes known as 'teaching elders'). These ministers are regarded simply as Presbyters ordained to a different function, but in practice they provide the leadership for local Session.

Some Presbyterians identify those appointed (by the laying on of hands) to serve in practical ways (Acts 6.1-7) as deacons (*diakonos* in Greek, meaning "servant"). In many congregations, a group of men or women is thus set aside to deal with matters such as congregational fabric and finance, releasing elders for more 'spiritual' work. These persons may be known as 'deacons', 'board members' or 'managers', depending on the local tradition. Unlike elders and minister, they are not usually 'ordained', and are often elected by the congregation for a set period of time.

Other Presbyterians have used an 'order of deacons' as full-time servants of the wider Church. Unlike ministers, they do not administer sacraments or routinely preach. The Church of Scotland has recently begun ordaining deacons to this role.

Unlike the Episcopalian system, but similar to the United Methodist system described above, the two Presbyterian offices are different in *kind* rather than in *degree*, since one need not be a deacon before becoming an elder. Since there is no hierarchy, the

two offices do not make up an "order" in the technical sense, but the terminology of Holy Orders is sometimes still developed.

### **Episcopal**

A Bishop is synonymous to Episcopal. A Bishop is the overall head of the Church. This is another system of the Church governance. Though the Bishop is the overall head of the Church, Christ is the ultimate ruler in which he (Bishop) is subjected to His authority. Christ is the head of the Church according to Pauline epistle to the Ephesians (Eph. 5:23). Also a bishop is the Teacher of the Faith, the carrier of Sacred Tradition, and the living Vessel of Grace through whom the *energeia* (divine grace) of the Holy Spirit flows into the rest of the church. Although it is very possible that the Bishop can act on delegation capacity, especially to elders/priests who are under him. In the Early Church those who presided over congregations were referred to variously as *episcopos* (bishop) or *presbyteros* (priest). These were successors of the Apostles ordained to their office by the laying on of hands, and according to Orthodox theology formed a living, organic link with the Apostles, and through them with Jesus Christ himself. This link is believed to continue in unbroken succession to this day. Over time, the ministry of bishops (who hold the fullness of the priesthood) and presbyters or priests (who hold a portion of the priesthood as bestowed by their bishop) came to be distinguished. In Orthodox terminology, *priesthood* or *sacerdotal* refers to the ministry of bishops and priests

### **Democratic System of Polity**

The third system of governance in Christianity is the democratic system of polity. It can also be called congregational form of government. From the word democratic, it means the Church members/congregations enjoy a sort of autonomy. They are parts of decision making body and do contribute immensely to any affairs or matters that affect the Church. It should also be realised that the Congregationalist churches implement different schemes, but the officers usually have less authority than in the Presbyterian or Episcopalian forms. Some ordain only ministers and rotate members on an advisory board (sometimes called a board of elders or a board of deacons). Because the positions are by comparison less powerful, there is usually less rigor or fanfare in how officers are ordained. In the same vein Ajewole (2011) comments that in a democratic system of government, the leader seeks the opinion of his subordinates. He floats ideas and calls for comment after which he amends these ideas and announces his decision. Do we have such democracy in our denominations today? Furthermore, in his contributions to the types of leadership, Ajewole (2011) does not limit himself to the ecclesiastical terrain hence, identifies six kinds of leadership which are:

- a. Charismatic leadership;
- b. Traditional leadership;

- c. Constitutional leadership
- d. Situational leadership;
- e. Appointed leadership;
- f. Functional leadership
- g. Spiritual leadership.

In addition, he also mentions leadership styles such as dictatorial, autocratic or authoritarian, democratic, Laisser Faire leadership styles. It is important to discuss some or all these various types of leadership.

Who are the Charismatic, dictatorial or autocratic, democratic and Laisser Faire leaders? What are the peculiar characteristics of each of them?

### **Charismatic leadership**

The word charismatic is from the Greek word 'Kharisma' which means favour, grace'. It is also a divine gift, a gift or power believed to be divinely bestowed (Encarta dictionaries, 2009). This is a type of leadership that can be termed emerged through the gift of grace. This gift of grace includes fluency of speech, healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues, good retentive memory and courage. Such leaders also possess the ability to carry along with them a great crowd. Since this is a study about the church, it is our concern that a charismatic leader should possess the ability to carry along many people in the organization.

### **Traditional leadership**

This is the type of leadership that is popularly found in the traditional settings. In this type, the customs and traditions of the particular society determine who the leader is. In addition, in this set up consideration is not given to the educational status, wealth, property etc. of the leaders to be chosen rather such selection of the leadership is within the particular society and is done through the consultation with the oracle. For example, Obas among the Yoruba, obi among the Igbo or olu among the Edo or Sekiri people. The Emirs from the North, all from Nigeria.

### **Constitutional leadership**

In this type of leadership, leaders are chosen through constitutional right, that is leadership backed up by the law. The leader is chosen either by election or appointment. Such leader is guided by the constitution. For example, the President of a country, Governors of a state and Ministers etc.

Other types of leadership to be considered are:

- Autocratic or Dictatorial
- Laisser faire
- Democratic and
- Inspirational leaders

### **Autocratic or Dictatorial Leadership**

According to Adeshina (2002), define autocratic as common of too much power. He stresses further that such leaders take decisions without consulting others and their

decisions are final. They dominate decision making on policies. Some of the characteristics peculiar to Autocratic or Dictatorial leadership can be identified as:

- i) He entertains no questions from his subordinate or those under his authority.
- ii) He does not encourage group work.
- iii) He fears that collective decision of group will affect his behaviours.
- iv) He is a dictator and so much power is centred on him.
- v) He does not follow the goal(s) of the organization.
- vi) He insists on work done even when the subordinate is dying thus, he does not entertain, excuses, he always wants his words to be final.
- vii) He is a leader that is feared but not respected.
- viii) He gets things done when he is around hence, he makes the subordinates to be high service.

The Effects of this type of leadership style is that it kills initiatives and the subordinates' morale is low.

### **Laissez Faire**

It means 'as you like'. According to Abori (2006), a leader of this type does not give orders nor offer to assist the grouping in anywhere to achieve his goals unless requested. He is very limited. In such an organization there are no rules and regulations. The leader has no authority rather he functions as an observer and recorder. He is a more symbolic or 'window dressing' leader. Knezevich (2003), in his opinion believes that such a leader is a 'leaderless' in a crisis situation thus, this type of leader easily collapses.

### **Democratic Leadership**

The leader with this leadership type can be termed as a participatory leader. His own argument is based on the fact that the group is greater than the sum of its parts. In his dealing as a leader, he takes note of the society or environment of the organization, the nature and man as an important resource, and ensures that the need of these variables are taken into consideration in decision making and process.

Some peculiar characteristics of a democratic leadership are:

- i) He has a good rapport with his subordinates.
- ii) He often delegates authority.
- iii) There is a good channel of communication.
- iv) Decisions are reached after joint meetings or consultations with those concerned, however, he takes the final decisions in the interest of the organisation
- v) Everybody is kept abreast and active within the organization.

The implication of this type of leadership is that, the people within the organization function and interact very well even the leader is not around. The subordinates develop their initiatives and ideas without hindrance. Personal problems are solved. The subordinates are willing to work effectively with the leader and there is job satisfaction thus, bringing progress to the organization.

## **Inspirational leadership**

This type of leadership promotes change by the power of their passionate commitment to ideas and ideals. They lift their eyes from present practicalities to future possibilities. His words stir up the spirit of the followers, strengthen their convictions and move them to actions. There are some basic characteristics of this type of leadership:

- i) They have positive attitudes that create strong emotional connection with the people.
- ii) Their speech is enlivened with words such as justice, freedom, honour, respect, pride and love.
- iii) Their affirming and encouraging demeanour builds the confidence of their followers and elicits their whole hearted devotion. Their can-do attitude keeps hope alive during difficult times.
- iv) Inspirational leaders create a sense of urgency by explaining why it is important to take action now rather than sooner rather than later. In addition, they describe actionable steps people need to take. Examples of Inspirational leaders:

- i. Ronald Reagan, the 40<sup>th</sup> president of the United States was known for his strong leadership on behalf of free enterprise and politically conservative ideas. His inspirational leadership style incorporated excellent communication skills seasoned with humour and optimism. He had a sign on desk in the oval office that read: "I can be done"!
- ii. Martin Luther King (Jr.) was an American clergyman, activist, and leader in the African-American civil Rights Movement. He is best known for his belief in nonviolence civil disobedience. His words and actions have inspired many people to speak up and stand up for what's right.
- iii. Pat Summit was the leader of the University of Lady volunteer's basketball program for 38 years, she was known as an intense, demanding focused, determined and inspiring coach. She compiled on amazing record of 1,098 wins and 208 losses, winning eight NCAA national championships along the way.

Inspirational leaders attract followers and motivate people to change by the power of their passion and their strong convictions.

## **Servant Leaders**

Servant leaders care deeply about people. They seek to remove the barriers and obstacles that hold others back from achieving their full potentials. They strive to create an environment where their followers can do their best work. Servant leaders frequently ask, "How can I help?"

Robert K. Greenleaf (1970) popularized the concept of the servant leader in by saying "I think the simplest way to explain it would be to say that servant leaders focus on identifying and meeting the needs of

others rather than trying to acquire power, wealth, and fame for themselves.”

Examples of servant leaders include:

- i. Mother Teresa who founded the Missionaries of charity, a Roman Catholic religious’ congregation, in Calcutta, India. Today, the ministry has more than 4500 sisters ministering in 133 countries. Members vow to give “wholehearted and free service to the poorest of the poor.”
- ii. Oprah Winfrey is the chairman of Harpo Inc. Her focus is helping others succeed. Many of her TV programs and outreach initiatives are aimed at removing obstacles, so people can achieve their potentials. Her goal is to empower people to achieve their dreams.
- iii. Max De Pree (1980 -1987) states, “The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you” In between, the leader is a servant

Servant leaders attract followers and motivate people to change by helping to remove obstacles that are in the way of their growth and development.

Successful leaders come in different shapes and sizes, no two are alike, and no single leadership style is always best. All leaders want to change the status quo, but they use different means. Some take the lead with their ideas, while others lead with their passion and conviction. Still others lead by demonstrating courage in the face of risks and the unknown, and some brings about change by serving others.

### **3.4 Different Leadership Positions in the Contemporary Churches in Nigeria**

The issue of position in Nigerian Christianity differs from one denomination to another, even among the Pentecostal there are variations. The Roman Catholic Church does not operate the same leadership position with their Protestants counterparts. For example, in the Roman Catholic Church (Orthodox congregation) the Pope which is the highest rank, the Reverend Father/Sister are the existing positions. Whereas in the protestant Church like the Anglican Communion the leadership position ranges from lay reader, Catechist, Cannon, Reverend, Provost, and Bishop and Archbishop. Among the Aladuras, particularly Cherubim and Seraphim, Celestial Church of Christ, Christ Apostolic Church operates different leadership positions. These positions such as Prophets and Prophetess, Evangelist, Mother-in-Israel, Pastors among others are peculiar to the above sects of Christianity.

Among the Pentecostal who are mostly title conscious, there exist a lots of variations in the religious circle. E.g. Redeem Christian of God whose founder was late pastor Josiah Ekundayomi while the current General Overseer is Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye, a one-time university lecturer only recognizes leadership position of deacons and deaconess with the highest rank as Pastor. Whereas in some other Pentecostal churches whether indigenous or non-indigenous like the Redeem Evangelical Mission whose General overseer is Mike Okonkwo a one-time President of Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria recognizes the position of Bishop, Reverend and Pastor. Likewise, The Living Faith Church (aka Winner’s Chapel) recognizes leadership positions of deacons, deaconesses with the highest rank as the Bishop who himself is the General Overseer (Bishop David Oyedepo).



The Foursquare Gospel Church though a non-indigenous Pentecostal church recognizes the following leadership positions: pastor, deacon and deaconess, elder with the highest as Reverend.

As a matter of fact, the reason for these variations in the leadership position in the Christendom is a difficult task as we often have the slogan “Christ is one”, when and how they emerged still remain an issue for a rethink.

### **3.5 Qualities of a Religious Leadership**

According to Gbile (2002) leadership is not a position of issuing orders or commands, for self-gratification and abrogation of power; rather it is a place of selfless, rigorous and relentless service, and labour to humanity. The tasks of Christian leader include servant hood, stewardship ability to bring people of different characters and backgrounds together for development and accomplishment of ones dreams and goals which must be well articulated. Therefore, a Christian leader must not be a power tussle, discriminative, materialistic, segregating and immoral to mention a few.

A good leader needs to be selfless, courageous, patient, loyal and responsible, has to believe in the people he is leading and bring out the best in them. In addition, faithfulness is a necessary ingredient as a servant of God. A Christian leader must possess an inner self-examination, probing and proofing. They are the people who should consider their life style with God’s standard like prophet Isaiah who became overwhelmed when he had an experience with God. He also must be careful about his attitude toward spiritual things, possessions, titles, and positions. In view of this Ogbonnaiya (2003) warns that a Christian leader must be careful towards so called ‘the three Fs’- finance, female and fame. In addition, he must be responsible and responsive to the domestic demands. Ogbonnaiya further cautions that every Christian leader caring for the church or having interest in spiritual activities must not neglect the family, which is his primary and personal responsibility. In the economy of God, the discharge of God given duty or responsibility will not involve in neglect of another.

Furthermore, a good leader must be full of wisdom and with these other attributes like faith honesty, caring, dynamic, diligent, dedicated, loving, God fearing and fill with Holy Ghost. He must have a pure and transparent heart that can intercede effectually for the dying world, and hands that are clean and not lazy. His life style must be above reproach and have nothing around him to attract suspicion. He must be a man with one wife with a pattern of family life that witnesses Jesus Christ to all people inside and outside the Church. He must be hospitable to the extent that his house will be an extension of the ministry.

### **3.0 Conclusion**

Leadership is not uniquely peculiar to the ecclesiastical world but as well to the secular. As earlier on mentioned that leadership is one of the glaring needs of the

Church today and that which must be addressed by the individual and corporately, this will enable us to positively influence our world as Christian leaders either now or in the future. We must strive to possess the afore-mentioned qualities so as to be role models now and tomorrow.

### **5.0 Summary**

In the just concluded unit you have been exposed to both the general or secular and religious definitions of leadership. Other things to remember are the time for the emergence of leadership in the Church, types of governance in the Church, the qualities expected of a religious leader and finally the different offices occupied by the laity and clergy in the contemporary Nigeria society.

### **6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment**

1. Explain any two definitions of leadership
2. Highlight the qualities of a good religious leader

### **7.0 Self-Assessment Questions**

1. Discuss the three types of governance the Church
2. Why do you think that leadership is what can either make or mar a society both in the ecclesia and secular?

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## **UNIT 6: UNIVERSAL LOCAL OR VISIBLE CHURCH**

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**
- 3.0 Main Content**
  - 3.1 What is the Local or Visible Church?**
  - 3.2 When did the Local Church begin?**
  - 3.3 What makes a Local Church a Church?**
- 4.0 Conclusion**
- 5.0 Summary**
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment**
- 7.0 References/Further Readings**

### **1.0 Introduction**

In this introductory segment on ecclesiology, it is opined that the church has both a universal, invisible aspect, as well as a local, visible aspect. The former was the focal point of the previous lesson, while the latter will be the heart of the remaining discussion. The members of the visible church have complied with the outward call of the gospel, professing Christ, submitting to baptism, Holy Communion and placing themselves under the preaching and authority of the local church in physical structures.

### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain what the visible or local entails
- Identify the features of visible church
- State the position of the Scriptures on visible or local church

### **3.0 Main Content**

#### **3.1 What is the Local or Visible Church?**

The visible church consists of the manifestation and appearance of those who identify themselves as Christians. This outward appearance consists of the denominations, buildings, pastors, elders, church attendees, and ceremonies like preaching, communion, and baptism. It is what is visible to anyone and everyone. However, not all who attend physical churches are truly Christians. The visible church can be true or false. It can be true if it holds to biblical theology, or it can be false if it denies one or more of the essentials of the Christian faith.

There is no outstanding official pattern of the visible church. Christians can meet in buildings, parks, deserts, beaches, or anywhere there is a gathering of professing believers. Some visible churches have multiple pastors and some do not. Some have

regimented, traditional worship services and others are more casual. Music can be hymns that are set to organ music or praise songs that use drums and guitar. The visible church has a wide variety of manifestations and is not limited to geographical, denominational, or cultural boundaries.

The body of Christ is the body consisted of Spirit-baptized believers, those saved during the church age from Pentecost to the Rapture. Some of the present members of this body are in heaven, the rest on earth. This body does not take account of OT saints, Tribulation saints, or Millennial saints.

“The church which is the body of Christ is the whole spiritual body of true Christian believers of this age regardless of location or circumstances. It is the total number of Spirit-baptized believers--those saved between the Day of Pentecost and the Rapture--whether they are in heaven or on earth” (McCune, p. 78)

There are different scholars who have given different expressions on the ecclesiology of universal invisible church therefore we would go through them to ascertain the reality of what the whole concept is meant.

“The universal church is the total number of true Christian believers, whether in heaven or on earth, who have been Spirit-baptized into the body of Christ” (Snoeberger, p. 3). “In the universal sense the church consists of all those who, in this age, have been born of the Spirit of God and have by that same Spirit been baptized into the body of Christ” (Thiessen, p. 311). “Sometimes referred to as the universal or the invisible Church, the Church which is His Body ... includes all the redeemed, whether Jews or Gentiles, from Pentecost to the Rapture, whether in Heaven or on earth” (Jackson, p. 12). “... the church in Scripture is composed of all the redeemed in every age who are saved by grace through personal faith in the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ ...” (Reymond, p. 805). “... the whole body of those who through Christ’s death have been savingly reconciled to God and have received new life” (Erickson, p. 1034). “The church is the community of all true believers for all time ... Here the term ‘the church’ is used to apply to all those whom Christ died to redeem, all those who are saved by the death of Christ. But that must include all true believers for all time, both believers in the New Testament age and believers in the Old Testament age as well” (Grudem, p. 853). “The church of Christ, in its largest signification, is the whole company of regenerate persons in all times and ages, in heaven and on earth” (A. H. Strong, quoted in McCune, p. 78)

Basically speaking, a local church is the visible manifestation of the body of Christ in a particular place on earth at a specific time. What do we imply when we make the difference between the visible and invisible church? And what is the reason for this distinction? Beginning from around the 4th century the term "Visible Church" was referred to by theologians, not to a building, but to the members on the rolls of a local church. In other words, all peoples who are members of a local church are seen as a part of the visible church.

The Westminster Standards Chapter 25, "Of the Church," states “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" (sections 1, 2).

In accordance with Thiessen (p. 312), the local church is "the group of professed believers in any one locality." According to McCune (p. 75), "the local church is the visible expression of the body church in any one place on earth."

Edward Hiscox (quoted in McCune, p. 91) gives a great deal fuller explanation: "A Christian church is a company of regenerate persons, baptized on a profession of faith in Christ, united in covenant for worship, instruction, the observance of Christian ordinances, and for such service as the gospel requires; recognizing and accepting Christ as their supreme Lord and Lawgiver, and taking His Word as their only and sufficient rule of faith and practice in all matters of conscience and religion." Jackson (p. 28) in addition gives a fuller designation: "A local New Testament church is a body of believers immersed upon a trustworthy confession of faith in Jesus Christ, having two officers (pastor and deacons), sovereign in polity, and banded together for work, worship, the observance of the ordinances and the worldwide proclamation of the gospel." David Auckland ("Current Trends" class notes; Maranatha Baptist Graduate School, Watertown, WI; Spring 1992) likewise gives a complete description, defining the local church as "an organized body of baptized believers meeting together on a regular basis for the purpose of evangelizing the community and the world, obeying the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's table, and edifying the believers." These definitions unravel the marks of a local.

The visible church is denoted "visible" because it is perceptible by the senses and pragmatic means. It is made up of everybody who professes the true religion along with their children. For the reason that men do not have the capability to see into the minds of men and read the human heart, anyone who professes Jesus Christ in realistic manner i.e., he has a knowledge of the gospel, he is orthodox in doctrine, he professes faith in Christ and repentance toward God, he is not as far as anyone is aware committing routine or scandalous sins and permitted to join the church along with his children. In the visible church there are genuine believers who are truly united to Christ and false professors or hypocrites who only taste of heavenly gifts but do not in actuality partake in Christ's salvation. Their relationship to Him is only superficial. "On this account the church is compared to a floor, in which there is not only wheat but also chaff (Matt. 3. 12); to a field, where tares as well as good seed are sown (Matt. 8. 24, 25); to a net, which gathers bad fish together with the good (ver. 47); to a great house, in which are vessels of every kind some to honour and some to dishonor, 2 Tim. ii. 20." People who are members of the visible church yet who never actually believe in Christ get the outward privileges of membership in fellowship, the word, the sacraments and the guidance of church government, but are never regenerated, saved, forgiven, united to Christ and spiritually sanctified. The blood of Jesus does not cleanse their sins.

The visible or local church is distinguished from the earth by profession as well as its external government, discipline, and ordinances that is, the preaching of the gospel and the sacraments. The members of the visible church have complied with the

outward call of the gospel, professing Christ, submitting to baptism and placing themselves under the preaching and authority of the local church. Then, everyone who obeys the outward call of the gospel puts themselves in covenant with God. They have alienated themselves from the world and at least superficially enjoy the privileges of being members of the visible church e.g., the teaching of the word, godly guidance, the fellowship of the saints, etc. At the same time as in a definite sense those who outwardly acknowledge the truth partake in an external covenant with real responsibilities and privileges, it does not signify and theologically cannot denote that they really participate in the saving merits of Christ. Such people for a meantime are in the covenant but are never legitimately of the covenant. They partake in the covenant externally as professors of the true religion, but they never participate in the covenant of grace which flows from the eternal covenant of redemption.

The visible church is the outward structure and appearance (church buildings, clergy, etc.) of those who claim to be Christians. The invisible church consists of those who are truly born again and are new creatures in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Matthew 7:21-23 says "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" After warning His disciples of the danger of false prophets, Jesus warns them of the consequences of a false profession of religion. He depicts people who profess Christ; who recognize His Lordship; who are even engaged in some type of Christian service; yet who never had a saving relationship to Jesus. These people were visibly members of the visible church. However, they were never actually united to the Lord or redeemed; they were never members of the invisible church.

Undoubtedly, Jesus says to all false professors of religion on the day of judgment, "I never knew you." Since God is omniscient, the word "knew" in this context does not refer to a mere intellectual knowledge (John 1:47, 49; 2:24, 25; 21:17). To a certain extent the phrase "knew" in this passage is used in the Hebraic sense of love, acceptance, friendship, intimate fellowship. Christ says that everyone in the visible church who is not actually saved or do not have true saving faith and the works that exhibit the reality of that faith never, ever for even a single moment had a relationship or crucial union with Him.

In Johannine theology he depicts in 1 John 2:19-20: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things." In this passage John discusses some people who at one time had professed apostolic doctrine and were members of the church but really were not true believers therefore they slipped away eventually.

It is emphasized in this passage that the Spirit-inspired analysis of the apostle John

concerning these particular people is obvious. John says, "they were not of us." That is to say, they were never authentic members of the church. Although it is true that they were baptized and professed the true religion, they were never united to Christ or saved. They were chaff on the same floor as wheat (Mt. 3:12), or tares among the wheat (Mt. 13:24-25). They were members of the visible church but never of the invisible church. In this framework John uses the term "us" (emon) in the sense of true Christians. John noted obviously that true Christians or members of the invisible church cannot apostatize: "for if they were of us meaning, true believers, they would have continued with us." The fact that these professing Christians de ceased from the church is pragmatic proof that they were never true Christians. "They went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us." "The meaning here is that secession proves a want of fundamental union from the rest."

### **3.2 When Did the Local Church Begin?**

It is attested that as with the body of Christ, the local church started on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. On that day, 3,000 were saved. These 3,000 were saved, baptized, and added, not only to the body of Christ, but also to the first local church, the church of Jerusalem (Acts 2:41-47).

The local church of Jerusalem continued to grow (Acts 4:4, 5:14, and 6:7), sooner or later spawning other local churches in Judea, Samaria, and beyond (Acts 1:8; cf. Acts 9:31 and 16:5).

### **3.3 What Makes a Local Church a Church?**

What makes a local church a church or what marks make a church separate, distinguishing it from other organizations and institutions? A variety of answers have been given to this question these include the following two, taken from Grudem (p. 865):

In accordance with the 1530 Lutheran Augsburg Confession, the church is "the congregation of saints in which the gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered." In the same way, according to Calvin, "Wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to Christ's institution, there, it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists." According to these expressions, the two marks of a local church are the proclamation of the Scriptures and the administration of the sacraments (ordinances).

A much more all-embracing answer to the question, What makes a local church a church?, is presented by McCune (pp. 90-91), who says that the local church of the New Testament is composed of those who are: 1) true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:41a, 47); 2) baptized (immersed) in water as a public testimony (Matt 28:19, Acts 2:41); 3) organized with scriptural officers (Phil 1:1, 1 Tim 3:1-13); 4) sharing a common faith or body of truth around which to fellowship (Acts 2:42, Jude 3); 5) observing the ordinances of baptism and communion (Matt 26:26-30, 28:19, Acts 2:41-42); 6) carrying out the great commission (Matt 28:18-20); and 7) meeting at regular and stated times (John 20:19, 26, Acts 20:7, 1 Cor 16:2, Heb 10:25).

Following the definitions or descriptions of men like Hiscox, Jackson, and McCune, there are many so-called local churches that are not actually churches. As Jackson (p. 26) states: "Not all organizations are churches that are called by that name." Mack &



Swavely (p. 47) call such a “church” a “no church”: “‘No church’ is a strong term, but it is an accurate one, because a body of believers that does not conform to the biblical definition of a church cannot truly be called a biblical church.” Members of such “churches” are to be evangelized or proselytized, our “mission field” includes the unsaved, the unchurched, and the wrong-churched.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

It is attested that although God deals with the visible church as one church, as one people of God, the external administration of the church with the preaching of the word, the ordinances and discipline in the present and in due course that is after the final judgment, in the eternal state only the invisible church or the elect will actually benefit. While outward professors receive temporary benefits resulting from intellectual insights from the word, pressure to conform to God's law, the external influence from a society of family-oriented, ethical people, etc., they will be given greater damnation on the day of judgment for spurning the great light to which they were uncovered under repeated gospel preaching.

#### **5.0 Summary**

The local church is the locus of God's activity in this dispensation (the church age). The Bible teaches that the local church is the ‘pillar and support of the truth’ (1 Tim 3:15), and is the only God-appointed institution authorized to carry out His mission of witness and service on earth during the present dispensation of grace. The local church is the only avenue whereby the biblical mission is to be funded; therefore, all giving in support of the mission should be channeled through one's local church. The use of spiritual gifts, as in all spiritual endeavors in this dispensation, is to be under the auspices of the local church.

#### **6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment**

- What is universal visible or local church?
- Explain the implication of enrolling to visible church without being a member of invisible church

#### **7.0 References/Further Readings**

Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), p. 563.

Berkhof, p. 564.

John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, ed. Alvah Hovey (Valley Forge, PA: The American Baptist Publishing Society, 1886), pp. 358-9.

The strongest Biblical reference for “catholic church” is based on the textual variant found in Acts 9:31, “the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria....”

However, theology which is built upon textual variants is weak indeed.

Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (NY: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1953), p. 183.

Henry C. Vedder, *A Short History of the Baptists* (Valley Forge: the Judson Press, 1969), p. 54. Clyde C. Sm, "Catholic," *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), p. 203.

Reinhold Seeberg, *Text-Book of the History of Doctrines*, trans. Charles E. Hay, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), p. 325.

Louis Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), p. 229.

## **UNIT 7: THE UNIVERSAL INVISIBLE CHURCH**

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**
- 3.0 Main Content**
- 3.1 The Universal Invisible Church**
- 3.2 The Reformers' Use of the Concept Universal Invisible Church**
- 4.0 Conclusion**
- 5.0 Summary**
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment**
- 7.0 References/Further Readings**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Another widespread description for the universal, invisible church and the one which will be used throughout this study is the body of Christ. In the view of this writer, this description is preferable because intrinsically in the biblical idea of church is the idea of assembling or congregating, something that the universal, invisible church will never actually do. The church is both an organism and an organization, with the body of Christ being more the former and the local church more the latter.

### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this study you will be able to:

- grasp with terminology “universal invisible church”
- state crystal-clear the position of the church fathers and theologians concerning the invisible church
- explain the implication of participating in the visible church without belonging to the invisible church

### **3.0 Main Content**

#### **3.1 The Universal Invisible Church**

In view of the fact that there is no Biblical reference for the phrase “universal, invisible church,” the apparent question arises, “from where did the term come?” the truth of the matter is this terminology is the outcome of the development of ecclesiology dating back to the second century. Abruptly after the end of the last Apostles the term and concept “catholic (universal) church” made inroads into the ecclesiology of the Ante-Nicene Fathers. The adoption of Apostolic succession by Irenaeus, and the hierarchical development in ecclesiology caused by the over- emphasis on and the non-biblical thought of the bishopric led to the mythical concept. With reference to the latter, Cyprian expressed that the bishops of local churches were the very existence of the church and not simply the wellbeing of the church. In addition, he affirmed that sole support for and obedience to the bishop was necessary to be in the church. Therefore, these false impressions led to the idea of the “catholic” or “universal, visible church.” This conception was set to terms by Ignatius who was the first to use “catholic” with “church “.

If truth be told, when he wrote his epistle to the church in Smyrna he stated that “wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church.” Additionally, in 155 in a letter from the church in Smyrna describing Polycarp's martyrdom, the expression “catholic” was used. Consequently, the answer to the abovementioned question is noticeable. Some of the early Fathers applied their misconstructions of Scripture to their ecclesiology and caused blunder to multiply. So with the progression of ecclesiastical hierarchialism arose the need to re-define “church.” Ekklesia no longer meant only local assemblies, but the word was as well incorporating the perception of Catholicity. And this concept goes on to prosper with the aid of certain expressions such as Cyprian's *extra nulla salus ecclesiam* (outside the church there is no salvation). This assisted to institute the relating link between soteriology and ecclesiology in the thinking of the early Church Fathers. By the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century the concept of “catholic church” was definitely preset in ecclesiastical writings and practice. Therefore water baptism integrated the person into the visible “universal body of Christ,” soteriologically and ecclesiologically.

The term “universal, invisible church” has a prevalent usage in contemporary Church of Christ. For example, Roman Catholicism acknowledges to an invisible part of the church; nevertheless, they maintain that the invisible church does not precede the visible church (Berkhof 1976). Furthermore, Protestants are bound to the theory of the “universal invisible church” because it is explicitly declared in the Westminster Confession. In addition; this concept has filtered through Baptist theology and practice. For example, John Broadus, the great Baptist preacher and scholar, refers to this thought in his discussion of Matt. 16:18ff. Baptists also integrate this notion in their practice by engaging in ecumenicalism. Besides, some Baptists emphasize the unscriptural idea of the Holy Spirit baptizing believers into the “universal, invisible Body of Christ.” This concept of “church” not only demoralized the theology and practice of the local New Testament church found in Baptist ecclesiology, but it also challenges the Baptist heritage to which Baptist should adhere.

Virtually all theologians identify the difference between the church in a universal, invisible sense and a local, visible sense. Grudem makes the following distinction: “The invisible church is the church as God sees it” (p. 855); “The visible church is the church as Christians on earth see it” (p. 856). Both senses are found in 1 Corinthians 1:2's “to the church of God which is at Corinth” (cf. 2 Cor 1:1). The local church at Corinth was one of the many visible manifestations of the universal, invisible church of that day.

On the other hand, the invisible church points to those persons who have really been regenerated or accelerated by the Holy Spirit, God's elect or true believers. Augustine referred to the church as a mixed body, a visible people, but this people have both tares and wheat, as portrayed by Jesus. In other words, there is nothing like a perfect church, and there will at all times people in the church with bad motives or are there for the erroneous reason. There will constantly be people who declare to love Christ but whose heart is distant from Him. Many, Jesus says, will say on that day, did we not do this and that in your name? Jesus will then say, “I never knew you”. These are descriptions of some people now sitting in your local church and Jesus says of them

that he "never knew them!!!" Some people are in church for show, to be seen by men as sanctimonious, others possibly for a social club or to show off their capability to wax fluent when discussing theology. These people's hearts are totally invisible to us, but of course, they are not invisible to God and only He can discern who is actually regenerate, so we must be charitable in our judgements.

Conceivably the briefest and the best statement of the church as invisible and visible is found in the Westminster Standards. Chapter 25, "Of the Church," states: "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 (sections 1, 2).

Nonetheless, it was not until Augustine did ecclesiology deviate even more from Scripture. Augustine, the "great theologian of the Western Church," who was deeply influenced by neo-Platonism, came across a controversy with the Donatists. The Donatists disapproved of the "visible church" because of its lack of a pure membership, asking if the church was really crack into two churches, the mixed church of the present and the pure church of the future. In seeing the Donatists' justifiable criticism of the impure "visible church," Augustine was pushed to couple his notion of the predestination of the elect with his Cyprianic concept of the "catholic church." Consequently, the "church" was the *communio sanctorum*, likened by Augustine unto an enclosed garden correspondent to "the certain predestinated number of saints." Berkhof sums up Augustine's position by stating the "real unity of the saints and therefore of the church is an invisible one." His theological ingenuity had a dual upshot. It not only helped Augustine to tidily sidestep the Donatists' criticism, but it also was the source for afterward ecclesiological error. Though, Augustine did not use the term "invisible" with "catholic church," he did invent the concept of "invisible, catholic church" out of theological inevitability. So by the 5<sup>th</sup> century there were at least two diverse concepts to "church." To the "catholic," who held to baptismal regeneration and thus unregenerate church membership, the true church was universal and moreover invisible. Conversely, to the Donatists, who demanded and practiced believer's baptism and pure church membership, the true church was the local church practicing church discipline and other New Testament concepts.

Indeed, Reformed theologians emphasize that this difference does not denote that God has two detach churches. Undoubtedly, they affirm that Yahweh has established one church, that Jesus has only one bride, people, church, or body. Our Lord does not have two churches but only one. The terms "invisible" and "visible" are used to illustrate two separate aspects of the one church; or, alternatively, the church is measured from two diverse perspectives. It does not entail that there are two detach air tight categories with one group on heaven and another on earth. In contrast, there is a huge overlap between both categories. All authentic believers are members of the invisible church whether they are living in heaven or on earth, whether they are alive or dead. It is confirmed that not all professing Christians, though, who are members of the visible church, are members of the invisible church. Nevertheless, some people who declared their faith and are baptized yet are hypocrites. Such people do not actually believe in Christ or

truly united to Him by faith and are not part of the invisible church.

The invisible church comprised of those who have been redeemed and are truly Christians. They are regenerate, born again, made new creatures, and are indwelt by God (John 14:23). They are the ones who have trusted, by faith alone, in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and have repented of their sins. They believe in Jesus as God in flesh (John 1:1, 14; Colossians 2:9) who died on the cross and physically rose from the dead as a payment for our sins. These people are the ones who have been justified by faith (Romans 3:28; 5:1). They are born again members of the invisible church, they are the elect.

- "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God,'" (John 3:3).
- "For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation," (Galatians 6:15).
- "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come," (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit," (Titus 3:5).
- "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," (1 Peter 1:3).

Christianity is not comprised merely of religious patterns, attending of churches, tithing, taking communion, etc. True Christianity is the manifestation of the regenerate, those who are saved and are indwelt by God. They often gather in church structures and participate in church practices. They are redeemed, true Christians.

Concerning the invisible church John says that true believers have received the Holy Spirit from Christ which shields them against apostasy or abandonment: "But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things." True believers or members of the invisible church cannot fall away because they are baptized with the Holy Spirit and thus eternally abide in Christ (1 Jn. 2:27; 5:4). Jesus agrees: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand" (Jn. 10:27-28).

John 10:16 Jesus says he has other sheep which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear...This "other sheep" is referring to members of the invisible church who are yet to join the visible church. This shows that some invisible church members may still backslide but would still come back since the anointing of the Lord is on them. That is why one has to be careful to look down on those who are yet to repent and are not part of the visible church because in the long run he may repent no one knows. It is only God omniscient who has absolute knowledge of the invisible church.

### 3.2 The Reformers' Use of the Concept Universal Invisible Church

During the pre-Reformation era of Christianity, the concept of the “church” was at least dualistic. The Anabaptists held to their local church concept while the Catholics held to their “universal (catholic) church” concept. Furthermore, the roots to the “invisible catholic church” originated in Augustine: nevertheless, his concept was not essential for further progression until the Reformation. When Luther broke from the “Catholic Church” he kept some of their doctrines. Accordingly, then, Luther denied that the “Catholic Church” was basically external but he asserted that it was to be found in the sphere of the universal. So to Luther, the “invisible, catholic church” was included in the external church through which God dispenses His grace. Nonetheless, the Reformed took another step away from New Testament ecclesiology and maintained that the “invisible, catholic church” went beyond the bounds of the “visible, catholic church.” Consequently, the *ecclesia universalis* includes all who are saved, whether in the external church or not.

The phrase invisible as defined by the Reformed symbols and theologians does not entail that some Christians are invisible like ghosts hovering around in the spirit sphere. The implication is simply the fact that the invisible church cannot be completely discovered, differentiated or discerned by the eyes of men, by pragmatic means. There are some reasons why this statement cannot be rejected. First, no one has the capacity to look into the human heart and perceive if a person is really united to Christ and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. That reality is the reason that, historically, Presbyterian churches have admitted members upon a convincing profession of faith. Second, the inward, effectual calling of the Spirit and the appliance of redemption to the human soul are all spiritual, unseen events. Moreover, the Holy Spirit gives indisputable saving faith only to the elect. The fake faith of unregenerate professors of religion repeatedly is imperceptible to mere mortals. We can only perceive external signs, statements and actions. No person has the capacity to establish or observe the whole body of God's elect irrespective of time i.e., all through human history preceding the last judgment or place i.e., there are many real believers in the world of which we are not aware. Williamson writes: "It is invisible to us because it has extension in both time and space. It reaches from one end of the earth to the other, and from the beginning to the end of the age. But it is invisible only to us. It is not invisible to God. He who infallibly discerns the hearts of men, knows them that are his. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: 'the Lord knoweth them that are his' (II Tim. 2:19)."Jesus prayed for the invisible church "the elect present and not yet born in John 17. "Christ is speaking of a special company which had been given to Him. The reference, then, is to the sovereign election of God, whereby He chose a definite number to be His 'peculiar people.'" This is in a peculiar or special way. These are eternally His: 'chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world' (Eph. 1:4); and by the immutability of His purpose of grace (Rom. 11:29), they are always His."

### 4.0 Conclusion

The theology of 1 Jn. 2:19-20 teaches that the church is composed of true and false

believers and the doctrine of perseverance points towards the elect who would forever remain in Christ. True Christians are united to Christ by the Holy Spirit and can never apostatize while those who are not baptized in the Spirit and not united to the Savior can really fall apart because their presence in the visible church was impermanent, for they failed in their perseverance. If they had been members of the invisible church, they would have remained with the body of believers.

## **5.0 Summary**

The concept “universal, invisible church” has its origin in the Church Fathers. Furthermore, the “established church” has contributed to its development through the ages, diverging more and more from New Testament ecclesiology. It can be enthusiastically seen that the concept of “catholic, visible church” led to “catholic, invisible church.” The Roman Catholics had their visible, external ecclesiology, and the Protestants had their invisible internal ecclesiology, while the Anabaptists had their pure, visible ecclesiology. Therefore, Baptists should avoid integrating into their local church ecclesiology Protestant ecclesiology which was a theological obligation against Roman Catholic ecclesiology and based upon the Platonic philosophy of Augustine, who in actual fact used his ecclesiology to destabilize the local church ecclesiology of the ancestors of the Baptists. Several Baptists teach and practice historical and theological New Testament ecclesiology.

## **6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment**

- What is universal invisible church?
- Explain briefly the position of the church fathers on the term, “invisible church”

## **7.0 References/Further Readings**

Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), p. 563.

John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, ed. Alvah Hovey (Valley Forge, PA: The American Baptist Publishing Society, 1886), pp. 358-9.

The strongest Biblical reference for “catholic church” is based on the textual variant found in Acts 9:31, “the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria....”

However, theology which is built upon textual variants is weak indeed.

Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (NY: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1953), p. 183.

Henry C. Vedder, *A Short History of the Baptists* (Valley Forge: the Judson Press, 1969), p. 54. Clyde C. Sm, “Catholic,” *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), p. 203.

Reinhold Seeberg, *Text-Book of the History of Doctrines*, trans. Charles E. Hay, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), p. 325.

Louis Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), p. 229.



## **MODULE 2: TYPOLOGIES AND MODELS OF ECCLESIOLOGY**

<b>Unit 1</b>	<b>Categories/ Types of Ecclesiology</b>
<b>Unit 2</b>	<b>Roman Catholic Ecclesiology Unit</b>
<b>Unit 3</b>	<b>Protestant Ecclesiology</b>
<b>Unit 4</b>	<b>Eastern Orthodox Ecclesiology</b>
<b>Unit 5</b>	<b>Christology and Eschatology</b>
<b>Unit 6</b>	<b>Pentecostal Ecclesiology</b>
<b>Unit 7</b>	<b>African Pentecostal Ecclesiology</b>

### **UNIT 1: CATEGORIES/ TYPES OF ECCLESIOLOGY**

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Intended Learning Outcomes</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main content</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>High Church Ecclesiology</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Low Church Ecclesiology</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>High Church Ecclesiology</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Strong Ecclesiology</b>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Weak Ecclesiology</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Tutor-marked Assignment</b>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>References/Further Readings</b>

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This unit is intended solely as a descriptive – style breakdown of different sorts of ecclesiology within the broad spectrum of the Christian tradition. And all typologies that help in facilitating the theological task at points of need, ought not to be done away with.

There are two basic polarities which define the shape of a given ecclesiology. The first is referred to as the High-Low polarity while the second is referred to as the Strong-Weak polarity. Within this framework any given ecclesial body could potentially fall in one of the four categories which are High-Strong, High-Weak, Low-Strong, and Low-Weak. Here are the descriptors of these categories and with attending attempt to put various Christian ecclesial bodies in their proper place.

#### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the unit you should be able to:

- Highlight the various types of Ecclesiology
- Discuss the various types of Ecclesiology

- Highlight and Discuss the Ecclesiological bodies

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 High Church Ecclesiology**

Here, there is high view of church history and tradition which emphasizes on liturgy and above all the Eucharist. Churches are generally structured Episcopal (i.e. through a hierarchy of bishops who stand in communion with each other). Emphasis is put on salvation of membership in the church through participation in the sacraments, generally holds to infant baptism and close connection between baptism and initiation into the broad community of faith.

#### **3.2 Low Church Ecclesiology:**

Here, there is a generally suspicion of history and tradition. It emphasizes the Bible as the church's ultimate authority and preaching is more central than the Eucharist or the liturgy. Churches tend to be structured congregationally (i.e. governed by the local congregation itself or through one or more elders appointed by congregations). Salvation is emphasized as the subjective appropriation and confession of faith in Christ. It holds to believers' baptism. There is a close connection between salvation, baptism, and committed discipleship in the community.

#### **3.3 Strong Ecclesiology:**

The Strong Ecclesiology holds a high view of the role of the church in the economy of salvation. Understands that the church is the means by which God is at work in the world. A strong view of the church as the ongoing embodied presence of Christ in the world. The church participates in the mission of God to redeem the world. Membership in the visible church community is indispensable to Christian life and the shape of Christian salvation.

#### **3.4 Weak Ecclesiology:**

Holds a humble and limited view of God's role for the church in his plan of salvation. The church exists to strengthen and instruct the believer and to witness to God's work of salvation that takes place solely through God's action. The church does not participate in God's action, but points away from itself to God's action outside of human effort. The emphasis is on the invisible church, the universal body of all people who believe in Christ throughout the world. All Christians are members of this church and that is what is primary. membership in a local congregation is for edification and growth, but is not central to salvation.

The four Ecclesiastical bodies can therefore be properly categorised as follows.

#### **1. High-Strong:**

Under this category, we have the Roman Catholic, and the Anglican Communion.

**2. High-Weak:**

Here we have the Protestant, Episcopal Church (USA), Methodists,

**3. Low-Strong:**

Here, we have the Anabaptists/Mennonites, Some Baptists (especially British), New Monasticism, Eastern Orthodox

**4. Low-Weak:**

Most Evangelicals, Most Baptists (esp. USA), Pentecostals, Charismatic, Holiness Movement, Nazarenes.4.0 Conclusion

Types of Ecclesiology are important in the doctrine of the Church as it gives the typology of the various Ecclesiologies as the case may be. It exposes us to the denominations that belong to the each of the typology.

## 5.0 Summary

In this unit the following are the major points learnt

- High Church Ecclesiology
- Low Church Ecclesiology
- High Church Ecclesiology
- Strong Ecclesiology
- Weak Ecclesiology

## 6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment

1. What is your own understanding of low church ecclesiology?
2. Highlight the four types of ecclesiology
3. Explain the importance of the four types of ecclesiology

## 7.0 Self-Assessment Questions

How would you explain to a novice about the views of the Weak Ecclesiology on God's plan of salvation to humanity?

What reasons will you advance for such views?

## 8.0 References and Further readings

- Anon. (1837). "Ecclesiology". *The British Critic Quarterly Theological Review and Ecclesiastical Record*, London: J.G. and F. Rivington
- "Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (2001)". Office of Ecumenical & Interreligious Relations of the Episcopal Church. 2001. Retrieved 20011 – 10 – 06
- F. Bauer, W. Danker, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, third ed., (Chicago:University of Chicago Press, 2000)

- Livingstone, E. A., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2006)
- White, James F. (1979). *The Cambridge Movement: the ecclesiologists and the Gothic revival* (revised ed.). Cambridge University Press.

## **UNIT2: MODEL OF ROMAN CATHOLIC ECCLESIOLOGY**

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes.**
- 3.0 Main content**
  - 3.1 Roman Catholic ecclesiology as a plurality of model**
  - 3.2 The model of the church as a mystical body**
- 4.0 Conclusion**
- 5.0 Summary**
- 6.0 Tutored-marked assignment**
- 7.0 Self-Assessment Questions**
- 8.0 References/ further reading**

### **1.0 Introduction**

In this unit we will learn about Roman Catholic ecclesiology and the views of the different scholars on it. The church model is discussed as well. The significance of this aspect of ecclesiology exposes us to the commencement of leadership in the Church with St. Peter the Apostle, who the successor was later to be the Pope.

### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

- explain vividly, Roman Catholic Ecclesiology.
- The two biblical images of the Church model as a mystical communion

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Roman Catholic Ecclesiology as a plurality of Model**

Roman Catholic ecclesiology today has a plurality of models and views, as with all Roman Catholic Theology since the acceptance of scholarly Biblical criticism that began in the early to mid 20th century. This shift is most clearly marked by the encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* in 1943. Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J. contributed greatly to the use of models in understanding ecclesiology. In his work *Models of the Church*, he defines four basic models of Church that have been prevalent throughout the history of the Catholic Church. These include models of the Church as institution, as mystical communion, as herald, and as servant.

The ecclesiological model of Church as Institution holds that the Catholic Church alone is the "one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church", and is the only Church of divine and apostolic origin. In this view, the Catholic Church— composed of all baptized, professing Catholics, both clergy and laity — is the unified, visible society founded by Christ himself, and its hierarchy derives its spiritual authority through the centuries, via apostolic succession of its bishops, most especially through the bishop of Rome (the Pope) whose successor ship comes from St. Peter the Apostle, whom Christ gave "the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven". Thus, the Popes, in the Catholic

view, have a God-ordained universal jurisdiction over the whole church on earth.

### **3.2 The Model of the Church as a Mystical Body**

The Catholic Church is considered Christ's mystical body, and the universal sacrament of salvation, whereby Christ enables men to receive sanctifying grace. The model of Church as Mystical Communion draws on two major Biblical images, the first of the "Mystical Body of Christ" (as developed in Paul's Epistles) and the second of the "People of God." This ecclesiological model draws upon sociology and articulations of two types of social relationships: a formally organized or structured society (Gesellschaft) and an informal or interpersonal community (Gemeinschaft). The Roman Catholic theologian Arnold Rademacher maintained that the Church in its inner core is community (Gemeinschaft) and in its outer core society (Gesellschaft). Here, the interpersonal aspect of the Church is given primacy and that the structured Church is the result of a real community of believers. Similarly, Yves Congar argued that the ultimate reality of the Church is a fellowship of persons. This ecclesiology opens itself to ecumenism and was the prevailing model used by the Second Vatican Council (itself considered by Roman Catholics an ecumenical council). The Council, using this model, recognized in its document *Lumen Gentium* that the Body of Christ subsists in a visible society governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him, although many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of its visible structure.

### **4.0 Conclusion**

Roman Catholic ecclesiology emanated in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century and the four basic ecclesiological models is used in getting it explained. It confirms that church leadership commenced from the era of St. Peter, that is one of the inner caucus of Jesus among the twelve Apostles and his successor (Apostle Peter) was the Bishop of Rome.

### **5.0 Summary**

The following are the major points learnt in this unit

- The concept of ecclesiology
- The four basic church models of Roman Catholic Ecclesiology
- The Model Church as a Mystical Body

### **6.0 Tutored-Marked Assignment**

1. What period did the Roman Catholic Ecclesiology begin
2. Highlight and Discuss the four models of the Roman Catholic Church
3. Explain vividly how the church leadership started from St. Peter

## **7.0 Self-Assessment Questions**

1. Who was St. Peter?
2. Why was the commencement of Church leadership linked with Apostle Peter?

## **8.0 References/ Further Readings**

"Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (2001)". Office of Ecumenical & Interreligious Relations of the Episcopal Church. 2001. Retrieved 10-06- 20011

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"Church Architecture, Church furnishings, Church liturgy - Homepage". The Ecclesiological Society. Retrieved 10-042011

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McGrath, Alister. E. (1998). *Historical Theology, An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. p.200.

George, Timothy (1988). *Theology of the Reformers*. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press. pp. 285.

## **UNIT 3: MODEL OF PROTESTANT ECCLESIOLOGY**

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**
- 3.0 Main Content**
  - 3.1 Definition of Protestant Ecclesiology**
  - 3.2 The Lutheran view of Protestant Ecclesiology**
  - 3.3 Radical Reformation Ecclesiology**
- 4.0 Conclusion**
- 5.0 Summary**
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment**
- 7.0 Self-Assessment Questions**
- 8.0 References/ Further Readings**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Here, both the Protestant and Reformation ecclesiology were discussed respectively with their contravention to the Roman Catholic Ecclesiology regarding views of a true Christian church. While the Lutheran view was used in the protestant, other views were also used in the Radical Reformation Ecclesiology and this should be well noted.

### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

- Explain the Protestant and Radical Reformation Ecclesiology
- Show your understanding of the Martin Luther Argument
- Make comparison between Protestant and Radical Reformation Ecclesiology

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Definition of Protestant Ecclesiology**

The term Protestant ecclesiology refers to the spectrum of teachings held by the Protestant Reformers concerning the nature and mystery of the Church otherwise known as the 'Theology of grace'

#### **3.2 The Lutheran view of Protestant Ecclesiology**

Martin Luther argued that because the Catholic church had "lost sight of the doctrine of grace", it had "lost its claim to be considered as the authentic Christian church."; this argument was open to the counter-criticism from Catholics that he was thus guilty of schism and a Donatist position, and in both cases therefore opposing the central teachings of Augustine of Hippo.

**Who was Martin Luther? What is the central teaching of Augustine of Hippo?**

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### **3.3 Radical Reformation Ecclesiology**

There is no single "Radical Reformation Ecclesiology". A variety of views is expressed among the various "Radical Reformation" participants.

A key "Radical Reformer" was Menno Simons, known as an "Anabaptist". He wrote:

They verily are not the true congregation of Christ who merely boast of his name. But they are the true congregation of Christ who are truly converted, who are born from above of God, who are of a regenerated mind by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the hearing of the divine Word, and have become the children of God, have entered into obedience to him, and live blameless in his holy commandments, and according to his holy will with all their days, or from the moment of their call. This was in direct contrast to the hierarchical, sacramental ecclesiology that characterised the incumbent Roman Catholic tradition as well as the new Lutheran and other prominent Protestant movements of the Reformation.

Some other Radical Reformation ecclesiology holds that "the true church [is] in heaven, and no institution of any kind on earth merit[s] the name Church of God.

A more conservative analysis of ecclesiology was given in the mid-20th century by the Methodist Robert Newton Flew.

### **4.0 Conclusion**

It can be concluded that both the Protestant and Radical Reformation Ecclesiology are reformatory and protestant in nature, they still hold different perspectives about the view of what the true church is, thus little wonder to discover that a variety of views is expressed among the various "Radical Reformation" participants, although they still centered towards the same direction.

### **5.0 Summary**

The major points learnt in this unit are:

The Protestant Ecclesiology which is associated with Martin Luther or the Lutheran view of the Protestant Ecclesiology

The Radical Reformation Ecclesiology is also discussed

### **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment**

1. How would you describe Protestant Ecclesiology to a lay man?
2. Explain the view of Lutherans on Protestant Ecclesiology.

### **7.0 Self Assessment Questions**

1. What are the differences between Protestant and Radical Reformation Ecclesiologies.
2. Examine the relevance of their views to the contemporary Christian Doctrine on Grace

### **8.0 References /Further Readings**

Anon. (1837). "Ecclesiology". *The British Critic Quarterly Theological*

*Review and Ecclesiastical Record*, London: J.G. and F. Rivington  
"Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (2001)". Office of Ecumenical &  
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revival* (revised ed.). Cambridge University Press.

## **UNIT 4 MODEL OF EASTERN ORTHODOX ECCLESIOLOGY**

### **1.0 Introduction**

### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

### **3.0 Main Content**

#### **3.1 The Perspective Orthodox on the Eastern Orthodox Ecclesiology**

#### **3.2 Comparative Analysis among the Eastern, Western and Protestant Ecclesiologies**

### **4.0 Conclusion**

### **5.0 Summary**

### **6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment**

### **7.0 Self-Assessment Questions**

### **8.0 References/ Further Readings**

### **1.0 Introduction**

In this unit, orthodox ecclesiology is discussed and its view on eastern orthodox ecclesiology is then examined. Comparison is also made between the Eastern, Western and Protestant Ecclesiologies.

### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Examine the Orthodox perspective on the Eastern Orthodox Ecclesiology
- Make comparative Analysis between the Eastern, Western and Protestant Ecclesiology

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 The Perspective of Orthodox on the Eastern Orthodox Ecclesiology**

From the Orthodox perspective, the Church is one, even though She is manifested in many places. Orthodox ecclesiology operates with a plurality in unity and a unity in plurality. For Orthodoxy there is no 'either / or' between the one and the many. No attempt is made, or should be made, to subordinate the many to the one (the Roman Catholic model), nor the one to the many (the Protestant model). It is both canonically and theologically correct to speak of the Church and the churches, and vice versa.<sup>3</sup>

#### **3.2 Comparative Analysis among the Eastern, Western and Protestant Ecclesiologies**

Western Christians often speak of the Orthodox Churches, rather than the Orthodox Church. From the Orthodox perspective, the Church is one, even though she is manifested in many places. Orthodox ecclesiology operates with a plurality in unity and a unity in plurality. For Orthodoxy there is no

‘either / or’ between the one and the many. No attempt is made, or should be made, to subordinate the many to the one (the Roman Catholic model), nor the one to the many (the Protestant model). It is both canonically and theologically correct to speak of the Church and the churches, and vice versa. This is impossible for Roman Catholic ecclesiology because of the double papal claim for universal jurisdiction and infallibility.

The same must be said of the Protestant ecclesiology, which connect the notion of the Church with denominationalism, and which make a distinction between the one and the many in terms of the invisible and the visible Church. From an Orthodox perspective, the Church is both catholic and local, invisible and visible, one and many. To explain what lies behind this Orthodox ecclesiological unity in multiplicity, one has to deal with the Orthodox understanding of the nature of the Church.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The Church is one. The western ecclesiology manifested with plurality and unity and does not subordinate to many other churches. The Roman Catholic Church lays claim to the universal jurisdiction and infallibility of the papacy.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

These are the points learnt in this unit:

- Orthodox Ecclesiology operates in plurality which manifested in many places.
- Comparative analysis is made among the Eastern, Western and Protestant Ecclesiologies

#### **6.0 Tutor – marked Assignment**

1. Make comparison between Eastern, Western and Protestant Ecclesiologies
2. How do you explain Eastern Orthodox Ecclesiology to a lay man?

#### **7.0 Self-Assessment Questions**

1. Do you still think that the contemporary Roman Catholic Church still hold to infallibility of the papacy? Give reasons
2. Advance reasons why the Roman Catholic Church refuses to under the subordination of any other churches?

#### **8.0 References/ Further Readings**

Anon. (1837). "Ecclesiology". *The British Critic Quarterly Theological Review and Ecclesiastical Record*,  
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## **UNIT 5 CHRISTOLOGY AND ESCHATOLOGY**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 General definitions and concepts of Christology and Eschatology
  - 3.2 Comprehensive Doctrine or Teachings of Christology
  - 3.3 The various theories or schools of thought on the humanity and divinity (Deity) of Christ.
  - 3.4 General Perceptions of Christianity and other World Religions about Eschatology
  - 3.5 The Old and New Testaments beliefs and Doctrine of Eschatology
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment
- 7.0 Self-Assessment Questions
- 8.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 Introduction**

This unit comprises of the teachings or doctrine that are fundamental to Christianity. It is the core in which the religion hangs on without which this course will be incomplete and as well insignificant to any teaching or learning in theology. Thus, the unit focuses on the basic concepts, understanding and teachings on Christology and Eschatology respectively. It examines the different views and concepts of Christology and Eschatology. The perspectives of some world religions like Judaism, Hinduism and Islam are discussed especially on eschatology.

### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Explain vividly the concepts of Christology and Eschatology respectively
- Discuss the different perceptions of scholars on Christology and Eschatology respectively
- Explain the perceptions of other World Religions on Eschatology
- Discuss comprehensively the basic doctrine of Christianity on Christology and Eschatology
- List and briefly explain the various schools of thought on the humanity and divinity (Deity) of Christ.
- Examine both the old and new testaments teachings on Eschatology
- Justify for both the humanity and divinity of Christ
- List our attitudes to the teachings on Christology and Eschatology

### **3.0 Main Content**

#### **3.1 General definitions and Concepts of Christology and Eschatology**

##### **What is Christology?**

Christology means the doctrine of Christ or the study about Jesus Christ. The teaching about Jesus Christ lies at the heart of every Christian theology. This involves what we as Christians have to say about Jesus in contrast to what one who is definitely a non-Christian or one who provisionally abstains from a final, personal decision might say about Jesus.

Every Christian is asked whether his understanding of Jesus is also the true as that is appropriate to Jesus Himself. The purpose of Christological endeavour is to examine, systematically this question and thus to account for the Christian teaching about Jesus as well as to examine the teaching itself.

May be we should begin with this personal question in Matthew 22:42 –“what think ye of Christ?” or simply put “what is Christ to you?” We may summarize the biblical teaching about the person of Christ as follow:

“Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man in one person, and will be so forever”. The Scripture material supporting this definition is extensive. We will discuss first the Humanity of Christ then His Deity and then attempt to show how Jesus’ Deity and humanity are united in the one person of Christ.

##### **What is Eschatology?**

On the other hand, **Eschatology** which has its origin from the **Greek word ‘eschatos’** meaning **‘last’ or ‘farthest’** and was known to have first been used in 1844, is the teaching or belief about the ultimate destiny of mankind. Literally, it is known as the doctrine or discourse of last or final things. It deals with the Day of the Lord, the Day of Righteous Judgment; with death and immortality; the millennium, the Parousia or sudden coming again of Jesus or the second coming of Jesus Christ, and the eternal reign of the Lord throughout the universe.

In addition, Christian Apologetics and Roman Catholic Ministry perceived the term as the study of the teaching in the Bible concerning the end of times or the period of time dealing with the return of Christ and the events that follows. A branch of Christian theology that deals with the biblical study of end time prophecies of the last days some of these events are the rapture, millennium kingdom, tribulation, future judgment, the white judgement throne as recoded in the Apocalypse, that is the books of Daniel, Ezekiel and Revelation.

Since ancient pre-scientific, man has no few means with which to change in his word and combat its injustices, it is natural that he gave more of his attention that modern man would do in theories about the final destiny of the righteous and the wicked and the possibility of a future golden age. In view of this general face it is surprising that

the early Hebrew actually has so little concern with eschatology, either with respects to the individual or the Universe at large. Most of the Old Testament writings centred upon this world and its problems, and ideas of a Universal judgment and restoration and of a resurrection after death, appear only at a late period and, partly at least, as the result of foreign influence. Thus, eschatology is of greater concern to the Christians than cosmological theories about how the Universe and the human race began.

### **3.2 Comprehensive Doctrine or Teachings of Christology**

The following sub-headings are crucial in the understanding of the doctrine of Christology

#### **A. THE INCARNATION: DEITY AND HUMANITY IN THE PERSON OF CHRIST.**

**The Humanity of Christ:** This is centred on how Jesus Christ was born and other aspects that proves Him as truly man.

**The Virgin Birth:** When we speak of the humanity of Christ, it is appropriate to begin with a consideration of the virgin birth of Christ. The Scripture clearly asserts that Jesus was conceived in the womb of his mother Mary by a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit and without a human father. (Matt. 1:18-20, 24-25; Luke 1:35).

The doctrinal importance of the virgin birth is seen in three areas:

1. It shows that salvation ultimately must come from the Lord. Just as God had promised that the “seed” of the woman (Gen. 3:15) would destroy the serpent. So God brought it about by His own power, not through mere human effort. The virgin birth of Christ is an unmistakable reminder that our salvation only comes about through the supernatural work of God. (Gal. 4:4-5).
  - a. It makes possible the uniting of full deity and full humanity in one person. If we think of other possible ways in which Christ might have come to the earth, none of them would so clearly unite humanity and deity in one person.
  - b. It makes possible Christ’s true humanity without inherited sin. All human beings have inherited legal guilt and a corrupt moral nature from Adam – this is called “original sin”. But the fact that Jesus did not have a human father means that the link of descent from Adam is partially interrupted. (Luke 1:35). Because the Spirit brought about the conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary, the child was to be called “Holy”.

#### **Human Weakness and Limitations**

**Jesus had a human body:** He was born just as all human babies are born but only the conception is different (Luke 2:7). He grew through childhood to adulthood (Luke 2:40-52). Jesus became tired just as we do (John 4:6). He became thirsty (John 19:28). He was hungry (Mt. 4:2). He was also physically weak (Matt. 4:11; Lk. 23:26, 46). He could be angered or provoked



**JESUS HAD HUMAN MIND:** Luke 2:52- This shows that Jesus went through a learning process as other children do – he learned how to eat, how to talk, how to read and write and how to be obedient to his parents (Heb. 5:8). This ordinary learning process was part of the genuine humanity of Christ.

**HE HAD A HUMAN SOUL AND HUMAN EMOTIONS:** John 12:27; 13:21; Matt. 26:38 – indications that he had a human soul. He also had a full range of human emotions. Heb. 5:7

**PEOPLE NEAR HIM SAW HIM AS ONLY A MAN:** Matt. 13:53-58. They know he was one of them. Even his brothers who grew up in the same household did not realize that he was anything more than another very good human being. They apparently had no idea that he was God come in flesh

### **SINLESSNESS:**

The New Testament clearly affirms that though Jesus was fully human, He was different in one important respect; He was without sin and He never committed sin during His lifetime. Some may object to this, that all human sin. But we need to realize that Human beings are now in an abnormal situation. God did not create man sinful but holy and righteous. Adam and Eve in Eden before they sinned were truly human. But now we do not match the pattern that God intends for us.

### **WHY WAS JESUS HUMANITY NECESSARY?**

To deny Jesus' true humanity is to deny something at the very heart of Christianity. Jesus had to be fully man if he was going to be the Messiah and earn our salvation. (I John 4:2-3)

- (i) **FOR REPRESENTATIVE OBEDIENCE:** Jesus was our representative and obeyed for us where Adam had failed and disobeyed (Luke 4:1-13; Gen. 2:15, 13:7 Rom. 5:18-19).
- (ii) **TO BE A SUBSTITUTE SACRIFICE:** If Jesus had not been a man, he could not have died in our place and paid the penalty that was due to us (Heb. 2:16-17, 14). Jesus had to become a man not an angel because God was concerned with saving man. So to do this he had to be made like us in every way.
- (iii) **TO BE THE ONE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN:** Because we were alleviated from God by sin, we needed someone to come between us and God to bring us back to him. In order to fulfil this role of mediator, Jesus had to be fully man as well as fully God.

- iv) **TO FULFIL GOD’S ORIGINAL PURPOSE FOR MAN TO RULE OVER CREATION:** What is the purpose of God for man according to Gen. 1:28.? To ‘multiply’, ‘replenish’ and ‘subdue’ the earth’ But man did not fulfil that purpose for he fell into sin. Then when Jesus came as a man, He was able to obey God and thereby have the right to rule over creation on earth. (Heb. 2:7-9); Eph. 1:22; Matt. 28:18).
- v) **TO BE OUR EXAMPLE AND PATTERN IN LIFE:** (I John 2:6; 3:2-3; 2Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29; I Peter 2:21; Heb. 12:2, 3). Jesus had to become a man like us in order to live as our example and pattern in life.
- vi) **TO BE THE PATTERN FOR OUR REDEEMED BODIES:** (I Cor. 15:42-44, 49). Jesus had to be raised as a man in order to be the “first born from the dead” (Col. 1:18), the pattern for the bodies that we would later have.
- vii) **SYMPATHIZE AS HIGH PRIEST:** Heb. 2:18; 4:15-16. If Jesus had not been a man, he would not have been able to know by experience what we go through in our temptations and struggles in this life. But because He has lived as a man, He is able to sympathize more fully with us in our experiences

## A) THE DEITY OF CHRIST

Having affirmed that Jesus Christ was fully human, it is also important to see how fully divine He was. We use the word “incarnation” to refer to the fact that Jesus was God in Human flesh. The incarnation was the act of God the son whereby He took upon Himself a human nature.

**DIRECT SCRIPTURAL CLAIM:** The direct statements that Jesus is God or that He is divine.

- (a) The word God (“Theos”) used for Christ: in these passages, the word “God” is used in the strong sense to refer to the one who is the Creator of heaven and earth, the ruler over all – John 1:1; 1:18; 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Titus 2:13; Heb.1:8; 2Pet. 1:1; Isaiah 9:6.
- (b) The word ‘Lord’ (Kyrios) used for Christ; The word Lord (Greek. Kyrios) is used in Septuagint. (Greek translation of the O.T.) as a translation for the Hebrews “yhwh” “YAHWEH” or “the LORD” or “JEHOVAH”. Therefore the Greek speaking reader at the time of the New Testament who had the knowledge of the Greek O.T. would have recognized that in the contexts where it was appropriate, the word “LORD” was the name of the one who was the creator and sustainer of heaven and earth.

There are many instances in the New Testament where “LORD is used for Christ in what can only be understood as this strong Old Testament sense, the Lord who is Yahweh or God Himself. (Luke 2:11, 18; 1:43; Matt. 3:3 Isaiah 40:3). The implication of all these is when Jesus comes, the Lord Himself will come.

Jesus also identifies Himself as the sovereign Lord of the Old Testament when he asks the Pharisees about Psalm 110:1 (Matt. 22:44).

- (c) Other strong claim to Christ is the use of the word “God and Lord” to refer to Christ, we have other passages that strongly claim deity for Christ – John 8:58- “I am” – Jesus was repeating the very words God used when he identified Himself to Moses as “I AM THAT I AM” (Exod. 3:14). Also see Rev. 1:8 and 22:13; John 1:1 and Ps. 33:6; John 1:14; Alpha and Omega; and the word.

Another claim is “the son of man”- Matt. 16:13 with Luke 9:18- This unique form has as its background in the vision of Daniel, Dan 7:1- the son of Man who came to the Ancient of Days. Daniel 7:13-14. This passage clearly speaks of someone who had heavenly origin and who was given eternal rule over the whole (Matt. 26:6)

## **EVIDENCES THAT JESUS POSSESSED ATTRIBUTES OF DEITY**

He demonstrated His Omnipotence – Mt. 8:26-27; 14:19; Jn. 2:1-11. He asserted His eternity – John 8:58; Rev. 22:13

He demonstrated His Omniscience in knowing people’s thoughts – Mark 2:8; John 6:64; 2:25; 16:30.

He possessed Divine sovereignty – Mark 2:5-7; Matt. 5:22, 28 etc. He possessed the attribute of immortality – Jn. 2:19; 10:17-18; I Tim. 6:16.

### **3.3 The various theories or schools of thought on the humanity and divinity (Deity) of Christ.**

In the early Christian community, Christ stands out as both human and divine, the son of man but also the son of God. His sinless character is maintained and He is regarded as a Christ and at the same time God and man. However, the difficulties involved in such conception were not fully felt by the early Christian mind and only dawned on it the light of controversy.

There had been great debates on the nature and Being of Christ, this is referred to as “Christological Controversy”.

Many groups evolved out of these controversies. Many of these people were sincerely trying to defend the nature of the Divine. In their various attempts many fell to the other extreme as heretics, thus, contradicting the Holy Scriptures. Some denied the

humanity of Christ and some denied His divinity while others in the attempt to justify the two also fell into their own error. These shall be examined below:

a) **KENOSIS THEORY:** Did Jesus give up some of His divine attribute while on earth? Phil. 2:5-7 – Kenosis Theory holds that Christ gave up some of His divine attribute while He was on earth as a man. The word “kenosis” is from the Greek word means ‘emptied himself’ of attributes such as omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence while on earth.

But the context of Phil. 2:7 does not teach that Christ emptied Himself of some of His divine attributes. The best understanding of this passage is that it talks about Jesus giving up the status and privilege that was his in heaven; he “did not count equality with God a wrong “clung to for his own advantage”, but “humbled himself for our sake and come to live as a man. II John 17:5 and 2 Cor. 8:9. Kenosis theory is showing how incredible it seemed for modern rational and scientific people to believe that Jesus Christ could be truly human and fully, absolutely God at the same time.

In conclusion, the New Testament affirms the full, absolute deity of Jesus Christ. Col. 1:19; 2:9 and we agree that He is truly and fully God as He is truly and full man. His name is rightly called “Emmanuel” that is “God with us” (Matt. 1:22)

b) **EBIONITES:** Felt constrained in the interest of monotheism to deny the deity of Christ. They regarded Him as a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary, who was qualified at His baptism to be the Messiah by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him. They thereby deny incarnation. Gulf still remains between man and God. No sacrifice has been made for man’s sin.

c) **DOCETISM:** This denied the human body of Christ. It submitted that the body “seems” like that of man but not really. This also denies the incarnation and thereby no sacrifice for man as the gulf between man and God is still unabridged.

d) **THE Gnostics:** These were profoundly influenced by the dualistic conception of the Greeks in which matter is believed and as well seen to be inherently evil. It is represented as utterly opposed to Spirit. They rejected the idea of an incarnation; a manifestation of God is a visible form since it involved a direct contact of Spirit with matter. They denied the reality of Jesus human nature.

e) **THE ARIONS:** Arius is the proponent of this theory and one of the clergies under Alexander in the fourth century of the Christian era (Foster, 1991) The NICAEA council was the first ecumenical council (World Council of the Church) to hold in the history of the early Church. It is called “A GREAT COUNCIL OF BISHOPS” as it attracted 220 bishops. The Council was necessitated to make peace with Alexandria and as well address the controversies on the divinity and humanity of Christ. Arius and his followers affirmed the pre-existence of Jesus but denied his deity. Christ is seen as the first of the creatures, not God, less than God yet more than man. God has not become man. Christ is a third sort of being subordinationism.

This idea was strongly opposed by a man called Athanasius a clergy. He strongly defended the position that the son is consubstantial with and of the same essence as the father. A position that was officially adopted by the Council of Nicea in 325 and what is now known as the Nicea Creed. The Nicea Creed is so significant as it sets out right belief in the Three Persons of the Trinity centring attention on the Father and Son. The key word of the whole statement is that the Son is of one substance with the Father, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven was made flesh, was made man. This means that Christ is fully God, and Christ is truly human.

Yet there are some other groups who though agreed with the two natures of Christ but still with inadequate views. These include:

- (a) **APOLINARIANISM:** What is the teaching of Apolinarianism? Apolinaris a Laodicean Bishop in AD 361, taught that the one person of Christ had a human body but not human mind or spirit and that the mind and spirit of Christ was from the divine nature of the Son of God. His chief interest was to secure the unity of the person in Christ without sacrificing his real deity and also to guard the sinlessness of Christ. But he did so at the expense of the complete humanity of the savior. This view was rejected on the ground that not just human body that needed salvation but our human mind and spirit as well.
- (b) **NESTORIANISM:** This is a doctrine that there were two separate persons in Christ, a human person and a divine person. This saw in Christ a man side by side with God, in alliance with God, sharing the purpose of God but not one with Him in the oneness of a single person life. It denies the union of human and divine natures in Christ. This also was rejected.
- (c) **MONOPHYSITISM (EUTYCHIANISM):** This denied that human nature and divine nature in Christ remained fully human and fully divine. It held rather than the human nature of Christ was taken up and absorbed into the divine nature, so that both natures were changed somewhat and a third kind of nature resulted. (Like mixing ink and water). Eutyches taught that Jesus was a mixture of divine and human elements in which both were modified to form one new nature.

## IMPLICATIONS

All these views deny Jesus as fully God and fully man. If Jesus is not God Himself, then:

1. The revelation he brings is not final

2. The redemption he brings is powerless to forgive and to save.
3. He has no part in our relationship with God
4. His death and atonement are irrelevant to our moral status before God.
5. My sin has nothing to do with Him.
6. Only if Jesus is God can he deal with our sin? If He deals with our sins, He must be God because only God can forgive.

The right Christological position is that Jesus is fully man and fully God.

## WHY WAS JESUS DEITY NECESSARY?

It is appropriate to recognize that it is crucially important to insist on the full deity of Christ, not only because it is clearly taught in the Scripture but also because:

1. Only someone who is infinite God could bear the full penalty for all the sins of all those who would believe in Him – any finite creature would have been incapable of bearing the penalty.
2. Salvation is from the Lord and the whole message of scripture is designed to show that no human being, no creature could ever save man, only God could.
3. Only someone who was truly and fully God could be the one mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5) both to bring us back to God and also to reveal God most fully to us (Jn. 14:9).

Thus, if Jesus is not fully God, we have no salvation and ultimately no Christianity.

### 3.4 General Perceptions of Christianity and other World Religions about Eschatology

Much has been previously explained about the perceptions of Christianity on eschatology which holds and teaches that the end times have begun with the life and ministry of Jesus Christ the Messiah who will return to establish the kingdom of God on earth. However, it is of great importance to point out that other religions of the world have their own beliefs about the term. Although there is existence of many world religions, such as Confusionism, Taoism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Bahaa just to mention but a few, but our attention will be on Judaism that is the religion of the Hebrew or the Jewish race, Hinduism and Islam.

According to Merriam Webster Dictionary the Hebrew Scriptures sees eschatology as the catastrophes that beset the people of Israel due to disobedience to the law and will of God. Also they hold that conformity to God's plan will result to the renewal and fulfilment of God's purpose

**Hinduism** on the other hand, maintains the belief in the great cycles of the destruction and creation of the universe. According to Islamic **religion** it is believed that the Mahdi or the Restorer of faith will come back to inaugurate the last judgement in which the good will enter heaven while the evil ones will go to hell. A consideration of the various beliefs and teachings among these diverse religious groups is a pointer that eschatology centres on the end of mankind and the universe as a whole.

### **3.5 The Old and New Testaments Views and Teachings on Eschatology the Old Testament Perceptions of Eschatology**

The first clear indication of the existence of some kind of eschatological ideas among the Hebrews is found in a causal reference of Amos (5:18) a belief in the day of the Lord, but no one knows exactly what it involved. The 8<sup>th</sup> century Prophets all spoke of God's intention to judge Israel itself in the near future. Prophet Zephaniah (1:14-18) gives the classic picture of this "day of wrath" from time to time. However, most of the other prophets brought certain other nations within the scope of God's judgment as well (Amos 1:3, 2:3, Isa. 17-19, Jer. 46-51), but the idea of Universal judgment and upon all nations seems to have been a much later development and is related to apocalyptic literature than to prophecy (Isa. 24, Zech. 12, 14), the developed eschatological frame took various forms, sometimes include the following.

- (1) The coming of a Messiah (Isa. 11:10; Zech. 9:9)
- (2) Sometimes, judgmental salvation which is simply attributed to the direct intervention of Yahweh (Ezek. 39:34; Isa.2:12-21). Daniel 7:13 introduces the mysterious figure of 'one like a son of man' into the picture.
- (3) Post-Exilic Israel's increasing concern with individual as a distinguished nation; life is culminated in the belief in the final resurrection of the dead. (Isa. 26:19; Dan.12:2)
- (4) Daniel's passage speaks of the resurrection of both the righteous and sinners for eternal reward and punishment.

Many Old Testament passages, especially in Isaiah, describe the peace, prosperity and happiness of the recreated world of the future Israel (Isa. 60; 65:17-25). Israel of course will be specially favoured. Jeremiah (31:31) says "Yahweh will enter into a new covenant with her" In some passages however, other nations are represented as sharing in her (the nation of Israel) blessings (Isa.2:2-4; Zech.14:6), and, in at least one passage placed on an equality with her (Isa.19:24). The comprehensive term for the glorious future that lies beyond the judgment is "the Kingdom of God" (although precisely that term does not appear in the Old Testament. For in that day God will reign over all as King (Isa.24:23; Zech.14:16).

In the inter-Testament period i.e. the period between the two Testaments, keen interest in eschatology is apparent in such apocryphal books as II Maccabees, filled with the belief in Jewish political rulers (167-63B.C). In this period "the Messiah" was thought of as David leader who would restore Israel's fortunes. Under Maccabean rule, from Judas Macabees to Aristobulus 11, a deliverer who combined the functions of a priest and king was heralded. Then, with the end of Hasomonaean rule and Pompey's approach in 63 B.C. Jews returned to the David type of expected royal leadership. Again the fire of hope for a sudden coming of a Messiah were kindled by the Jewish revolt against Rome (A.D 66-70), which resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem. Current historical time and again coloured the eschatology of Israel as sometimes her

hope were set upon the coming of a military and political “Messiah”, sometimes, as Enoch, on a heavenly “son of man”. There is no evidence of a role in Jewish eschatology, although it certainly does in the New Testament.

### **New Testaments Views and Teachings on Eschatology**

In the New Testament Age, some of the views expressed by Jesus Himself at first appear contradictory. If His actual word has been preserved, we should have a clearer conception of what he actually thought about things to come but we are possible to make all passages tally. The Gospel offers various views, none of which is all in use concerning the final state of the righteous. As stated in each of the first three Gospels (Matt. 16:28; Mark 13:30; Luke 17:20-24), Jesus considered that the future coming of the son of man was identical with the sudden coming of the Kingdom of God. Yet he also believed that the kingdom of God was already at work within the hearts of earnest seekers of it and that they would share in the eternal, Universal kingdom of God, which would finally expel Satan and establishes redemption of all who had ever lived.

The authors of all the Gospels expressed themselves concerning “things to come”. Matthew was persistently interested in the judgment, and climaxed his views in the statements. He taught that agreements made on earth would be carried through in heaven, and enigmatically about children having angels continually beholding the face of the “father, which is in heaven” (1810). His Gospel made it possible to interpret the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D70) as a tragic signal of the coming of the Lord. This catastrophe was a rebuke to Jews for rejecting Jesus. He optimistically urged believers to prove it by the example of disfranchised Jews, and to take advantage of the situation by making “disciple of all the heathens”.

Mark 13 (“the title Apocalypse”) may represent the efforts of a Jewish Christian to apply what Daniel has prophesied in the chapter, which make Jesus to speak of wars and rumours of war, brothers betraying each other, false prophets arising, and the fallings even of heavenly bodies to play their appointed roles. Yet in the midst of all these Mark quotes Jesus, the son of man will be coming “with great power and glory” at hour which no man, not even angels know but only the father. Mark wrote that Jesus urged constant watching lest any be caught sleeping at His coming.

For the record of Luke concerning what Jesus taught about “the end” consider (Luke 13:24, 19:41-44, 21:5-38). Jesus’ Teaching as presented in the above references is referring to the day of visitation, which no man knows and no stone would be left unturned.

However, the author of fourth Gospel (St. John) has very different views from the other three concerning “things to come”. He finds the comforter ever present in a mystical and eternal fellowship with the followers of Christ. He does not look to the Parousia. He states his eschatology in the “super discourses” of 13-17 rather than in the pre-supper talks of Mark 13. Matt. 24-25 and Luke 21.



Paul's eschatological views rooted in his sure belief in Christ resurrection. He was not able to tell his hearer the nature of immortality, but he assured them that God would surely equip those who deferred immortality with the qualifications of attaining it (1Cor. 15:35-38). He stressed the Old Testament faith fulfilled in a Christian revelation of one whom as God's resurrection, would return to judge the world and give eternal life to those that keeps his commandments. Many of Paul's writings concerning eschatological matters were directed to those who were frankly pushed about "things to come".

The unknown author of Epistle to the Hebrews felt that Christianity's greatest message was not concerned with "things to come", but with teaching on how man can have access to God at all times (10:19-25). He wishes to make Christians who for generations have various expected the coming of Messiah, feel proud of their unshakeable faith and make it a thing of growth.

Revelation which has been regarded by theologians as a significant and major Apocalypse or Apocalyptic writing contains the most elaborate and spectacular New Testament symbolism concerning the ushering in of the millennium- the banding of Satan for 1000 years (Rev. 20:2) while the righteous dwell with Christ and after these 1000years, the loosing Satan, who will be cast into the sea of fire along with the beasts and false prophets, while the new heaven and new earth come down from God, who makes all things new (Rev. 21:5).

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

The last unit of this module two is so elaborate and fundamental to the Christian doctrines. The teaching of Christology is a discourse on the person, the incarnation, Deity and humanity of Christ. On the other hand is the aspect on eschatology which concerns its self with Christian eschatology. The significant importance for this study is to acquaint the true seekers of God about the divine and human nature of Christ. Our exposure to the teachings on eschatology is to prepare the believers in Christ to be mindful of how they live their lives, be in readiness for the coming Messiah, not to be dismay about all the catastrophes and diverse predicaments that the world entirely are experiencing. It is to be aware that it is a fulfilment of the prophecies both from the O.T and N.T writers. Though it is a challenging period for the entire humanity because of wars, rumours of wars, earthquakes in different parts of the world, unrighteousness and lots of evil, all of these create problems for man

#### **5.0 Summary**

In this unit you have been exposed to the basic fundamental teachings of Christology and Eschatology

- Christology means the doctrine of Christ or the study about Jesus Christ

- The Deity of Christ that is the two natures of Jesus
- Various theories concerning the divinity and as well as His humanity were x-rayed
- The unit also examined the implications of the incarnation
- On Eschatology various conceptions were discussed and the importance of this to Christians
- The views of old testaments prophets such as Ezekiel, Daniel etc. the authors of the gospels, Pauline notions and the book of Revelation on eschatology are included in this unit

### **6.0 Tutor-marked assignment**

- 1) Compare the Paline's and Markan's views on eschatology
- 2) Why is the incarnation important?
- 3) Briefly explain why Jesus Christ is both divine and human

### **7.0 Self Assessment Questions**

- 1) Mention and discuss the various theories on the Deity of Christ
- 2) Explain the perceptions of Hindus and Islam about the final end of humanity and universe

List all the books regarded as Apocalypse and their significances to the contemporary Church

### **8.0 References/Further Readings**

McKinnon, A., Trzebiatowska, M. & Brittain, C. (2011). 'Bourdieu, Capital and Conflict in a Religious Field: The Case of the Anglican Communion'.  
*Journal of Contemporary Religion*, Vol 26, no. 3.

Merriam Webster Dictionary

## **UNIT 6: PENTECOSTAL ECCLESIOLOGY**

- 1.0** Introduction
- 2.0** Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0** Main Content
  - 3.1** Pentecostal Ecclesiology
  - 3.2** An overview of Ecclesiology
  - 3.3** Why Study Ecclesiology
  - 3.4** The word 'Church' in the Scriptures.
- 4.0** Conclusion
- 5.0** Summary
- 6.0** Tutor-marked assignment
- 7.0** References/Further Readings

### **1.0 Introduction**

The objective of this study is to explore the ecclesiology developed by the Church of the Nazarene and how it can currently be experiencing changes which may be essential, structural, methodological or functional. Based on the premise that we are a Christian church, we believe that Jesus Christ alone is the way for salvation. We are a church called to proclaim the Gospel by a godly walk and vital piety. We are a missionary church, which enables not only receive but also sends its members to proclaim the good news in their Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. With this in mind the church is in constant tension, especially with the rise of Pentecostalism, Charismatic and other independent movements.

### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this study you should be able to:

- Understand the background of Pentecostal ecclesiology
- Evaluate the doctrine of Pentecostal ecclesiology

### **3.0 Main Content**

#### **3.1 Pentecostal Ecclesiology**

It appears Azusa Street remains key to Pentecostal origins, even if it was not the only centre. The fundamental nature of early Pentecostal ecclesiology originating from Azusa focuses on experiences of Spirit baptism, replicating those seen at Pentecost

(Douglas 2003). These experiences in assemblies of people, churches, filled with the Spirit's presence brought holiness and spiritual gifts. The eschatological framework within adopted traditions was revised through bright appreciations of Acts and passages such as Rev. 14.6-7 and Mt. 24.14 and gave necessity for churches to distribute the 'everlasting gospel of the kingdom' before Christ returned (William 1996). This conceivably remains as a general perception of Pentecostal ecclesiology; however, it is significant not to disregard other fewer surveyed aspects. The familiarity of the Spirit was not only personal but led to the forming of communities, and in this context Douglas Jacobsen has recommended that the critical sign of the Spirit's presence was the mutual love produced by the experience.

There were as well ecumenical implications as unity across churches was connected with Spirit baptism. But more considerably was the growth of church networks across the world through the 'creative chaos' of Pentecostal growth and later organization of mission groups. There are also indications of the social implications of Spirit baptism in the work of Parham and others. The global swell of Pentecostalism with its multiplicity moreover hint at the contextualization inherent in its ecclesiology, a point afterward developed by Melvin Hodges from the 1950s.

Pentecostal" or "charismatic", are principally a twentieth century phenomenon. Nevertheless, its history can be traced to the three great spiritual movements of the eighteenth century; Wesleyanism, the Calvinist revival, and the German Pietists. Their fundamental teaching was that the saving power of the Holy Spirit, was given at Pentecost to all who repented, believed and were baptized, and was accessible at all times and places (Taylor 1995).

John Wesley who started this area pinpoints a plain division between "extraordinary" and "ordinary" gifts of the Spirit at Pentecost. The three movements taught that the "ordinary" gift, defined as the gift of "sanctifying grace", was obtainable everlastingly. They acknowledged that the "extraordinary" gifts such as speaking in tongues, miraculous healings or other charismas were restricted principally, not completely, to the apostolic generation (Taylor 1995).

A very little minority persisted on the thorough notion that the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit would widen largely to "the last days." This acknowledgement is what led to the Pentecostal Movement that emphasizes speaking in tongues and the gifts of healing. It was in 1906, that an African American pastor, Charles Seymour, emerged in an interracial mission of holiness in Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California and began to state publicly the pledge of the gift of tongues. Then a revival set in, amidst torrents of emotion and several cases of people who spoke in tongues. The theological upshot shortly materialized, that is to say, that this experience was the "indispensable" sign that a believer had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The innermost question is whether the statements and the prominence of modern Pentecostalism rely on a sound exegesis of Scripture. Several vigilant scholars agree that there is difference between Pentecostal practices and biblical teachings, predominantly as to whether the "tongues" spoken at Pentecost were unfamiliar or were recognized languages. Some of them discover an emphasis on the miraculous and emotional experiences as being sometimes more important than a dedication to ethics.

It observed that from the Biblical proof, the Nazarenes put more pressure on the

ethical and moral side, but illuminate that we are not saints for the reason that we have reached a high level of morality or live blameless lives. But to a certain extent we are answerable to God for our way of life, our deeds and even our idle words. Some say: "But if God saved me, whether I wanted to or not, he determined, and if he decides, then I have to admit that I am saved devoid of having to answer to God for my way of life. To be precise, I have no moral quality; what matters more is my position before God and not my condition." The Nazarenes object to this, we put more emphasis on the ethical part because we believe that God chooses us for salvation in Christ Jesus, but through prevenient grace He stimulates our realization sufficient so that with our wills we will choose God and be saved (Accel 2000).

Most importantly, supposing the gifts are given by God to whom He wills; "the Spirit distributes as He wills" and to whom he wishes, then, the gifts are not for salvation but as a charge from a Holy God to a particular person. So the Apostle Paul asks these questions in I Corinthians 12:29-30: Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Does everyone interpret? The answer could not be yes to all these questions if you want to read a little more about this history information can be found in a number of theological and historical sources such as *The Age of New Horizons*, by Justo Gonzalez. The historical part is very imperative to comprehend the beginnings of Pentecostalism. An accurate exegesis must admit that the answer to all questions is no. Not everybody will speak in tongues. Nevertheless, for the Pentecostal, speaking in tongues is an indispensable sign of receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Nazarenes carry on with John Wesley's biblical interpretation that whoever accepts that the "ordinary gift" is receiving the gift of "sanctifying grace", and that the extraordinary gifts of languages, healings and other miraculous powers were restricted large, not entirely, because as Nazarenes believe in the gift of healing, to the apostolic generation.

Subsequent to the historical development we can see that from 1900 to around 1960, the teachings and Pentecostal practices were restrained to Pentecostal Movement. But this would transform afterward. Between late 1950 and early 1960s the doctrines and practices of Pentecostalism expanded within all reputable denominations: Baptists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and even the Roman Catholic Church. This means that the Charismatic Movement is basically the beginning of Pentecostalism within the established churches. This is the name that the conventional churches have a preference to use rather than the term "Pentecostal". And the suggestion is that in these churches special gifts are emphasized, called "charismata". These charismatic groups are known as neo- Pentecostalism. At this point in the discussion it will be suitable to ask the question: How charismatic are Nazarenes? To direct our discussion, let's glance at a definition, from the *Beacon Theological Dictionary*: "the church is a living organism, created by Christ on the day of Pentecost. It is the community of redemption, and is a new and unique race, united by the Spirit in the bonds of the blood of Calvary. Its internal role is to be an example of worship, teaching, fellowship and service. Its mission is to represent God in Christ to the world, for the holiness of life and the proclamation of the gospel to every creature. "For our comparative study with the rise of Pentecostalism, the Charismatic Movement and independent

movements, it is significant to chat about the function of the church, principally because the first part of this definition is obviously acknowledged in most of these movements. What is the function of the church? It is based on this question that we find that there are diverse ways of understanding it.

Ecclesiology is really about the developments, practices and experiences of all kinds of functions of the church. The interior function is to be an example of worship, teaching, fellowship and service. To consider the way, they comprehend the function of worship. The Charismatic and Neo-charismatic movements recognize that the worship service ought not to be coldly rational but aesthetic and artistic, so that people can feel the real presence of God. In a worship service, God's presence is not broadcasted in the course of a well-planned theologically rational discourse, but via aesthetics and the senses. People express their feelings almost unimpeded. The expressions of happiness, joy and appreciation are exceedingly variable with laughter as well as trembling. For them, the emotional worship serves as a guide by which believers gain direct entrance to God. All meetings are programmed to comprehend an alleged presence of God (Sik 2001).

Considerably the internal function of the church is to be a paradigm of worship, teaching, fellowship and service, it appears that in the part of worship where there have been charismatic developments infusing the Nazarene church and other churches. For instance, in many local churches of the Nazarene, people in the congregation may give a round of applause, raise their hands, and make small movements of the body or even dance. In some local churches in countries where the culture is to be joyful, the changes are not conspicuous because clapping, dancing, and shouting are not strange to their culture. On the other hand, many local churches get into trouble with their local, zonal, regional leaders for adopting these changes and mimicking Pentecostal or Charismatic churches. For instance, churches that have continued and enjoyed singing hymns from hymnbooks produced largely in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, view with scorn and criticism those who leave this mode and start singing contemporary songs; more so it seems that they not only view them with disdain, but even demonize them because these churches have interchanged traditional hymns for contemporary songs.

Now is to consider the expression which shows how Charismatic and Pentecostal churches express their understanding of worship. For them, "the presence of God is not transmitted through a well-planned theologically rational discourse, but via aesthetics and the senses." From the outset, we noted that "emotions" continue at the center of their orientation. Emotions are not bad or satanic; I believe that they play an essential role in worship. The chief hitch lies in attempting to make experiencing emotions the center of worship. Worship for Nazarenes can never be fully focused on emotions. The Church of the Nazarene takes into account, the fact that God deals with each one of his children using media as emotions, reason, the will, and character, because the goal of worship is not only feelings, but being changed into the likeness of Christ. The personality of the believers must echo ethics. Leaving our position would lead us to make worship a particular matter, private, individualistic and subjective. Worse still, the subject of worship (God), the source of all religious value, would no longer be the center of worship as He would have been replaced by the individual

(Bosca 1993). Therefore, worship gives room for developing the believer's ideas in his desire to worship. But we should not lose sight that worship is more than this; it should be developed into a way of life, a product of an intimate relationship with Christ, who gives spiritual life to the church. Purkiser expresses it in this way: "The Holy Spirit is not only the link between the individual to Christ; he is in addition the connection that binds together the members of the body, and its living Head. The Spirit is the life of the body, since the churches inauguration at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit has its place or seat inside the church" <sup>11</sup> Worship does not give, or produce spiritual life, it is a means whereby, if in the context of worship, we find the Spirit of Christ, then we will be changed and worship will have served its purpose. It is not worship that produces spiritual life in me, but my relationship with Christ.

To uphold this close relationship with Christ and not fall into the charismatic interpretation of private, individual and subjective worship, we need to review our ecclesiology expressed in Article of Faith No. 11, "the Church". Here is an idea which is little known and badly articulated today by church leaders. "The church consists of those who obey Christ, live in holiness and experience mutual accountability." <sup>12</sup> At some point in the history of the church, we lost this principle. This was the principle which marked the genius of the Wesleyan movement. Being accountable to each other was a brand that could not be sidestepped, ignored or postponed. It was a thing that had to be done and it impacted the growth and development in the life of the believer. So our enticement in our contact with Pentecostal, Charismatic and independent churches is to discard this role of the church and make worship a confidential matter, centered individually on emotions, without any sense of responsibility to our neighbors. For us Nazarenes, worship must be centered on God. God is the audience and we, the worshipers dedicated ourselves to our neighbor to form a community that gathers around the living Christ in order to stroll in intimacy, and as we do this we are transformed from glory to glory by the Spirit. This brings us to the second function of the church: to represent God in Christ to the world, to promote holiness of life and to proclaim the gospel to every creature. The Church of the Nazarene believes, preaches, and calls to holiness of heart and life. However today, we are not proclaiming the gospel as we ought to; or if we are proclaiming Christ, we are not winning many souls to Christ and his church.

Pentecostal ecclesiology determines that a change in worship, per se, will detonate the numerical growth of the church. The pastor has to determine which style fits best with the kind of church where he is pastoring, but however no kind of praise or worship style will impact profoundly the numerical growth of the church. If this is the case, why are Pentecostal, Charismatic and independent movements growing? First, we need to affirm that not all of them are growing, but we also accept that some of them are growing explosively. What makes these churches grow numerically? I would like to submit two examples of the Nazarene churches. The first one is the miracle of Grove City Nazarene Church, in Ohio, USA.

The leadership of the Church of the Nazarene in Grove City has many passions for church: "... It has many other gifts. ...The people have many physical and emotional needs. Therefore, the church has decided to center much of its interest on being a church of excellence to reach the lost and those who do not attend a church." <sup>15</sup> One of the vital reasons that flourishing churches have a tradition of excellence is because

they “do” a few things right and “don’t do” the rest.” 16 Grove City Church for several years have gone through stagnation and this was not because they didn’t have activities, in actual fact, the whole church budget was spent on these activities, but the church remained dormant. They broke the log jam when they knew that they had many gifts, many skills, many needs, but they resolved to put all these to one side and devote themselves to doing the most essential thing, winning the lost for Christ and his church. They choose to put all their endeavor, money, and talents in doing one thing and doing it with brilliance.

We have to note that churches can reach excellent growth through giving attention towards the lost. Moreover, church should be ready to adopt changes in issues such as styles of worship, pastoral care, music options and colors of carpet, and so on.

The other example is the Church of the Nazarene “House of Prayer” in Cali Colombia, where the pastor is Adalberto Herrera; in 1981 Adalberto Herrera Cali with his wife Nineye de Herrera became pastor of the church. This church had a total of 15 members. It took several years of stagnation, in which each year one member was gained and one lost, until one day the deadlock was broken. Over time, after enduring several tests and crying out to God for revival, they progressively started adding new believers. Today, the Church of the Nazarene “House of Prayer” has more or less 12,000 members and is one of the largest churches in the country. To consider his “Master Plan” we note that the secret is prayer and the ability to reproduce through cells groups where discipleship is carried out by design, and where there is a disciplined system of “assimilation” or integration of new converts to all of the churches systems. These churches witnessed explosive growth against stagnation for the reason that they have built a system that retains disciples and sends converts to win others to Christ. This is what the vast majority of churches throughout the world need to do, in order to swell statistics. The church continues to grow in large numbers and worshipping centers due to adopting changes that would be for the benefit of her members. We learnt that the basic disease that is damaging the church is that traditional churches have lost their vision of being missionary churches dedicated to the community, to discipleship and to personal transformation. This loss of vision creates many symptoms whereas it is right that there are many reasons for this stalemate. The leadership of the church has to be vigilant so as to checkmate the symptoms that bring stagnation in order to be in a better position to handle them.

At this point, it is good to revise John Wesley’s contribution to the development of a healthy ecclesiology in order to establish clearly the way to salvation. John Wesley’s work was dedicated to the community, to society, to discipleship and to personal transformation. We can take note of what George Whitefield himself (successful preacher and contemporary of John Wesley) said as to what was the difference between the results of his ministry and those of John Wesley; with honesty he said, “My brother Wesley was wiser than me. He organized into classes the souls who came under his ministry. I was careless and my people are become like sand that is blown away” (Stevens 2012). That is, John Wesley developed a system of assimilation, retention and training of new converts to the gospel. Woodie Stevens ponders: “What will happen to our ministry when it does not develop a reproducible system which will



advance onwards when we have gone to the Lord's presence?

Dennis McCallum (pastor of Xenos Christian Fellowship) states: "If we raise Christian disciples, they naturally evangelize and bring growth to the church." So, compared to the Pentecostal, Charismatic and independent movements, we need to review our ecclesiology. We need to re-focus our vision and our mission. We need to analyze the internal and external functions of the church to guide us in our task of reaching the mission of the church. Many of the Charismatic Movements are reviewing John Wesley and his system and are adjusting to his movement and this is giving amazing results of numerical and spiritual growth, etc. Let's not put too much emphasis on superficial changes of music, whether or not we applaud, if we dance in worship or not, and let's put the emphasis on developing leaders and in winning people for Christ. We need disciples who can disciple others to form mature disciples, who are stable and strong in their faith. We need to develop a system where the new convert does not escape through the back door, but is intentionally guided until he or she becomes a solid believer in the faith, capable of reproducing themselves in others. We need to make the fundamental change which would modify our structure or programs, or whatever is necessary to put emphasis on local evangelism primarily, of course, without neglecting global evangelism, as the one should be the product of the other.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

Pentecostal ecclesiology deals with fundamental teaching concerning the saving power of the Holy Spirit, which was given at Pentecost to all who repented, believed and were baptized, and was accessible at all times and places. They always emphasized on miracles, speaking in tongues, prophecies and other charismatic gifts claimed to be given by Holy Spirit.

I have understood in the light of the Scriptures that God has used hundreds or thousands of strategies to do things, as the strategy He gave particular one to Joshua to attack Jericho. Therefore, God has not always used the same strategy, in actual fact, He has always changed strategies. Pentecostalism is another mode God is using to get people into His kingdom.

#### **5.0 Summary**

Pentecostal ecclesiology is arising out of what seems as the key Pentecostal experience of the spirit of salvation which brings triumphs over "sin, sickness and Satan." It is this Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit that constitutes the church and enables us to see it as the "charismatic fellowship of the Spirit." This is rooted in the "Acts of the Apostles and of the Holy Spirit." Pentecostal Movement that emphasizes speaking in tongues and the gifts of healing began in 1906 with African American pastor, Charles Seymour, who emerged in an interracial mission of holiness in Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California and began to state publicly the pledge of the gift of tongues.

John Wesley was also a pioneer of Pentecostalism and he pinpoints an acknowledgement of gifts such as speaking in tongues, miraculous healings or other charismas emanating from the apostolic generation.

## 6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment

- What is Pentecostal ecclesiology?
- How did Pentecostal and charismatic movements began?
- State the benefits of Pentecostalism

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## **UNIT 7: African Pentecostal and Charismatic Ecclesiology**

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**
- 3.0 Main Content**
  - 3.1 African Pentecostal and Charismatic Ecclesiology**
  - 3.2 Features of African Pentecostal theology**
- 5.0 Summary**
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment**
- 7.0 References/Further Readings**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This segment is narrowing down this study to Pentecostal ecclesiology in African perspective. Christianity in Africa has consistently been enjoying serious publicity and attention in terms of written literature, miracles, prosperity, prophecy and speaking in tongues as from the last quarter of the 19th century up to the present day. On this account we would consider Pentecostal ecclesiology in African context in order to ascertain what its teachings professed.

### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this study you should be able to:

- Define African Pentecostal Ecclesiology
- State the features of Pentecostal and charismatic movements in African context

### **3.0 Main Content**

#### **3.1 African Pentecostal and Charismatic Ecclesiology**

It is proven that Pentecostalism is the highest rising stream of Christianity in the world today. The movement is reforming religion in the twenty-first century. Pentecostalism is considered as that mode of Christianity which emphasizes special salvation in Christ as a transformative experience twisted by the Holy Spirit. consequent to that primary practice, we learnt that pneumatic phenomena as “speaking in tongues,” prophecies, visions, healing, miracles and signs and wonders have come to be established and cherished among her congregations as verification of the active presence of God’s Spirit. On the other hand, Charismatic by and large refers to traditionally younger Pentecostal independent and parachurch movements, many of which operate within non-Pentecostal denominations. The expression “charismatic” itself emanates from Paul’s reference to charismata pneumatika, “Gifts of the Spirit,” in 1 Corinthians 12-14. Therefore, Paul uses the phrase to refer to those “extraordinary divine graces” that believers show on account of their understanding of the Holy Spirit.

African Pentecostal ecclesiology specifically refers to the particular African initiatives, appropriations and contributions to the growth, importance and impact of Pentecostalism as a global phenomenon. In Africa the pioneers of Pentecostalism were indigenous prophet figures, many who were persecuted out of historic missionary denominations for chasing spiritualities every now and then outrageously observed by church authority as belonging to the occult. They consist of prophets William Wadé Harris of the Gold Coast (Ghana), Garrick Sokari Braide of the Niger Delta, Simon Kimbangu of the Congo, Isaiah Shembe of South Africa and others. During the onset of the nineteenth century these prophets challenged Africans to discard their traditional resources of supernatural succor and turn toward the living God Almighty. It appears several of these religious prophetic campaigns consequentially manifested to independent churches when the prophets had folded up.

In our contemporary African society, they are major Western mission-related Pentecostal churches as well as African-initiated ones. It is learnt that the prophetic movements were therefore followed by the materialization of the well-liked Spiritual, Aladura or Zionist churches known jointly as “African independent” or “African initiated” churches (AICs). Healing became the single most significant goings-on in the AICs, but many of them wandered away into therapeutic techniques that were not Christian. Afterward, it has become controversial to consider these older AICs as Pentecostal devoid of qualification. Ever since then African Pentecostalism has flourished in several directions.

On the other hand, Classical Pentecostal denominations have been very popular in Africa. In South Africa particularly, the Assemblies of God, Apostolic Faith Mission and the Full Gospel Church of God fall to this category. It is confirmed that some have their backgrounds in North America however most of classical Pentecostal churches operating in Africa started locally; overseas support time and again arrived afterward. Other Pentecostal movements in Africa comprise New Pentecostal Churches (NPCs), trans-denominational Pentecostal fellowships like the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship International (FGBMFI), Women Aglow and Intercessors for Africa; and charismatic renewal groups of the mainline churches. Jointly with nomadic global Pentecostal preachers and prophets, these have superiority over the religious landscape as the new faces of African Christianity.

Accordingly, in Africa at the moment, there are main Western mission-related Pentecostal denominations such as the Assemblies of God emanating from the United States, and in addition African-initiated ones like William F. Kumuyi’s Deeper Christian Life Ministry, which began in Nigeria in 1973. Besides, there are the innumerable “mega” independent NPCs like Mensa Otabil’s International Central Gospel Church in Ghana, David O. Oyedepo’s Word of Faith Mission International or Winner’s Chapel of Nigeria and Andrew Wutawanashe’s Family of God in Zimbabwe, which were moreover started due to local plans. Furthermore, African Pentecostal churches have turned out to be a leading force in Western Europe and North America. The issue that African religions have come into view in Europe not as primal forms but in terms of Christianity is itself evidence of the growing vigor of the Christian faith in contemporary Africa. Eventually, the biggest single Christian

congregation in Western Europe since Christianity began is Nigerian Pastor Matthew Ashimolowo's Kingsway International Christian Center (KICC) in London.

Mathews Ojo does an historical appraisal of the appearance of the Deeper Life Bible Church. In this work, he unveils that the Deeper Life Bible Church began as a "Bible Study Group" in Nigeria in the early 1970s. He said that Pastor Kumuyi was brought up as an Anglican but afterward got changed to the Apostolic Faith Church. He was afterward excluded from the church due to his non-cooperation with the church's provision that "only ordained ministers could preach and teach". It is attested that there were two major stages in the church's developmental process. The first stage was the formative stage during which the church tried to draw Christians from different Christian denominations for its Bible classes and prayer meetings. It was during the second stage of the church's growth that Kumuyi's followers could, in the stringent sense be called "members" as they totally disengaged relationship with their former denominations. Moreover, in this stage, much emphasis was placed on miracles, healings and evangelism on the streets, in the markets, in public buses and lecture halls. Ojo moreover observes that the emphasis on puritanism, exclusivist or separatist tendencies by the church have over the years affected the spirit of ecumenism in the church. He elucidates that the church has time and again laid claim to a monopoly of the truth on Christian doctrinal issues. Ojo gives reasons for such separatist dispositions by the Deeper Life Bible Church: The Separatist attitude is without doubt understandable. Once people have left their former churches and joined Deeper Life, they are anticipated to have nothing to do with those earlier backgrounds which Kumuyi regards as worldly or sinful. The idea of separation is strengthened by the teaching on sanctification. To preserve one's sanctification, one must separate from the world. The world is often interpreted to mean anything that is not Deeper Life.

Now the ecclesiological African factor in Pentecostalism brings in the issue of Rudolf Otto who grieves emphatically for the helplessness of orthodox Christianity to consider the significance of the non-rational phase of religion, hence giving the "idea of the holy" what he expresses as "a one-sidedly intellectualistic approach" (Otto 1950).

Pentecostalism is a reaction to such cerebral Christianity and anywhere it has emerged the movement has expressed itself on account of the revival of the pragmatic aspects of the faith by demonstrating the power of the Spirit to infuse life, and the ability of

the living presence of Jesus Christ to save from sin and evil. This is still more so in Africa where religion is a continued existence approach and where spirit-possession, with its emphasis on direct divine communication, intervention in crises and religious mediation, are essential to religious experiences. The ministries of healing and deliverance have therefore turned out to be some of the most significant expressions of Christianity in African Pentecostalism. A great deal of the worldviews principal to the practice of healing and deliverance, particularly the belief in mystical causality, resonates with African philosophical thoughts.

In Pentecostal ecclesiology what people regard as imperative in theology are the things that attend to their religious needs. Those stumble upon with the spiritual world either as malicious powers seeking to destroy people, marine spirits negating efforts at municipal morality or as the performance of ritual in order to seek help from the powers of beneficence are vital rudiments in African religiosity. In stability with the African religious archetype, Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity has demonstrated successful in Africa because of its openness to the supernatural and through its interfering and oral theological forms that vibrate with traditional African godliness. The aim of the worshippers, although, has constantly been to be biblical, and this theology is articulated in three ways.

### **3.2 Features of African Pentecostal theology**

1. African Pentecostal theological ecclesiology is seeing as an enthusiastic emphasis on transformation. The constitutive act of the Pentecostal association is the act of a direct and predominantly passionate encounter with God that introduces deep changes in the life and state of affairs of the person who experiences it. The Holy Spirit is the one who assists the express character of the encounter. The act of transformation takes place at the personal and mutual levels together with a new dynamism in worship inspired by the Holy Spirit. The primary theological emphasis of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity is consequently the transformative encounter with God who is holy and who is spirit. In the African context, participants in Pentecostalism fanatically give evidence not only concerning their new life, but moreover the transition often made from resorts to traditional religious resources in order to be genuine Christians believing in God alone.
2. African Pentecostal theology is a theology of empowerment. There is an emphasis on the empowering effect of the gospel of Jesus Christ; there is a correlation between transformation and empowerment. The African Pentecostal persistence that it is possible to be a Christian and be dominated by desires of the flesh and demonic influences has led to the stipulation of ritual contexts in which people could surrender such stumbling blocks through healing and deliverance in order that they may be empowered to triumph in life.

African ecclesiology is projected to deal with the effects of evil caused by demonic spirits and witchcraft. Evil powers represented by those with evil eyes, demons, witchcraft and curses, in the African context, result in all sorts of

misfortunes like sickness, failure, childlessness and other setbacks in life. The worldview supporting the practice of healing and deliverance in African Pentecostalism is based primarily on Jesus' encounters with the powers of affliction and Pauline philosophy of the struggle with principalities and powers (Ephesians 6). The fundamental theological direction of the healing and deliverance trend is the conviction that demons may either possess a person and take over his or her management faculties or basically oppress people through different influences. Even if the human crisis has emanated from possession or oppression, African Pentecostal churches and movements including the classical Pentecostal churches provide the ritual contexts for prayer and exorcism to deliver the afflicted. As a result, the African ecclesiology on mystical operation concentrates higher in the practice of healing and deliverance.

3. In African ecclesiology it is believed a thriving discharge of a healing and deliverance ministry paves the way for good health, success and prosperity in life, and makes feasible the grasp of God-given abilities. Therefore, it is likely to view deliverance theology as a reaction to or the transformation in the face of the loss of faith preaching. Whenever state of affairs is facing deadlocks, the application to the work of demons and witches come in practical as explanations. African Pentecostal prosperity theology may have some ground to recuperate in respect of its weak theology of suffering. It shows that the cross of Christ is not just an icon of limitation, but also one of triumph over sin, the world and death. Pentecostals create awareness to the fact that the gospel is regarding restoration, thus it is anticipated that the transformation of the personality would be apparent in personal health, well-being and care, in short, salvation is holistic and includes spiritual as well as physical abundance. The course of restoration is not individualistic as people are encouraged to separate from generational curses and through fasting, prayer and personal ministration release family members from any such oppression. Salvation offers a holistic meaning that includes "a sense of well-being evidenced in freedom from sickness, poverty and misfortune as well as in deliverance from sin and evil." (Anderson 1999).

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

African Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity is complex. It is alive. It is thriving. And it must be a major focus for Christians around the world who are involved in evangelism, missions and the state of the global Church. In African ecclesiology it is believed in a flourishing of a healing and deliverance ministry which paves the way for good health, success and prosperity in life, and makes realistic the grasp of God-given abilities.



## 5.0 Summary

African Pentecostal ecclesiology highly cherished weekend retreat for spiritual rebirth, revival, healing, total dedication, freedom from guilt and bondage of sin past, entire sanctification with the Holy Spirit. It is called the "Encounter with God". Hundreds of thousands have witnessed the powerful impact that the Encounter with God has put in their spiritual life. From the beginning to the end, prayer is practiced, and the retreat focuses intensely on the work of God in the life of the person transforming and renewing those who seek him.

African Pentecostal theology is a theology of empowerment. There is an emphasis on the empowering effect of the gospel of Jesus Christ. African ecclesiology is coined to deal with the effects of evil caused by demonic spirits and witchcraft. Evil powers represented by those with evil eyes, demons, witchcraft and curses, in the African context, result in all sorts of misfortunes like sickness, failure, childlessness and other setbacks in life.

## 6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment

- Explain Pentecostal ecclesiology in African context
- What are the main teachings of African Pentecostal ecclesiology?

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## **MODULE 3: SACRAMENTS**

UNIT	1 Meaning and definitions of Sacraments
UNIT	2 Early Christian Rites /Types of Sacraments
UNIT	3 The importance of Sacraments
UNIT	4 The application of Sacraments in contemporary Church
UNIT	5 Soteriology or Salvation
UNIT	6 Church Discipline
UNIT	7 Church Discipline is a God-given Duty

### **UNIT 1: MEANING AND DEFINITIONS OF SACRAMENTS**

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Intended Learning Outcomes</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Content</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>General definitions and terms of Sacraments</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Specific definitions of Christian Sacraments</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Hebrew and Latin equivalent of sacraments</b>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Historical Origin of Sacraments</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Tutor-marked assignment</b>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Self-Assessment Questions</b>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>References/Further Readings</b>

#### **1.0 Introduction**

In the preceding units, you have learnt definitions of Ecclesiology, types of ecclesiology, authority of the church. In this unit you will be exposed to the basic understanding and meanings of sacraments which could be regarded as one of the doctrinal emphases of the church. Ecclesiology as a concept is the study of the church and the church has basic doctrines which her adherents must keep to. In this regards, few of such will be examined in which sacraments is one of them. Baptism, Repentance, the Eucharist, Confirmation etc. These are some of the rites which have been right from the foundational stage of the Church, Jesus Christ the founder of the Church was a pacesetter. He was baptised at the river Jordan by John the Baptist popularly known as the fore runner of Jesus. The Eucharist practiced today is a command by Jesus, ‘do this in remembrance of me’ ( Lk 23 , Matt I Cor 10) The definitions of sacraments, Christian sacraments and derivations of sacraments make up the contents in this unit.

## 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- i. define sacraments and as well Christian sacraments
- ii. give the Hebrew and Latin equivalent of sacraments
- iii. list all the seven sacraments
- iv. explain the importance of some of these sacraments

## 3.0 Main Content

### 3.1 General definitions and terms of Sacraments

Hexam's *Concise Dictionary of Religion* calls a sacrament "a Rite in which GOD (or Gods) is (are) uniquely active". But within Christianity the word is used in a more restricted sense. For example, The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines the sacraments as "efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions." The catechism included in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer defines a sacrament as "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof."

Some Protestant traditions avoid the word "sacrament". Reaction against the 19th-century Oxford Movement led Baptists to prefer instead the word "ordinance", practices ordained by Christ to be permanently observed by the church. "Sacrament" stresses mainly, but not solely, what God does, "ordinance" what the Christians do.

The Catholic Church teaches that the sacraments are seven. Oriental Orthodoxy has the same teaching. The Eastern Orthodox Church also believes that there are seven major sacraments, while it applies the corresponding Greek word, μυστήριον (mysterion) also to rites that in the Western tradition are called sacramentals and to other realities, such as the Church itself, to which the word "sacrament" is also applied in the West. Anglican teaching is that "there are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord", and that "those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel".

### **3.2 Specific definitions of Christian Sacraments**

In the Christian community sacraments are acts of worship that are understood by the worshipers to give access to an intimate union with the divine and to be efficacious for salvation. The term sacraments is sometimes used in a very broad sense for places, persons, things, ceremonies, and events that mediate, or are intended to mediate, the presence and power of the divine. The most conventional functional definition of a sacrament is that it is an outward sign, instituted by Christ, that conveys an inward, spiritual grace through Christ. The two most widely accepted sacraments are Baptism and the Eucharist, however, the majority of Christians recognize seven Sacraments or Divine Mysteries: Baptism,

However, it should be pointed out that in a broader sense, Christians acknowledge sacraments in other religious traditions and also in the particular circumstances of the lives of individuals and groups. A simple illustrative story in the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament of Christians) is that of Jacob setting up a stone in the desert and calling the place Bethel, house of God (Gn. 28:10-22).

More-usually the term sacraments refer to a limited number of ancient rituals understood to be the acts of Jesus Christ carried out through the continuing ministry of the church. The Eastern Christian and Roman Catholic churches enumerate these rituals as, baptism-confirmation (or Chrismation), Eucharist, penance (sacrament of reconciliation), Holy matrimony, ordination (or holy orders), and the anointing of the sick. However, in the narrower sense of the term only two of such sacraments, namely baptism and Eucharist are clearly identified in the New Testament.

### **3.2 Hebrew and Latin equivalent of Sacraments**

The word sacrament derived from Latin “Sacramentum”, meaning “oath”, “pledge” or “bond” and which was also used to translate the Greek word for *mystery*, From the perception of Christians the term applies to rituals of worship, it is found not earlier than the century, when it came into use by Western churches as a translation of the Greek term “musteron”, which had the religious connotation of effecting union with the divine even before Christian used the term in that sense. When the word sacrament is used in the singular form without contextual specification, it may be assumed to mean the Eucharist. In Christian belief and practice, a sacrament is a rite, instituted by Christ, that mediates grace, constituting a sacred mystery. It should be brought to mind that views concerning the rites of sacrament, and what it means for an act to be a sacrament vary among Christian denominations and traditions.

### **3.3 Historical Origin of Sacraments**

**Jewish Roots.** At the time of Jesus of Nazareth the people of Israel, the Jewish community, enjoyed a rich accumulation of symbolism and ritual. Jesus and his early

followers participated in that heritage and followed the observances. Characteristically, Christian rituals were shaded not only out of the immediate experience of the early Christian community but also out of the stories, imagery, and ritual observances of their Jewish tradition. This influence can be seen in Christian perceptions of sacred space and sacred time, and it also appears in the configuration and sacred actions.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

As you go through the pages of this unit sacraments have been perceived as the acts of worship through which a man gain access to the Divine. Symbolic objects such as places, persons, things and so on are used to mediate the presence and power of the Divine. Sacraments are important aspect of the practice of the Christianity in which Jesus set the pace for this. Sacraments are not peculiar to the rite of Christian usage but among the ancient Jews.

Sacraments have two derivatives “Sacramentum”, and “musteron” from Latin and Greek words respectively.

#### **5.0 Summary**

The followings are the major points you have learnt in this unit:

- The general definitions of sacraments and Christian sacraments respectively
- Jesus is our perfect example as He Himself observed these rites eg the baptism and Eucharist
- Sacraments though have the English meaning it has its origin from both the Latin and Greek languages.
- The historical origin was also discussed.

#### **6.0 Tutor-marked assignment**

1. What is Sacrament? How did sacrament begin?
2. Mention the two terms in which the word ‘Sacraments’ have its derivatives from.

#### **7.0 Self-Assessment Questions**

- 1, Examine the relationship between the Jewish sacrament and that of the Christian tradition
2. Why is such sacrament important to the Church?
3. Advance reasons why Jesus Christ did practice such sacrament

## 8.0 References/ Further Reading

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## **UNIT 2: EARLY CHRISTIAN RITES/ TYPES OF CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**
- 3.0 Main Content**
  - 3.1 Early History**
  - 3.2 The concept of Eucharist**
  - 3.3 How the Eucharist is Celebrated or Mode of observance of the Eucharist.**
  - 3.4 Conditions that one must fulfil to be a Partaker in the Eucharist**
  - 3.5 Baptism as one of the sacramental activities of the Church**
  - 3.6 Etymological Definition of Baptism**
  - 3.7 Other sacramental activities of the Church e.g reconciliation, confirmation, Holy matrimony etc.**
- 4.0 Conclusion**
- 5.0 Summary**
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment**
- 7.0 Self-Assessment Questions**
- 8.0 References/ Further Readings**

### **1.0 Introduction**

When we talk about early Christian rites, what is it all about? Why are these rites important to the early Christians? And how were they performed? What are these sacraments, divine ordinances and liturgies, especially in the context of the Church? Sacraments otherwise known as Christian rites simply refers to the rituals which the early Christians employed in order to gain access to the Divine which have been discussed very briefly in the preceding unit of this module. In the unit, types of Christian rites namely Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation (penance, repentance) Holy order (ordination) Holy matrimony, and anointing of the sick would be the focus of this unit in which some of them will be extensively discussed. Furthermore, the significance of few of these sacraments would be highlighted.

### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- explain the early history of Sacraments
- itemize the different kinds of Sacraments
- discuss few of these rites e.g Eucharist, Baptism, Confirmation,
- narrate the observance of these Sacraments mentioned
- discuss the importance or significance of Sacraments mentioned

### **3.0 Main Content**

#### **3.1 Early History**

Although there are references to sacramental activities in the New Testament, and these are accompanied by sacramental theology (I Cor.10:14), little is known about the form of early Christian ritual except through late second-century sources. By the fourth century most of the rituals were elaborate and well established in the patterns that were to endure; though they were not numbered explicitly as seven until the twelfth century in the West.

#### **3.2 The concept of Eucharist**

The **Eucharist** is one of the early Christian rites and that which is a central sacrament to the Christian community. In essence, Eucharist is the core of the Christian sacramental system. It is also known as the Divine Liturgy, Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper, the communion service, and the Mass. It is the part of liturgical worship that consists of a consecrated meal, usually bread and wine. Sr Anne regards it (Eucharist) as one of the three initiation rites that must be performed to be a full-fledged member of the Christian community. The ritual is based directly on the table grace of Jewish observance as solemnized in the Passover Seder. There are several common element: the community is gathered to respond to God's call and to fulfil a commandment; the gathering is at a ritual meal at which prescribed, foods are blessed, shared, and consumed; the accompanying prayers and ceremonies ritually re-enact a past saving event so that the present worshippers become part of that past event and it becomes present in their experience; the doing of this anticipates a fulfilment that still lies in the future; the ritual (though not it alone) constitutes the participants as God's people. In the Jewish understanding and also in the Christian, the ritual is not effective in isolation from the community's daily life; on the contrary, it is effective precisely in it for reshaping of the imagination and sense of identity of the worshipers, thereby bringing about a transformation of individual and social life.

In addition, seven types of sacraments are identified namely Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation (penance, repentance) Holy order (ordination) Holy matrimony, and anointing of the sick. It should be brought to mind that all were observed in the early period of Christianity. However, among the contemporary Christians with respect to the Pentecostals not all are observed due to doctrinal beliefs.



The Roman Catholics and the mainline denominations particularly the Anglican Communion still practice and observe all the afore-mentioned Sacraments.

### **3.3 How the Eucharist is Celebrated or Mode of Observance of the Eucharist.**

The celebration of the Eucharist differs from one denominational affiliation to another especially in this age of proliferation of churches and religions. In the early Christian era and with particular reference to the apostolic age, the Eucharist ordinarily is “celebrated daily, though the community as a whole is more likely to participate on Sundays, special feasts and weekdays” of Lent. It is performed in a highly elaborated way with processions, candles and incense, congregational singing, and the wearing of special vestments by the celebrating clergy. From early times it has consisted of a ritual meal of small amounts of bread and wine, commemorating the farewell “supper of Jesus” before his death and extending the presence and friendship ‘or Jesus to his followers through the ages. The celebration begins with readings from the Bible, prayers, usually a sermon on-the biblical texts is read, and sometimes, hymns. Then follows a great prayer of praise and thanksgiving, recited by the one who presides over the ritual; in this context the story of the farewell supper is recited and re-enacted. The bread and wine are consecrated, the bread is broken and distributed to the worshippers, who consume it immediately, and the wine is likewise consumed. This eating and drinking is known as “communion”.

Justin Martyr described the Eucharist thus:

And this food is called among us Eucharistia [the Eucharist], of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.

Some Christian denominations practice closed communion. They offer communion to those who are already united in that denomination or sometimes individual church. Catholics restrict participation to their members who are not in a state of mortal sin. Most other churches practice open communion since they view communion as a means to unity, rather than an end, and invite all believing Christians to participate.

Some groups depart from this traditional liturgical structure. A division is often made between "High" church services, characterized by greater solemnity and ritual, and "Low" services, but even within these two categories there is great diversity in forms of worship. Seventh-day Adventists meet on Saturday, while others do not meet on a weekly basis. Charismatic or Pentecostal congregations may spontaneously feel led by

the Holy Spirit to action rather than follow a formal order of service, including spontaneous prayer. Quakers sit quietly until moved by the Holy Spirit to speak. Some Evangelical services resemble concerts with rock and pop music, dancing, and use of multimedia. For groups which do not recognize a priesthood distinct from ordinary believers the services are generally led by a minister, preacher, or pastor. Still others may lack any formal leaders, either in principle or by local necessity. Some churches use only a cappella music, either on principle (for example, many Churches of Christ object to the use of instruments in worship) or by tradition (as in Orthodoxy).

### **3.4 Conditions that one must fulfil to be a Partaker in the Eucharist.**

There are conditions an individual must need fulfil before one can partake in the Holy Communion especially among the contemporary Orthodox, Protestants and Pentecostals. Although in the early Christian era, admission around the Eucharist is surrounded by baptism and confirmation. In the present dispensation there is a little difference due to diverse denominational affiliations and beliefs. E.g the Foursquare Gospel Church, a Pentecostal congregation which has its origin from California in America and whose advent to Nigeria was in 1955, accept an individual who is born again and have been baptised by immersion. In most Pentecostal congregations in Nigeria, whether indigenous or non-indigenous the above conditions must be met. For instance, the Redeemed Christian Church of God whom the current General Overseer is Dr. Pastor Enoch Adejare Adebayo, he just marked his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday recently, an indigenous Pentecostal congregation would not compromise an individual to partake in the Lord's Supper except the person is 'born again. (a common slogan among the Pentecostals) and whose baptism is by immersion. The Anglican Communion will allow an individual after baptism (not by immersion but strikingly) and confirmation.

### **3.5 Baptism (General concept of the term)**

Baptism is another sacramental rite that has clear antecedents in Jewish observations. This is the baptism in water which signifies a ritual of spiritual regeneration, the imposition of hands in blessing, and the action of anointing to start or commencement of an office or mission. More so, "Baptism" has also been used to refer to any ceremony, trial, or experience by which a person is initiated, purified, or given a name.

Beyond the direct influence of ritual actions of Jewish life, there is the much more extensive and pervasive indirect influence of stories, prayers, and symbols from the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus, baptism is not easily understood without knowledge of the Hebrew stories of creation and sin, of the Deluge, and of the passing through the water; of the Red Sea at the Promised Land. In another vein, baptism is the outreach of God through Jesus in his community whereby it is possible for a person to turn from the evil ways and convert to the community of the faithful. Thus, the meaning of baptism is evident in the New Testament in the early chapters of the Acts of the

Apostle's and in the instructions given in the early community, for instance, in the Didache.

Moreover, baptism has been part of Christianity from the start, as shown by the many mentions in the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline epistles. Christians consider Jesus to have instituted the sacrament of baptism. John the Baptist adopted baptismal immersion as the central sacrament in his messianic movement, seen as a forerunner of Jesus Christ the founding father of Christianity. How explicit Jesus' intentions were and whether he envisioned a continuing, organized Church is a matter of dispute among scholars. In Christianity, baptism (from the Greek noun *baptisma*; itself derived from *baptismos*, washing) is for the majority the rite of admission (or adoption), almost invariably with the use of water, into the Christian Church generally and also membership of a particular church tradition. Baptism has been called a sacrament and an ordinance of Jesus Christ.

In some traditions, baptism is also called christening but for others the word "christening" is reserved for the baptism of infants.

The New Testament reports that Jesus himself was baptized. The usual form of baptism among the earliest Christians was for the candidate to be immersed totally (submersion) or partially (standing or kneeling in water while water was poured on him or her). While John the Baptist's use of a deep river for his baptism suggests immersion, pictorial and archaeological evidence of Christian baptism from the 3rd century onward indicates that a normal form was to have the candidate stand in water while water was poured over the upper body. Other common forms of baptism now in use include pouring water three times on the forehead.

Martyrdom was identified early in Church history as "baptism by blood", enabling martyrs who had not been baptized by water to be saved. Later, the Catholic Church identified a baptism of desire, by which those preparing for baptism who die before actually receiving the sacrament are considered saved. As evidenced also in the common Christian practice of infant baptism, baptism was universally seen by Christians as in some sense necessary for salvation, until Huldrych Zwingli in the 16th century denied its necessity.

### **3.6 Etymological Definition of Baptism**

The English word "baptism" is derived indirectly through Latin from the neuter Greek concept noun *baptisma* (Greek βάπτισμα, "washing-ism"), which is a neologism in the New Testament derived from the masculine Greek noun *baptismos* (βαπτισμός) which is a term for ritual washing in Greek language texts of Hellenistic Judaism during the Second Temple period, such as the Septuagint. Both of these nouns are nouns derived from *baptizein* (βαπτίζω, "I wash" transitive verb) which is used in Jewish texts for ritual washing, and in the New Testament both for ritual washing and also for the apparently new rite of *baptisma*. The Greek verb root *bpt* in turn is hypothetically traced to a reconstructed Indo-European root *\*gwabh-* or *\*gwebh* in the suffixed zero-

grade form \*gwabh-yo The Greek words are used in a great variety of meanings. The New Testament contains four related words; two verbs and two nouns which are :

*baptein* —to wash something

- *baptizein*—to wash, often a person in a ritual context
- *baptismos*—Jewish ritual washing
- *baptisma*—the new Christian rite

As Christians of different traditions dispute whether total immersion (submersion) is necessary for baptism, the precise meaning of the Greek noun *baptisma* in the New Testament has become important for discussion

### Meaning of the Greek verb *baptizein*

The Greek-English Lexicon of Liddell and Scott gives the primary meaning of the verb *baptizein* (1st Person βαπτίζω *baptizô*), from which the English verb "baptize" is derived, as "dip, plunge", and indicates that the dipping or plunging need not be complete, as when a sword is plunged into a throat or into a foetus or when wine is drawn by dipping a cup in the bowl; for New Testament usage it gives two meanings: "baptize", with which it associates the Septuagint mention of Naaman dipping himself in the Jordan River, and "perform ablutions", as in Luke 11:38

Although the Greek verb *baptizein* does not exclusively mean dip, plunge or immerse (it is used with literal and figurative meanings such as "sink", "disable", "overwhelm", "go under", "overborne", "draw from a bowl"), lexical sources typically cite this as a meaning of the word in both the Septuagint and the New Testament.

In Christianity, baptism (from the Greek noun *baptisma*; itself derived from *baptismos*, washing) is for the majority the rite of admission (or adoption), almost invariably with the use of water, into the Christian Church generally and also membership of a particular church tradition. Baptism has been called a sacrament and an ordinance of Jesus Christ. In some traditions, baptism is also called christening, but for others the word "christening" is reserved for the baptism of infants. The New Testament reports that Jesus himself was baptized. The usual form of baptism among the earliest Christians was for the candidate to be immersed totally (submersion) or partially (standing or kneeling in water while water was poured on him or her). While John the Baptist's use of a deep river for his baptism suggests immersion, pictorial and archaeological evidence of Christian baptism from the 3rd century onward indicates that a normal form was to have the candidate stand in water while water was poured over the upper body. Other common forms of baptism now in use include pouring water three times on the forehead. It is also important to note that in the early Christian centuries, baptism was by total immersion of the candidate, preferably in running water, accompanied by a formula of profession of faith. This going through the water symbolizes a death and a spiritual rebirth. Baptism was surrounded by lesser ritual elements: a divesting of old clothes and donning of a new white robe (which

was worn for about one week), an anointing, and the receiving of a lighted candle. The ritual was general preceded by a fast of some days and all-night vigil

Another form of baptism is "baptism by blood", or Martyrdom which was identified with early Church history as "baptism by blood", enabling martyrs who had not been baptized by water to be saved. Later, the Catholic Church identified a baptism of desire, by which those preparing for baptism who die before actually receiving the sacrament are considered saved. As evidenced also in the common Christian practice of infant baptism, baptism was universally seen by Christians as in some sense necessary for salvation, until Huldrych Zwingli in the 16th century denied its necessity. Today, some Christians, particularly Quakers and the Salvation Army, do not see baptism as necessary, and do not practice the rite. Among those that do, differences can be found in the manner and mode of baptizing and in the understanding of the significance of the rite. Most Christians baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (following the Great Commission), but some baptize in Jesus' name only. Most Christians baptize infants; many others hold that only believer's baptism is true baptism. Some insist on submersion or at least partial immersion of the person who is baptized, others consider that any form of washing by water, as long as the water flows on the head, is sufficient. Baptism" has also been used to refer to any ceremony, trial, or experience by which a person is initiated, purified, or given a name

### **Infant Baptism**

The first sacramental participation of an Orthodox Christian is that of initiation, usually in infancy which became common, alongside the developing theology of original sin, displacing the earlier common practice of delaying baptism until the deathbed. Against Pelagius, Augustine insisted that baptism was necessary for salvation even for virtuous people and for children. Although , the children are baptized by total triple immersion with an accompanying formula invoking the triune God. This is followed immediately by the christmation (anointing) of forehead, eyes, nostrils, mouth, ears, breast, hands, and feet, with words, proclaiming the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit. As soon as possible thereafter, the infant is given communion (either a small taste of the wine or both bread and wine). This initiation is performed by a bishop or a priest. Infant Baptism is not a generally acceptable practice in the Christendom.

In contrast the Pentecostals do not baptise infant on the bases that they have not yet attain the age of accountability; this is also subjected to criticism as it is perceived as a relative term in this jet age. However, as far back as 16<sup>th</sup> century when Martin Luther considered baptism to be a sacrament, the Lutherans disagreed with the Pentecostals by saying that, baptism is a "means of grace" through which God creates and strengthens "saving faith" as the "washing of regeneration" in which infants and adults are reborn. Since the creation of faith is exclusively God's work, it does not depend on the actions of the one baptized, whether infant or adult. Even though baptized infants

cannot articulate that faith, Lutherans believe that it is present all the same. Because it is faith alone that receives these divine gifts, Lutherans confess that baptism "works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare." In the special section on infant baptism in his Large Catechism, Luther argues that infant baptism is God-pleasing because persons so baptized were reborn and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. For the Swiss Reformer Huldrych Zwingli differed with the Lutherans by denying sacramental status of baptism. Zwingli identified baptism and the Lord's supper as sacraments, but in the sense of an initiatory ceremony. His understanding of these sacraments as symbolic differentiated him from Luther.

Among the Protestants and the orthodox the Roman Catholics allows a child of eight years to partake in the baptism so and is eligible to take the Holy Communion as well. At this age it is believed that, that child knows her right from her left

Another group of Christianity known as the Anabaptists (a word that means "rebaptizers") rejected so thoroughly the tradition maintained by Lutherans as well as Catholics that they denied the validity of baptism outside their group. They "rebaptized" converts on the grounds that one cannot be baptized without wishing it, and an infant, who does not understand what happens in a baptism ceremony and who has no knowledge of the concepts of Christianity, is not really baptized. They saw as non-biblical the baptism of infants, who cannot confess their faith and who, not having yet committed any sins, are not in the same need of salvation. Anabaptists and other Baptist groups do not consider that they *rebaptize* those who have been baptized as infants, since, in their view, infant baptism is without effect. The Amish, Restoration churches (Churches of Christ/ Christian Church), Hutterites, Baptists, Mennonites and other groups descend from this tradition. Pentecostal, charismatic and most non-denominational churches share this view as well.

### **3.7 Other sacramental activities of the Church e.g Reconciliation, Confirmation, Holy Matrimony etc.**

The ordinary ritual of repentance and reconciliation is not a public ceremony as in the early Church but a private conversation between a Christian and a priest who acts in the name of the Church. The penitent, i.e. the person seeking forgiveness and reconciliation through the ministry of the Church, ordinarily stands or sits before cross, an icon (sacred image) of Jesus Christ, or the book of the Gospels, The Priest, who stands at one side, admonishes the penitent to confess his or her sins to Christ, because he, the priest, is only a witness. Having heard the confession, and having perhaps given advice, the priest lays his stole (a type of scarf used as a ritual vestment) on the head of the penitent, lays his hand on him and pronounces a prayer of forgiveness. Besides this ritual of repentance which can be repeated many times by the same person, the anointing of the sick is available, all who are ill, whether or not they are in danger of death. Anointing of the sick has the double purpose of prayer for healing from illness and forgiveness of sin.

## Confirmation

Similarly, confirmation also known as 'Chrismation' is not readily understood without reference to the theme of the breath of God, which runs through the Hebrew Scriptures.

It is a further step of the initiation into the community, a confirmation of the baptism by the leader of the local church with a laying of hands, a further anointing. And a prayer that the Holy Spirit (the breath of God that was in Jesus) might descend upon the candidate. In the early centuries, there were also many reconciliation (penance, repentance) rituals: the recitation in of which the Lord's Prayer was one. However, there was also a more formal ritual of reconciliation, later modified radically, that applied to those excommunicated from Eucharist and the company of the faithful for some gravis offence. A period of exclusion, accompanied by the wearing of a special garb and the performance of prescribed works of repentance that were supported by the prayers of the community, was concluded by a ceremony in which the bishop led the penitent back into the worship assembly to readmit them to the Eucharist.

The custom was established in the early centuries of the laying on of hands not only in confirmation but also in the designation of persons to certain ministries or offices in the life and worship of the community. Such laying on of hands symbolized the passing on of authorization understood to come in a continuous line from Jesus and his earliest followers, It was performed in the context of a worship assembly and was accompanied by prayers and solemnity.

**HOLY MATRIMONY:-** From the fourth century onward there is evidence of the blessing of marriages, at least in certain cases, by bishops, although the ritual of marriage was otherwise performed according to local civil custom. Of the anointing of the sick there is, despite the injunction found in the New Testament (Jas 5:14), no clear evidence from the early centuries of the Church.

Finally, it should be understood that all these theology of the rites, otherwise known as the Christian sacraments are based on the understanding that human existence in the world, and as human beings experience is not as it is intended by God, its creator; hence we stand in need of salvation (redemption, rescue, healing). If all were in the harmony of God's creation, all things) would speak to us of God and would serve our communion with God. However, because of a complex legacy of the misuse of human freedom (a legacy known as original sin), the things of creation and the structures of human society tend to betray us, turning us away from our own true good. Jesus Christ is seen as the Saviour (redeemer and healer) in his life, actions, teachings, death, and redeeming power.

In the New Testament and the other writings extant from the earliest period of Christian history, known as the patristic period, the community dimension of the sacraments is inseparable from the communion with God that they offer.

## **Holy Order or Ordination**

The term Holy Orders is used by many Christian churches to refer to ordination or to those individuals ordained for a special role or ministry.

In the Roman Catholic (Latin: *sacri ordines*), Eastern Catholic, Eastern Orthodox (ἱερωσύνη [hierōsynē], ἱεράτευμα [hierateuma], Святенство [Svyashchenstvo]), Oriental Orthodox, Anglican, Assyrian, Old Catholic, Independent Catholic churches and some Lutheran churches Holy Orders comprise the three orders of bishop, priest and deacon, or the sacrament or rite by which candidates are ordained to those orders. Except for Lutherans and most Anglicans, these churches regard ordination as a sacrament (the *sacramentum ordinis*).

Protestant denominations have varied conceptions of church offices. In the Anglican tradition and some Lutheran churches, the traditional orders of bishop, priest and deacon are also bestowed using ordination rites. The extent to which ordination is considered sacramental in these traditions has, however, been a matter of some internal dispute. Many other denominations do not consider the role of ministry as being sacramental in nature and would not think of it in terms of "holy orders" as such.

Historically, the word "order" (Latin *ordo*) designated an established civil body or corporation with a hierarchy, and *ordinatio* meant legal incorporation into an ordo. The word "holy" refers to the Church. In context, therefore, a holy order is set apart for ministry in the Church.

Other offices such as pope, patriarch, cardinal, monsignor, archbishop, archimandrite, archpriest, protopresbyter, hieromonk, protodeacon, archdeacon, etc., are not sacramental orders. These are simply offices or titles.

In addition, ordination ritual and procedures vary by denomination. Different churches and denominations specify more or less rigorous requirements for entering into office, and the process of ordination is likewise given more or less ceremonial pomp depending on the group. Many Protestants still communicate authority and ordain to office by having the existing overseers physically lay hands on the candidates for office.

## **Ordination of Women:**

The Ordination of women is a controversial issue among different denominational affiliations in contemporary Christianity.

The Roman Catholic Church does not ordain women to any of the orders and has officially declared that it does not have authority to ordain women as priests or bishops. "Ordaining" women as deaconesses, appears to some to remain a possibility, but not in any sacramental sense of the diaconate, for a deaconess is not a female deacon, but instead holds a position of lay service and, as such, does not receive the sacrament of Holy Orders. Many Orthodox, Old Catholic, Anglican and Protestant churches ordain women, but in many cases, only to the office of deacon.



Various branches of the Orthodox churches, including the Greek Orthodox, currently ordain women as deaconesses. Some churches are internally divided on whether the Scriptures permit the ordination of women. When one considers the relative size of the churches (1.1 billion Roman Catholics, 300 million Orthodox, 590 million Anglicans and Protestants), it is a minority of Christian churches that ordain women. Protestants constitute about 27 percent of Christians worldwide, and most that ordain women have only done so within the past century.

In some traditions women may theoretically be ordained to the same orders as men. In others women are restricted from certain offices. The Church of England (in the Anglican Communion), for example, does not permit the consecration of women as bishops, though the Episcopal Church USA (the United States denomination that is part of the Anglican Communion) does. Similarly, in some Protestant denominations, women may serve as assistant pastors but not as pastors in charge of congregations. In some denominations, women can be ordained to be an elder or deacon. Some denominations allow for the ordination of women for certain religious orders. Among the Nigerian Pentecostals women are General Overseers, Pastors, Assistant Pastors etc. Within certain traditions, such as the Anglican and Lutheran, there is a diversity of theology and practice regarding ordination of women.

The Roman Catholic Church, in accordance with its understanding of the theological tradition on the issue, and the definitive clarification found in the encyclical letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (1994) written by Pope John Paul II, officially teaches that it has no authority to ordain women as priests and thus there is no possibility of female priests at any time in the future.

However, in the Episcopal Church the first women were ordained priests on July 29, 1974, though the orders had not been endorsed by General Convention. The so-called Philadelphia 11 were ordained by Bishops Daniel Corrigan, Robert L. DeWitt, Edward R. Welles, assisted by Antonio Ramos. On September 7, 1975, four more women were irregularly ordained by retired Bishop George W. Barrett. The 1976, General Convention, which approved the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate, voted to regularize the 15 forerunners.

- In 1994, the Convention affirmed that there is value in the theological position that women should not be ordained
- In 1997, the Convention affirmed that "the canons regarding the ordination, licensing, and deployment of women are mandatory and that dioceses noncompliant in 1997 shall give status reports on their progress toward full implementation."
- In 2006, the convention elected Katharine Jefferts Schori as Presiding Bishop. She is the first woman to serve as primate in the Anglican Communion.

The three "noncompliant" dioceses were San Joaquin, Quincy, and Fort Worth. The 2006 directory of the North American Association for the Diaconate lists three women

deacons in Quincy, 15 in San Joaquin, and 8 in Fort Worth. Fort Worth also allows parishes that wish to call a woman priest to transfer to the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Dallas.

## **Gender and sexuality**

**Ordination of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT) clergy** The ordination of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender clergy who are open about their sexuality, are sexually active, or are in committed same-sex relationships is a debated practice within some contemporary Christian Church communities.

While the majority of churches are opposed to it because they view homosexuality as incompatible with Biblical teaching and traditional Christian practice, there are an increasing number of Christian churches and communities that are open to conferring holy orders (including ordination) on people who are gay and lesbian. These are mainly moderate and liberal Protestant churches and include the Metropolitan Community Church and the Church of Sweden where clergy may serve in senior clerical positions.

- In 1976, the Convention declared that homosexuals are "children of God" and "entitled to full civil rights".
- In 1979, the Convention endorsed the Equal Rights Amendment and urged legislatures to ratify it.
- In 1988, the Convention reaffirmed the expectation of chastity and fidelity in relationships.
- In 1991, the Convention restated that "physical sexual expression" is an appropriate within a monogamous "union of husband and wife". The Convention also called on the church to "continue to reconcile the discontinuity between this teaching and the experience of members", referring both to dioceses that have chosen to bless monogamous same-sex unions and to general tolerance of premarital relations.
- In 2000, the Convention affirmed "the variety of human relationships in and outside of marriage" and acknowledged "disagreement over the Church's traditional teaching on human sexuality."
- The 2006, General Convention affirmed "support of gay and lesbian persons as children of God"; calls on legislatures to provide protections such as bereavement and family leave policies; and opposes any state or federal constitutional amendment that prohibits same-sex civil marriages or civil unions."
- The 2009, General Convention affirmed that "gays and lesbians (that are) in lifelong committed relationships," should be ordained, saying that "God has called and may call such individuals to any ordained ministry in the Episcopal Church." The Convention also voted to allow bishops to decide whether or not to bless same-sex marriages.

In conclusion, the issue of ordination has caused particular controversy in the worldwide Anglican communion, following the appointment of the Bishop of New Hampshire in the US Episcopal Church by their meeting rejected the ordination of gays and lesbians.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, so many issues are discussed, which is basically other sacramental activities practiced in the Church. For example, ordination or Holy Order is an important aspect of Church tradition and one of the sacraments in the Church. Other Sacramental rituals (rites) are confirmation, Holy matrimony, Anointing of the sick e.t.c.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

- The Followings are the major points learnt in this unit:
- The History of Sacraments and their types.
- The Concept of the Eucharist
- The Condition necessary to be a partaker of the sacrament
- Other Sacramental activities, such as reconciliation, Confirmation, Holy matrimony etc.
- Ordination of women, gender and sexuality

#### **6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. What is confirmation?
2. Why did the Anglican communion reject ordination of homosexuals?
3. Highlight other sacramental activities known to you

#### **7.0 Self Assessment Questions**

Explain the conditions that will qualify an individual to be a partaker of Eucharis. Define ordination.

Briefly explain the qualities that one must possess before that person is is ordained as a deacon / deaconess in your local church?

#### **8.0 References and Further / Further Readings**

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## **UNIT 3: THE IMPORTANCE OF SACRAMENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**
- 3.0 Main contents**
  - 3.1 The importance of baptism**
  - 3.2 The importance of Eucharist**
  - 3.3 The importance of Confirmation, Ordination (Holy order), Holy Matrimony etc.**
- 4.0 Conclusion**
- 5.0 Summary**
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment**
- 7.0 Self-Assessment Questions**
- 8.0 References/ Further Reading**

### **1.0 Introduction**

The focus of this unit is to explain in detail and highlight the importance of sacraments that have been extensively exhausted in the previous unit. It may not be possible to discuss the importance of sacraments one by one, an attempt will be made so as to do justice to it. Generally, sacraments provide access for a closer fellowship with God, the Creator, thus the observation is imperative in the Church. Sacraments are redemptive because they draw people into the fellowship with the Divine in which salvation is found.

### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the unit you should be able to:

- Highlight types of baptism.
- Discuss the significances of baptism
- Mention the importance of Eucharist and other sacramental rituals.

### **3.1 The importance of baptism**

There are differences in views about the importance or significances of baptism for a Christian. Some Christian groups assert that baptism is a requirement for salvation and a sacrament, and speak of "baptismal regeneration". Its importance may be understood by an informed knowledge of their interpretation of the most fundamental and basic

meaning of the "Mystical Body of Christ" as found in the New Testament. This view is shared by the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions, and by Churches formed early during the Protestant Reformation such as Lutheran and Anglican. For example, Martin Luther said:

*To put it most simply, the power, effect, benefit, fruit, and purpose of Baptism is to save. No one is baptized in order to become a prince, but as the words say, to "be saved". To be saved, we know, is nothing else than to be delivered from sin, death, and the devil and to enter into the kingdom of Christ and live with him forever.*

The Churches of Christ and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints also espouse baptism as necessary for salvation.

For Roman Catholics, baptism by water is a sacrament of initiation into the life of the children of God. It configures the person to Christ and obliges the Christian to share in the Church's apostolic and missionary activity. The Catholic Tradition holds that there are three types of baptism by which one can be saved: sacramental baptism (with water), baptism of desire (explicit or implicit desire to be part of the Church founded by Jesus Christ), and baptism of blood (martyrdom). Pope Pius XII, in his encyclical *The Mystical Body of Christ*, June 29, 1943, includes *all baptized Christians* as members of Christ, members of the one true Church, which is the body of Jesus Christ himself, as God the Holy Spirit has taught through the Apostle Paul.

Through the waters of Baptism those who are born into this world dead in sin are not only born again and made members of the Church, but being stamped with a spiritual seal they become able and fit to receive the other Sacraments. He also determined that through Baptism those who should believe would be incorporated in the Body of the Church. It was on the tree of the Cross, finally, that He entered into possession of His Church, that is, of all the members of His Mystical Body; for they would not have been united to this Mystical Body through the waters of Baptism except by the salutary virtue of the Cross, by which they had been already brought under the complete sway of Christ. That this Mystical Body which is the Church should be called Christ's is proved in the second place from the fact that He must be universally acknowledged as its actual Head. "He," as St. Paul says, "is the Head of the Body, the Church." (Col. 1:18)

By contrast, most Reformed (Calvinist), evangelical, and fundamentalist Protestant groups recognize baptism as an act of obedience to and identification with Jesus as the Christ. They say that baptism has no sacramental (saving) power, and only testifies outwardly to the invisible and internal operation of God's power, which is completely separate from the rite itself.

Churches of Christ consistently teach that in baptism a believer surrenders his life in faith and obedience to God, and that God "by the merits of Christ's blood, cleanses one from sin and truly changes the state of the person from an alien to a citizen of God's kingdom. Baptism is not a human work; it is the place where God does the work that only God can do." Thus, they see baptism as a passive act of faith rather than a meritorious work; it "is a confession that a person has nothing to offer God."

The symbolism is threefold:

1. Baptism is considered to be a form of rebirth—"by water and the Spirit" (John 3:5) the nakedness of baptism (the second birth) paralleled the condition of one's original birth. For example, St. John Chrysostom calls the baptism "λοχείαν", i.e., giving birth, and "new way of creation...from water and Spirit" ("to John" speech 25,2), and later elaborates: For nothing perceivable was handed over to us by Jesus; but with perceivable things, all of them however conceivable. This is also the way with the baptism; the gift of the water is done with a perceivable thing, but the things being conducted, i.e., the rebirth and renovation, are conceivable. For, if you were without a body, He would hand over these bodiless gifts as naked [gifts] to you. But because the soul is closely linked to the body, He hands over the perceivable ones to you with conceivable things.
2. The removal of clothing represented the "image of putting off the old man with his deeds" (as per Cyril, above), so the stripping of the body before for baptism represented taking off the trappings of sinful self, so that the "new man," which is given by Jesus, can be put on.
3. As St. Cyril again asserts above, as Adam and Eve in the Scripture and tradition were naked, innocent and unashamed in the Garden of Eden, nakedness during baptism was seen as a renewal of that innocence and state of original sinlessness. Other parallels can also be drawn, such as between the exposed condition of Christ during His crucifixion, and the crucifixion of the "old man" of the repentant sinner in preparation for baptism.

In summary, baptism is an outward and open confession of the Lord.

This going through the water symbolizes a death and a spiritual rebirth.

Traditions make clear reference to baptism as not only a symbolic burial and resurrection, but an actual supernatural transformation, one that draws parallels to the experience of Noah and the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea divided by Moses. Thus, baptism is literally and symbolically not only cleansing, but also dying and rising again with Christ

Baptism is also the entry into the Church and therefore allows an individual access to all rights and responsibilities as full members, including the privilege to receive Holy Communion.

### **Other divergent views among the various denominations**

The liturgy of baptism in the Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Lutheran, Anglican, and Methodist traditions makes clear reference to baptism as not only a symbolic burial and resurrection, but an actual supernatural transformation, one that draws parallels to the experience of Noah and the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea divided by Moses. Thus, baptism is literally and symbolically not only cleansing, but also dying and rising again with Christ. Catholics believe that baptism is necessary for the cleansing of the taint of original sin, and for that reason infant baptism is a common practice. The Eastern Churches (Eastern Orthodox Church and Oriental Orthodoxy)

also baptize infants on the basis of texts, such as Matthew 19:14, which are interpreted as supporting full Church membership for children. In these traditions, baptism is immediately followed by Chrismation and Communion at the next Divine Liturgy, regardless of age. Orthodox likewise believes that baptism removes what they call the ancestral sin of Adam. Anglicans believe that Baptism is also the entry into the Church and therefore allows them access to all rights and responsibilities as full members, including the privilege to receive Holy Communion. Most Methodists and Anglicans agree that it also cleanses the taint of what in the West is called original sin, in the East ancestral sin.

Eastern Orthodox Christians usually insist on complete threefold immersion as both a symbol of death and rebirth into Christ, and as a washing away of sin. Latin Rite Catholics generally baptize by affusion (pouring); Eastern Catholics usually by submersion, or at least partial immersion. However, submersion is gaining in popularity within the Latin Catholic Church. In newer church sanctuaries, the baptismal font may be designed to expressly allow for baptism by immersion. Anglicans baptize by submersion, immersion, affusion or sprinkling

### **Salvation Army**

The Salvation Army does not practice water baptism, or indeed other outward sacraments. William Booth and Catherine Booth, the founders of the Salvation Army, believed that many Christians had come to rely on the outward signs of spiritual grace rather than on grace itself. They believed what was important was spiritual grace itself. However, although the Salvation Army does not practice baptism, they are not opposed to baptism within other Christian denominations.

### **Hyper dispensationalism**

There are some Christians termed "Hyper dispensationalists" who accept only Paul's Epistles as applicable for the church today. They do not accept baptism or the Lord's Supper, since these are not found in the Prison Epistles. They also teach that Peter's gospel message was not the same as Paul's. Hyper dispensationalists assert:

- The great commission and its baptism is directed to early Jewish believers, not the Gentile believers of mid-Acts or later.
- The baptism of Acts 2:36–38 is Peter's call for Israel to repent of complicity in the death of the Messiah; not as a Gospel announcement of atonement for sin, a later doctrine revealed by Paul.

Water baptism found early in the Book of Acts is, according to this view, now supplanted by the one baptism foretold by John the Baptist. The one baptism for today, it is asserted, is the "baptism of the Holy Spirit". This, "spirit" baptism, however, is unlikely given the texts and facts that the baptisms of the Eunuch and the



household of Cornelius were explicitly in water. Further evidence points to the humanly administered Great Commission which was to last until the end of the world. Therefore, the baptism the Ephesians underwent was water by context. Likewise, Holy Spirit Baptism is recorded as only occurring twice in all the book of Acts to selected individuals. Finally, it is argued that only Jesus possessed the power to baptize with the Holy Spirit and with Fire which eliminates any mortal ever doing

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According to a tradition, evidence of which can be traced back to at latest about the year 200, sponsors or godparents are present at baptism and vow to uphold the Christian education and life of the baptized.

Baptists argue that the Greek word βαπτίζω originally meant "to immerse". They interpret some Biblical passages concerning baptism as requiring submersion of the body in water. They also state that only submersion reflects the symbolic significance of being "buried" and "raised" with Christ Rom 6:3-4. Baptist Churches baptize in the name of the Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. However, they do not believe that baptism is necessary for salvation; but rather that it is an act of Christian obedience.

Some "full gospel" charismatic churches such as Oneness Pentecostals baptize only in the name of Jesus Christ, citing Peter's preaching baptism in the name of Jesus as their

authority Act 2 :38. They also point to several historical sources that maintain that the early church always baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus until development of the Trinity Doctrine in the 2nd century. In 1982 the World Council of Churches (WCC) published the ecumenical paper *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. The preface of the document states:

*Those who know how widely the churches have differed in doctrine and practice on baptism, Eucharist and ministry, will appreciate the importance of the large measure of agreement registered here. Virtually all the confessional traditions are included in the Commission's membership. That theologians of such widely different traditions should be able to speak so harmoniously about baptism, Eucharist and ministry is unprecedented in the modern ecumenical movement. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the Commission also includes among its full members theologians of the Catholic and other churches which do not belong to the World Council of Churches itself.*

According to Acts 2:38, baptisms follow from Peter's preaching baptism in the name of Jesus and lead those baptized to the receiving of Christ's Spirit, the Holy Ghost, and life in the community: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" as well as to the distribution of goods to those in need.

Those who heard, who were baptized and entered the community's life, were already made witnesses of and partakers in the promises of God for the last days: the forgiveness of sins through baptism in the name of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on all flesh. Similarly, in what may well be a baptismal pattern, 1 Peter testifies that proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and teaching about new life lead to purification and new birth. This, in turn, is followed by eating and drinking God's food, by participation in the life of the community—the royal priesthood, the new temple, the people of God and by further moral formation. At the beginning of 1 Peter the writer sets this baptism in the context of obedience to Christ and sanctification by the Spirit. So baptism into Christ is seen as baptism into the Spirit. In the fourth gospel Jesus' discourse with Nicodemus indicates that birth by water and Spirit becomes the gracious means.

John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire"

Many in this group also argue that John's promised baptism by fire is pending, referring to the destruction of the world by fire.

John, as he said "baptized with water", as did Jesus' disciples to the early, Jewish Christian church. Jesus himself never personally baptized with water, but did so

through his disciples. Unlike Jesus' first Apostles, Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, was sent to preach rather than to baptize but did occasionally baptize, for instance in Corinth and in Philippi, in the same manner as they. He also taught the spiritual significance of the submerging in baptism and how one contacts the atoning death of Christ in such.

Other Hyper dispensationalists believe that baptism was necessary only for a short period between Christ's ascension and mid-Acts. The great commission and its baptism was directed to early Jewish believers, not the Gentile believers of mid-Acts or later. Any Jew who believed did not receive salvation or the Holy Spirit until they were baptized. This period ended with the calling of Paul. Peter's reaction when the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit before baptism, A significant scenario worthy to be noted in the development of Christianity in the early Church

### **Comparative summary**

The section below is an x-ray of the comparative summary in which Baptism is believed and practiced by different of denominations and of Christian Influence. Although the section does not give a complete listing of denominations, rather it only mentions a fraction of the churches practicing "believer's baptism". However, we consider this section imperative because baptism is a sacrament that is generally accepted and practiced among different denominations though there could be some variations. For examples, **the Anglican Communion** has the belief that baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of Regeneration or New-Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed. Also Faith is confirmed, and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God." Baptism regenerates or gives spiritual life a Standard. In addition, the Anglican Communion has two types of baptism which are infant and adult and it is by submersion, immersion or pouring of water and it is done in most sub-denominations and in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit (Trinity)

**Apostolic Brethren** believes that baptism is necessary for salvation because it conveys spiritual rebirth Also stresses the necessity of "second" Baptism of a special outpouring from the Holy Spirit. The baptism is by submersion only and do not baptize infants.

**The Baptists** sees the rite of baptism as a divine ordinance, a symbolic ritual, a mechanism for publicly declaring one's faith, and a sign of having already been saved, but not necessary for salvation. The Baptists baptises .by submersion only and. no infant baptism. They baptise in the name of the Trinity, that is in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Christadelphians** Baptism is essential for the salvation of a believer. It is only effective if somebody believe the true gospel message before they are baptized. Baptism is an external symbol of an internal change in the believer: it represents a death to an old, sinful way of life, and the start of a new life as a Christian, summed up as the repentance of the believer — it therefore leads to forgiveness from God, who forgives people who repent. Although someone is only baptized once, a believer must live by the principles of their baptism (i.e., dead to sin, and a new life following Jesus throughout their life). The baptism is by submersion only and does not practice infant baptism. Baptises in name the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (although Christadelphians do not believe in the Nicean Trinity)

**Disciples of Christ** To this sect of believers, baptism is an outward and public sign of God's grace made manifest in the individual. In submersion, one symbolically experiences dying with Christ, and then rises with Him. Disciples of Christ usually baptises by submersion and with the Trinity. No infant baptism

**Churches of Christ** have historically had the most conservative position on baptism among the various branches of the Restoration Movement, understanding baptism by immersion to be a necessary part of conversion. It is by immersion only and in the name of the Triune God. No infant is baptised because of the belief that baptism is a necessary part of salvation, some Baptists hold that the Churches of Christ endorse the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. However, members of the Churches of Christ reject this, arguing that sin, faith and repentance are necessary, and that the cleansing of sins is by the blood of Christ through the grace of God, baptism is not an inherently redeeming ritual. Baptism is understood as a as confessional expression of faith and repentance rather than a "work" that earns salvation.

**The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS)** This crops of Christianity practises baptism by immersion performed by a person holding proper priesthood authority. Baptism is perceived as an ordinance essential to enter the Celestial Kingdom of Heaven and preparatory for receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost by laying on of hands. In addition, they do not baptise infant but a child of at least 8 years old can observe the rite and in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost (The LDS church doesn't believe in the Nicean Trinity, but rather in the Godhead

**Jehovah's Witnesses** Their own form of baptism is by submersion only; typical candidates are baptized at the district and circuit conventions. No infant baptism. The Jehovah's Witnesses see baptism as that which is necessary for salvation as part of the entire baptismal arrangement, as an expression of obedience to Jesus command as recorded in the gospel of Saint (Matt 28:19-20), as a public symbol of the saving faith in the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Rom 10:10) and as an indication of repentance from dead works and the dedication of one's to Jehovah (1pet2:21). However, baptism does not guarantee salvation.

**Lutherans church** The Lutherans believes and practice that baptism is a miraculous sacrament through which God creates and/or strengthens the gift of faith in a person's

heart. "Although we do not claim to understand how this happens or how it is possible, we believe (because of what the Bible says about baptism) that when an infant is baptized God creates faith in the heart of that infant". Types of baptism are by sprinkling or pouring. Automatically they baptize infants.

### **Methodists (Arminians, Wesleyans)**

The Sacrament of initiation into Christ's holy Church whereby one is incorporated into God's mighty acts of salvation and given new birth through water and the Spirit. To the Methodists baptism washes away sin and clothes one in the righteousness of Christ. The type of baptism practiced by the Methodist is sprinkling, pouring or by immersion. They believe and practice infant baptism and in name of the Triune God. Although contingent upon repentance and a personal acceptance of Christ as Saviour.

**Trinitarian Pentecostals and various "Holiness" groups, Christian Missionary Alliance, Assemblies of God.** These groups of churches are of the view that water Baptism is an ordinance, a symbolic ritual used to witness upon the acceptance of Christ as personal Saviour. Baptism is by submersion. Also stress the necessity of a "second" Baptism of a special outpouring from the Holy Spirit. No infant baptism.

### **Oneness Pentecostals**

Being baptized is an ordinance directed and established by Jesus and the Apostles. Baptism is by submersion. Also stress the necessity of baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 8:14–17, 35–38). No infant baptism.

**Presbyterian and most Reformed Churches** Baptism is perceived as a sacrament, a symbolic ritual, and as well a seal of the adult believer's present faith. It is an outward sign of an inward grace. Baptism is by sprinkling, pouring, immersion or submersion. They also baptize infants. This is to indicate membership in the New Covenant.

**The Quakers:** - Quakers means Religious Society of Friends. They view baptism as only an external symbol that is no longer to be practiced. And they do not believe in Baptism of water, but only in an inward, ongoing purification of the human spirit in a life of disciple led by the Holy Spirit. They do not involve infants in baptism.

### **Revivalism**

It is a necessary step for salvation. Baptism is by submersion, with the expectation of receiving the Holy Spirit. There is no baptism of infants and they baptize in the Trinity i.e. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

### **Roman Catholic Church**

"Necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament". Usually, baptism is by pouring

in the West, by submersion or immersion in the East; sprinkling admitted only if the water then flows on the head. They baptize infants and with Trinity.

### **Seventh-day Adventists**

Not stated as the prerequisite to salvation, but a prerequisite for the admission to the church. It symbolizes death to sin and new birth in Jesus Christ. "It affirms joining the family of God and sets apart for a life of ministry". Baptism is by submersion and they do not baptize infants and baptize in the name of the Trinity.

### **United church of Christ**

(Evangelical and Reformed Churches and the Congregational Christian Churches)- This category of Christians regards baptism as an outward sign of God's inward grace. It may or may not be necessary for membership in a local congregation. However, it is a common practice for both infants and adults. Baptism is by sprinkling, pouring, immersion or submersion. They believe in the baptism of infants and to indicate membership in the New Covenant. Baptism is done in the name of the Trinity.

### **Anabaptist**

Baptism is considered by the majority of Anabaptist Churches (Anabaptist means to baptize again) to be essential to Christian faith but not to salvation. It is considered a biblical ordinance along with communion, feet washing, the holy kiss, the Christian woman's head covering, anointing with oil, and marriage. The Anabaptists also have stood historically against the practice of infant baptism. The Anabaptists stood firmly against infant baptism in a time when the Church and State were one and when people were made a citizen through baptism into the officially sanctioned Church (Reformed or Catholic). Belief and repentance are believed to precede and follow baptism. Baptism is by pouring, immersion or submersion. They do not baptize infants and as well as in the name of the Trinity.

## **3.2 The importance of Eucharist**

- i. The Eucharist is seen as fashioning worshipers into "one body" with Jesus Church, which has far reaching consequences for their lives and their relationships (as the apostle Paul explains in Corinthians, chapters 11-13).
- ii. It is for reshaping of the imagination and sense of identity of the worshipers, thereby bringing about a transformation of individual and social life.
- iii. It is an identification with the suffering and death of Christ
- iv. It is an obedience to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ that we should do this in remembrance of Him. Little wonder why the Roman Catholics observe the Lord's Supper at every mass

## **3.3 The importance of Confirmation, Ordination (Holy order),**

### **Holy Matrimony, etc**

- i. Confirmation is a further step of the initiation into the community, that an individual who has gone through the rite of baptism is now a full fledged member of the Christian community
- ii. It is a ritual one must pass through in order to be eligible to partake in the Eucharist. This is peculiar among the Orthodox and Protestants.
- iii. It is the laying hands of the Bishop that a person has fully surrendered his/her life to God having forsaken the devil and his deeds.

### **Ordination (Holy order)**

- i. The importance of ordination could be itemized thus:-
- ii. It is the passing on of authority to carry out a specific assignment and operating in a given office.
- iii. That individual is so much empowered so as to be effective and efficient in the specific office.
- iv. As an ordained minister of God, he is for the accomplishment of a specific mission. Significantly he is given a sense of responsibility, direction and high level of commitment.
- v. It has made the person to be set apart, distinguished and consecrated of a specific mission.
- vi. He is ordained to make atonement for his own sin and the sins of others, this is relevant to the Roman Catholics sect of Christianity who believe this as part of the Priestly role. Consequently, Christ did this on the cross of Calvary, who they regarded as High Priest. (Heb.3:1)

### **Holy Matrimony**

Holy matrimony is an institution ordained by God which should be given the greatest respect and honour because it is sacred or sanctity.

These are some of the significances of holy matrimony:-

- (i) For intimate union or companionship
- (ii) To have control over man's instinct, the sexual urge, for avoidance from sexual immorality
- (iii) For procreation of off-springs that will be nurtured in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

### **4.0 Conclusion**

Perhaps your understanding of what Sacraments are have been broadened. It is central to the teachings and practice of Christianity. Thus, Sacraments are redemptive that

draw people into the fellowship with the Divine in which salvation is found as the foremost. It is also important to note that we stand in need because of some of these things like healing, salvation (redemption, rescue etc) hence we must not fail in the observance of the Sacraments.

## **5.0 Summary**

The following are the major points you have learnt in this unit:-

- That when anyone is baptised, by going through the water, it symbolizes a spiritual rebirth.
- Taking part in the holy communion is an identification with the suffering and death of Christ. In the case of ordination or holy order it means authority is being passed on an ordained person to carry out a specific assignment and operating in a given office.
- Baptism an essential ritual in Christianity, a part of the sacrament is considered.  
The beliefs and practices differ from one denomination to another.
- The significances of holy matrimony are for sexual fulfilment in man, intimacy, procreation etc.

## **6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment**

1. Explain the importance of going through the rite of Eucharist.
2. Mention the different types of Sacraments as it is peculiar to the Roman Catholic Church and Protestants.
3. Why do we need to encourage the young ones to go through the rite of Holy Matrimony?
- 4 Advance reasons why most of the denominations under study practice baptism

## **7.0 Self-Assessment Questions**

1. Who are the Jehovah Witnesses? Why is their beliefs and practices on baptism different from other denominations?
2. Trace the origin of the Anabaptist and succinctly explain the beliefs on baptism
3. Why is ordination important in the Church?
4. What are the significances of Holy Matrimony in the Church?



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## **UNIT 4: SOTERIOLOGY**

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**
- 3.0 Main Content**
  - 3.1 Concept of ‘Soteriology’**
  - 3.2 Old Testament Perception of ‘Soteriology’**
  - 3.3 New Testament Perception of ‘Soteriology’**
  - 3.4 Dimensions on the various Concept of Salvation**
  - 3.5 Object of salvation**
- 4.0 Conclusion**
- 5.0 Summary**
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment**
- 7.0 Self-Assessment Questions**
- 8.0 References and Further Reading**

### **1.0 Introduction**

The issue of salvation is the core of Christianity. Jesus was born to be the saviour through the shedding of his blood on the cross of Calvary. Thus it extensively discusses ‘soteriology’ a Greek derivative of salvation. It further explains both Old and New Testament perception of soteriology and the dimensions of salvation.

### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the unit you should be able to:

- Explain the word ‘soteriology’
- Discuss the perception of both the Old and New Testament of salvation
- Discuss the six dimension of salvation
- Explain the object of salvation

### **3.0 Main Content**

#### **3.1 Concept of ‘Soteriology’**

‘Soteriology’ is synonymous to salvation which has been varied perceived by religious scholars. The word simply means ‘salvation’ and it has equivalent both in Hebrew and Latin languages.

The Hebrew word ‘yesu’ is often translated salvation. so in Latin, it is ‘salus’ which means ‘healthy’ ‘safety’ and a ‘state of wellbeing’. It is a religious concept that refers either to the process through which a person is brought from condition of distress to a condition of ultimate wellbeing. In the view of Chambers Dictionary ‘soteriology’ is from the word ‘soteria’ that is, salvation from soter (saviour) is perceived as the doctrine of salvation. While Cassell defines the term as the branch of theology concerned with the doctrine of salvation through Christ mission to the world

Furthermore, it is a concept that is often understood by different people in diverse ways, even among different denominational affiliations, it is variedly perceived. As a student of theology it is imperative you are exposed to the major concept of the salvation in order to give you the liberty of forming your own opinions, especially on

what the scriptures teaches on the issue. The diverse interpretations of salvation has arisen due to hermeutical differences among theologians with the variations in ages.

In a nutshell, the word ‘soteriology’ as one prominent conception emphasizes justification as the process through which the individual, alienated from God by sin is reconciled to God and reckoned just or righteous through faith in Christ Jesus. This is from Christian conception of the term. However, in Hinduism and Buddhism for example, it is understood as liberation from the inevitable pain of existence in time by means of religious disciplines that ultimately achieve a state of being that is not determined by time bound, perception and form of thought.

Thus, salvation in this context is the act of saving from destruction or catastrophe, the saving of one from sin and its consequences through faith in Christ who is the revelation of God, the mediator, between God and man who has come to reconcile us with God the father. This is the perception of Apostle Paul in his dealing with Timothy

### **3.2 Old Testament Perception of Soteriology**

The Old-Testament perceptions of ‘Soteriology’ is brought into a focus in the greatest saving act of God in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. God at different periods of Israelites history had delivered or saved them from their enemies, e.g, Gideon and the Midianites, Joshua and the fall of Jericho. The story of Balaam and Balak is another good examples. It should be noted that the will of God to save Israel was rooted in the covenant relationship between God and the Israelites. This is further proved in God’s provision of a peaceful dwelling place for the Israelites (in Canaan), the Israelites victories over their enemies, and so on. In the Old Testament notion of salvation it is predominantly militant, and the idea of victory over the enemies is explicitly political. This is to say that political salvation does not only mean deliverance from the enemies but also final victory and the submission of rival nations to the rule of Israel.

### **3.3 New Testament Perception of Salvation**

In discussing the New Testament perception of salvation, we feel it should be divided into two segments for a better understanding and ease of reference particularly on your part as a learner. These are the notions of the gospels and the Pauline Epistles.

Generally, in the New-Testament conception, the Greek terms ‘Sozein’, ‘Soter’ and ‘Soteria’ stand respectively for ‘Save’, ‘Saviour’ and ‘Salvation’ respectively. It is the work of God’s mercy and not man’s activity. It is the work of God’s grace even as presented by Paul to the Ephesians Christians. (Eph 2:8-10). Christ has been exalted by God to grant forgiveness and repentance to Israel and whoever would come to him. (Act 5:13). II Peter 2:20. So salvation includes in its scope grace, election, predestination, calling, fore knowledge, pardon, regeneration, adoption, sanctification, preservation, perfection, glorification and eternal life Rom 8:27-30.

In another dimension the subject of salvation presupposes that an individual is in some present or future danger. A drowning man is said to be saved or rescued when another succeed in pulling him out. The same goes with someone who is sick and near the point of death or involve in a fire accident and so on. If successfully rescued as all are said to be saved from some dangerous predicament then such person is reckoned with

as been saved. The Bible, God's word pronounces all men as been under the danger of eternal damnation that is been separated from God, to spend endless eternity in the lake that burns with fire and brimstones because of sin. Rom 3:23, Ezk 18:20 Rev 21:8. This judgement cannot be escaped except by a personal response to God's provision-Jesus Christ that was sacrificed on the tree.

IN THE GOSPELS, Christ is regarded as the one to save His people from their sins. Matt 1:21, Zacchaeus was a partaker of this salvation, (Luke 19:1-10). And salvation can be received by all men, both the circumcised and uncircumcised. (Universalism) Acts 15:1-end. In addition, there is no salvation in any man except in JESUS. Acts 4:12, Acts 15:11; Heb. 2:10, 5:9. Even Simeon the priest saw the salvation, when he saw the infant Jesus. Luke 2:25-32. It be understood further that the core of the New Testament message is found in the salvation brought by Jesus Christ alone, and is meant for all, both Jews and Gentiles alike. Even when the Jews rejected Christ, He came to as many as would believe in Him by faith (John 1:12).

**Pauline Notion of 'Soteriology'**:- the emphasis on salvation is on Christ. Though Apostle Paul divided the history of salvation into three parts:- Adam to Moses, Moses to Christ and Christ to the Parousia. For Paul, the author of salvation is not Christ but God the father who initiated this provision right from the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. In Pauline thought, salvation comes from God, but through Christ. It is the plan conceived by God before the foundation of the world. Gal 4:4.

### **3.4 DIMENSIONS ON THE VARIOUS CONCEPT OF SALVATION**

Akper (2007) quoted Ericson (1985) identified about six dimensions on which there are various conceptions on the doctrines of salvation. The six dimensions have been itemized which includes time, need, medium, extent, and object of salvation. However, these dimensions were limited to 'naturalistic and super naturalistic' particularly by the traditional theologians of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It is highly necessary to succinctly explain these dimensions.

#### **TIME**

With reference to the time of salvation one may likely ask as at what point is someone saved or when does an individual become saved? Is timing then an important consideration for man's salvation? These are some questions that readily come to the mind of a lay man. However there are two conceptions or views of salvation, some Christians conceive it as a futuristic event which will accompany the parousia (second coming of Christ), while some perceive it that they have been saved by the definitive work of Christ on the cross of Cavalry.

Akper (2007) argues that though the work of salvation has been concluded when the veil in the temple was torn apart, that is, when Christ was about to give up the ghost. Yet the Reformed view that believer's salvation is both 'definitive and progressive'.

**The Need:** this is an area which point to the fact for the purpose of salvation. Why is salvation granted to humanity? Of what purpose or reasons? It is believed that salvation is put forth for the reconciliation between man and God. St Paul in his Epistles to the Corinthians write '...who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus

Christ...' (II Cor. 5 vs 18). In the same vein the writer of the gospel of Matthew confirms that 'Jesus was born so that He can save His people from their sin' (Matthew 1 vs 21).

Humanity is alienated from God the creator because of sin, in order to restore the initial relationship, trust and confidence, hence, salvation is needed. However, other theologians argue that salvation goes beyond reconciliation of man with God. This view was promoted by the liberation theologies like Black theology, Latin American theologies and feminist theology. They advocate that for the physical salvation which should remove all forms of oppressions and injustice (Akper, 2007). This is regarded as the liberating message of the gospel.

### **The Medium:**

The Medium of Salvation of Christians over the ages differ on the issue of salvation. How does an individual obtain the means to salvation? To some believers it is the agency of the Holy Spirit only, while to some it is the grace conveyed when partaking in the sacrament which Akper (2007) quoted Warfield regarded as ex operator.

In addition, to the six dimensions upon which the various conceptions of salvation differs is the extent of salvation. This is viewed in the two ways i.e universalism and particularism. Universalism states the fact of God's plan to save all men i.e He wills it. Particularism differs in that, it emphasizes that salvation is for a particular individual, only the chosen one (i.e the elect) who have been selected since the beginning of the world to be saved. '...for whom he did foreknow, he also predestined to be conformed to image of his son...' (Rom.8 vs 29). It is further buttressed by the Calvinist that those people who were bypassed in such salvation are left their wickedness to perish.

### **3.5 Objects of salvation**

There are varied opinions among Christians with regards to objects of salvation. Is salvation meant for both humanity and cosmos who were cursed particularly when referring to the disobedience of Adam and Eve which sent them out of the Garden of Eden? The proponent of universalism upholds the above, while some particularists contend that salvation is accomplished for only Christians.

Furthermore, the modern Christian churches tend to be much more concerned with how humanity can be saved from a universal condition of sin and death than the question of how both Jews and Gentiles can be in God's family. According to both Catholic and Protestant doctrine, salvation comes by Jesus' substitutionary death and resurrection. The Catholic Church teaches that salvation does not occur without faithfulness on the part of Christians; converts must live in accordance with principles of love and ordinarily must be baptized. Martin Luther taught that baptism was necessary for salvation, but modern Lutherans and other Protestants tend to teach that salvation is a gift that comes to an individual by God's grace, sometimes defined as "unmerited favour", even apart from baptism.

Christians differ in their views on the extent to which individuals' *salvation* is pre-ordained by God. Reformed theology places distinctive emphasis on grace by teaching that individuals are completely incapable of self-redemption, but that sanctifying grace is irresistible. In contrast Catholics, Orthodox Christians and Arminian Protestants

believe that the exercise of free will is necessary to have faith in Jesus.

Furthermore, the case of Paul of Tarsus could be a very good example on the matter of salvation, it is the sacrifice of Jesus that brings salvation and make one to be joint heirs with Christ. Like Jews and Roman pagans of his time, believed that sacrifice can bring about new kinship ties, purity, and eternal life. For Paul the necessary sacrifice was the death of Jesus: Gentiles who are "Christ's" are, like Israel, descendants of Abraham and "heirs according to the promise". The God who raised Jesus from the dead would also give new life to the "mortal bodies" of Gentile Christians, who had become with Israel the "children of God" and were therefore no longer "in the flesh".

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#### **4.0 Conclusion**

Salvation is fundamental to the Christian message. The task which brought Jesus as the offering for humanity. 'Soteriology' which is synonymous to salvation has been variedly perceived not only by religious scholars but among different denominational affiliations, the perceptions of the issue differ between the Orthodox and Protestant, so it is among the Pentecostals. Salvation is not limited to the soul, that is, freedom from sin rather it is economics, social and political liberty.

#### **5.0 Summary**

The major points that were discussed in the unit are:

The general conceptions of soteriology

The- views of the old and new testaments scholars

The six dimensions of salvation and the object of salvation.

#### **6.0 Tutored-marked assignment**

1. How would you define the concept of salvation to a layman?
2. Explain the six dimensions of salvation

3. Who is the object of salvation referred to?

## 7.0 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Explain how the Old Testament Writers view the idea of Soteriology
2. How is it true that the perception of salvation among the Pentecostal differ from that of the Protestants?

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## **UNIT 6: CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**
- 3.0 Main Content**
  - 3.1 What is Church Discipline?**
  - 3.2 Grounds for Church Discipline**
  - 3.3 The Pattern and Basis of Church Discipline**
  - 3.4 The Purpose of Church Discipline**
  - 3.5 The Practice of Church Discipline**
  - 3.6 Procedures for Restoration/Forgiveness**
- 4.0 Conclusion**
- 5.0 Summary**
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment**
- 7.0 References/Further Readings**

### **1.0 Introduction**

In this segment attention is given to church discipline which is a very complicated area of doctrine and one stiff to practice, it however rests upon the divine authority of Scripture and is fundamental to the purity, power, progress, and purpose of the church. The responsibility and inevitability for discipline is not an alternative for the church if it obeys the Word of God, but a church must be uniformly concerned that Scripture is cautiously followed in the practice of church discipline. The following work surveyed for this very significant area of doctrine in order to bring its composition to limelight.

### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Define church discipline
- State the basis and procedures for church discipline
- Explain the process of restoration of the sinner

### **3.0 Main Content**

#### **3.1 What is Church Discipline?**

R.C. Sproul says “The church is called not only to a ministry of reconciliation, but a ministry of nurture to those within her gates. Part of that nurture includes church discipline . . .” The idea of church discipline is completely steadfast with the essential purposes of the church, evangelism and edification. Evangelism works with those without the church who are in bondage to sin to bring them to faith in Christ where the conversion process begins. The instruction procedure is planned to build up believers so they can be built to the image and character of Christ. Church discipline as a division of the edification procedure ministers to those within the body of Christ who are subjugated to some area of sin so that they can go through emancipation from its power through fellowship with Christ.

Carl Laney states, “Church discipline may be broadly defined as the confrontational and corrective measures taken by an individual, church leaders, or the congregation regarding a matter of sin in the life of a believer.” Discipline in the church is not



punishment. It is discipline and discipline is designed to train and restore.

According to Jackson (p. 75), “one of the most neglected doctrines of the Word of God is church discipline.” In case this chain on ecclesiology is blameworthy of such ignorant, we can bring to a close by probing the doctrine of church discipline. It seems that the doctrine of church discipline and its practice experienced abandonment. Churches that carry out church discipline are becoming less and farther between. Fear of being seen as unloving, of losing members plus income, and of causing a church division may be some of the reasons for such reservation. Despite the possibility for such involuntary results from congregations however church discipline must be practiced for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and the good of the local church.

Discipline means to teach, instruct, to correct, or train one that he might be strengthened, perfected; to punish or chastise. Webster says it means “training or experience that corrects, molds, strengthens, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character. Broadly speaking, church discipline includes all processes or means by which a church trains and educates its members to “walk in the light.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17 unveils “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”. The marginal note on “instruction” is “discipline”. Thayer says “discipline” means “whatever in adults cultivates the soul, especially by correcting mistakes and curbing the passions; hence, instruction which aims at the increase of virtue.” While many think of discipline only as corrective, it must be pointed out that discipline is twofold in its nature:

- a. Instructive discipline which is preventive in nature.
  - b. Corrective discipline which is chastising and penalizing in nature.
6. Examples of instructive (preventive) discipline.
- a. Ephesians 6:4 – “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”
  - b. 1 Thessalonians 5:22 – “Abstain from every form of evil.”

### **3.2 Grounds for Church Discipline**

The Scriptures categorize the following offenses as grounds for church discipline:

1. Doctrinal deviation (2 John 9-11, Rev 2:14-16, and 20)
2. Divisiveness or dissension (Rom 16:17 and Titus 3:10; cf. Prov 6:19)

According to McCune (p. 148), “this would include failure to adhere to the church covenant, constant agitation of the church over some issue (including false doctrine), failure to adhere to the decision of the body on some matter, and the like.”

3. Disorderly conduct (1 Cor 5 and 2 Thess 3:6-14)

In 1 Corinthians 5, the sin that warranted church discipline was immorality particularly, incest. In addition to immorality, 1 Corinthians 5:11 identifies the sins of covetousness, idolatry, reviling (NIV: slandering), drunkenness, and swindling (cf. 1 Cor 6:9-10) as also being grounds for church discipline. In 2 Thessalonians 3, the sin that attracted church discipline was laziness and a refusal to work. According to 2 Thessalonians 3:6 and 14, church discipline was warranted for this offense because it desecrated apostolic teaching. The principle this passage establishes is that any

offense that violates apostolic teaching (not just the specific sin at issue, laziness or denial to work) is grounds for church discipline.

The abovementioned is in all probability not an exhaustive list. Mack & Swavely (p. 137) broaden the scope of church discipline to embrace “any action that is forbidden in Scripture and cannot be overlooked [Prov 19:11].” According to Saucy (pp. 120-121): “The Scripture does not explicitly state the criterion by which an offense is worthy of discipline. It would appear from the instances mentioned that discipline concerns those who clearly have a harmful effect upon the congregation in one way or another.” What sins meet such criteria? In the final study, this is a judgment call the leadership of each church must make in dependence upon the Word of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Churches should maintain one another’s discipline. Saucy (p. 122) states in this view: “The act of the congregation when rightly taken in disciplining one of its members is in reality the act of the church at large represented in a particular locality. The discipline of one church should therefore be respected by other churches. For, in the final analysis, all true disciplinary action is the exercise of authority by the Lord of the church” (see 1 Matt 18:18-20 and 1 Cor 5:4).

### **3.3 The Pattern and Basis for Discipline**

- The discipline of the church is first and foremost patterned after Christ because the Lord Himself disciplines His children (Heb. 12:6) and, as a father delegates part of the discipline of the children to the mother, so the Lord has delegated the discipline of the church family to the church itself (1 Cor. 5:12-13; 2 Cor. 2:6).
- Discipline is more so based on the holy character of God (1 Pet. 1:16; Heb. 12:11). The pattern of God’s holiness entails His yearning for the church to be holy, sanctified unto Him which is a significant reason for the obligation of church discipline. The church is for that reason to clean out the leaven of malice and wickedness from its ranks (1 Cor. 5:6-8). A stoppage to implement discipline in the church shows a lack of consciousness of and concern for the holiness of God.
- Church discipline is to be patterned after and based on the divine commands of Scripture (1 Cor. 4:6). We have several passages of the Bible which both command and give us God’s directives on the how, why, when, and where to apply church discipline. Once more, a letdown to exercise this duty makes obvious a lack of compliance and belief in the authority of the Bible (1 Cor. 5:1-13; Matt. 18:17-18; Titus 3:10; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 5:20; Gal. 6:1).
- A further basis for the requirement of church discipline is the witness of the church in the world (1 Pet. 4:13-19). The world observes the conduct and life of the church. When the church acts no differently than the world, it loses its trustworthiness and genuineness (1 Pet. 2:11-18; 3:8-16; 4:1-4).

### **3.4 The Purposes of Church Discipline**

The following are the highlights on the purposes of church discipline:

- ✚ To keep a local church pure (1 Cor 5:6-7; cf. Eph 1:4, 5:26-27, Col 1:21-22, and Heb 12:10-11) Church discipline is parallel to removing a physical disease from the body by way of operation in order to bring glory to God and enhance the testimony of the flock. Church discipline is a means of eliminating

unbelievers from the membership of a local church.

- ✚ To restore, heal, and build up sinning believers (Matt 18:15, 2 Thess. 3:14-15; Heb. 12:10-13; 2 Cor 2:6-8, Gal 6:1, and Jas 5:19-20) Church discipline is not punitive, but corrective in nature. It is equivalent to the discipline of a child. When a true believer falls into sin, the church discipline process is intended to put him back on the path of perseverance, thus preventing him from apostatizing (see 1 Cor 11:32; cf. 1 Cor 5:5b and possibly Jas 5:20).
- ✚ To restrain others from sinning (1 Tim 5:20; cf. Ecc 8:11). The church discipline is not only meant to correct the sinner as a means of helping the one being disciplined to persevere in the faith, but also a means of helping each believer in the congregation persevere in holiness. This is to set an example for the rest of the body and uphold saintly fear (1 Tim. 5:20).
- ✚ To produce a healthy faith, one sound in doctrine (Tit. 1:13; 1 Tim. 1:19-20).
- ✚ To win a soul to Christ, if the sinning person is only a professing Christian (2 Tim. 2:24-26).
- ✚ To silence false teachers and their influence in the church (Tit. 1:10-11).
- ✚ To protect the church against the disparaging consequences that occurs when churches fail to practice church discipline.

A church that fails to implement discipline involves in four losses:

**The Loss of Purity:** Church discipline is imperative to the purity of the local body and its shield from moral decay and adulterated doctrinal influences. It portrays that a little leaven leavens the entire lump (1 Cor. 5:6-7).

An image of this is the Corinthian church which exhibits a lack of concern for purity. They deserted the task to discipline and suffered as a consequence. Their inattentiveness to one moral issue may have led to their concession on other issues. The Corinthians occupied in lawsuits, tainted their freedom, profaned the Lord's Supper, mistreated the dominance of love, failed to normalize the use of their gifts, and questioned the resurrection.

**The Loss of Power:** Sin in the life of the church offends the person of the Holy Spirit and extinguishes His power. If sin remains unrestrained by the loving application of church discipline in a body of believers, the Holy Spirit must discard such a church to its own carnal resources. The unavoidable result will be the loss of the Lord's blessing until the sin is dealt with. This is just as true for the church at the moment, particularly when we know certain things exist but pay no attention to them or merely look the other way because it is hard to deal with or because it involves one of our friends or relations.

**The Loss of Progress:** A church that refuses to put into practice church discipline will notice its ministry falling down. The church may want to grow and reach out and it may try all kinds of measures, evangelistic campaigns, and programs in an endeavor to turn things around, but if sin is cherished, it will all be to no avail (Revelation 2:5 and 3:16).

**The Loss of Purpose:** As God's representatives to a lost and dying world, God has called the church to be a holy people, a people who, standing out as separate from the world, would make known the perfect will of the works of God in Christ (1 Pet. 1:14-16; 2:9-15). If this is so, we must be different from the world and church discipline

enables us to both remember and sustain that purpose. However, a chronic judgment against the church is the fact there is little or no difference between the church and the secular world when it comes to attitudes, values, morals, and standard of living. Therefore, our sense of direction or purpose is dashed to the ground.

### **3.5 The Practice of Church Discipline**

The spiritual manner in which all disciplinary actions are to be given is stated below;

- Discipline must be carried out by those who are spiritual, truly walking by the Holy Spirit and growing in the Lord (Gal. 6:1).
- Discipline must be done in a spirit of humility, calmness and endurance, being watchful to ourselves so that we too should not be tempted (Gal. 6:1-2; 2 Tim. 2:24-25).
- Discipline must be implemented without partiality, doing nothing in a spirit of favoritism (1 Tim. 5:21).

Those who walk unruly are to be cautioned, warned, and appealed to in love (1 Thess. 5:14-15; 1 Tim. 5:1-2; Eph. 4:15; 2 Tim. 4:2). This admonishing, is not constrained to church leaders, but may be applied to any person in the body with another if that person is Spirit controlled and spiritually minded (cf. 1 Thess. 5:14 with Gal. 6:1). supposing there is no reaction in repentance and obedience, then the sinning believer is to be scolded openly and members of the body are to hold back friendly fellowship through the process and procedure of group disapproval and social banishment as prescribed in the next segment, Procedures for Church Discipline below (2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15; Tit. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:20). This action has a two-fold objective:

- It is to designate to the offender that his or her action has defiled the Lord and has caused a crack in the synchronization of the body. The goal is always restoration and the person is still to be seen as a brother (2 Thess. 3:14-15).
- It is to generate panic in the rest of the flock as a forewarning against sin (1 Tim. 5:20).
- If there is still no reply in repentance and obedience, the church is to apply the procedures of excommunication as aimed at in Matthew 18:17.

Quite a lot of examples of church discipline are found in Scripture. The Corinthian believers were to be “gathered together” in order to take action against the felonious brother (1 Cor. 5:4-5; Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; Phil. 3:17-19).

This is expressed by Paul as “punishment inflicted by the majority” (2 Cor. 2:6). As a shielding measure, we also find that the whole church in Rome and in Thessalonica were to take action with regard to the unruly and schismatic, not just a few (2 Thess. 3:6-15; Rom. 16:17).

- As a final point, discipline in the name of our Lord constantly includes a willingness to forgive. The many or majority who discipline must also be ready and keen to forgive, comfort, and reaffirm their love to the sinning person (2 Cor. 2:6-8).

### **3.6 Procedures for Restoration/Forgiveness**

In maintaining the goal of restoration, the role of the church must change after there is repentance. This means accepting the person and forgetting the past (2 Cor. 2:7a). But

how do we know when repentance is genuine? What is our duty when the sinning party acknowledges their wrong and claims repentance? The following two passages answer this for us. Luke 3:8, when they “. . . bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance.” Then, Acts 26:20 says, “. . . that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.”

Legitimate repentance will be proven evidently by its deeds and attitudes. The repentant person will:

- (1) Without restraint admit his sin (1 Jn. 1:9; Prov. 28:13a).
- (2) Stop the activity for which he was disciplined or at least look for help if it's a case of life dominating patterns (Prov. 28:13b; Gal. 6:1f; Jam. 5:19-20).
- (3) Make restitution and ask for forgiveness from those hurt as it is appropriate (Phil. 18-19; Matt. 5:23-24).
- (4) He or she will display a true change of heart, a real concern and pious grief over his actions, not in order to be forgiven, but because of the harm caused to the glory of God and the hurt caused others (2 Cor. 7:8-11; Ps. 51:17).
- (5) He or she will begin to show the fruit of the Spirit and a concern for the things of Christ (Gal. 5:22f).

The church should comfort them by reaching out to them, assuring them of your support, and encouraging, exhorting, and challenging them to move on (2 Cor. 2:7b). The church should also show them love by way of including them, drawing them close, doing for them that which will aid their growth and complete recovery (2 Cor. 2:8). This would consist of encouraging them to get involved in ministry (Luke 22:31-32). For positions of leadership, there should be a time of testing to display their qualifications after the analogy of 1 Timothy 3:10.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

In church discipline we must exercise extreme care. Scripture does not guarantee the exercise of discipline for an individual's or a church's taboos or pet peeves, the “dirty dozen” or the “nasty nine.” The Bible not our opinions or dislikes must be the guide for what is sin. Further, we must not become hypercritical or “speck inspectors.” Church discipline ought to be carried out in love in order to restore the sinner.

#### **5.0 Summary**

Church Discipline means to teach, instruct, to correct, or train a believer that he might be made stronger, perfected; to punish or chastise. Discipline is more so based on the holy character of God (1 Pet. 1:16; Heb. 12:11). The pattern of God's holiness entails His craving for the church to be holy, sanctified unto Him which is a considerable reason for the obligation of church discipline. The key concerns that guide us in this are: the holy character of God, the testimony of the congregation, the effect upon the unity and purity of the congregation, and the edification and restoration of the church member. Church discipline is imperative to the purity of the local body and its guard from moral decay and adulterated doctrinal influences. It portrays that a little leaven leavens the entire lump (1 Cor. 5:6-7).

#### **6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment**

- ❖ What is church discipline?
- ❖ Explain briefly the procedures for church discipline
- ❖ Pinpoint the appropriate manner of restoring and forgiving a sinner back into

the fold

## 7.0 References/Further Readings

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## **UNIT 7: CHURCH DISCIPLINE IS A GOD-GIVEN DUTY**

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**
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### **1.0 Introduction**

It is attested that little has been said or written in latest years about church discipline in the Christian congregation, in spite of the fact that it is a subject matter which both the Holy Bible and the Lutheran Confessions have much to say. Church discipline, together with excommunication is practiced and rigorously observed with it exclusion of a sinner from the Lord's Supper, and some church fathers even urged exclusion from all participation in the worship service. Church discipline, as it is recommended in the Bible and the Confessions it also meant for evangelical ministry whose primary aim is forgiveness and repentance of the sinner as well as other congregational members.

God's will is to be applied accordingly. Church discipline is part of "the office of the keys." The term "the office of the keys" is not found in the Scriptures, yet "keys" are referred to in both testaments as symbols of power. Of Eliakim God says in Is. 22:22, "And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open." Jesus said to Peter, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 16:19). The glorified Savior says of Himself in Rev. 1:17-18, "I am . . . the living one; I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades." The metaphor refers to loosing or locking with keys the chains of sin. The Small Catechism explains of what this power entails in its response to the question, "What is the Office of the Keys?" It affirms: "It is the peculiar church power which Christ has given to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of penitent sinners, but to retain the sins of the impenitent as long as they do not repent." Certainly, church discipline is only one part of the office of the keys. This office comprises all the powers which the risen Christ has given to His church for the extension of His kingdom-preaching, teaching, administering the sacraments, as well as implementing church discipline. Therefore, church discipline is sacred.

### **Intended Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand that church discipline is sacred and comes from God



- Grasp with the idea that Church leaders have held church discipline in high esteem
- Explain that church discipline is evangelical in nature

### **3.0 Main Content**

#### **3.1 Church Discipline Is a God-given Duty**

##### **3.2.1 Church Discipline in the Scriptures**

In the Bible the Lord calls on the Christian worshippers to put into effect church discipline, together with the critical step of excommunication. However, He makes it apparent that the congregation is to implement the discipline evangelically and with its Gospel purpose ever in mind, that is to say, the repentance and salvation of the sinner. The passage of Bible most closely connected with church discipline is Matt. 18:15-18, where Jesus tells us what to do "if your brother sins against you." The text reads: "If your brother sins against you go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

The above passage is preceded by the parable of the lost sheep, and the Jesus says in verse 14, "So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." Immediately following His words of instruction on church discipline the Savior reminds Peter of his obligation to forgive his brother "seventy times seven" and then goes on to tell the parable of the merciless servant. Other passages in the Bible and many biblical examples teach that church discipline is to be carried out in an evangelical mode. This evangelical emphasis is evident in Luke 17:3-4: "Take heed to yourselves; if your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him; and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, and says, 'I repent,' you must forgive him." Paul strictly rebukes those in the church at Thessalonica who were inactive busybodies, not doing any work. "Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work in quietness and to earn their own living" (2 Thess. 3:12). The apostle then continues, "If any one refuses to obey what we say in this letter, note that man, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed" (v. 14). On the other hand, Paul adds this fraternal and evangelical word: "Do not look on him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother." (v. 15).

The circumstance in Corinth was more severe. "It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among pagans; for a man is living with his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you" (1 Cor. 5:1-2). In the last part of this short chapter Paul repeats the order, "Drive out the wicked person from among you" (v. 13). He castigates the church in Corinth for closing its collective eyes to this immorality. With such neglect they have done damage not only to the soul of the one who had fallen in sin but also to the cause of edifying the Christian

congregation itself.

Conceivably the most famous case of church discipline recorded in Scripture is that of the prophet Nathan's dealing with King David after he had fallen into the sins of adultery and murder. The rebuke is recorded in 2 Samuel 12. The prophet told David the parable about a lamb of a poor man that was taken by a rich man for use at his own banquet. David, thinking that this was an account of an actual incident, was incensed and ordered that the offender be put to death. Nathan's response was devastating: "You are the man" (2 Sam. 12:7). The prophet applied the parable to David's theft of Uriah's Bathsheba and to the senseless killing of the innocent husband. Upon David's confession, Nathan brings this word of absolution, "The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die." (v. 13).

In the Revelation to John the glorified Lord Jesus rebuked Pergamum and Thyatira for their breakdown carry out church discipline. They have among them those who are teaching faith-destroying error. They have among them those who are living immoral lives. "I have a few things against you" (Rev. 2:14). You authorize these things to go on without decisive action. "Repent then" (v. 16). Such a rebuke reminds us of the stern word given to Ezekiel: "If I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand." (3:18, cf. Is. 58:1-2, 1 Thess. 5:14). Those who resist all forms of church discipline, and particularly excommunication, point to Jesus' words in Matt. 7:1-2: "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get." From the Scriptural record elsewhere it is obvious that the Lord is not hereby excluding all judging. Not only the church but also the state has the duty and right to judge and to punish (Rom. 13:1ff). The context makes it plain that the Lord was condemning a spirit of self-righteousness and judging on the basis of external appearance, something that he speaks to also in John 7:24: "Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."

### **3.2.2 Church Discipline in the Lutheran Confessions**

The Lutheran Confessions have much to say not only concerning the office of the keys in general but also concerning church discipline in particular. In the Smalcald Articles Martin Luther differentiates excommunication, which "excludes those who are manifest and impenitent sinners from the sacrament and other fellowship of the church until they mend their ways and avoid sin," from that "greater excommunications of the pope which imposed civil penalties in addition to the spiritual." The former Luther calls "truly Christian." (SA III, ix)

Now, who is to be disciplined and finally, if essential, excommunicated? "The openly wicked and the despisers of the sacraments are excommunicated" (Ap XI, 4). What is considerable here is not only that excommunication is carried out when required but moreover that "the despisers of the sacraments" are particularly mentioned as those who at the end of the day must be alienated from the fellowship of the church. The

statement is made in correlation with the dialogue on confession and after the statement that the Lutheran clergy coached the people "about the worth and fruits of the sacrament in such a way as to invite them to use the sacraments often." In other words, not only those who were living in outrageous sin but also those who saw no need for the incessant refreshment given by the Savior in the sacraments were excommunicated by the church of the Reformation.

Undeniably, Melancthon avers in the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope that "the Gospel requires of those who preside over the churches that they preach the Gospel, remit sins, administer the sacraments, and, in addition, exercise jurisdiction, that is, excommunicate those who are guilty of notorious crimes and absolve those who repent." (Treatise, 60). In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession this power is designated as the power of bishops: ". . . a bishop has the power of the order, namely, the ministry of the Word and sacraments. He also has the power of jurisdiction, namely, the authority to excommunicate those who are guilty of public offenses or to absolve them if they are converted and ask for absolution." Of course, a bishop is not to behave like a tyrant. "But he has a definite command, a definite Word of God, which he ought to teach and according to which he ought to exercise his jurisdiction." (Ap XXVIII. 13-14)

In pinpointing particularly that bishops have the right of jurisdiction, the confessors hurry to add that this is not a power given to bishops alone. "It is certain that the common jurisdiction of excommunicating those who are guilty of manifest crimes belongs to all pastors. The bishops have tyrannically reserved for themselves alone and have employed for gain" (Treatise, 74). Moreover, when speaking of the power of bishops, the Confessions warn against "violent use of the ban" (AC XXVIII, 2) and complain about the "unjust excommunication" of kings and "especially of the emperors of Germany." (Treatise, 35) Considering the aforementioned discussion we are not supposed to interpret these confessional statements concerning the power of bishops and pastors as teaching that those who have been given authority over the churches in so doing have the right to excommunicate unilaterally. Undoubtedly, the call of the Christian pastor confers the authority Jesus gave in John 20:23: ". . . if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." However, as the Lutheran Confessors make obvious, the whole congregation is involved, for "the keys do not belong to the person of one particular individual but to the whole church, as is shown by many clear and powerful arguments, for after speaking of the keys in Matt. 18:19, Christ said, 'If two or three of you agree on earth,' etc." (Treatise 24).

However, both the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions designate that church discipline is a duty of the Christian congregation, church discipline dare not be made one of the marks of the church. The marks of the church remain the pure preaching of the Gospel and the proper administration of the holy sacraments (AC VII, 1). Therefore, among the invalid teachings of the Schwenkfelders rejected and condemned by the Formula of agreement is the proposition "that it is no true Christian congregation in which public expulsion and the orderly process of excommunication do not take place" (FC Ep XII, 26). It is one thing to portray church discipline as a duty of every Christian congregation. It is quite another to deny the continuation of

the church where through lack of knowledge or other deficiency Christian discipline is not exercised by Scriptural standards or is not exercised at all. Therefore, the Confessions, also, call for the full exercise of the keys, which belong to the whole church, but warn against unjust excommunication, and reject any notion that the lack of church discipline of itself indicates the absence of a true Christian congregation.

### **3.3 Church Discipline is Evangelical**

It is learnt that Church discipline searches for the salvation of the sinner but not the damnation. This is obvious in the typical example of the incestuous man in the church at Corinth. Paul calls upon the church "to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5:5). What on earth the implications of "the destruction of the flesh," the congregation was to keep out this person from fellowship, therefore turning him over to Satan, but in the hope that through such a dreadful action he might see the awfulness of his sin, repent and as a result be saved "in the day of the Lord Jesus." Paul uses related words when he speaks of Hymenaeus and Alexander who "made shipwreck of their faith" (1 Tim. 1:19). Both of them "I have delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme" (v. 20). It is observable that a great deal is implicated here than a relationship with an outward, visible congregation. Threatened is the relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. The intention of church discipline is that by this severe action the sinner might be led to repent and say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner" and receive again with joy the Savior's forgiveness and freedom.

A second evangelical reason of church discipline is that it serves as a warning to others. Paul has this reason in mind when he says, "As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear" (1 Tim. 5:20). In congregations where "the openly wicked" are not rebuked the sanctification and justification of church is hampered thereby causing others to fall. Another member of the congregation, noting that the sins of others go without discipline and uncondemned is tempted to the same sin. "A little leaven leavens the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5:6). It is then not just for the advantage of the unrepentant that church discipline is put into effect. It is more so to be implemented so that others within the Christian congregation may understand that if they fall into the same sin and prolong to live without repentance, they will as well fall into the same condemnation and judgment. Certainly, it is a horrible thing to consider that those whom we fail to warn will be dispatched to the fires of hell.

In Ezekiel 3:18 God's Word is clear "If I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand." The authority to caution and even to excommunicate is as indispensable, so Luther often rings a bell, as the commands not to kill or to steal, if for any reason the duty to admonish is ignored, then not life or property but the salvation of the soul is at risk. Another evangelical purpose of church discipline is the purifying of the church to the glory of God. On several circumstances in the Old Testament the Lord warned His people to "purge the evil from the midst of you" (Deut. 13:5; 17:12). To perform detestable customs and to disregard discipline was

for them to fail to remember the message of Jahweh, "I am the Lord your God." (Lev. 18:30) These evangelical purposes are reminders of the obligation and joy of receiving the repentant sinner back into unity with the congregation.

Paul says to the same church in Corinth which he has rebuked for lack of discipline that they are not to forget to forgive the one who returns: But if any person has caused ache, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure not to put it too severely to you all. For such a one this punishment by the majority is enough; so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. Any one whom you forgive, I also forgive. What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, to keep Satan from gaining the advantage over us; for we are not ignorant of his designs (2 Cor. 2:5-11).

Whether the apostle is here referring to the repentance of the incestuous man of whom he wrote in the fifth chapter of his first letter or not, it is apparent that he is urging the congregation to put into effect solid discipline toward the unremorseful but in addition forgiving love toward the remorseful. Whichever Church that has the opportunity of receiving back such a repentant sinner into its fellowship will never question the value of church discipline and even of excommunication. It will have seen the sacred purposes of church discipline fulfilled in the failed sinner who has returned to the Lord and to the companionship of the Christian congregation.

Moreover, evangelical purposes of church discipline are to carry out this discipline evangelically. People are not to be forced to go to communion, as though the very act of communing is adequate to keep them "on the rolls." They dare not be neglected by simply sending them letters to indicate that their names have been dropped from the membership rolls. Evangelical discipline requires that any communication by letter be done in the framework of personal visitation. Letters informing members of awaiting action may even be personally conveyed, in so doing affording another chance to reinstate another to the fellowship of the church. Dr. Luther's words from the Large Catechism are most appropriate: ". . . no one should under any circumstances be coerced or compelled, lest we institute a new slaughter of souls. Nevertheless, let it be understood that people who abstain and absent themselves from the sacrament over a long period of time are not to be considered Christians. Christ did not institute it to be treated merely as a spectacle, but commanded his Christians to eat and drink and thereby remember him." (LC V, 42)

### **3.4 The Appropriate Manner of Church Discipline**

The appropriate manner of church discipline starts with every Christian. It ought to commence with prayer and self-examination. Paul says in Gal. 6:1, "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Look to yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Matt. 7:1-5, referred to former in this study, warns against the danger of self-righteous and unkind judging. It is very important that we at the outset explore our motives and seek prayerfully only the good of the brother or sister who is "overtaken in a fault."

Pastors more than ever must be free of unkind judging. It is not the responsibility of the pastor to dig out the sins of his flock. Neither does he follow up hideous rumors and gossip that are brought to his awareness by others. Gossip which shows off the alleged sins of others before the pastor is in itself a sin and is to be dealt with as such. Those who promote such reports are to be confronted to face the one whom they have accused, and their allegations should be overlooked if the challenge is rejected. Luther piercingly censures such gossip, whether by pastor or laity, in the Large Catechism: "Those are called backbiters who are not content just to know but rush ahead and judge. Learning a bit of gossip about someone else, they spread it into every corner, relishing and delighting in it like pigs that roll in the mud and root around in it with their snouts. This is nothing else than usurping the judgment and office of God, pronouncing the severest kind of verdict and sentence, or the harshest verdict a judge can pronounce is to declare somebody a thief, a murderer, a traitor, etc. Whoever therefore ventures to accuse his neighbor of such guilt assumes as much authority as the emperor and all magistrates. For though you do not wield the sword, you use your venomous tongue to the disgrace and harm of your neighbor" (LC I, 267-68).

Henceforth, any legalistic act by pastor or congregation does hostility to the soul of another, causes offense in the church, contempt in the community, and consequently harm to the cause of the kingdom of God. Examples of such legalism consist of "dropping" members from the church rolls devoid of fraternal exhortation, random use of constitutional requirements for membership without consideration of individual circumstances, needless exposure given to the sins of members and in general an abuse of the steps of church discipline commanded by the Lord of the church.

Three steps of church discipline are stated in scriptures in Matt. 18:15-17:

The first step prescribed by our Lord is, "If your brother sins against you go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother" (Matt. 18:15). Each Christian is hereby reminded, "Remember, this is a fellow sinner for whom Christ died. No concern of yours? Of course he is. He is just as much concern of yours as is the person who has never heard of Jesus Christ, His love, His cross, and His salvation." All people are our concern, and especially "those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). That concern may indicate that we challenge the one who has fallen on several occasions with regard to his sin. Jesus does not pinpoint that this method is to be carried out only once. It is only when the Christian is influenced that nothing more can be done in the one-on-one challenge that is he at freedom to disclose the matter to others.

Then the second step unveils, "But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses" (Matt. 18:16), is apparent from the last piece of the verse. There is to be no hesitation concerning what was said or done. More than one person is necessary if at the end of the day charges is to be brought. This principle goes back to the days of the Old Testament when the Lord instructed His people, "A single witness shall not prevail against a man for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense

that he has committed; only on the evidence of two witnesses, or of three witnesses, shall a charge be sustained" (Deut. 19:15). Analogous expressions are found somewhere else in the Old Testament. Besides, the presence of others indicates that the original visit by a fellow Christian to the one who has sinned was prompted neither by malice nor caprice but by the legitimate desire to rescue the brother or sister.

Generally, the third step depicts, "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector" (Matt. 18:17). It is essential that the person who is being dealt with has certainly been informed that the case is being brought to the notice of the congregation and that a proper summons to that person has been issued and received. This is why it is customary to put on record such a notice and invitation. In addition, exact minutes are indispensable in the event that anything that transpires in the meeting with the offender is called into question. The counsel of the fathers to review the minutes of the meeting prior to adjournment is a wise one. This gives all the chance to ensure that an authentic record has been endorsed and to do this while the matter is still plainly in mind.

Moreover, if the offender has certainly been "gained," the church has a right to anticipate "fruit that befits repentance" (Matt. 3:8). Those who confess transgression and express repentance are called upon "to make right the evil" to the best of their ability. The repentant thief vows to bring back that which was stolen. The person who has acquired an unscriptural divorce has the commitment to do everything possible to restore the marriage. The member who has in the past abandoned the means of grace shows repentance by realistic attendance at God's house and in the support of the work of the church.

By so doing, any "repentance" that expects forgiveness without equivalent change in life is a charade repentance and hypocrisy. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession says in this link, "Christ frequently connects the promise of forgiveness of sins with good works. He does not mean that good works are propitiation for they follow reconciliation but he does so for two reasons. One is that good fruits ought to follow of necessity, and so he warns that penitence is hypocritical and false if they do not follow" (Ap IV, 275).

The Apology says in another place: "There can be no true conversion or contrition where mortifying the flesh and good fruits do not follow. True terrors and sorrows of the soul do not permit the indulgence of the body in lusts, and true faith is not ungrateful to God or contemptuous of his commandments. In a word, there is no penitence inwardly which does not produce outwardly the punishing of the flesh. This, we say, is what John means when he says (Matt. 3:8), "Bear fruit that befits penitence," and Paul when he says (Rom. 6:19), "Yield your members to righteousness," and elsewhere (Rom. 12:1), "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy," etc. When Christ says (Matt. 4:17), "Be penitent," he is surely talking about total penitence and total newness of life and fruits." (Ap XII, 131-32) An ending word is in order regarding the exercise of church discipline. To a certain extent perceptibly, if the sin is one that is known all through the community, for instance, listed even in

the newspaper, it may be not required for the first two steps outlined in Matthew 18 to be followed. The subject can possibly be brought instantly to the attention of the congregation (LCI, 284). All the same, Walther reminds us in his Pastorate that "as always, so here, too, love is the highest law. If love to the offender demands first of all a private admonition, even though the offense be public, the practice of acting in a public manner would constitute a grave injustice."

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

The role of the pastor in church discipline varies. Members will come up to him with problems, reports, or gossip. The pastor serves as counselor to his flock, directing them on the basis of Holy Scripture in their dealings with fellow Christians. In a number of cases, for instance, when a member of the people attending worship has been guilty of sin against him personally, disciplinary measures have to be taken officially considering the nature of sin appropriately. Church discipline is carried out based on biblical teaching and it is meant to correct the sinner to allow him or her to repent in order to flee from the wrath of God.

#### **5.0 Summary**

It is attested in the Bible that the Lord calls on the Christian church to put into effect church discipline, together with the significant step of excommunication. On the other hand, God makes it perceptible that the worshippers are to implement the discipline evangelically and to encourage the repentance and salvation of the sinner. The passage of Bible most directly connected with church discipline is Matt. 18:15-18, where Jesus tells us what to do "if your brother sins against you...." The Lutheran Confession affirms that Church discipline is biblical and should be carried out appropriately. Church discipline is moreover evangelical because it enables the sinner to accept his or her wrong and to be able to repent in the sight of God. It also serves as a deterrent to others while portraying God's holiness among the congregation of the Lord.

#### **6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment**

1. State the reasons why church discipline is God-given duty
2. Discuss church discipline as being evangelical

#### **7.0 References/Further Reading**

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## **MODULE 4: AFRICAN ECCLESIOLOGY**

### **Unit 1: Background of the African Ecclesiology**

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Intended Learning outcomes

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Background of African Ecumenical Ecclesiology

3.2 Important characteristics of African ecclesiology

3.3 Ecclesiology within the All Africa Conference of Churches

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 References/Further Readings

Self-Assessment Exercise

#### **1.0 Introduction**

The purpose of this unit is to provide an overview of approaches to ecclesiology in the African context with specific reference to various expressions of the ecumenical movement. While wider ecumenical ecclesiological debates have pondered on the distinctive nature of the church, African contributions have focused on the embeddedness of the church in the African context with its evolving cultures and social context.

#### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this study you should be able to:

- Explain what is portrayed as African ecclesiology
- Describe the features of African ecumenical ecclesiology
- Emphasize the centrality of Christ and the Bible in African ecclesiology

#### **3.0 Main Content**

##### **3.1 Background of African Ecumenical Ecclesiology**

African theologians operating within the paradigm of inculturation have employed a variety of descriptions to describe the church within the African context, such as clan (Waliggo, 1998), family (Oduyoye, 1991; Chukwu, 2011), and community (Omenyo,

2000). Within African liberation and reconstruction theologies, ecclesiology has repeatedly been framed in sociological expressions. Furthermore, usually, African inputs to ecclesiology have normally responded to numerous aspects of the African social context. This is reasonable given the consideration that churches as historical communities are undeniably culturally and historically grounded and accustomed.

Overriding historical considerations of what the church is in sub-Saharan Africa replicate a legacy of missionary Christianity and its affiliated western interpretations. Most churches that were planted as a result of the 19th century missionary movement were stuck in denominational and theological stripes of its 'parent' European churches. Incongruously, it was among missionaries serving in the so-called mission fields that the scandal of denominationalism was intensely felt. Little wonder that the Edinburgh Missionary Conference (1910), which is regarded as the birthplace of the modern ecumenical movement, was a conference of missionary societies and not of churches. The ecumenical movement was therefore, in large part, an outgrowth of the missionary movement. In many respects, the formation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948 and the subsequent merger of the International Missionary Council into the WCC as its Commission for World Mission and Evangelism at New Delhi in 1961 signaled an ecclesiological renaissance. This allotted in a sustained exploration for a common understanding of church and mission among WCC member churches, in addition to augmented consideration to needs and concerns of churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In protestant spheres in Africa, the creation of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) in 1963 in Kampala gesticulated a new motivation for the search for unity among churches in Africa. Ever since its foundation, the AACC has continually been in the frontline for the development of creative African theology. It is definitely a case study of the 'church enabling task' of African theology in the sense that church and theology in Africa have been closely linked (Maluleke, 1997:9). Inaugurated as a fellowship of churches for consultation and teamwork within the wider fellowship of the universal church, the AACC was rapidly placed to become an inducement for the search for validity in African Christianity. At the Kampala Assembly in 1963, it was acknowledged that the church in Africa had until then not reached true selfhood (AACC, 1963:32). Churches in Africa were therefore summoned to a considerate study of particular forms of the church. The AACC's (1970:117) second Assembly at Abidjan in 1969 invigorated the quest for African cultural and liturgical forms through which African churches could express the faith in all phases of church life (AACC, 1970:117). This was fundamental given the vague legacy of mission in Africa as well as an understanding of the church in its western categories.

A number of African theologians bewailed this status quo during the 1960-70s. Idowu (1968:426) detected that the church in Africa "came into being with prefabricated

theology, liturgies and traditions” whereas Mbiti (1972:51) bemoaned that the church in Africa was lacking a theology, theologians and theological concern. Pobe (1983:5) pigeonholed this dilemma as the “North Atlantic Captivity of the Church” in which Christianity in Africa began with a presumed definition of the Christian faith, which is “definitely North Atlantic– intellectually, physically, spiritually, economically and culturally.” As for Idowu, what was desirable was an indigenous African church free of assimilated theological foreignness. This implied among other things the need to develop African forms of the liturgy and incorporate the use of African musical instruments in the church. The AACC Kampala Assembly (1963) framed this mission in terms of the “selfhood of the church” as a challenge to position the Christian Church within the spiritual, cultural and political realities of Africa.

### **3.2 Important characteristics of African ecclesiology**

An overview of the important characteristics of African ecclesiology are elaborated thus:

Christ centrality is one of the main features of African ecclesiology. The centrality of Christ and the Bible are emphasized in African ecclesiology. This is not to recommend that the Bible is not central to other formulations of the Christian church, but it is a widespread truth that every branch of the African church grasps scripture as the ultimate rule of faith and central to their understanding of God’s revelation in Christ. West (1995:195) ratifies that ‘AIC church leaders in speaking for ourselves uphold their belief in the Bible’s absolute authority’. One of the vital defining potentials of African ecclesiology is the Christocentric nature of their doctrine and worship style. The Christocentrism of African ecclesiology upholds ‘Jesus as African ancestor, as the centre, as the point of departure’ (Pongo 2005:29). Similarly, the magnetism of the Pentecostal-type AIC hermeneutics for African people is that undoubtedly above all other thoughts, these churches are understood to afford biblical responses for ‘this worldly’ needs like sickness, poverty, hunger, oppression, unemployment, loneliness, evil spirits and sorcery; therefore, in Pentecostal-type AICs, the experience of the Spirit turns out to be an important and perchance the most central key in the hermeneutical process (Oduro 2008:90). Concerning ecclesial method, this has led to an over-reliance on notions of orthodoxy in their doctrinal and missiological practices.

Renewal of inherited liturgical practices is one of the strengths of African ecclesiology which is their ability to embody another world within their liturgical practices and their pneumatological viewpoints. The liturgical traditions derived from methods of the developed world are more common in the traditional churches, whereas African practices based on indigenous methods are used by the African churches (Pongo 2005:31). For instance, the AICs use baptism in a totally new way to reintegrate witches into the community. Pneumatologically, African people are able to play with reality by means of an imminent grasp of the Holy Spirit in worship, in order to reshape their

social realities. Symbol and African ritual have constantly molded the cornerstone of African ecclesiology.

Additionally, African ecclesiology is a liberation ecclesiology and transforms traditional ecclesiology in the African context. African preaching upholds the ultimate feature and liturgical heart of African worship. Bantu prophets or indigenous clergy are another representative of African ecclesiology. Those numerous ecclesiologies started to build an unequivocal Afrocentric conception of the Christian faith. The African ecclesiology has been observed as the key social, political, educational and organizational entity in the collective and communitarian experience of African people.

The African ecclesiological method commences with African existential experiences, but not with historic mandates and was regularly born of abstract philosophical cogitations as to the nature of the body of Christ. There remains a dominant tradition of the oneness of God, which does not spot the supposedly speculative Trinitarian formulation of the historic church. The AICs does not live in mutuality and interdependence with other missionary churches all over the world.

The African church can be categorized 'as truly evangelical in the manner in which the term was used before ecumenical and evangelical division narrowed the definition' (Saayman 2000:14). African ecclesiology of the 21st century could advance a model of Christian mission that inspires and transforms. Africa desires an academic and popular ecclesiology for its positive total transformation and its real spiritual and physical reconstruction. A reexamination of Protestant ecclesiology is very significant for the African ecclesiology.

### **3.3 Ecclesiology within the All Africa Conference of Churches**

The Kampala Assembly emphasized the mission of the church in three dimensions as prophetic, reconciling and witnessing (AACC, 1963:61). The AACC next Assembly at Abidjan admonished African churches to pursue unity, not for its own sake but for mission (AACC, 1970:120). The third Assembly at Lusaka (1974) went beyond unfolding the prophetic role of the church to defining the prophetic ministry of the churches in Africa along these lines: The mission of the church is prophetic, and in serving it can achieve its prophetic mission by being betrothed, involved and sensitive to the welfare of the society. The Church must be alive in the present in order to live healthier in the future (AACC, 1975:38).

The AACC's concern with the selfhood of the church in Africa led to the adoption of the policy of moratorium at Lusaka in the quest for the self-reliance, self-expression and self-identity of the churches in Africa. The moratorium debate accentuated a missiological debate that signalled a shift from paternalistic to partnership models of mission. While churches, mission boards and ecumenical organisations in the West critiqued the moratorium debate, the Lusaka Assembly appealed to the credo belief in

the “one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church” but that this is manifested in the “church in every locality”. The moratorium was therefore an implicit critique of a distorted missionary version of catholicity that limited catholicity to the churches in the West.

Considering the Harare Assembly (1992), ecclesiological replication focused on the role of the church in social transformation with admiration to the acknowledgement of human rights, democracy, peace and reconciliation. Harare obviously discerned a swing from the pursuit for authenticity which had up till then categorized AACC ecclesiological reflections towards advocacy. Homily on civil society proliferated within the AACC during this time, summarized in the publication of *Civil Society, the State and African Development in the 1990s* (1993). These advances moreover triggered the need to illuminate the place of the church in wider civil society. The African theology of reconstruction, introduced by Jesse Mugambi at the appeal of the AACC leadership momentarily became characteristic of theological creativities within the AACC. Notwithstanding, a vigorous emphasis on reconstruction theology at the Addis Ababa Assembly (1997), ecclesiological consideration was very frail while at the Yaoundé Assembly (2003) it was peripheral. However, a purposeful view of church unity arose from Yaoundé and this was summarized in the proposed vision of the AACC, to be precise “Churches in Africa: together for Life, Truth, Justice and Peace”.

While the AACC congregated for its 9th General Assembly at Maputo in 2008 having “regained its place as the pre-eminent ecumenical organisation on the continent” following fruitful restructuring, there was a transformed call for the renaissance of the theological foundation of its work. In the post-Maputo epoch, the AACC department of “Theology, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations” became a main attention of ecumenical activities. The focus of ecclesiological reflections at Maputo was principally on the role of the church in treating the numerous issues facing the African continent, principally in relation to economic, environmental, health, and peace and reconciliation concerns. The AACC’s most recent Assembly at Kampala in 2013 underscored a view of church unity as a serviceable prerequisite for the effective common witness of the church in the world. The Assembly pondered on the relationship between the “imperative of Christian unity and the promotion of peace, justice and dignity” (AACC, 2015:102).

Sakupapa (2017:256) argued that notions of church that have materialized at different points in the AACC history highlight various features of the social responsibility of the church instead of ecclesiological questions on the nature of the church. The unity of the church has accordingly been stressed as a matter of reliability for the churches’ witness in society. Here one may deduce a tension between ecclesiology and ethics. The South African story in which churches found unity in their common fight against apartheid is informative. De Gruchy (1995:14) spots that such unity “was based on a common social

praxis” deprived of paying much attention to divisive theological and confessional issues.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

The Prevailing historical thoughts have shown how the church in sub-Saharan Africa replicate a legacy of missionary Christianity and its associated western explanations. Most churches that were established by the missionary movement were held in denominational and theological stripes of its ‘parent’ European churches. In protestant circles in Africa, the creation of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) indicated a new inspiration for the search for unity among churches in Africa. Africans initiated an ecclesiology that would enable them worship God in their own way. A determined view of church’s unity arose from a vision of the AACC, to promote togetherness, truth, justice and peace.

#### **5.1 Summary**

the AACC was rapidly upheld to develop a stimulus for the search for cogency in African Christianity. Ecclesiology in Africa encouraged the quest for African cultural and liturgical forms through which African churches could express their faith. It was a fundamental step to strip the vague legacy of western mission in Africa. The desire of African theologians was to build an indigenous African church free of assimilated theological foreignness. There was a need to incorporate the use of African musical instruments in the church. The centrality of Christ and the Bible are emphasized in African ecclesiology. AIC church leaders advocate their belief in the Bible’s absolute authority’ and African ecclesiology upholds ‘Jesus as African ancestor. Ecclesiology in African context afford biblical responses for ‘this worldly’ needs like sickness, poverty, hunger, oppression, unemployment, loneliness, evil spirits and sorcery. African people are able to play with reality by means of an imminent grasp of the Holy Spirit in worship, in order to restructure their social veracities.

#### **Self-Assessment Exercise**

- Examine the relationship between the Jewish sacrament and that of the Christian tradition
- Why is such sacrament important to the Church?
- Advance reasons why Jesus Christ did practice such sacrament

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## **Unit 2: Ecclesiology in African Context:**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Intended Learning outcomes
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Clan as a Symbol of the Church in Africa
  - 3.2 Replicas of the Church in Africa
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- Self-Assessment Exercise
- 6.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 Introduction**

There has been an influx of Christian ecclesiological ideologies in Africa. These ideologies have led to deferent forms of ecclesiological formations most of which are foreign to the African mind. The form of ecclesiology that Christ could have envisioned in his pursuit of establishing church is not completely comprehended. The challenge that lies before African church leaders is to formulate an ecclesiology that would be authentically Christian and uniquely African.

### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this study you should be to:

- Determine clan as a symbol of African ecclesiology
- Describe the replicas or models of African ecclesiology
- Explain how Christology in African context depicts Jesus as ancestor

### **3.0 Main Content**

#### **3.1 The Clan as a Symbol of the Church in Africa**

There is a great inevitability of transforming Christianity from a mission creativity to a church institution once it enters a local setting. John Mary Waliggo (1998: 111-128) identifiers four main requirements for a mission to turn into a true local church. The

church should have local workers to consolidate the faith within the local community where it has found recognition, the Christian message should be offered in the language and cultural values of local people, the Christian community should be briefed on the importance of missions so as not only to receive but also to play a part in missionary work, and the community should grow into self-supporting in terms of resources and financial formation. The church finds a lot of applicability in the clan and familial lineages in the African societies.

African social life is systematized along kinships and clan systems. Every person knows his clan and he identifies himself with it whenever he meets new people or whenever he has to introduce himself. This affinity has been borrowed much by Christians within the Pentecostal churches and other African Instituted churches who like associating themselves with the church. When an African person is introducing himself he or she would say “I am so and so and I belong to this specific clan.” In the similar way, Pentecostal Christians within the area and beyond introduces themselves: “I am so and so and I am born again or I am saved”. This entails he is a member of the church and his identity or belonging is within the Christian community just as the traditional African would imply that he is a member of the specific clan that he identifies himself with.

The nuclear part of the clan is the home where the values of the clan are to be practiced. the extended family which consists of the grandparents, parents, children and other close relatives is the most valuable unit of life. It is where life is lived in totality. It is a holy union and all the family members are bound by the rituals to lead a spotless life in the totality of African. Purification is necessary whenever one contaminates himself. In ecclesiological setting, the nucleus of the African Christian life is the local church. Here the principals and the teachings of the church are supposed to be observed and applied to the fullest. The same applies to the church within the community whereby if one contravenes the laws of the church so as to be back into the fold again. The prayers offered by the church leaders is expected to be a sure ritual to reunite one with the church and to clean him from every uncleanness that he might have acquired while in sin.

Members of the same clan call each other brother, or one who belongs to my father, one whom we share the same lord. In the clan background it has more to do with fatherly connotation more than lordship even though a father in the traditional setting was considered a lord of all his children and their children up to a generation.

It is a name that shows belonging and closeness to each other. In this sense one identifies the other as a member of his own family. This name carries with it responsibility and obligations. Everyone is expected to treat his kinsman like a brother. Give him assistance if in need and even provide him with a place to sleep. In matters of marriage or bereavement, every clan member is supposed to contribute in providing material

things and otherwise. No one is permitted to marry from his clan for that would be like marrying his own sister. Respect and righteousness within the clan members is extremely anticipated.

Christians within the Pentecostal and even mainline churches apply this concept of brotherhood. Christians call each other brother, or a son of my father, or a son my lord or sister, or a daughter of my father, or a daughter of my lord. Just as it is within the traditional understanding in the clan system, this names bears interpersonal tasks and obligations. A church member should treat the other as a brother or sister. He is to be lively in times of marriages, funerals and other occasions that the other member is having. An accomplishment of one member is professed as an achievement of the whole church and is celebrated by all. The same applies to challenges; a challenge of one member is observed as a challenge of the whole church and faced by all. The only variance might come in matters of marriages. Conflicting to the customary teachings within the clan, the church inspires marriages within the church members.

It is significant also to note that every clan finds its values and ethos from its ancestor founder, who is its lord. All the members of the clan should be progenies of the founder ancestor. The clan bears his name and he is cherished and occasionally venerated. He is the lord or the father of the clan and his values are the values of the clan even though slight changes might be made to fit the circumstances and the setting of the people. The clan is viewed as the body of its founder since the members are said to emanate from his womb. In this respect then the clan consist of the living and the dead members as well as the founder ancestor. The clan is a unity of both the living and the dead ancestors. The only two ways one can become a member of the clan is only if she, (not he) has been married by a man from the clan or has been born there.

It is attested that as women get married they cease to be members of their father's clans and join those of their husbands. These conceptions have found a lot of applicability in Christianity. Even though they are not openly encouraged, they have practically crept into the formation of the church within the area. They too can be used to nurture the growth of the church by copying their meanings within the church. The church is termed after its founder ancestor Jesus Christ. Charles Nyamiti (1998: 131) has deliberated the ancestrology of Christ within the trinity where he perceives the Father as the ancestor of the Son, and the Holy Spirit as their ancestral oblation. Thus he observes that "in God ancestorship and descendancy are essentially sacred, pneumatic, ritual, Eucharistic and doxological categories." The concept of the father being the parent ancestor of the son, and the Holy Spirit being their ancestral oblation brings in the centrality of the trinity in the whole relationship of the church as the clan of Christ. The church and the trinity becomes one unit in the divine koinonia.

As a clan of Christ, church members are called Christians because they find their meaning in the nature and the work of Christ. The church is similarly called the body of

Christ, to demonstrate that she belongs to Christ and a perpetuation of the values of Christ in addition, to confirm that she is in unceasing communion with Christ her ancestor and founder. The eschatological teachings of the church portray it as being in communion with the dead in Christ, with the Roman catholic church signifying the certainty of this teaching by venerating and praying through some of the church ancestors (saints). While the clan is called the body of the founding ancestor, the Bible refers to the church as the body of Christ. The clan as well as the church can therefore be viewed as living organisms with their lives extending from their physical presence to spiritual existence. The church belongs to Christ and hence the clan is the true revelation of the ancestor founder, it likewise becomes the true revelation of Christ. The church must present the values of Christ and turn out to be his presence in the world. By so doing, the fullness of the Christology of Jesus is arrogated in African society.

One converts to a member of the clan through birth or being married in the clan. The concept of being born again gets a lot of prominence in other African communities. One becomes a member of the church by submitting his life to Christ, the ancestor lord of the church, and undergoing a new birth in the community of believers. It will be perceived that in most African churches one cannot be considered as a member of the church except he is ritually led through prayers of repentance and requesting Christ to receive him as anew born again in his kingdom. Besides, the eschatological analogy of the church as the bride of Christ waiting to be married and enjoined with Christ forever gives the African church the hope of eternally becoming members of his household. This typology similarly gives a logic of value to African women and confirms the guarantee of their belonging in their husband's tribes. If Christ's marriage with the church warrants the church a permanent belonging in his house, their marriage gives them lasting sense of belonging to the new communities they have been married. The concept of the church being the bride of Christ turns into a relevant point of departure when doing theology among African women, and affirming the significance of the marriage institution in Africa.

### **3.2 Replicas of the Church in Africa**

Nigerian theologian Orobator (1996:268) rhetorically asks whether there is a systematically expounded theological idea of the foundation, nature, mission and meaning of the African church "in terms which are peculiar to and expressive of the African way of being church." This begs reflection on whether there is such a thing as an 'African ecclesiology'. What qualifies such ecclesiology as African? It appears fair to argue that there have been efforts to reflect on the church taking into deliberation the African social-cultural-religious context. African inculturation theologians have chiefly re-interpreted western theological traditions of the church through a retrieval of some traditional African concepts and values. Amid African Roman Catholic theologians, the authorized validation of the notion of the "Church as family of God" as an

ecclesiological concept by the Roman Catholic African Synod in 1994 and its subsequent promulgation by Pope John Paul II stimulated ecclesiological reflections on the concept of family. In their suggestions, the African bishops maintained that “the mystery of the Truine God is the origin, model and purpose of the Church..., a mystery which finds suitable expression for Africa in the image of the Church As-Family” (African Synod 1996:89). Proponents of ecclesiological models patterned after the African family find the notion attractive for fostering ecumenism given the stress on solidarity, fraternity, openness and inclusivity which these values elicit (Waliggo, 1998:118).

Nonetheless, the models of family and clan moreover transmit possibly injurious associations. It is often the case that an African family is hierarchical while clan identity may make available ‘an incentive to nepotism, corruption and the advancement of one social group to the detriment of others’ (Sankey, 1994:448; cf. Waliggo, 1998:124). The concepts of clan classically strengthen a preoccupation with internal relations amid members to the detriment of the ‘world’ outside. Moreover, the view of the church as family may well involve a narrow formation of the universality of the Church. Given the hierarchical and uneven nature of family relations in both contemporary and traditional Africa, Waliggo realizes the necessity for “a vision of an African family where equality is guaranteed, sharing of responsibility is accepted, the clear option for the disadvantaged members is made, and deadly tensions are eliminated” (African Synod, 1996:208). Short of this, he argues, the theology of the Church as family is a double-edged sword that may be used profitably but may also lead to benign paternalism.

Some theologians have expounded on African ancestral ecclesiologies. For example, Charles Nyamiti (1998:137, 132) expresses an ancestral-koinonia ecclesiology on the basis of an ancestral Christology entrenched in the mystery of the Trinity. He labels communion in the church as koinonia and recognizes the church as the extension of Christ’s ancestorship in human communities. The ancestral relationship that Christ shares with all church members surpasses the differences of tribe, race and gender. Nyamiti talks of Christ as the church ancestor per excellence. He says that he is the ancestor of the tripartite church, the church in heaven, the church in purgatory, and the church on earth. Ancestral ecclesiology not only lends itself to an understanding of the church as communion of saints but also evades the jeopardy of secular ecclesiologies which recognize the church as just another institution in society (1998:144). In the same way, Bujo (1992:85) advances an ancestral ecclesiology grounded in the concept of life with a nuanced focus on the central role of Christ, the Proto-Ancestor and the Eucharist. The use of ancestor replicas in relation to the doctrine of God in African theology has been criticized for not taking full perception of the divinity of God and Christ. Since both Nyamiti and Bujo take ancestral Christology as the starting point for ecclesiology,

the same denunciation may be steamrolled in addition to the point that such ecclesiologies have slight influence on the actual life of African churches.

In liberation theologies, as well as South African black theology, the social context has been decisive for ecclesiology (Goba, 1981:56). Unfolding black theology in South Africa as having enjoyed only the status of ‘a guerrilla enterprise’ since its early stages, Tshaka (2015:10) argues that “a church that is conversant with her own context is one which must realize that black people are not yet liberated.” This unease with liberation is shared by African liberation theologians north of the Limpopo who label the church as “a liberating agent in Africa” (Magesa, 1992). Amid African women theologians, ecclesiological replications have a preliminary point in the lived familiarities of marginalisation and oppression to which African women are endangered in both church and society. Women theologians have therefore criticized ecclesiologies which challenge the dignity of women and irritate women’s contribution to the life and work of the Church as well as uncritical servant models of the church. In line with Lenka-Bula (2008:300), the aim of such criticism is to construct “communities of wholeness and inclusivity where all God’s children and God’s creation are affirmed”. Isabel Phiri (2012:265) supplements the necessity for just relations between men and women against the upbringing of the marginalisation of women in the church. While African women theologians draw on African culture in their replications, they reframe the inculturation discussion using gender as a tool of exploration. In this manner, they go on a refurbishment of ecclesiology captured in feminist ecclesial portraiture and call for new visions of partnership among men and women in the sense of *koinonia*.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

The clan as a communion of people with one purpose, one mind, one mission and a common belonging cannot be fully exhausted. The Africans valued unity and commonness. In circumstances where members of different clans lived near each other, or members of different families were in close proximity with each other, families or clans were to live together as members of one family, maintaining peace, common values as well as supporting each other. This is advocated by the church to nurture inter-religious dialogue and toleration in its contextualization pursuit to maintain peace and understanding between different religious groups.

#### **5.0 Summary**

Ecclesiology that is formed on the basis of the clan and kinship systems in Africa would help strengthen and cement the church in the African mind. The whole purpose of the church would copiously be grasped and practiced within an African mental composure. However, the key elements of ecclesiology are efforts to reflect on the church taking into cognizance the African social-cultural-religious context. African inculturation theologians have primarily reshaped western theological traditions of the church

through a repossession of some traditional African concepts and values. The ancestral relationship that Christ shares with all church members exceeds the differences of tribe, race and gender.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise**

- What are the models of African ecclesiology?
- Elaborate on African clan as a perfect representation of the church in African context
- How can you ascertain the significance of ancestral Christology in African ecclesiology?

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### **Unit 3: Ecclesiology in African Theology of Reconstruction**

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Ecclesiology in African Theology of Reconstruction

3.2 African ecclesiology as Ubuntu Community

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 References/Further Readings

Self-Assessment Exercise

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This unit elaborate on ecclesiology in African theology of reconstruction. Besides, there is a critical adoption of the notion of ubuntu as suitable term for articulating an ecumenical ecclesiology within the African context which place emphasis on community living. This is buttressed by the connotations of communality, communion and interrelatedness that ubuntu transmits in African thought.

#### **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this study you should be able to:

- Expatiate why African theologians in their ecclesiology prompted a shift to theology of reconstruction



- Analyze African ecclesiology as an Ubuntu community
- Determine the position of the Holy Spirit in African ecclesiology

### **3.0 Main Content**

#### **3.1 Ecclesiology in African Theology of Reconstruction**

Undeniably, considering the model of African reconstruction theology, Jesse Mugambi (1995:163) grasps the inconsistency between the much celebrated numerical growth of Christianity in Africa towards the end of the twentieth century and the socio-economic trials antagonizing Africans. He avers; “How can the most religious continent in the world be abandoned by God to perish in poverty, in debt and under the yoke of the great powers of the world?” Mugambi wonders whether the kind of religiosity that African Christians have embraced can help them cope with the challenges they face. These considerations underlie his call for the “need to shift our theological gear from liberation to reconstruction” (1995:165). Given his belief that the church in Africa is one of the most persuasive and viable social institutions particularly in rural areas, Mugambi speaks of the church as “the facilitator of social transformation”. Mugambi’s ecclesiology circuitously echoes the belief that the world sets the plan.

Mugambi’s attitude is nevertheless awkward given the nature of his endorsements for future of African theology. As Katongole (2011:84) contends, Mugambi “shifts his reflection away from the church and her practices and instead suggests a ‘theology of reconstruction’ whose main protagonist and beneficiary is the African nation-state.” To pawn such a methodology, Katongole lures Jean-Marc Ela and Stanley Hauerwas and proposes that the significant role of Christianity is to be positioned in a new ‘Christian social hermeneutics’ that may help Christians to envisage an ‘alternative social history’. He contends on the church framing a new social imaginary in Africa as a substitute to the state social imaginary. By so doing, he cuddles narrative theology and gives precedence to social imagination. Katongole’s assessment of the church as a “uniquely suited community for the task of the social re-imagination of Africa” is definitely striking. Nevertheless, his handling of the idea of nation-state does not appear to copiously capture its doubtful nature within the African context.

Resembling Mugambi, Katongole is shocked with how an overwhelmingly Christian continent is a place of terrible events such as the Rwandan genocide, the burden of disease, wars and poverty. In a fresh publication, he bargains stimulating viewpoints on a theological grammar of hope. He pens, “the church’s unique calling and mission at the intersection of social brokenness and repair is to be a sacrament of God’s ongoing work of social repair” (2017:264). At the core of this assertion is an endeavor to articulate a view of the church as a sacrament of hope. The theological grammar of hope is, in Katongole’s (2017:120) interpretation, the exceptional support that the church offers at the above-named juncture. It remarkably draws people to the necessity for dirge as a social ethic; driving the church to the margins, to the crucified ones in history. While

this scrutiny is valuable, one also requires to deliberate about ecclesiology from the viewpoint of the margins rather than the church reaching out to the margins.

Considering the abovementioned momentary synopsis Conradie (2007:18) asserts that “there is an apparent resistance to drawing any clear distinction between the agenda of the church and that of state or civil society” in African contributions to ecclesiology. Katongole’s approach is undeniably an exclusion, although narrow given its insufficient treatment of the dubious nature of the African nation-state. Conradie’s argument pinpoints a serious question, specifically how to comprehend the nature and distinguishing mission of the church within the entire house of God.

### **3.2 African Ecclesiology as the Ubuntu Community**

Etymologically, the term ubuntu is derived from the Bantu languages of sub-Saharan Africa. It finds expression in a variety of terms across Southern Africa to connote communality or togetherness. Theoretically, there are no less than three ways in which the idea of ubuntu has been brought in fresh dialogue on the subject. These are specifically, as a signifier of a quality of being human, an ethical theory (Thaddeus Metz) and as a notion of relational cosmology (Desmond Tutu). Tutu (2004:27) asserts, “ubuntu has to do with what it means to be truly human ... that you are bound up with others in the bundle of life, for a person is only a person through other persons.” Ubuntu may well be termed as an African communitarian philosophy. This is best summarized in Mbiti’s (1969:108-109) prominent expression, “I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am.” By so doing, it is only on account of other people that the individual becomes cognizant of his being. This solicits more interpretation regarding African conceptualization of personhood. The perception of ubuntu has been brought in African theological reflections on peace and reconciliation, African spirituality, ecological theology and on economic justice (Sakupapa, 2017:257).

Ubuntu carries connotations of communality, communion and interrelatedness. It accordingly reverberates with other concepts in African thought such as vital participation and vital force (Sakupapa, 2012). It ties in the solid link with life related with these ideas. Such life-centeredness is ostensible in African ethics. As Bujo (1992:22) contends, the “morality of an act is determined by its life-giving potential”. Good acts are those which contribute to the community’s energetic force. Magesa (2013:97) in recent times reasoned that “ubuntu is also a quality of groups and communities, in whom certain reputations of kindness, hospitality, and sharing are perceived.” The stress in the clue of ubuntu on life, community and hospitality renders it significant for articulating a nuanced form of communion ecclesiology. It equally traces the church as the spot where God’s people are “mobilised for new activities and new strategies for social change and for building a new society.” He therefore reflects the role of theology as “the creation of a visionary, creative and resourceful society for the struggle against all the negative forces that Africa is suffering from” including

socio-political and economic powers that are personified in sterile local and international institutions and social structures.

Menkiti (1984:172) maintains that personhood in the African context is “something which has to be achieved, and is not given simply because one is born of human seed”. Kwasi Wiredu (1992:104) describes the speech of Zambia’s first Republican President, Kenneth Kaunda, which he spoken to Margaret Thatcher in praise of her fruitful role at some point during dialogues to purge Zimbabwe of white minority rule: “Personhood is not an automatic quality of the human individual; it is something to be achieved, and the higher the achievement, the higher the credit.” Such a consideration of personhood undertakes human existence but places the attainment of personhood within a wide web of relationships. this assessment defines the person as a practice of coming into being in the mutual relatedness of individual and community.

Membership in the community called ubuntu demands solidarity not only within the community but also towards others. This may be best agreed in several vigorous views related with ubuntu, like identity is established by relatedness to others, reverence for the human self-respect of all, and solidarity in need. The first part has been clarified above in terms of relational ontology. The second part has been expressed in Desmond Tutu’s work who contends for the essence of human dignity in terms of our common humanity. Illustrating on the Judeo-Christian tradition of the creation of human beings, the Christian teaching of unreserved justification of the sinner and the notion of ubuntu, Tutu argues for the human rights and dignity of all, especially of those despised by the majority; the victims of history, beggars, prostitutes, etc. Tutu’s emphasis on this point is further lightened by his view of God: “God is clearly not a Christian. His concern is for all his children” (Tutu, 2011:12). Tutu similarly emphasizes the inalienable dignity of offenders of some absurd violations of human dignity in human history, such as apartheid; both the oppressor and the oppressed are created in the image of God. In the words of Tutu (1999:35): “a person with ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming others, does not feel threatened that others are able or good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated and diminished, when others are tortured and oppressed.”

The matter of whether or not ubuntu may be a suitable metaphor for an ecumenical ecclesiology beseeches more questions concerning its worth in dealing with diversity. Would the notion of ubuntu adequately capture the tension between unity and diversity, since unity does not entail uniformity? Some contend that the view of ubuntu does not satisfactorily capture profound perceptions of the other as unique (Conradie 2007:11). This encounter may have to do with the particularistic nature of the view. This menace becomes noticeable in the face of essentialist ideas of identity which stress protection of such identity. In this approach, ubuntu becomes a view of exclusion rather than

inclusion and may lead to harmful forms of identity such as xenophobia, nepotism and even ethnicism.

Again, one may argue that ubuntu is stained with patriarchal values prevalent in many African cultures. By directing to the emancipatory prospective of ubuntu to help the reinvention of violent masculinity, some academics contend that it is attuned with feminism (Magadla and Chitando, 2014:185-190). Moreover, Oduyoye, (2001:45) asserts that the use of notions like motherhood and womanhood (Masenya) by some African women theologians suggest an ethic of care similar to ubuntu. The foregoing nevertheless, the idea of ubuntu has prospective for developing an ecumenical ethic that reinforces both the ecumenical search for unity and the social responsibility of the church. This is resultant from the integrative capacity of ubuntu as a relational concept and as a moral vision.

Considering African religious ethos that reinforces ubuntu, community surpasses the human community of the living to contain the living dead and the whole of creation (Bujo, 2009:281; Mbiti, 1969:175). The human is perceived as part of a web of relationships; ‘a cosmic community’ (Bujo, 2009:296). The range of relationships that come under the grasp of ubuntu holds prospective for an ecumenical theological reinterpretation of relationship. Ubuntu resounds with many features of the view of koinonia as expressed in the New Testament and in recent ecumenical theological dialogue. Nalwamba and Sakupapa (2016:76) contend that “koinonia is expressive of the relationship and unity within and among churches locally and globally”. A fresh WCC (2013:10) meeting document has used the idea of koinonia as a key to comprehending the nature, unity and mission of the church as well as the character of God and creation. Given the western direction and term in broader ecumenical discourses, ubuntu may contribute towards contextual ecumenical theological reflection on ecclesiology and ethics in the African context. Ubuntu shares the features of hospitality, fellowship and participation.

Ubuntu is seen as a community, therefore, the church is an ubuntu community. This infers an ecclesiology of inclusion. Though, if an ubuntu ecclesiology is to be rendered an applicable metaphor that reverberates with both African tradition and Christianity, numerous questions emerge. The foremost is Christological. Who is Jesus within the ubuntu community? The community called ubuntu (ecclesiology) springs its existence from Jesus, the ultimate expression of ubuntu is repeatedly articulated in the church through the Holy Spirit. The ubuntu community is thus a koinonia of the Spirit. This unavoidably relates with a second question; how the proposal set out here relates to the Christian tradition of the doctrine of the Trinity. There is wide-ranging ecumenical agreement that the church is the creation of the Truine God as confined in the creeds and confessions (WCC, 2013:10). This is apparent in the appeal to the doctrine of the Trinity in enunciating the ecumenical basis of the churches’ search for unity. In this

respect, ecclesiology is known as inevitably derivative to the doctrine of God. Nonetheless, one must not spoil the relationship between Trinity and church.

In the African context, the idea of ubuntu as a metaphor for an ecumenical ecclesiology must be reconciled with an appropriate African view of the doctrine of the Trinity. There are presently few extensive works on the Trinity within the African context (Kombo, 2007). Charles Nyamiti is perhaps the only African theologian who has written widely on the Trinity although from the viewpoint of an ancestral Christology. Certainly, the theological doctrine of the Trinity as a legacy of early Church Fathers poses numerous challenges within the African context. The intellectual infrastructure of Greek philosophy that is used chiefly with regard to the language of persons is foreign within the African set up. Nonetheless, the ecclesial implications of the doctrine of the Trinity and its importance for understanding reconciliation and redemption have been intimated by some African theologians such as Oduyoye (1986:141-142).

On account of essentiality of the doctrine of God to an adequate theological account of the nature of the church, ubuntu may be adopted in ecclesiology since it reverberates with the extensive frameworks of the doctrine of God as the divine community. The church as an ubuntu community partakes in God's communion. Theologically, community must be understood as a gift of God made possible through the power of God. Therefore, the church as a fellowship of those called together by the Holy Spirit, may be understood as effected not only through the response of community members to the ethic of ubuntu but more so as a gift of God through the Holy Spirit (Sakupapa, 2012:426). The Holy Spirit establishes the ubuntu community which indicates that the unity and interaction within the community necessitates participation, hospitality and solidarity. The significance of ubuntu portrays a metaphor for describing an ecumenical ecclesiology. It consists of ubuntu as a radical ethical vision that reverberates several aspects of solidarity and hospitality. Such solidarity is African hospitality protracted not only to friends and neighbours but also to enemies. It is in this respect that Oduyoye (2001:100) has designated "the limitation of hospitality to one's own ethnic group" as a "perversion of hospitality in Africa".

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

It is attested that Ubuntu is a solidarity that attains ecumenical significance in African ecclesiology. The Church as the ubuntu community is expected to be a community of sharing, interdependence, struggle for justice and solidarity. A community that is informed by the ethic of ubuntu can rightly be spoken of in terms of a moral community and an expression of ecumenical movement in Africa to reignite a web of moral communities inspired by communitarian spirit.

#### **5.0 Summary**

The church as an ubuntu community and a moral community, participates in the struggles for peace and justice in the world. The church as ubuntu community stands in solidarity with the world. The ubuntu is a metaphor for an African ecumenical or ecclesiological vision that to do justice to the typical nature of the church in the whole household of God. African ecclesiological discourses label the nature of the church in terms of a free community of equals, but seem to place less emphasis on the distinctiveness of the church community within the larger human community. the church is seen as the whole household of God. The church is portrayed as a community of men and women whom the spirit of God has gifted in a certain way for service to each other and to the world in anticipation of God's new creation. An ecumenical ecclesiology founded on the notion of ubuntu is in essence a missional ecclesiology in that it is mission-centric. The church in Africa cannot be truly church if it does not engage with the existential needs of God's people on the continent and in creation as a whole.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise**

- Explain Mugambi's reaction that triggered a shift in African liberation theology to a theology of Reconstruction
- Evaluate African ecclesiology as an Ubuntu community
- What is the position of Desmond Tutu concerning Ubuntu community?

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## **Unit 4: African Protestant ecclesiology**

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### **1.0 Introduction**

African theologians recommend that African ecclesiology signifies two key concerns for the Christian mission in Africa: firstly, to Africanise the Christian message, and secondly, to contextualise the liturgies that have prompted this need for Africanisation in order to distance the African tradition from faith in Christ. Undeniably, it is essential

to read the Gospel with rehabilitated devotion to the comments of the Fathers of the Church and yet be indifferent to the strategic directives of Catholic ecclesiology. AICs have confidence in bringing a positive change for the African people through the use of African hymns in their worship services to acknowledge their African identity. African women's ecclesiology agitates for gender equality in the church.

## **2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Synthesize the ideas that led to unearth missionary Christianity to be able to Africanize the Christian message
- Define the hub of protestant ecclesiology
- Examine the role of African Independent Theologies (AICs) in relation to African ecclesiology
- Unravel the priority of African women's ecclesiology

## **3.0 Main Content**

### **3.1 African Protestant ecclesiology**

African Protestant ecclesiology does not include an effortlessly captured and objective body of ideas, practices or values that can be quietly considered and examined. It is more like an interior structural force that is best understood from the vantage point of contemporary African existence. This structuring force places the entire African past within the dynamic construct of African identity, African cultures and African traditions, all of which are being raided with the influence of globalisation. Globalisation is having an equally decisive impact upon the religious universe of African civilizations; it has affected the relationship between the Protestant and Catholic churches in Africa, with implications for the matters of tradition and modernity in the African Protestant ecclesiology and how the Gospel can, through the African churches, organize a new civilisation which, as Bediako (1990:85) said, 'will allow us to live in the age of Africa's faith and confidence in God'. Therefore, the impact of Pentecostal, charismatic ecclesiology, specifically the growing influence of Word-faith theology on African missional ecclesiology and their hermeneutic cannot be overlooked.

Ecclesiology develops out of missiology and simultaneously, forms a dimension of missiology. Christian missions, as the significance of missiologists, missionaries, theologians and Christians, are the starting point of any missiological image. A glimpse at African Protestant ecclesiology determines that 'Africa plunged into the new world order not as a steady continent, but as a region withdrawing into ethnic disintegration and economic breakdown ...' (Mugambi 1995:207). Though, the churches in Africa are in an exclusive spot to give solid social content to the dream of a new African society, because they can possibly free the peoples of the weaknesses and risky practices of



certain cultural traditions and release them from the many aspects of life that fail to meet African hopes (Pongo 2005:17). It is apparent that most of protestant ecclesiology in Africa needs to be reexamined and recontextualised, as it has failed in many areas of church life.

Any thoughtful consideration upon the Christian mission and the church's role in the transformation of Africa, must completely involve with the different African ecclesiologies of the 21st century to develop an empathetic Christian mission model that inspires and transforms the existing models of Christian mission, the pressure between African traditional church leaders and the Protestant church. It will be valuable to examine their significance and missions, in order to lead African theologians toward an African ecclesiologies that can handle the matters cited earlier.

In Protestant ecclesiology, the church is considered as a community of brothers and sisters, God's people, a spiritual family. Pongo (2005:29) underscores that 'the organization and functioning of the Church are best understood in the light of the traditional family, and its hierarchy has been very largely Africanized'. In reality, the membership of churches in Africa is rising fast. Consistent with some theological and ecclesiological witnesses, it 'appears as if the centre of gravity of Christianity may undeniably be moving from Europe to Africa'. Walls (1998: 2) avers: It is extensively acknowledged that there has ensued within the present century a demographic shift in the centre of the Christian world, which means that more than half of the world's Christians live in Africa ... The Christianity typical of the twenty-first century will be molded by the actions and processes that take place in the southern continents, and primarily by those that take place in Africa.

Consequently, the purpose of African ecclesiology in the present-day context is to incarnate the rise of a new missionary awareness in African Christianity, a realization directed not only towards the construction of a new African society, but also towards a world project and a social transformation for all based on essential values of Christian faith. Undeniably, the contemporary state of the world communicates not only to African ecclesiology, but to all Africans, because it averts the transformation of the existing world order. The role of Africa and her churches in such a world, is to put at the heart of the consideration, the enquiry for the situations for a total fight against the mortal sedimentation of mentalities in our present society, against the spirit of destruction of human beings and disorganizations of the communities, against the socio-economic psychosis which has been globalized in our time: the great disaster of a deaf and blind global system facing the challenges of the future and profound hunts for the humanity.

### **3.2 Ecclesiology of African Independent Churches**

Saayman (1998:1) detects that in the Catholic Church, 'most mission agencies still use the nineteenth century missiology based on a hierarchy of assumptions from western cultural and moral superiority'. This hierarchy appears to subsist amid all missionaries today, but the major physiognomies of African ecclesiologies vary from that of the Catholic and Protestant churches. African churches are less concerned in doctrine and more engrossed by the movement of the Holy Spirit and similarly, they are not fascinated in the manner of pastoral dressing from the Catholic Church or the liturgical motive. The AICs believe in bringing about an affirmative transformation for the African people without Catholic and Protestant ritual liturgy and the use of African hymns in their worship services. The churches declared their autonomy from the old missions and acknowledged their African identity. Most AICs are also stressing glorious uniforms and hours of chanting, marching and other African rituals.

These AICs and sects are dwellings that attempt to bring symbolic or concrete answers to transitional situations where people have the mutual experience of living with the consequences of colonisation and decolonisation. Nevertheless, the deficiency of appropriate ecclesiology emerges at several levels of the AICs and infers that most indigenous churches have a missionary vision without ecclesiology. They are accessible as high places for the gratification of the spiritual needs of their members. Thus, the partial failure of Protestant, Catholic and evangelical churches in Africa to afford satisfactory answers to the spiritual and physical needs of their members has visibly subsidized to the creation of new spiritual communities that do meet the aspirations of African believers and as a result, encourage the conversion of their members. It's apparent that the AICs are undertaking 'mission in an African way' and that the mainline churches can learn from them. They are perceptibly meeting the existent needs of people in the African context at the grassroots level. They are drawing people to God by contextualising and inculturating the Gospel for African people. Their method is a substantial contribution to the proper understanding of Christian mission and can no longer be overlooked (Oduro 2008:49).

However, on examining the ecclesiology of AIC, it appears essential to give exceptional consideration to their Christology and African messianism for, as Hebga (1990:80) voices out, 'too often the charismatic leader enjoys a position of ambiguity that competes with that of Christ'. These church leaders are gladly called prophet, Black Messiah, visionary, president and initiator. A figure like Isaiah Shembe, for example, bluntly replaced Christ even in the doxology of the Trinity and set himself up in the role of saviour of the White people. By contrast, others, like Simon Kimbangu, 'rejected any claims to personal divinity and proclaimed themselves as messengers of God and liberator of Black people' (Pongo 2005:38).

Without a doubt, a missiological glimpse at the current situation of the AICs divulges two important phenomena, which presently portray the awareness of their mission.

Therefore, as Solomon (2001:44) cautions, it would not be accurate to put them all in one group. The first phenomenon is a dislodgment of the centre of gravity. The passage from a state of the communities of popular protest against a certain spirit of the society and institutionalized churches, coming from the establishment of the Western missionaries. The second phenomenon relates to progressive vanishing, without obedience, of the inferiority complex that these AICs and the sects suffered in confrontation with the powerful presence of Catholicism or historical Protestantism. The vanishing of this inferiority complex has, as a consequence, the obligation of the Independent Churches to social, political and economic motivations. This was exactly the case of the Kimbanguist church, which has parishes, schools, universities and polyclinics in many countries of the world. Nevertheless, the AICs appear to generally experience a syndrome of inner divisions. They regularly experience schisms over internal struggles for power and of the personal ambitions and egoistic interests of their leaders in the race for material benefits.

The African spiritual identity of these AICs is powerfully fastened in the ministries of miraculous healing, spiritual combat against evil spirits, forces of sorcery and fetishism. In effect, the mushrooming of sects and new religious movements in English, French and Portuguese-speaking Africa can be reduced if the Catholic, Evangelic and Protestant movements would agree to work together (Kalemba 2009:236). The real adversary of the Christian mission is the injurious effect triggered by the way that these spiritual communities treat each other as sects, according to a principle of rejection. The traditional churches act in similar capacity, and therefore a sort of denominational Babelisation arises. The reorganisation, reorientation and redynamisation of the African independent and traditional churches through a reassessed African ecclesiology will confirm to be appropriate; therefore, missiologists can, through a revisited African ecclesiology, learn how to battle equivocal spiritualism, the religiosity of fear, the several theories that paralyse intelligence and split the rational springs of spirituality, spiritual blindness and the reign of illogicality and the ignorance that many Africans show as far as their Christian life is concerned.

The church is, definitely, missionary by its very nature and this is exemplified in a truly missionary ecclesiology. The church and mission have to work together, because it is hard for any group of Christians to subsist without starting ecclesia (community) and ecclesia cannot endure without mission. The connection between church and mission are crucial to the concept of *Missio Dei* (the mission of God). Any church is missionary by their nature, while ‘mission and church are considered as two detached structures which Christians had to connect together in some way’ (Saayman 2000:19). The process and progress from church to mission to church should ‘rather be seen as cyclical, and specifically as an ascending, never-ending spiral’ (Saayman 2000:20). Churches, in the same way, need to advance a satisfactory missionary ecclesiology for today. It is accurate to say that there is a better collaboration between church and

mission owing to the earnestness of the ecclesiological problem in Christian mission. The missionary church lives in mutuality and interdependence with other missionary churches all over the world. Christian Mission has its derivation in God, who is the source. The church is the result. The Christian mission is the first mission 'from God, the communication to all men of God's love, as Jesus Christ who showed attention even to the smallest, in the strength and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit' (Bosch 1995:10). Christian mission displays the dynamic relationship between God and the world, as first described in the covenant with Israel and then, lastly, in the coming, life, death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ. On the theological level, we cannot inaugurate the Christian mission without incessantly referring to the fundamentals of the faith: God's self in Jesus Christ.

God is the first missionary, as articulated in the mission of God. Christian mission means spreading the Gospel message and expansion of the church. Compliance to the mission command of Matthew 28:18–20 is an act of faith that is grounded on the ultimate command of Jesus Christ. Evangelisation and church planting are the indispensable scopes of the mission, together with the proclamation of salvation in Christ to all who believe. To call people to repentance and conversion, to pronounce the forgiveness of sins, to call all to become living members of the community of Christ's earthly life and to attempt to serve others through the power of the Holy Spirit. (Bosch 1995:22). Christian mission is also a ministry with many aspects: witness, service, justice, healing and reconciliation, the liberation of the oppressed, the search for peace, evangelism, fellowship. church planting, the eschatological motive. The church of Africa therefore, has a hefty obligation of going universally, in accordance with the ultimate order of Jesus, to make 'disciples' of Christ (Mt 28:19–20); nevertheless, this mission can only be promising if Africans can be humble and transform themselves first, before thinking to transform other continents.

### **3.3 African Women's Ecclesiology**

The word ecclesiology comes from two Greek words, *ecclesia* and *logos*. *Ecclesia* means the Church while *logos* mean word or reason. It literally entails the study about the Church or reasoning about the Church. By so doing, Rosemary Ruether (1983: 213) asserts that a Church is the place "where the good news of liberation from sexism is preached, where the spirit is present to empower us to renounce patriarchy, where a community committed to the new life of mutuality is gathered together and nurtured, and where the community is spreading this vision and struggle to others". This notion depicts the fact that African women's ecclesiology is more of advocating for gender equality in the church.

Women who are the majority in the Church, and form the pillar of the Church are regularly debarred from decision-making (Potgieter 1996: 17). As Isabel Phiri (1996: 67) digests, they have been “conditioned to look up to men only for leadership”. This results in women being treated as junior “partners rather than as daughters of God’s house” (Oduyoye 2001: 84). Therefore, women are under-represented in all the decision-making bodies of our Churches in African society today, at all points and even their condition of service requires additional review (Phiri 1996: 71). Clericalism, as the case may be disempowers the people and makes them “laity” reliant on the clergy (Ruether 1983: 206-7). It appears that people have no direct access to God; only the clergy can mediate or intercede for others. It is for the clergy to approve theological training, to preach, to teach, to administer and to administer the sacraments (Potgieter 1996: 18). This clericalism is constructed upon patriarchy as evinced by the fact that it continues to omit women even in lay leadership roles.

Mercy Oduyoye (2001: 88) articulates the image of the Church as a caring community is smeared “by its tardiness” in opposing violence against women. Today, violence takes numerous shapes. That is, psychological violence, frightening of women ministers, dismissing those who oppose, writing warning letters (Phiri 1996: 63 – 105), Sexual violence, physical violence, marginalization, and belittling, among others. All these are rampant in the African Church. Nyambura Njoroge (1996: 5) asserts that the training that the Church administers does not organize one to minister to prostitutes, the sufferers of domestic violence, and the victims of sexual harassment in the work place, “nor to the wealthy, with their deep spiritual needs.” According to Phiri (1998: 199-200), external impacts have damagingly affected the African Church with respect to ordination of women. As, in the Anglican Church of Malawi, Rev. R.S. Hunter debated against the ordination of women on the ground of upholding what was the tradition of the very first Anglican Missions. The argument moreover was unable to put into contemplation the current wishes of the contemporary situation, which amounts to a grave challenge to Christianity in Africa of the 21st century.

Sharon Potgieter like other feminists admits that she is no longer relaxed in the Church for its symbols have turned out to be worthless (1996: 20). Ruether senses that these patriarchal symbols and the hierarchical relationship of the ministry to the laity are still taken as normative (1983: 200). Women are though permitted, in a lesser way, to incorporate themselves into this male-defined and dominated role and they embrace the same titles such as Reverend, the Bishop, the Moderator, the Archbishop, the Very Reverend, Rt. Rev. Canon etc without enquiring the appropriateness of these titles. They too stand in the pulpit when given a role to play devoid of, at times, questioning the symbolism of the pulpit in an African setting. In zones where some are ordained, they also wear the Clerical Collar, and the Clerical Gowns without enquiring their symbolism.

African women's Anthropology points out the patriarchal nature of women's continued existence in Africa. To be precise, it unveils the patriarchal constructions that have been shaped by one gender from time old to build the supposed inferiority of women before men. For instance, there are several conventional overviews that have been handed over from one generation to the other. They consist of: "To be born a female child is inferior status", "women are Eve incarnate" (cf. Genesis 3), "a girl is little piece of property", "women are entitled to men", "men and women are not equal", "God ordained the inferiority of women", "no women no cry", "sin in the world is a result of women", "women are fragile", "women cannot make good leaders", "women are dangerous when they are given instruments of power", among others. African women's anthropology as a study of full humanity of women also addresses some of the matters that unfavorably affect women more undesirably than their male equals. They consist of polygamy, marriage, divorce, domestic violence, childlessness or barrenness, widowhood, prostitution, and division of labour, among other problems. It similarly strives to map up the approaches for women in addressing some of these problems.

Specifically, Rosemary Ruether (1983: 94, 95) traces the history of patriarchal Christianity that came to control the Christian Church in classical orthodoxy and contends that it never went so deep as to totally repudiate women's input in the image of God. Nevertheless, she avers that churchmen came to consider women as bearers of sin. Remarkably, patriarchal theology viewed women to be more apropos to sin and as slighter spiritually. As an inferior being, it was believed that a woman could never embody the image of God wholly as man can. Moreover, man was to consider a woman as representing part of himself that must be "repressed and kept under control by reason to prevent a fall into sin and disorder". In another dimension, the fall of humanity in Genesis 3 led to the erroneous inference that women have inferior nature and they should remain under punishment for that, "original sin". It seems that the coming of Christ, his death and resurrection did not unwrap the dilemma that feminism found itself in (succeeding the fall in Genesis 3). This pattern of patriarchal anthropology can be demonstrated in the whole line of classical Christian theology from ancient to contemporary times.

Incidentally, the illustration of St. Augustine best demonstrates the classical basis of patriarchal anthropology. he asserted that even though a woman can achieve salvation, she still remains, inferior. She is sin-prone; she is only secondarily in the image of God while the male normatively retains the image of God. Likewise, the 16th century Reformation reinforced the views of the classical orthodox in relation to women in the Church and the society in general. Especially, Martin Luther said that in the original creation, Eve was equal to Adam but after the fall in Genesis 3, things changed. She is now subject to man as her superior; as a punishment for her sin; an expression of divine justice (Ruether 1983: 97). In the Church, the refusal to ordain women after a long time is a clear point of sin. Hence Acolatse is right in saying that "if sin constitutes missing

the mark of our true humanity, and we are serious about corrective measures to bring us to full humanity, then we are better for naming it and finding healing for it” (2001: 138). This is the call for entire Africa; a challenge to break the silence on gender inequalities. We must wrestle the sin of failure to appropriate our God given freedom, as it is the case in present day Africa with regard to gender issues. African women theologians’ emphasises that women are connected in an exceptional way to hospitality in that Mary the mother of Jesus accommodated God. Therefore, she is Theotokos meaning the mother of God (Oduyoye 2001: 94). This designates that the concept of hospitality is cherished amid women given the high honour of hosting God through Mary. African women have consequently placed much weight on the subject of hospitality since they see it as the mark of divinity and thus, something to which human beings should seek. Accordingly, hospitality is the way of life through which we can be able to relate with the doctrine of the last days (eschatology).

The resurrection of the body is used as the symbol for dealing with African women’s spirituality of hope, for as they contend, it was women who were determined to do decency to the body. “It was women, who were entrusted with the message of hope that said death does not have the last word” (Oduyoye 2001: 110, 121). Resurrection reinforces them as they focus on the eschaton, which is informed by the current time (in regard to our relation with our neighbours). This triumph over death is a guarantee that led God’s unerring spirit and that they “shall not stray in the desert nor miss their providential way”. African women’s spirituality should hence be seen as a way of revealing and advocating women’s true humanity, with hospitality.

For African women’s theologians and to a large extent, for many Africans, eschatology concentrates on the fullness and effectiveness of life here, in this land of the living. It entails, our present hospitality is very significant in our African eschatology for we do not focus on the last things without due regard to our present time. This similarly means, it is in agreement with Christ’s teaching in the Lord’s Prayer for us to seek the kingdom of God to come here on earth as it is done in heaven (Matthew 6:1ff). The eschatology, in African women ecclesiology expressed their hope for renewed rains and fertility of the land, bountiful crops, and healthy offspring for human and animal and more importantly for peace, social order, justice, security against outside enemies, and good rulers who would protect the poor and liberate the captive. This further agrees with the concept of African hospitality and African eschatological thinking as the previous discussion has shown.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

The best understanding of the church’s mission today is that each church must do what it can to extend the Kingdom of God and to make the positive transformation of African societies possible. African theologians should recommend another typology, one which takes into account more current developments, such as the proliferation of so many new

churches. This new typology considers the daily life and practice of each church rather than official theology. It deals mainly with spirituality and with the way faith is expressed corporately rather than the content of faith. The present context of African ecclesiologies, develop, as of now, a deep-rooted Christianity that offers African religions, a wealth of vital spiritual fruitfulness. It is for this reason that the African ecclesiologies can put God at the centre of this process, in a kind of global pastoral and social transformation. So, it is useful to rebuild, as of now, an African spirituality of cooperation such as existed before the African colonisation. African Women's Theologies are theologies for all genders as their concerns are geared towards building a fair and just society. Men, women and children cannot be excluded in it. Besides, African women's theologies are too significant to be left to one gender alone.

## **5.0 Summary**

The current African context is satisfactory for a deep Christian mission that makes the training of missionaries exclusively imperative. They will not be able to cope with or overcome perilous sects and new deceptive spiritual movements so, African ecclesiology can develop its capacity for intervention with the populations in a way that better meets their needs. If Africans are informed and formed as sons and daughters of the Kingdom of God, they will represent a truly great and vital force for the positive transformation and rebuilding of the African continent. In Africa, the main problem lies in the effects and impact of what has been announced by the Catholic and Protestant church about the reality of the challenges with which Africa is confronted: miseries, political and military conflicts, divisions, mediocrities, sterilities, despairs, catastrophes, xenophobia, derelictions, jealousies, capacity for destruction and powers of death.

## **Self-Assessment Exercise**

- What is the purpose for African Protestant Ecclesiology?
- Examine ecclesiology in the context of African Independent Churches (AICs)
- Critique the views of African Women's Ecclesiology

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