

THE CHURCH
New Life's Ecclesiology
Part I B: What Is the Church?

- Resource: Who's In Charge Here? *A Handbook for Restoring Jesus to Leadership of His Church*

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- Summary of Part 1A
- The church is an assembly of people called by God
 - To be different than the rest of the world
 - To meet and learn how to become disciples of Jesus
 - The church is described in Scripture as a spiritual temple, the body of Christ, and the bride of Christ
 - The church has a role in teaching the Word of God, maintaining good Christian doctrine and practice, establishing discipleship programs, worshipping, promoting unity, evangelizing the world, developing leaders and volunteers, serving her community
 - The church is to host the Presence of the Holy Spirit, and express the Glory of God
 - The *one thing* that establishes a local fellowship as being a church or not: the presence of the Holy Spirit in her people and in her building
 - To understand the Holy Spirit, we briefly looked at the Trinity and God the Father
- Christ the Son (*the incarnate Son*)
 - Lived as a man for 33 years (*but existed before; exists now*)
- Col. 1:15-17
- He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. *For by Him all things were created*, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible...*all things were created through him and for him.*
- Hebrews 1:3
- He is the *radiance* of His (*God's*) glory and the exact representation of His nature...
- John 14:9
- "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.."

- Christ appeared to Old Testament saints as the pre-incarnate Son
- I Cor. 10:2-4
- They (*the Israelites*) were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.
- Pre-incarnate appearances of Jesus included:
 - The three “men” who appeared to Abraham
 - The “man” who wrestle with Jacob
 - The “commander of the Host” who appeared to Joshua
 - The fourth “man” in the fire with the three Hebrew boys
- A “post-incarnate” Jesus has appeared to church age believers in open visions
- The Holy Spirit:
- The Spirit of God; the Spirit of Jesus, distributed to believers and disciples of Jesus
- If we have not had an open vision of Jesus...
- Then every single touch on our lives from God has been from the Holy Spirit
- The Holy Spirit is responsible for giving us:
 - Our salvation
 - The reassurance of our salvation
 - Teaching and revelation
 - Wisdom and guidance
 - Comfort
 - Conviction of sin
 - Our spiritual gifts
 - Our spiritual fruit
 - The “Presence” sensed
 - Intercession (for us)
- Rom. 8:14-16
- For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God...you received the Spirit of sonship, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.
- John 14:16-17
- “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth...You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you...”

- John 14:25-26
- "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."
- John 17:20-21
- "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word...so that the world may believe that you have sent me.
- If the Holy Spirit is in the people and the assembly, there is church --however unrecognized or un-honored He is
- We can ask the Spirit to come to our church
 - Or ask Him to come upon or come forth out of His Spirit-indwelt people
- We owe a great debt to God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the historical Church with her martyrs, missions, teaching, and influence on family, laws, government
- If we are wise, we will honor the church (*in most of its forms*) and not criticize or dishonor it
- We are warned by Jesus that the expression of the Kingdom of God in the Church would not be perfect in many of His parables
- Just because church has not been done perfectly
 - And just because, tragically, the church has actually been harmful at times
 - Does not give us who believe, who are "saved" and have committed to become disciples of Jesus, the excuse to not attend, support, and bless the church
 - Church is where we can worship, learn, pray, fellowship, be encouraged, and bear with the sins of others
- Church gives us opportunity to contribute and participate as we serve God and others in our gifts
- The Bible and church history teach us that the church (*like any organism or structure*)
 - Would need to be maintained, renewed, and revived
 - And would need workmen and workwomen to help maintain, renew, and revive her
 - "Friends" of God who would be willing to teach, pray for, minister to, rebuke, console, comfort God's imperfect people and church

- The "problems" we perceive in the church lie with the *laity* not victoriously being led by the Holy Spirit and not walking in their spiritual gifts *as much as* it is due to poor, un-empowered *leadership*
- How is the Church Doing Worldwide?
 - At New Life we support a missionary living in northern Iraq associated with a ministry called CPDE that plants home churches in Arab nations (*11,000 in operation to date*).
 - We also support a ministry (CCI) who trains pastors with an intensive two-week course in developing nations. The organization has trained 17,000+ pastors, most all who have planted a new church.
 - Another group we fund broadcasts Christian worship and teachings into the Middle East
 - Tommy Naumann's testimony: there are 160 similar organizations ministering to the 10/40 Window
- Go-To-Nations was established in 1981 in Costa Rica and eventually sponsoring missionaries and mission projects in over 100 nations.
 - 2.1 million people have accepted Christ
 - A salvation every 8 minutes
 - 7.8 million people have received gospel ministry.
 - A new church is planted every 27 hours
 - 26,000 students have graduated from GTO Bible schools
- The Jesus Film was created in 1979
 - It is now available in over 2000 translations
 - Has been viewed 10 billion times by audiences
 - 633 million people worldwide have indicated a decision to follow Christ
- Two billion people in the world say they are Christians
 - 500 million are "revivalists" – Pentecostal or charismatic
 - Two million Britons have taken the Alpha Course
- Christianity is growing mostly in the Global south, Africa and Asia
 - In 1900 there were ten million Christians in Africa: now 400 million
 - In South Korea in 1900--there were virtually no Christians
 - Today, over 30% of the population is evangelical
 - In China in 1950--the number of Christians was in the 100,000's
 - Today, there are an estimated 120,000,000 believers in home churches
- It is calculated that between 150,000 - 200,000 people in the world become a Christian each day!

- There are numerous churches in Latin America and Africa with 100,000's members; weekly attendance
 - Calvary Temple in India: 250,000
 - Yoido Full Gospel in South Korea: 200,000
 - Works and Mission Church in the Ivory Coast: 185,000
 - Deeper Christian Life in Nigeria: 180,000
- 70 churches in the world have over 20,000 in attendance weekly
- 400 churches in the world have over 2000 in attendance weekly
- Megachurches in the USA
 - Lakewood Houston, Texas: 43,500
 - Life Church in Oklahoma: 41,000
 - Willow Creek in South Barrington Illinois: 25,700
 - Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California: 22,000
- Christian charity:
- American charitable giving was \$484 billion in 2021
 - 27% of donations in 2021 went to religious organizations.
- People who attend church regularly tend to donate more money to any type of cause than non-attendees
 - Church tithing statistics show that about 81% of those who participate in religious services between 27–52 times a year their religious donation average is \$2,224, while their total annual charitable giving is about \$2,935.
 - Americans who do not attend religious services donations are \$593 for secular causes and \$111 for religious causes per year
 - Over 10,000 Christian charitable organizations exist with a combined budget of \$30 billion/year
 - Christians sponsor orphanages, hospitals, schools, natural disaster help, refugees, education, sex trafficking-opposition, child labor, injustices, poverty, clean water access
- The percentage of the unevangelized is shrinking.
 - In 1900 more than half of the world's population 54.3% was unevangelized.
 - That percentage continues to shrink, dropping to 28.4% in 2019
- There are 250 world countries and 24,000 people groups
 - 16,000 of the people groups have been reached by the gospel

- There are 7300 languages in the world
 - The full Bible is now available in 700 different languages
 - The New Testament is available in another 1500 languages
 - Selections and stories from the Bible are available in a further 1100 other languages
 - Language groups with all or part of Scripture available is 3300
 - That number was 1400 in 1974

- The Internet, and Bible word-processor-based translation has so accelerated the spread of the gospel, that there are estimates that as early as 2026-2031 all of the world's people groups would have received at least part of a Bible

- Matt. 24:14
- "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

- Christianity's influence on Western Civilization is vast
 - This has been scandalously denied by anti-Christian revisionist writers
 - Ex: international dating (BC, AD) is based on Christ's birth
 - Christianity correctly observed has given us
 - Civil law; the principles of democratic government; individual human rights
 - The advocacy of mercy, forgiveness, grace, self-sacrifice vs. pagan and atheistic ruthlessness, retaliation, self-serving exploitation and abuse of women, children and the poor
 - The promotion of monogamy and two-parent homes
 - Advocacy for sanctity of life: unborn, infants, the disabled, the elderly

- Christianity's influence on Western Civilization (*continued*)
 - Education of children and women; advocacy of literacy
 - Promotion of art, music, theater, literature, architecture
 - Advances in science
 - Hospitals; hospice; improving hygiene
 - Philanthropy and charity
 - Abandoning mandated pagan temple prostitution and child and human sacrifice
 - This initially Western influence has expanded to Japan, Africa, South America, India, now China

- The future of the Lord's church is a glorious one
- We will be victorious on earth
- Matt. 16:18-19
- "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build My church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."
- And we will be victorious in Heaven
- Rev. 7:9-10
- After this I looked and saw a multitude too large to count, from every nation and tribe and people and tongue, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice, "Salvation to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"
- It is a glorious time in history for believers, this current expression of the church of God, to step up and spread the good news and make disciples
- "Every day we delay they grow stronger."
- New Life Leadership's Prayer *(like the apostle Paul)*
- Eph 6:18-19
- ...pray at all times in the Spirit...be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel...