

A Systematic Theology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

## Part 09 Ecclesiology

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## Part 09 Ecclesiology

### Ecclesiology Introduction

Ecclesiology is the doctrine of the *ecclesia*, translated to English as the *Church*. The origin of the word *Church* comes from the Greek word *kuriakos*, meaning "the Lord's house." The English definition was extended some to make it capture the full concept of Christ's *Ecclesia*. It had to capture that the *Ecclesia* is "a called out and assembled body of believers," i.e. believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Three integral parts of this basic definition need to be emphasized. The Church is "called out", it is "assembled", and it is "a body".

A Systematic Theology must first have as its foundation a true Bible Doctrine. From that foundation a discourse must systematically analyze the doctrine keeping it pure from its detractors, and evaluating its fit into the larger arena of theology. Detractors from truth are myriad from outside but fall under three major considerations when guarding against internal sabotage. The Roman Catholic Religion has always directly opposed Bible truth; the Protestant Reformers are supposed to have come back to Bible truth, but, subtly, they carry all the Roman error as concealed weapons; and the ecumenical Bible correctors who make a pretense of using textual criticism and modern language to "fix" what God was unable to preserve. These three are enemies to Bible doctrine, Roman, directly; Reformed, more subliminally; and Ecumenical Bible correctors, very shrewdly. Exposing their pernicious ways is not generally the focus of a Bible Doctrines book, and in a world where Bible doctrine is under constant attack, this type of systematic theology needs be developed. Herein a solid Biblical Doctrine must form the basis and starting point for a systematic theology.

There is no truer, or more thorough, published, Baptist, and Biblical doctrine than that of

Dr. Mark G. Cambron.<sup>1</sup> His teachings on Ecclesiology at Tennessee Temple Bible School thoroughly lay the foundation for this systematic theology. His book, *Bible Doctrines*<sup>2</sup> will, with the permission of the Cambron Institute<sup>3</sup>, be given in block quotes throughout this effort. The book is readily available through <http://www.thecambroninstitute.org>, and it forms the foundational basis for this Systematic Theology.<sup>4</sup>

Believing in the verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures and believing that every single word is directly chosen by God, it is necessary to preserve and defend the doctrines extracted from Scripture and presented by Dr. Cambron. Below, in a block quote of his book, is his extensive analysis of Ecclesiology :[block quote of Dr. Cambron's *Bible Doctrines* page 213-228]

### **Cambron's Chapter 7 Ecclesiology - The Doctrine of the Church**

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ECCLESIOLOGY (The Doctrine of the Church)

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#### **OUTLINE FOR CHAPTER VII**

ECCLESIOLOGY

I. The Meaning of the Word.

II. The Use of the Word.

III. What the Church Is Not.

IV. What the Church Is.

A. A Mystery.

B. A Body.

C. A Building.

D. A Bride.

V. The Gifts to the Body.

VI. The Local Church.

VII. Discipline in the Church.

VIII. Ordinances in the Church.

1 Dr. Mark G. Cambron, B.A., M.A., Th.B., Th.M., Th.D., D.D., L.L.D., Litt.D., was one of the foremost theologians of our times. Born in Fayetteville, Tennessee on July 31, 1911. He was born-again in 1919. It was during a Billy Sunday campaign in Chattanooga that he trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. He served for many years at Tennessee Temple College (1948-59) with Dr. Lee Roberson and served as Dean of the College. From <http://www.thecambroninstitute.org> accessed 10/16/2013

2 Mark G. Cambron, *Bible Doctrines*, 1954, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 60-69

3 The Cambron Institute, 35890 Maplegrove Road, Willoughby, Oh 44094

4 It is noted and reproved in the Bibliography section of this work that Dr. Cambron's Bible Doctrines book recommends using the R.V., instead of the Holy Bible, 41 times for 54 Bible verses.

- A. Baptism.
  - B. Lord's Supper.
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**Chapter VII ECCLESIOLOGY** Ecclesiology is the doctrine of the Church.

## I. THE MEANING OF THE WORD

The word “church” does not mean the building in which the congregation meets; neither is it as the Catholics say, the Papal system. Others contend that it is a company, or a club, just an organization. The Church is not an organization, but an *organism*.

The following may surprise most students of the Word, but nevertheless, it is true. The word “church” cannot be found in the New Testament. The word “church,” is a *rendition*, and not a translation. This same word “church” is a rendition of the word *ecclesia*, which means a called-out company, or assembly. If we should call Bible things by Bible names correctly, we would call it the assembly of God in Christ, instead of the Church of God in Christ.

The word *ecclesia* always means a called-out company, or assembly. It refers to all classes of people; it is not limited to believers in Christ. There are three references in the Bible that refer to three different kinds of people. None of them are related, yet they are called-out companies, or assemblies.

### A. A Mob.

“When Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not, And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself to the theater. Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the *assembly* [*ecclesia*: that is a mob, and not believers] was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together...And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said. . . . Ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches [this word means temple; it is not from the word *ecclesia*], nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. . . . But if ye inquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful *assembly* [this is the same word *ecclesia*, and does not mean believers] . . . . And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the *assembly* [again the word *ecclesia*]” (Acts 19:30-32, 35, 37, 39, 41).

### B. The Children of Israel.

Certainly the children of Israel were a called-out company from Egypt, but we know that they were not the body of Christ. Christ had not been manifested in the flesh as yet. “This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers who received the lively oracles to give unto us” (Acts 174

7:38).

### C. The Body of Christ.

By this we mean the body of believers in the Lord Jesus. The New Testament abounds with references to the *ecclesia*, the called-out company, or assembly, from the world to Christ. The following are a few: God “hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the *church* [*ecclesia*, meaning called-out company, or assembly], which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22, 23). “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the *church* [*ecclesia*, meaning

called-out company or assembly], and gave himself for it. . . . This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the *church* [*ecclesia*, meaning called-out company, or assembly]” (Eph. 5:25, 32).

## II. THE USE OF THE WORD

Knowing that the word “church” is a rendition from the Greek, *ecclesia*, meaning calledout company, or assembly, we shall turn our attention to those portions of Scripture dealing with the body of believers. The word *ecclesia* is used in the following ways:

### A. A Local Assembly (*church*).

“Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto *the church* of the Thessalonians....” (I Thess. 1:1). “Unto the *church* of God which is at Corinth . . .” (I Cor. 1:2).

### B. Local Assemblies (*churches*).

This has reference to several local bodies. “Paul . . . and all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace” (Gal. 1:1-3).

### C. The Body of Living Believers (*unnumbered*).

We must explain that by this we mean a group of believers, living in a certain section, without reference to a local assembly, and without number. For instance, a minister may speak of the Church of Chicago, the Church of Denver, etc. we immediately know that he is referring to all Christian believers in these cities. The best illustration in the Word is: “Ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the *church* of God, and wasted it” (Gal. 1:13). Saul (Paul) did not limit his persecution to one certain assembly, or several local assemblies. He went *everywhere*, hailing into prison, and voting the death penalty for the early Christians. He considered all Christians as *The Church*.

### D. The Complete Body of Christ.

The complete body of Christ is called the *Church*, and is composed of all believers from Pentecost to the Rapture. “Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the

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*church*, and gave Himself for it” (Eph. 5:25).

## III. WHAT THE CHURCH IS NOT

### A. The Church Is Not Israel.

“Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God” (I Cor. 10:32). Here is revealed that there are three classes of people today: Jew, Gentile and Church. When a Jew is saved, he ceases to be a Jew, and becomes a Christian. When a Gentile accepts Christ, he ceases to be a Gentile, and becomes a Christian. “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:27-29). The Church (Body of Christ) is not spiritual Israel: “He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain *one new man*, so making peace” (Eph. 2:14, 15). The Body of Christ (Church) is a *new man*, and not Israel, whether spiritual Israel or revived Israel.

*B. The Church Is Not the Kingdom.***CHURCH**

1. No heirs of the Church.
2. No receiver of the Church.
3. There are elders of the Church.
4. No Sons of the Church.
5. Church called a temple (Eph. 2:21).
6. Church is here.
7. Church was never a subject of prophecy (Eph. 3: 5,9).
8. Church is to be built up (Eph. 4:12).

**KINGDOM**

1. The Church is heir of the kingdom.
2. The Church is the receiver of the kingdom.
3. No elders of the kingdom.
4. Sons of the kingdom.
5. Kingdom never called a temple.
6. Kingdom is not here, for the King is not present (Matt. 6:10).
7. Kingdom is the one subject of prophecy.
8. Kingdom is to be set up (Acts 15:16).

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**IV. WHAT THE CHURCH IS****A. It Is a Mystery.**

“By revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge 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 fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel. . . . And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Eph. 3:3-6,9). A “mystery” in Scripture means a “truth revealed for the first time.” In the above verses, the Holy Spirit shows us that *The Church* (Body of Christ) was first revealed to the Apostle Paul, and that it was not known by the Old Testament prophets. The truth of The Church was not hidden in Old Testament writings, but was hid in God.

**B. It Is the Body of Which Christ Is the Head.**

“As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is (the) Christ. 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. For the body is not one member, but many. . . . That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ,

and members in particular” (I Cor. 12:12-14, 25-27).

The Body is an organism composed of many members. All members do not have the same function. The Church is not a physical body, but a spiritual body. Believers in Christ are made members of that spiritual body by the Spirit’s baptism. There are those who hold that I Corinthians 12:13 is speaking of water baptism, but this argument can easily be refuted by another Scripture. I Corinthians 12:13 says that we are made members of the Body by *baptism* (Spirit’s), while Ephesians 3:6 declares we are made members of that Body by the *Gospel*. Both are correct. If I Corinthians 12:13 speaks of water baptism, then water baptism is an essential part of the Gospel of Ephesians 3:6. We know, however, that water baptism has no part in the Gospel whatsoever. *The Gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ* (I Cor. 15:1-4).

As is true of the physical body, so it is of the spiritual Body; when one member of the Body suffers, all members suffer with it. Not one Christian can suffer persecution without the whole Body hurting also. One member cannot grieve, but that the whole Body grieves with it. When the Body suffers, the Head also suffers. When we are persecuted, Christ is also persecuted: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (Acts 9:4).

Remember that the Body is an organism and must be considered as such. A building, for example, can be repaired by replacing old doors and windows, and the like, with new

ones, but when part of a body is removed, such as an arm, leg, eye, and the like, the part can never be replaced. If it were possible for a member of the Body of Christ to lose his salvation, then the Body of Christ would be mutilated, and this could never happen. The following are four characteristics of the Body of Christ:

1. *Oneness*. A body is one, a complete whole, an organic unity. So is the Body of Christ.
2. *Deathlessness*. The Body of Christ will never die, for it is connected with a living Head.
3. *Manifestation*. The one purpose of the Body of Christ is to manifest, or reveal Christ. “To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).
4. *Service*. The thoughts and the plans of the head are to be carried out by the body. Likewise, the Body of Christ is to carry out the will of its Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. What He commands we must do. His will shall govern our movements.

### **C. It Is a Building.**

“Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:19-22).

The apostles and New Testament prophets are the foundation of the Building (Church). They were the first ones to believe in the Lord Jesus, and they were the first ones to proclaim the Lord Jesus.

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (I Peter 2:5). We believers are living stones of this new building of God. When the temple of old was erected, there was no sound of hammer, chisel, or saw. All materials were formed beforehand. So are we, for we were selected before the foundation of the earth was laid. The inside stones of the temple could not be seen, for they were covered with cedarwood and gold. Only the gold could be seen. We, the living stones of the Building of God, are not to be seen. Christ only is to be seen.

The building was erected of different colored stones; even so the Building of God is composed of black, red, yellow and white races. God dwelt in the temple, and He abides in us.

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#### **D. It Is the Bride.**

Some have contended that the Bride of Christ is the same as the Wife of Jehovah, who is Israel. However, there is one Scripture which disproves this theory, and that is Revelation 22:17: “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” The above passage declares that the Spirit and the Bride are extending the invitation to sinners to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. If the Bride is Israel, then it is the Spirit and Israel extending the invitation. We know that is not true, for the greater part of Israel is in unbelief today. Who is inviting, or urging people to accept Christ? It is the Church, not Israel. Therefore, the Bride is the Church, the Body of believers.

Ephesians 5:25-32 clearly points to the fact that husband and wife have the same relationship as that of Christ and His Bride, the Church. Especially we see this in verses 28-30: “So ought men to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hateth his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.”

1. *The Bride Is Purchased By Christ.* “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and *gave himself* for it” (Eph. 5:25). See also I Corinthians 6:19, 20. In the Orient men purchased their wives; the price became her dowry. Christ bought his Church with His own precious blood. His blood is her dowry forever!

2. *The Bride Is Espoused to Christ.* “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have *espoused* you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (II Cor. 11:2). The Oriental marriage differs greatly from marriage as we know it. The Eastern custom of marriage took place after the following manner: First, the bride was bought (we have been bought by Christ); second, the ceremony was performed, inaugurating the espousal period, which lasted about a year. During this time the bride was considered the wife of her husband, yet they did not live together. The one year waiting period was protection of the future home. If there were any blemishes against the character and conduct of the bride, they would come to light during this time. The Bride of Christ is now in her espousal period. During this interval the blemishes of the Bride, if any, will certainly manifest themselves. History has proved that there have been many who have had the form of godliness, but have denied the power thereof. These blemishes

(these men) vanish away; finally comes the consummation of the marriage.

3. *The Bride Is Married to Christ*. “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (Rev. 19:7, 8). “Then shall the Realm of heaven be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride” (Matt. 25:1 — Moffatt). This is the consummation of Christ’s marriage to His Church. The espousal period is over; she is now with her husband, and so shall she ever be with Him (I Thess. 4:17).

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## V. THE GIFTS TO THE BODY

“Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When He ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. . . . And he gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” (Eph. 4:7, 8, 11).

### A. *Apostles*.

This was the first gift to the Church (Body). Upon the Apostles was built the early Church. The word “apostle” in the Greek is the same as the word “missionary” in Latin, meaning “the sent one.” Of course, the Church has missionaries (sent ones) today, but no apostles.

### B. *Prophets*.

To these men God gave His revelations. At the first, the Church did not have the New Testament, yet it needed to know the doctrines of God; therefore, God gave to men His unwritten Word; these in turn gave it to the people. The Church has no prophets today for we have God’s complete revealed truth, the New Testament.

### C. *Evangelists*.

Another gift to the Church was evangelists. These men fervently heralded the Gospel. They were men of humility, burdened for the lost. The pastor is told to do the work of an evangelist (II Tim. 4:5). The day of the evangelist is *not* over, and will not be until Christ comes to reign upon the earth.

### D. *Pastors and Teachers*.

The word “pastor” means “shepherd.” The pastor is to be the shepherd of his sheep, looking after his flock, weeping and rejoicing with them. The crying need of the Church today is for pastors. Blessed is the man who has a pastor’s heart. A pastor is not only called to preach three sermons a week, but he is called to pastor, shepherd, look after, care for, visit, love, protect, instruct the sheep. Every pastor, while doing the work of an evangelist, which is winning souls, should also be one who is able to *teach* the Word to his flock. Where will the church members get the Word if not from the pastor? All of the truth some people will get will be at a Sunday service.

Some distinguish between the pastor and the teacher, believing that there are those who are called only to be teachers. This may be so, but we know that all pastors are to be teachers also. All teachers may not be pastors, but all pastors *must* be teachers.

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## VI. THE LOCAL CHURCH

While we believe that the Body of Christ is composed of all believers from Pentecost to the Rapture, we do stress the importance of the *local* church, or assembly. The local assembly is the physical body by which the Body (Church) is manifested. God stresses the importance of the local church by giving it officers and ordinances. He who is ashamed of the local assembly is ashamed of that which was established at Pentecost. The local church, as well as the Body of Christ, was established at Pentecost.

### *A. Its Organization.*

The Scriptures indicate that there was some organization, but not as that today. It was not copied after the synagogue. It was entirely different.

### *B. Its Officers.*

1. *Deacons.* I Timothy 3:8-13 gives the requirements for deacons. The deacons were not chosen to run the church, but to minister to the church.
2. *Bishops and Elders.* There is a vast difference between the early Church and that of today as to bishops. The early Church had *many* bishops in one local church; today, we have *one* bishop over many local churches. The elders were called by that name because they were the oldest in the family. If the father were dead, the first son took his place. An elder was an elderly man. Titus 1:5-7 says, “For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre.” According to this, the elder and bishop were the same. The word “elder” refers to the person, while the word “bishop” refers to the office. Every bishop was an elder, but every elder was not a bishop. The word “bishop” means “overseer.” The “overseers” of the local churches were old men. This group of bishops composed what is known as the presbytery (I Tim, 1:4).

### *C. Its Purpose.*

The purpose of the Church is to glorify God in the building up of the Body of Christ in the holy faith; and to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth, winning, baptizing, teaching.

## VII. DISCIPLINE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Even though it is true that the Church is under grace rather than law, the flesh is still in the believer, and the Lord has laid down rules of discipline for His local church. There were three steps in Church discipline, and they are as follows:

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### *A. Judgment By Self.*

“If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged” (I Cor. 11:31). The believer knows when he has sinned and should immediately confess it to God (I John 1:9). If he confesses that sin, he has judged himself. It is forgiven, and he shall never be judged for it again. Let us stress the word “confess” however. Confess does not mean to admit it, that is, to own up to it; that is implied, but it goes deeper than that. It means to take one’s stand against.

### *B. Judgment By the Church.*

If a sinning brother will not judge himself, then he must be judged by the local church. I Corinthians 5:11, 12 says “I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?” Yes, fellowship in the local church should be withheld from the erring brother as judgment. Some term this “backdoor revival.” This extreme judgment should be meted out only after the effort to restore him. “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness: Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal. 6:1).

### *C. Judgment By God.*

If the fallen brother does not judge himself, and the Church will not judge him, then God will judge him through chastisement (Heb. 12:5-13).

## **VIII. ORDINANCES IN THE LOCAL CHURCH**

The Church has two ordinances: baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Baptism is observed at the beginning of the Christian life; the Lord’s Supper is taken all during the Christian life. We emphasize the fact that these are ordinances of the Church, and not sacraments.

### **A. Baptism.**

Baptism is from the Greek word *baptizo*, meaning to dip, to plunge, to immerse for the purpose of dying. It can never mean sprinkling, or pouring.

1. *Obligation* (Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 6:1-6; Col. 2:12). All believers are obliged to be baptized. One does not have to pray about it to seek God’s will in the matter. The Lord has commanded it.

2. *Administration*. Nearly every denomination, with the exception of some local Baptist groups, demands that their ministers, who administer the ordinance of baptism, must be ordained.

3. *Explanation*. Baptism is a public declaration of faith in Christ by the believer before

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man. It is his outward demonstration of an inward act, and is a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Immersion fully portrays the place of death; there are some people, even today, who have met actual physical death after coming up out of the baptismal waters. Those who have come out of other religions evaluate the ordinance of baptism more highly than those who have been raised in Christian homes. Not only does baptism show the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it also shows the believer’s identification *with* Christ. Baptism is his full declaration of his own death in Christ (II Cor. 5:14): dead to sin, dead to self and dead to the old life. It is also his declaration of being raised with Christ, after burying the old life, to walk in newness of life with Him.

The baptism of all believers, as recorded in the Word, pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. The baptism of John the Baptist looked *forward* to Christ’s death and resurrection, and our baptism today looks *back* to the death and resurrection of our Lord.

*It is not a saving ordinance.* Man is saved by faith alone. This occurs *before* baptism. It is true, however, that baptism is a public declaration of faith before man, and God looks not upon the baptismal waters, but upon the heart of man.

4. *Participation.* Who should be baptized? I believe *only* the believer! “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). Faith is first, then baptism. Again the question arises, “Does man have to be baptized to be saved?” No, for this Scripture says that he that *believeth not* shall be damned. *If* water baptism were essential, the Lord would have added these words, “He that is not baptized is damned.” The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians said, “I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius. . . . For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be of none effect” (I Cor. 1:14, 17). If baptism were necessary for salvation, Paul would not have boasted in the fact that he had baptized so few. He plainly states that baptism had nothing to do with the Gospel (Rom. 1:16), for Christ had sent him not to baptize, but to preach.

It is impossible to baptize an unbeliever, for if he is an unbeliever *before* he is immersed, he will be an unbeliever when he comes out of the baptismal waters.

What is the age limit for baptism? Some parents contend that twelve years of age is the youngest age at which a child should be baptized. This has no Scriptural foundation whatsoever. It may be a carry-over from the Jewish custom of adoption. The Word clearly states that baptism is for *all believers*, regardless of age or sex.

## **B. Lord’s Supper.**

“I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance  
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of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup” (I Cor. 11:23-28).

1. *Origination.* From the above Scriptures little doubt is left as to who instituted the Lord’s Supper. There is no record of this ordinance being held *before* the Lord Jesus inaugurated it. We, as it were, take the bread and the cup from His own precious hands. The theory that Christ never lived is exploded by the Lord’s Supper. It is His, and His only.

2. *Obligation.* The words “this do” are a command of the Lord, and the words “all of it” (Matt. 26:27) are better translated “all of you.” This ordinance is for the entire Body of Christ.

3. *Participation.*

a. *Who?* No one but a baptized child of God should participate in the Lord’s Supper.

Those who sat with Him at the last supper had been baptized. Baptism is the symbol of the commencing of the new life, and the Lord’s Supper is a symbol of the sustenance of

that life.

b. *How often?* Some churches observe the Lord's Supper every Sunday; some, once a month; others, four times a year; and still others, once a year; some never observe the Lord's Supper. What is the Scriptural stipulation for this observance? "As often" (I Cor. 11:26): there is no set, rigid rule.

c. *In What Manner?* Some believers are very confused concerning their fitness to partake of the Lord's Supper after reading I Corinthians 11:27-29. They notice the word "unworthily," and immediately they review their past mistakes, ever since they became a Christian, and fear that they shall be eating and drinking damnation to themselves if they partake. Let us point out that the word "unworthily" is an adverb, and modifies the word "drink," which means to drink in an "unworthy manner." As far as being worthy is concerned, which one of us can call himself worthy? No one! This has reference to the *act* of participation. The context will give a perfect explanation. In the early church love feasts were held; the rich brought their store of food and wine, while the converted slaves brought nothing. As the feast progressed, the rich believer, keeping his food and drink to himself, soon became drunk. The poor slave, of course, had nothing, and remained sober. The Lord's Supper was observed at the conclusion of the feast. The drunken believer could not appreciate the Lord's Supper. In his drunkenness, the cup of the Lord's Supper meant nothing more to him than another drink of wine. He could not discern the Lord's body and blood; thus, he drank it "unworthily." This fact led to many untimely deaths in the Corinthian Church: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (I Cor. 11:30).

If the Christian feels unworthy, it is a good indication that he *is* worthy, and vice versa. The man who finds some personal quality in himself to make him worthy to partake of

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the Lord's Supper had better stay away. The table is not spread for the righteous, but for the unrighteous, who are justified by faith.

4. *Constitution.* The elements of the Lord's Supper are bread and fruit of the vine. The bread was unleavened, as it was used in the observance of the Passover, from which the Lord inaugurated the Lord's Supper.

5. *Interpretation.*

a. *Transubstantiation.* This interpretation is held by the Roman Catholic Church. It declares that by the consecration of the priest the bread and wine cease to remain, as such, and become the actual body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. This Faith contends that when the Lord said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:53), he meant the actual flesh and blood of Christ. Therefore, the Mass is that ritual which turns the bread and wine into the actual flesh and blood of Christ. The priest alone drinks the wine, as not one drop of Christ's blood must be spilt. The bread is in the form of a wafer, so that not a crumb of His body should be lost. In answer to this we ask, "How could Christ, while being in His perfect body, hold part of His body in His hand when he said, 'This is my body'?"

b. *Consubstantiation.* The Lutherans and the Church of England believe this interpretation, which states that, while the bread remains bread, and the wine remains wine, the body and blood is present in a spiritual sense; the body and blood are present only at the moment when they are partaken of, and after being taken, cease to be the body

and blood of Christ.

c. *Symbolism*. This is the true interpretation, which states that the bread and wine are only symbols of Christ's body and blood, which were offered upon Calvary's cross for the remission of sins. "This do in *remembrance* of me"; it is observed in blessed memory, and that is where it ends.

6. *Limitation*. How long should the Church continue this observance? Till He comes again. What is our answer to the scoffer who jeers at the Second Coming, and who asks, "Where is the promise of His coming?" We point to the Lord's Table and reply, "There is the promise of His coming."

7. *Evaluation*.

a. *Its Value Doctrinally*.

(1) *The Person of Christ*.

(a) *His Humanity*. His humanity is as real as His Deity. The symbols speak of His actual human body and blood, and it is most essential that it is human, as the atonement must be in the nature of that which sinned ("Christ died for *us*").

(b) *His Deity*. His Deity is expressed in the words "Lord's Supper." All titles of Deity are in this one word, "Lord."

(2) *The Work of Christ*.

(a) *His Death*. The elements of the Lord's Supper portray this fact, for the body and blood are together in life, but separated in death.

(b) *His Resurrection and Second Coming*. "Till I come" does not mean "till I come from the grave," but "till I come from heaven."

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(3) *The Way of Salvation*.

(a) *It Assumes Our Guilt and Helplessness*.

(b) *It Emphasizes Substitution*. ("Broken for you")

(c) *It Reminds Us That Salvation Is Free*. (Given for you)

(d) *It Declares the Gift of Salvation Must Be Accepted*. (Take, eat and drink)

b. *Its Value Devotionally*.

(1) *We Come With Confession*.

(2) *We Come With Prayer*.

(3) *We Come With Consecration*.

(4) *We Come With Humility*.

(5) *We Come With Thanksgiving*.

(6) *The Whole Man Is Engaged*.

(a) *Ears to Hear His Invitation*.

(b) *Eyes to See Its Symbol*.

(c) *Hands That Handle the Elements*.

(d) *Mouth Which Eats the Elements*.

(e) *Body Which Assimilates the Element — Becomes Part of Us*.

c. *Its Value Practically*.

(1) *It Is a Means of Grace*.

(2) *It Is a Means of Testimony*.

(3) *It Is a Means of Strengthening Faith*.

(4) *It Is a Means to Promote Our Love Toward Him*.

(5) *It is a Means to Promote Love Toward One Another.*

(6) *It Is a Means to Promote Fellowship.* This fellowship is one with another in Christ around the Lord's Table, He being the center.

(7) *It is a Means to Stimulate Holiness.*

d. *Its Value Prophetically.* If the Lord Jesus is not coming the second time, why celebrate the Lord's Supper? *He is coming!* Remember, in answer to those who ask, "Where is the promise of His coming?," we point to the Lord's Supper.<sup>5</sup>

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## **Dangerous Affronts to Truth**

### **Roman Catholic Religion - The Mother Wolf to Ecclesiology**

### **Reformers Theology - Offspring Wolves to Ecclesiology**

### **Ecumenical Bible Changers - Brainchild Wolves to Eschatology**

## **Critique of other Systematic Theology Ecclesiology Works**

A systematic theology is more than a doctrines book. It needs to systematically review other belief systems and theology works.

### **Critique of John Miley's 1892 Methodist Ecclesiology**

John Miley (1813-1895), a Methodist, published his Systematic Theology in 1892.

### **Critique of Charles Hodge's 1878 Ecclesiology**

### **Critique of Augustus Strong's 1907 Ecclesiology**

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<sup>5</sup> Mark G. Cambron, *Bible Doctrines*, 1954, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 211-228

## **Critique of Theisens' 1949 Ecclesiology**

## **Critique of Chafer's 1948 Ecclesiology**

### **Critique of Chafer's Volume IV Ecclesiology and Eschatology Introduction**

A review of Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer's Ecclesiology and Eschatology in Volume IV of his Systematic Theology must begin with a review and documentation of his three most critical and systematic flaws. His whole Systematic Theology is seriously flawed in its organization, in its doctrines, and in its communication. Dr. Chafer's Ecclesiology is profoundly effected by all these shortcomings, but his Eschatology represents, at least, baby steps away from the flawed doctrine of Protestants, their Reformed Theology, and John Calvin's Covenant Theology.

Dr. Chafer has a very verbose and conglomerated communication method. His work is laden with run-on passive voice sentences. His commentary drones on for pages without significant content, and it takes careful scrutiny to discern his main point. This may be a purposeful style. Pleasing 70 + denominations at Dallas Theological Seminary is easier when some of them do not know exactly what you are saying. It is not, however, a competent way to write a systematic theology.

The doctrines of Dr. Chafer must be drawn out of his verbose commentary. As was stated in critique of his volume on Soteriology, it is easier to draw doctrine out of the Holy Bible than to draw it out of Chafer's voluminous effort. It is doubtless more accurate to do so as well. Again, trying to capture a doctrine agreed to by 70+ denominations is an undue challenge. None the less, this critique will address his doctrines on Ecclesiology and Eschatology, especially as they differ

from Bible Doctrine.

The most profound flaw in Dr. Chafer's Systematic Theology is his lacking organization and lack of a system in what he considers systematic. This profoundly effects each volume and each doctrine of his work. Here, in Volume 4 of his work, this lack annuls his presentation of a Biblical Ecclesiology and a Biblical, dispensational, premillennial Eschatology.

When one sets out to write a Systematic Theology they must organize every revealed doctrine in the Holy Bible. To some extent every man is a theologian because he organizes, in some fashion, what he knows about God. In that organization he distinguishes which parts he believes. Hopefully that is done consciously. Making such organization systematic entails a considerable effort and focused purpose. To do a systematic analysis each substantial part of a system is partitioned and isolated into a separate subsystem which is carefully defined and understood. Then all the systems are analyzed in concert to understand the larger system.

In a Systematic Theology, in a volume on Ecclesiology and Eschatology, those topics would be partitioned and isolated and therein carefully and Biblically defined. Dr. Chafer's Volume IV has none of that.

### **A Critique of Dr. Chafer's Ecclesiology**

Dr. Chafer's Ecclesiology section begins with his attempt to divide angels from Gentiles and Jews from Christians. This snafu occurred because Dr. Chafer wants to hold on to John Calvin's election of Christians, but reject John's Covenant Theology where Elect Christians replace God's Elect Nation, Israel. Calvin brought into Reformed Theology this old Roman Catholic Replacement Theology. Dr. Chafer is intent on advancing Dispensational Theology, but refuses to disbar, or deny, or even define its archenemy Covenant Theology. This dilemma results

in a volume on Ecclesiology intent on differentiating between Jew and Christian and Gentile. This is very awkward and not normally a concern of Ecclesiology at all.

### **Chafer's Systematic Error**

Chafer's Volume IV of Systematic Theology, containing 250 pages on Ecclesiology, includes material not related to that topic at all. Such inexcusable organization is the result of both an overall poor organizing practice and an inadequate definition of a Systematic Theology in general. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer contends that a Systematic theology is "The collecting, systematically arranging, comparing, exhibiting, and defending of all facts concerning God and His works from any and every source."<sup>6</sup> This author stated previous that in making such a brash definition Chafer unwittingly puts philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato, and Roman Catholics such as Saint Augustine and Saint Aquinas, and Protestants who persecuted Baptist, men such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, on equal grounds with Holy Scripture. In writing his seven or eight volumes on Systematic Theology he repeatedly makes this blunder.

A Systematic Theology is not to be an unabridged rendition of everything ever believed about God, as Chafer has boasted. It is to be a systematic organization of each truth that God has revealed in his inerrant, infallible record. Truths that are then given systematic analysis wherein they can debunk the theoretical conjectures of previous philosophers and theologians.

In his Ecclesiology Dr. Chafer needs both a strong organization of the truth about the Church and the Church age, and then a relentless attack of the Reformed Theologian's Covenant Theology, Replacement Theology, and Catholicness of the Church. Chafer's lacking organization and discipline make such a success unachievable. Chafer's unsystematic system and flawed

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6 from [www.ChristianBook.com](http://www.ChristianBook.com) book promotion accessed Dec 2013

organization of material brings about a very flawed doctrine. A flawed doctrine which it conceals in exaggerated verboseness.

Previous theologies have been built as if theology were a science. Dr. Chafer falls into the same trap. A scientific method starts with a hypothesis which it twists and refines with experiment until it holds enough merit to advance to a theory. Theologians have considered theories reliable enough to place in their science based systematic theologies. In the scientific method, after a theory receives more extensive testing and refinement, it becomes a law. As an engineer this author loves and respects the scientific method. Kepler used it expertly to derive the laws of planetary motion. As a theologian this author insists that the scientific method has no place in deriving the "Thus saith the LORD" kind of truth which a true theologian is looking for. .

Pilot asked Jesus "What is Truth?" In my statistics class I taught that truth is discovered by four primary means, only one has proven reliable. Philosophy says "I think therefore I am." In their field one thinks, reasons, deduces and believes, expecting he has therein discovered truth. Then, in the turn of the last century scientists formalized the scientific method, and used it in founding natural laws operating in our universe. In this method a hypothesis is tested, refined, and observed into a theory, which is tested, refined, and observed into a natural law. Leading theologians pounced on this, and considered theology as the chief of the sciences. They filled their Systematic Theology books with theories that they documented into laws expecting that they had discovered the truths about God. But science is only an able tool to lead and surmise the truth about natural laws, not supernatural laws.

Statistics had an ugly beginning. It had trouble overcoming its nemesis, "Figures don't lie,

but liars figure." The surveys and studies, the analysis and presentation of averages and standard deviations could surely lead to truth. But consider how statisticians and politicians readily misleads people into some grandiose untruths. Know that philosophy and science do the same misleading. For statistics, a majority believing something does not make it a truth. For philosophy one need only mention Christian Science founder Mary Baker Glover Eddy's idea that this world is only in the mind. And we have come to where science has, with no evidence, elevated the spontaneous generation of life to a theory, and even settled on the insane idea that "survival of the fittest" had changed beagle dogs into Clydesdale horses, and lizards into bald eagles. Ergo these forms of discriminating truth have their notable flaws.

The forth method of discerning truth is the "Thus saith the LORD" method. This is not the religious method. Indeed religions source of their truth is generally some ugly combination of the previous three mentions. Even in Dr. Chafer's Systematic Theology this "Thus saith the LORD" method to often takes a back seat to religion and survey. One would expect a section on Ecclesiology would begin with God's notable definition of the Church and its formation. Instead Dr. Chafer first philosophizes about angels, Jews, Gentiles and Christians. He then gives the scientific method a spin and presents theories that have been advanced. Chafer then presents a statistical survey of who believes what. Organizing theology systematically requires that a baseline of truth be established up front. That base line must proceed with a "Thus saith the LORD" as its sole source. The other methods are fraught with blunder.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer has purposed to "collect and systematically arrange, compare, exhibit and defend all facts concerning God and his works from any and every source." Systematically such an approach is theological malpractice. His lack of organizing thoughts and

direction is serious, but his total miss-organizing the "system" in systematic, coupled with his strong reliance on extra Biblical sources make this volume, and his previous three, inexcusable.

### **Chafer's Ecclesiology**

Ecclesiology is the doctrine of the *ecclesia*, translated to English as the *Church*.. The origin of the word *Church* comes from the Greek word *kuriakos*, meaning "the Lord's house." The English definition was extended some to make it capture the full concept of Christ's *Ecclesia*. It had to capture that the *Ecclesia* is "a called out and assembled body of believers," i.e. believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Three integral parts of this basic definition need to be emphasized. The Church is "called out", it is "assembled", and it is "a body". Failure to organize an Ecclesiology around this heart beat is a failure indeed. Dr. Chafer exhibits that failure.

I am remiss to effectively critique Dr. Chafer's section on Ecclesiology because of its misdirected or total lack of organization. This critique of Dr. Chafer's volume will expeditiously draw out from his work what should have been said in a logical pursuit of a systematic Ecclesiology.

In his second and seventh chapters on the Church, Dr. Chafer makes a noticeable effort in clarifying the long time confused definition. But in these two chapters he speaks of the church as an organism, and the church as an organization. With this classification Chafer attempts to separate the church catholic/universal and the church local. He rightly discerns that a poor distinction between universal-catholic and local "has wrought confusion and damage to an immeasurable degree."<sup>7</sup> He then worsens the confusion. Dr. Chafer never clarifies that the Holy Bible has not catholic church..

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7 Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology Volume IV*, Dallas Seminary Press, 1948., 36

Recall that Chafer is leaning and hobnobbing neoevangelical in every sense of the word. When fundamentalists drew a clear line and took a staunch separatist position against the apostate church, the neoevangelical determined that stay in/with the apostate church to "change them from within." Christ said we were to be "in the world but not of the world," but when it comes to apostasy, he demanded complete separation from it (2Cor 6:14-18<sup>8</sup>). The neoevangelical decided, on purpose, to be in the apostasy but not of the apostasy, and that thwarts every attempt they have made for its reformation. Chafer knows the truth about the Catholic Church. He words the dilemma of the reformers who would not recover the truth about this catholic organization being a local organization. But Chafer will not confront the ugly distortion of truth. Chafer allows the 70+ denominations he is pursuing to wallow around in some concept of a catholic church which is "invisible," but universal, which is catholic, but no longer "Roman Catholic." However, his "organized" church, his catholic church, is NOT local, NOT independent, NOT autonomous, and NOT Biblical.

The truth that the reformers would not recover out of the early church is, "there is no universal, catholic, or umbrella church which holds together all believers." Chafer panders on about an organism and an organization, but he refuses to uncover the whole truth, insisting rather that he keep a foot hold within the apostate organization; truly leaning neoevangelical to the core.

The fundamental truth is that every New Testament, pre-Roman church was independent

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8 2Cor 6:14-18 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

and autonomous. There was no other church or head church, denomination, counsel or organization, which usurped dictatorial authority over any other local body of believers. Even the apostles would not use their authority to dictate their will, and their will was indeed the foundation stone of truth. After Paul took and circumcised Timothy, Dr. Luke records, "And as they went through the cities they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem." (Acts 16:4) That is as strong as it gets in the Scriptures. When Rome set up its universal, catholic church it not only issued its own decrees, it used Roman Empire swords to enforce their dictates.

Paul clarifies the organization which Dr. Chafer tries to divide into two different entities. In Ephesians he states clearly "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the house hold of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph 2:19-22)

In this Scripture the body of believers is referred to as the temple and habitation of God and not the Holy, Catholic, Universal Church. And the apostles are shown to be the foundation stones upon which this temple stands. This image is so pervading that in the Revelation of Jesus Christ, a book, as you recall, which Martin Luther and John Calvin et al. wanted to tear from the Holy Scriptures and cast into a monastery trash can<sup>9</sup>. The Revelation shows us a temple where God tabernacles with man and "The foundations of the wall of the city, were garnished with ... " (Rev 21:18-20) sure enough, twelve precious stones representing the twelve (count them 12)

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<sup>9</sup> Do not miss the irony here, as the Vatacanus and Sinaticanus manuscripts from Alexandria Egypt were puled from the monastery trash cans and made the mainstay of the Modernist's New Testament textss.

apostles that are indeed foundations. (Rev 21:14) This Revelation, while we are examining the foundation truths which Reformers refused, depicts this city, called the Bride, the Lamb's wife, as having twelve gates which are the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, (21:12) "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." (21:22) Recall, once more, that Romanism, Protestantism, and the Reformed Theology which flowed from them both, purposely castigated the twelve gates of this city to pretend that the holy catholic church was the replacement for the nation of Israel. Their theology, which threw a disparaging eye on the Revelation of Jesus Christ, established an organization, the holy Catholic church, which, they indoctrinated, would usher in the kingdom age of Christ here on earth.

In this larger understanding of the systematic error inside of the Roman Catholic Church, an error carried out of the mother church by her protestors and reformers, one can see the enormity of Reformed Theology's error in both Ecclesiology and Eschatology. The task for a critique of Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer's Systematic Theology, should capture how much of this error he understood, and exactly what he did about it in 2000+ pages of expose'. Dr. Chafer's meanderings about an organized church and an organism called church do not bode well for a direct confrontation with this apostasy of catholicness. It is his blind neoevangelical leanings/tolerance which prevents Dr. Chafer from exposing the apostasy in this catholic church concept. It is ripe with the cliché "Don't let doctrine divide us, let the spirit unite us." The spirit in that trite saying, however, is not the spirit of truth. The concept that one universal catholic church, visible or invisible, unites and organizes all believers into one body is hatched from the pits of a Roman hell. Protestants protested the Roman Catholic concept of salvation by penance.

They protested the exaltation of a Roman priesthood. They even protested the motherhood of the Roman Catholic Church. When their protesting forced their severance from the Roman Catholic Church, their battle cry was for salvation by grace alone. Even then, they carried with them a little baptismal regeneration, some infant baptism, extensive exaltation of clergy, and all the catholicness of the church. When they reformed theology, it was Roman Catholic Covenant Theology, and it included a holy catholic church. Their version of the holy catholic church could no longer be called Roman, so in desperation for its root they called it "The invisible church." Before this novel ecumenical solution to the contradiction of a catholic church, the Church of England assumed the role of being the true catholic church; then so did the Lutherans, then so did the Presbyterians, then, alas, so did the next Protestant Denomination. An ecumenical solution to this dilemma finally 'evolved' out of this competition of catholicness they concluded that the catholic church was an invisible body of believers, the "invisible church."

How is it that Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer could write 251 pages on Ecclesiology and never address this catholic church issue? Quite simply, a neoevangelical cannot rock the boat or use reproof. They are attempting to stand in the midst of an apostate church, they cannot kick at a cardinal doctrine of the Protestant religion. So Dr. Chafer defends a catholic "organization."

### **Chafer's Error In Denominationalism**

A doctrine rooted in Romanism and connected to the catholic church phenomena is Denominationalism. A denomination is a collection of lesser churches organized under the headship of a greater church or greater authority. One church controlling what another church practices or believes is not found in the Bible, nor in New Testament Churches, until the Roman Empire established it as her means of controlling.

Rome dictated that there would be one catholic church, and they at Rome would be its head. Denominationalism was hatched by Rome. Prior, all churches were independent, autonomous bodies of baptized believers. After Rome devised and constructed denominational control, autonomous, independent, believer baptizing bodies were called Donatists, Paulicians, Waldensians,... et al., and heretics of Roman control. They still existed, and were present when Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin finally had their fill of Romanism. We are still here today. Baptists are the original non-denominationals. It is curious how Dr. Chafer tip-toes through the consternation of denominational divisions.

The fact remains that no denomination can possibly be correct, nor Biblical. Any group which attempts to usurp an authority on another, violates the autonomous independence of that other. Every denominational structure that fell out of the Roman Empire and its propensity to control local churches is inherently wicked and in its core, evil.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer is blind/silent to this truth, and tries to reconcile denominational evil with his own rationalizing of "facts". "The fact remains," says Chafer, "that both declarations are true... We are not divided, and, we are sore oppressed by schisms rent asunder." Chafer's rationalizing continues, "The true Church is not divided, nor could it be; yet the visible church is a broken and shattered attempt at the manifestation of a Scriptural ideal."<sup>10</sup> Chafer's 251 pages of Ecclesiology is an unmitigated rationalism which purports both a visible and invisible church, an organized and organism church, a universal and denominational church, a catholic and a fractured church. As a neoevangelical sympathizer Lewis Sperry Chafer is sunk right up to his chin in the apostate church he set out to refute. His whole Systematic Theology, all seven volumes, and particularly this volume on Ecclesiology, is refute with verbose rationalization

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 37

which keeps him from clarifying the truth. Here his rationalization about the catholic church being invisible and the visible church being denominational clarifies that Dr. Chafer is so buried in the apostasy that he can no longer see the truth. There is no catholic church in the inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Word of God, and in that Holy Writ, every denomination which strives to usurp authority over Christ's autonomous, locally assembled body of believer is inherently evil.

### **Clarifying the Corporate Body**

With that striking clarity stated, it needs consideration that Scriptures do, on occasion, make reference to all believers, Jews, Gentiles, bond, or free, being immersed (baptized) into one body. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many,, are as one body, so also is Christ" (1Cor 12:12) This corporate reference to believers is mitigated in the clear definition of an ecclesia. This clear mitigation is worded well by Baptist Theologians Dr. Emery Bancroft and Dr. Mark Cambron. Bancroft states, "The church as an organism includes all regenerate believers gathered out of the world between the first and second advents of Christ, while as an organization it includes local believers united for service of Christ in any given assembly."<sup>11</sup> Dr. Cambron clarifies that the word "church" is used for A) A Local Assembly (church), B) Local Assemblies (churches), C) The Body of Living Believers (unnumbered), and D) The Complete Body of Christ.<sup>12</sup> As Bancroft and Cambron rightly divide the word of truth, they allow no venue for a universal catholic church, Roman nor Protestant. Nor do they allow for a denominational existence in any form.

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11 Emery H. Bancroft, *Elemental Theology*, 1932, Baptist Bible Seminary, 1945, 60, Zondervan, 307

12 Mark G. Cambron, *Bible Doctrines*, 1954, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 214-215

**Dr. Chafer's Poisonous Root**

Dr. Chafer's Catholic Church with Denominational Divides is a poisonous root which renders his whole Ecclesiology of little doctrinal value. The rationalizations that he imagines in this section, illustrate the ever present danger of mixing with apostasy, rather than separating from it. Such is the plight of the neoevangelical who purposefully rejected the staunch separatist position of the early Fundamentalist. When trying to appease 70+ denominations, Chafer is "conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter." (Isa 59:13b-14)

Some would contend that Lewis Sperry Chafer was not neoevangelical leaning, and Dallas Theological Seminary was indeed Fundamental. I must let George W. Dollar, Professor of Church History at Bob Jones University answer for that. In his 1973 book "A History of Fundamentalism in America", he states, "Alumni of Dallas Seminary would raise the old claim that all is sound and Fundamental there, although such known sympathizers with New Evangelicalism as H.G. Hendricks, H.W. Robinson, G.W. Peters, and R.H. Seume serve on the faculty... Each year an array of speakers who travel with New Evangelicals mold the mind of students to a middle-of-the-road position. These speakers have included R.A. Cook, Arnold T. Olsen, H.T. Armerding, Clark Pinnock, F.A. Schaeffer, Carl Henry, Clyde Taylor, and Ted Engstrom."<sup>13</sup> Dr. Dollar also clarifies succinctly, "That the new evangelical strategy must be one of infiltration and not separation. In addition, he (New Evangelical Harold Ockenga, President of Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California<sup>14</sup>) named the new evangelical forces as the National

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13 George W. Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, 1973, Bob Jones University Press, 209

14 Harold John Ockenga (1905-1985) was an American evangelical leader, a Congregational minister, and one of the co-founders of Fuller Theological Seminary. Harold John Ockenga (June 6, 1905 – February 8, 1985) was a leading figure of mid-20th-century American Evangelicalism, part of the reform movement known as "Neo-

Association of Evangelicals (NAE), Fuller Seminar, Billy Graham, and *Christianity Today*... In 1960 Ockenga wrote: 'my personal concern as the originator of the New Evangelicalism has been to stir the interest of Evangelical Christianity in meeting the societal problems through content of Biblical Christianity. This is the tradition of Calvin, Luther, and Knox.' "<sup>15</sup> Dollar goes on to clarify that Charles J. Woodbridge, a Fuller Seminary faculty member who left in protest to Ockenga's new direction, called this new and dangerous direction, "a theological and moral compromise of the deadliest sort. Such a threat is it that the sharpest language must be used to expose its threat and insidious danger... Neo Evangelicalism advocates toleration of error. It it following the downward path of accommodation to error, cooperation with error contamination by error, and ultimate capitulation to error."<sup>16</sup>

It is reiterated here that Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, founder of Dallas Theological Seminary in 1924, does not use the sharpest language and does not expose the error of the 70+ denomination that he is -pandering to. He is the epitome of neoevangelicalism as herein defined.

A final note of the dangers and growth of Protestant-NeoEvangelicals and their Reformed Theology is from the May, 2014 Ancient Baptist Press Bulletin, which states:

"Following his Strange Fire Conference John MacArthur recently said, 'The resurgence of Reformed Theology... is the greatest revival in the history of the church, clearly.' This should cause all Bible-believing Baptists to take notice. While independent Baptists are busy planting churches, the Calvinist/Reformed system is finding its way

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Evangelicalism". A Congregational minister, Ockenga served for many years as pastor of Park Street Church in Boston, Massachusetts. He was also a prolific author on biblical, theological, and devotional topics. Ockenga helped to found the Fuller Theological Seminary and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, as well as the National Association of Evangelicals. from [http://www.theopedia.com/Harold\\_Ockenga](http://www.theopedia.com/Harold_Ockenga) accessed 15 June 2014

<sup>15</sup> Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, 204

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 205

into the libraries of our young pastors and then into their pulpits. This requires a Biblical response. As Laurence Vance has said, "The final authority for a Calvinist is not the Bible at all, it is Reformed Theology."<sup>17</sup>

Chafer's Ecclesiology and dabbling in Reformed Theology is embryo to the neoevangelical sympathies found in Dr. John Walvoord, his successor at Dallas Theological Seminar. Dr. Chafer's tip-toeing and coddling to John Calvin's election of saints, Presbyterian Denominationalism, and Reformed Theology's Covenant Theology made him unable to sound the trumpet of truth when it came to Ecclesiology.

It is distressing that even as I type this report the the Chosen People Ministries reported that "The Presbyterian Church USA recently approved an initiative to divest stock holdings in companies allegedly profiting from Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories."<sup>18</sup> This comes from the 221st General Assembly of the PCUSA held last week (June 2014) in Detroit. It is herein clear, when the PCUSA votes 310 to 303 to oppose Israel's presence in the Promised Land, that Calvin's Covenant Theology is still alive and well inside the Reformed Theology of the Presbyterian Church.

### **Critique of Geisler's 2002 Ecclesiology**

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17 Pastor James Alter, Ancient Baptist Press Bulletin 5/15/2014, 137 W Edgewood St., Sidney, OH 45365

18 June Newsletter Mitch Glaser, President, Chosen People Ministries, <http://chosenpeople.com>

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translation, Chicago, The Bible Institute Colportage ASS'N., 1840.

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