

**REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
ATLANTA**

**Ecclesiology and Sacraments
January 9-12 2019**

For various reasons the doctrines of the Church and the Gospel Sacraments have often been relegated to an incidental place in evangelical theology. Often their positive importance has been diminished.

Yet both in Scripture and in the history of the people of God the role of the church and the signs of the gospel have been central elements in Christian faith and thought. Against the background of biblical teaching, we will briefly explore what that significance is.

In our study of the **Doctrine of the Church** we will focus attention on certain aspects of the biblical material which forms the groundwork of the doctrine, with a view to understanding how the perspectives on the church given to us in redemptive historical revelation impact both our theology and praxis in the area of ecclesiology. In relation to **the Sacraments** our goal is to gain both a clear biblical-theological understanding of their significance and also a sense of their importance in the life of both the individual believer and the gospel community. To complement the class work reading in the appended texts should be completed.

Course Requirements

In addition to the instruction given in the lectures, a number of works on the church are listed as core reading, in addition to the variety of other works listed and materials that may be mentioned in class. The course will be graded on the basis of:

- (i) **Paper:** A research paper, no more than 15 pages should be submitted by the agreed date (to be decided). This may be on any topic related to the syllabus. It should show evidence of thoughtful and relevant choice of topic, clear understanding of the biblical and theological issues involved, careful research and an ability to analyze and critique as well as trace the lines of a positive biblical doctrine in the specific area of ecclesiology chosen for research. Due on February 16, 2019.

- (ii) **Examination:** An examination on the lecture material will be held on the last day of class.

Reading

The following works should be regarded as core reading. These particular works all reflect a reformed doctrine of the church. Bavinck represents an older but always vibrant exposition of Christian doctrine. Berkouwer a series of discussions which, in the European fashion, assumes knowledge of the basic materials. Calvin lies behind these authors, of course, and presents us with a remarkable exposition. Clowney represents a more contemporary biblical theological approach, R.B. Kuiper (note both the spelling and the identity—not to be confused with Abraham Kuyper!) was Westminster Seminary's first Professor of Practical Theology and his popular book will in a variety of ways serve both as an introduction and will be provocative of further personal reflection. The reading list on sacraments includes two classic studies (Calvin and Bruce), as well as the standard texts of Bavinck and Berkouwer and in addition studies of a more deeply rooted exegetical nature..

Doctrine of the Church:

- H. Bavinck: *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 4. Pp. 273-460
- G.C. Berkouwer: *The Church*
- J. Calvin: *Institutes*, Book IV, chapters 1-13
- E.P. Clowney: *The Church*
- R.B. Kuiper: *The Glorious Body of Christ*

In addition, the following works are particularly recommended for study:

- D. Bannerman: *The Scripture Doctrine of the Church*
J. Bannerman: *The Church of Christ*
G.Vos: *The Kingdom of God and the Church*

The following works may be consulted for perspectives on the church.

- R.J. Banks: *Paul's Idea of Community*
D.A. Carson (ed): *The Church in the Bible and the World*
J.N.D. Kelly: *Early Christian Doctrines*
H. Kung: *The Church*
G.McGregor: *Corpus Christi*
J.Moltmann: *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*
E.S.Morgan: *Visible Saints*
J.Owen: *True Nature of a Gospel Church (Works, 16: 2-208)*

Sacraments:

- H. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 461-588
G.C. Berkouwer: *The Sacraments*, 90-187;
John Calvin: *Institutes* Book IV, chapters 14-19
J. Murray: *Christian Baptism*;
Collected Writings 2, 366-384.
R. Bruce: *The Mystery of the Lord's Supper*
I.H.Marshall: *Last Supper, Lord's Supper.*

Ecclesiology and Sacraments—Lecture Outline

Introduction:

The doctrine of the church today:

- i. Historical
- ii. Theological

I. THE BUILDING OF THE CHURCH

1. The foundation of the church in the promise of Christ, Matt.16:18

- i. Programmatic words
- ii. Controverted statement
- iii. Point to church's centrality
 - (a) Son of Man imagery
 - (b) Community goal
 - (c) Community language
 - (d) Community rites
 - (e) parabolic teaching

2. The Church Jesus builds

- i. The meaning of *ekklesia*

3. Church and Kingdom

- i. Central message of Jesus
- ii. Relationship of kingdom and church
 - (a) Sphere in which kingdom is manifested
 - (b) Instrument of kingdom

4. The "Peter Saying"

- i. In Christian interpretation
- ii. In R.C. argument
- iii. Response
- iv. The "keys"

5. The Pattern of Church building

- i. Mk.1:13-14 prototype
- ii. The significance of Pentecost
 - (a) Promise → Fulfillment
 - (b) New covenant life in the Spirit
 - (c) Transcending of Mosaic economy
 - (d) Typical gives way to antitypical
 - (e) Mediation of many → mediation of One
 - (f) Dawning of "last days"
- iii. The pattern in Acts
 - (a) Christ displays kingdom power
 - (b) Christ defends and comforts his people
 - (c) Christ directs his people in the great mission
- iv. The effects in:
 - (a) Growth
 - (b) Government
 - (c) Marks

II. THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

1. Church as fulfillment of covenant community

- i. Saints
- ii. Elect and beloved
- iii. Called
- iv. Flock

2. Church as the assembly of Christ

- i. By Christ the assembly is opened
- ii. By Spirit the assembly is internationally convened
- iii. In assembly Christ is present
- iv. In return assembly is consummated

3. Church manifested in multi-dimensional way

- i. Universal *ekklesia*
- ii. Local *ekklesia*

4. Central designations of the Church

- i. Bride of Christ**
 - (a) Love and provision
 - (b) Eschatological destiny
- ii. Temple building**
 - (a) Pillar and ground of truth

- (b) Temple built in Christ
- (c) Climaxes pattern of revelation
- (d) Involves transformation in constitution
- (e) Exhibits attributes of God
- (f) The Upbuilding of the Church

Extensive-Missionary

Prayer

Practical assistance

Life-style

Mission activity

Intensive-inbuilding

In stability

To maturity

iii. The People/Family of God

(a) In O.T.

(b) In N.T.

Chosen and blessed community

Trans-ethnic community

Holy community

Military community

Pilgrim community

Alien community

iv. The body of Christ

(a) Pauline metaphor

(b) Source of idea?

(c) *Kephale* as head

Practical implications of ownership

Kingdom principles pertain

Gifts received

Union with Christ as foundational to church

III. LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATION and MINISTRY in the CHURCH

1. Organization in Gospels

2. Organization in Acts

i. The apostles

ii. The seven

iii. The elders

3. Eldership

i. Ministry

(a) Guardianship

(b) Nourishment

ii. Qualifications

(a) Personal qualities

(b) Spiritual gifts

4. Diaconate

i. The seven in Acts 6?

ii. Qualifications

iii. Deaconesses?

iv. Role of Widows

5. The standing "offices" in the church

6. Inter-relatedness of church

- i. Indications of connexionalism in NT
- ii. Development of hierarchy in later church life
- iii. Reformation restoration

IV. ATTRIBUTES AND MARKS OF THE CHURCH

Attributes

1. Unity

- i. NT emphasis
- ii. Nature of unity
- iii. Divisions in church

2. Catholicity

- i. Meaning of term
- ii. In NT

3. Sanctity

- i. Redemptive-historical/eschatological character
- ii. In R.C. teaching

4. Apostolicity

- i. Interpreted historically
- ii. Doctrinal

Marks

- 1.** Reformation understanding
- 2.** In Acts 2:42ff.

V. THE SACRAMENTS

- 1. Terminology in history of the church
- 2. Foundations for a Definition
- 3. The number of sacraments
- 4. Signs and Seals
- 5. Validity
- 6. Efficacy and necessity

VI. BAPTISM

1. The warrant for baptism
2. Significance
3. Mode
4. Subjects
5. Role

VII. THE LORD'S SUPPER

1. Institution
2. Significance
3. Meaning
4. The presence of Christ
5. Benefits
6. Participation
7. Conclusion

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Ecclesiology and Sacraments

Professor: Sinclair B Ferguson

Campus: Atlanta

Date: January 9-12 2019

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<p><i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None 	
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	Doctrines of the Church and the Sacraments by definition are grounded in biblical teaching, and have been developed within an historical and cultural context.
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Moderate.	Significant biblical terms form important elements in these two doctrines; but advanced technical linguistic knowledge is not of primary importance in articulating them clearly.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate to Strong	Focus in Ecclesiology segment is primarily biblical-theological; Sacraments section involves greater degree of focus on reformed perspectives as such.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	The ultimate goal of all theology is the glory of God and our likeness to Christ. Christ loved and gave himself for the Church. Here too he serves as our model
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	Focus here is on one aspect of life albeit it affects the whole of life
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Moderate to Strong	A reformed view of the church has its own distinctives; but those distinctives are often related to second-order rather than foundational issues.
Preach	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Minimal to Moderate	Course is systematic rather than practical theology; yet church and sacraments are integrated with preaching
Worship	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Minimal	Again these two doctrines come to fruition in worship, but focus on providing its foundation rather than its practice.
Shepherd	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Minimal	Again these two doctrines come to fruition in worship, but focus on providing its foundation rather than its practice.

Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	MinimalModerate	Doctrine lies at the root of how we react in every sphere; but course touches only lightly on relations to broader church per se.
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