**REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**ECCLESIOLOGY AND SACRAMENTS**

**Dallas Spring Semester 2020**

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 particular 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:

1. **Paper**: A research paper, no more than 15 pages should be submitted by the date set in the Seminary Calendar. 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.

**(ii) Examination**: An examination will be held during the exam period.

**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

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 a variety of 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)

**Doctrine of the 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**

**The progress of the discussions in the lectures —with possible modifications—will follow the outline below)**

**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

**5. Ministry of Women in early church**

i. Generally in NT

ii. Deaconesses?

iii. Role of Widows

**6. The standing "offices" in the church**

**7. 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**

**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

1. 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. Covenant 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