

# How Should I Regard the Church?

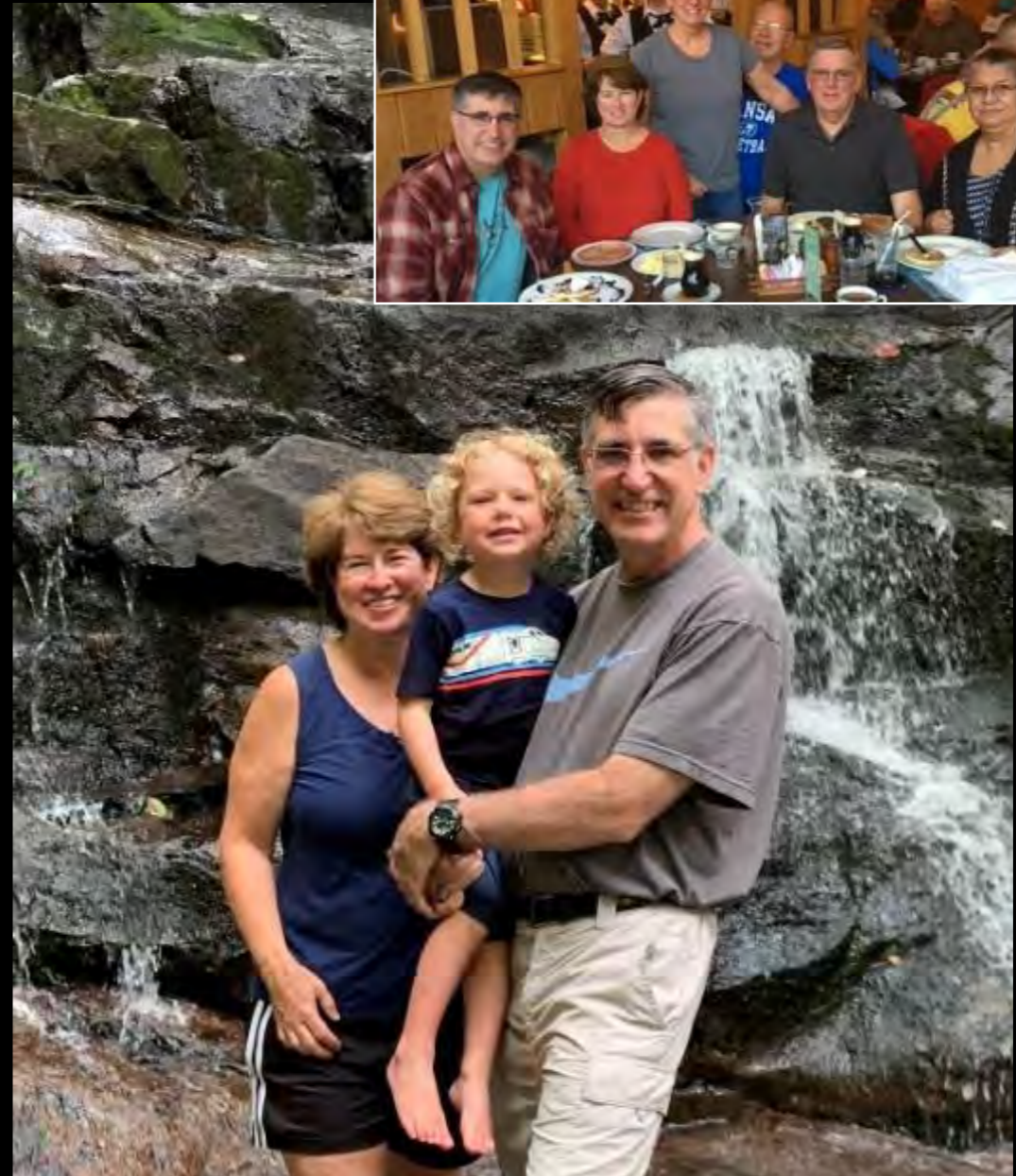


Universal?

Local?

# About Kirk...

- Married in 1991
- Alex (29) & Mandy, Lauren (27)
- Living in Northern VA and attending IBC since 2000
- Retired Air Force
- Grandparents to Percy
- MA – Christian Leadership from Dallas Theological Seminary in 2021



Kirk, Mary and Percy Streitmater



# Scriptural Interpretation at IBC

## What We Teach

## No Li G Ht S

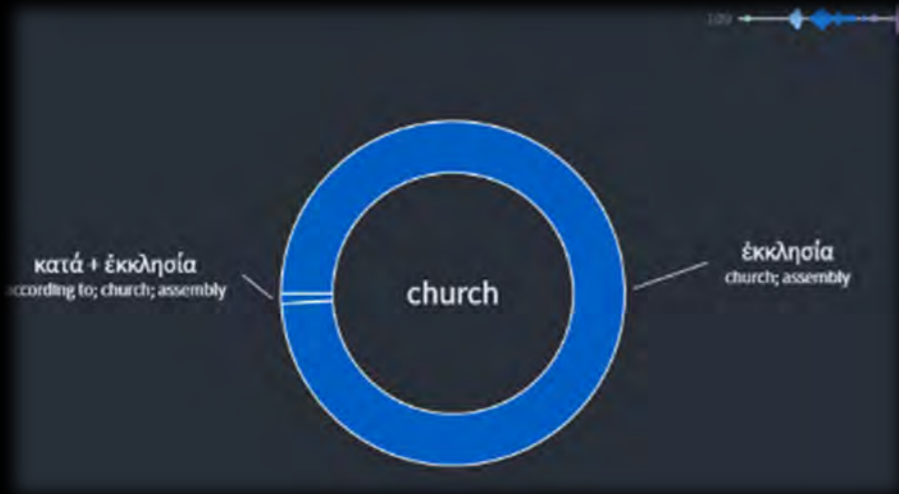
The teaching of Immanuel Bible Church is based on the Scriptures. Article V from our [Constitution](#) serves as our **STATEMENT OF FAITH**, and it reflects those doctrines that the elders and congregation consider essential to understanding, teaching, and practicing God's Word. It is based on an interpretation of the Scripture that is:

1. Normal - understanding the words of Scripture in their common usage unless otherwise indicated by the context.
2. Literal - understanding the meaning of Scripture in its ordinary sense unless the context requires a figurative interpretation.
3. Grammatical - using the recognized rules of grammar to interpret the text.
4. Historical - understanding the words of Scripture in the context of the times in which they were written.
5. Systematic - categorizing and comparing the teaching of the Scriptures with the whole of Scripture in view.

<https://immanuelbible.church/visit/what-we-teach>

# What is the Church?

- The term *ekklēsia* (ἐκκλησία) reflects the community of believers in Jesus Christ.



*Wherever we find the word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ; there, it is not to be doubted, is a Church of God: for his promise can never deceive: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."*

*John Calvin*

SENSES	
▶ church	85
▶ church (universal)	21
▶ church ⇔ body	11
▶ overseer (church)	5
▶ church ⇔ flock	4



# Four Meanings of Ekklesia in NT



- **General assembly** (1 Cor 11:18)
- **Local Christian Congregation** (Rev 2–3)
- **Regional Christian Community**  
(1 Cor 16:19; Acts 9:31)
- **Catholic Christianity**  
(Eph 1:22–23; 4:15–16; Col 1:18, 24)

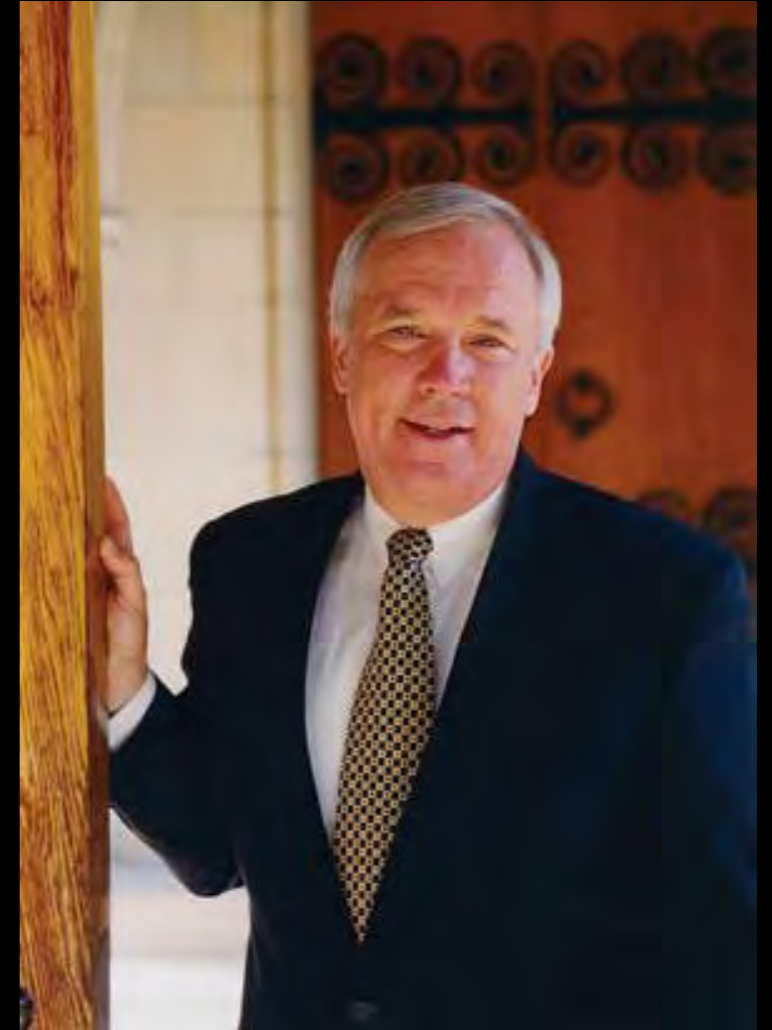
*N.B.—Local Christian Congregation (#2), is the common use in the NT.*



## What the Church IS NOT

“There is something amiss in the definition of the church as a voluntary association of believers. The church does not exist because some religiously enlightened people have decided to voluntarily associate with one another to advance the study of Jesus. The church begins, like faith itself, not with pious individuals, but with God.”

—William Willimon, *What's Right with the Church?*



William Willimon (1946–)



## What the Church IS

“The church is a *worshiping* community, a *witnessing* community, and a *working* community. In other words, the church is to *exalt* the Lord, it is to *evangelize* the world, and it is to *edify* its members.”

—John MacArthur



John MacArthur (1939–)



# One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic

The true body of Christ is the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, called by God the Father, united in Christ, and preserved by the Spirit. A true Christian congregation is centered on Christ's person and work, governed by the Holy Scriptures, conformed to the ancient tradition, identified by particular apostolic marks and works, and free from heresy.



Michael J. Svigel





## Immanuel Statement of Faith – The Church

- We believe that Christ established the church and is the Head of the church
  - *And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Mt 16:18)*
  - *And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. (Eph 1:22-23)*
  - *He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. (Col 1:18)*



## Immanuel Statement of Faith – The Church

- The purpose of the church is to worship, praise, and glorify God by proclaiming the gospel of Christ Jesus to the entire world (Mt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8);
  - by teaching His Word (Col 1:24-28; 1 Tim 4:11);
  - by seeking Him through earnest prayer (Acts 2:42);
  - by equipping the saints to walk, serve, and fellowship in the Holy Spirit's power (Acts 2:42-46; Eph 4:11-16; 1 Cor 14:26);
  - and by keeping the ordinances (1 Cor 11:24-25; Mt 28:19)



# The Creeds

## The Apostles' Creed

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints...

## The Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople

We believe... in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church





# One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic

**ONE:** A new “humanity” called by God & united in Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. (Eph 2:14-16)

**HOLY:** An identity distinct from the beliefs and practices of the world. (Eph 5:25-27)

**CATHOLIC:** A share of all churches in both confession and cooperation. (Mt 28:19)

**APOSTOLIC:** In conformity with the apostolic teaching reflected in the Scriptures and echoed in history. (Col 1:25)



## Holy Application

- The behaviour of Christians in the world must be remarkable enough to cause grudging admiration, astonished curiosity or threatening hostility (1 Pet 2:12; 3:16; Jn 15:18).

Edmund P. Clowney, *The Church*, 72.

**LETTER TO DIOGNETUS** (Διόγνητος, *Diognētos*). Greek apologetic treatise in the late second century

*The Church* ↔ *The Believer*



# The Catholic Church

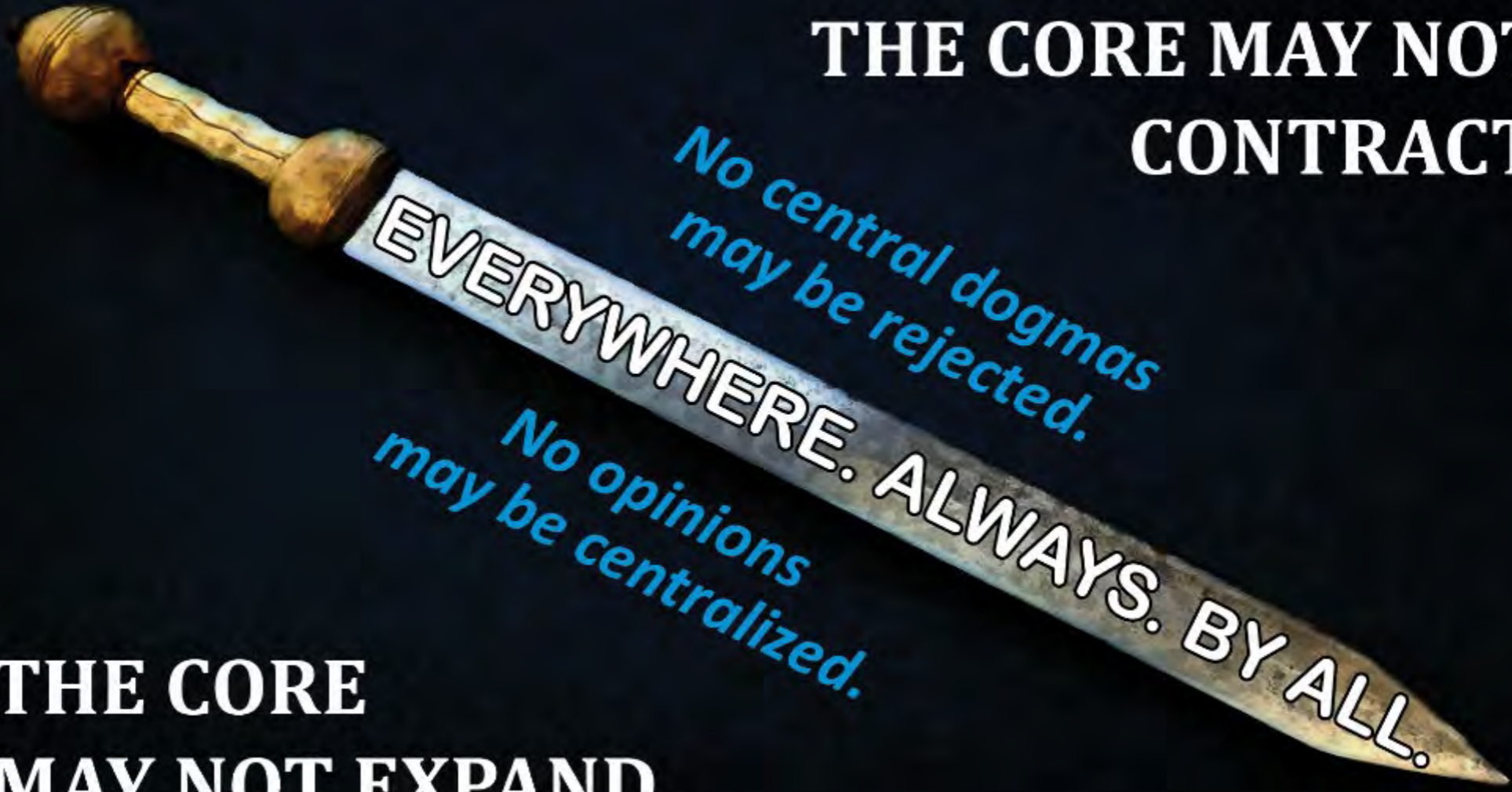
## The Principle of Addition or Subtraction

A church's catholicity may be doubted when:

- It fails to embrace central orthodox theology and practice.
- It embraces as central orthodoxy something that is not.



# Conformed to the Ancient Traditions...



**THE CORE MAY NOT CONTRACT.**

**THE CORE MAY NOT EXPAND.**



## Visible vs Invisible

- Some institutions, including the Roman Catholic Church hold the institutional view that the visible church is the source of grace and authority.
- A major protestant period (1500 – 1700) thrust was that the invisible church gives life to the visible church
  - This developed the doctrine of sanctification that emphasized the practical effects of the invisible (and often individual) relationship between the Redeemer and the redeemed.





*Hagiazo* — to consecrate, to make holy, to sanctify

- *Hagiazo* (ἁγιάζω) refers to sanctification and provides a means for believers to share in God's holiness (Heb 12:6) and walk in a manner worthy of the Lord (Col 1:10). We are created for good works (Eph 2:10) and through the indwelling of the Spirit (2 Thes 2:13; Rom 8:14) we are called to represent God's character (John 15:5; 1 Cor 10:31) and conform to Christ's image (Rom 8:29), even in weakness (2 Cor 12:9). God's word is the truth that provides a means to make us holy (John 17:17).



## 1 Peter 2:9

- <sup>9</sup> But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;



## Unity in the Body

- Paul, Peter, John and the early church fathers appealed to the unity of the apostolic teaching
  - *Eph 4:1-6; 1 Pt 3:8-9; 2 Pt 3:15-16; 1 Jn 5:1-4; Rev 22:18-19*
  - *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all (Eph. 4:3–5).*

God is the King...  
he is holy, loving, kind and fair

♥ God  
Loves  
You and  
Me



God  
would  
like us to  
obey

God's wants  
all of us



to be in His  
family



## Topics to discuss

- The relational character of God...
- The difference between substance and form...
- Sanctification as a team sport...
- Replacement Theology...
- Complementarianism vs Egalitarianism...
- Church ordinances and their relation to salvation...



## The Danger of Sectarianism

- We elevate inconsequential issues to the status of essentials; on the basis of disagreement...we refuse to fellowship or cooperate with brothers and sisters in Christ with whom we have so much in common. Plus, in so doing, we reinforce stereotypes about the strange, mythical creatures that inhabit “that church” down the street.

Nathan D. Holsteen, *Created in Christ Jesus: Church, Churches, and the Christian Life*, in *Exploring Christian Theology: The Church, Spiritual Growth, and the End Times*, vol. III (2014), 88.



## Immanuel Statement of Faith – The Church

- We believe that the Lord gave two ordinances to the church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper to the entire world (**Mt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8**);
  - Baptism is for believers and is a public testimony of faith in Christ in obedience to His command (**Mt 28:19**).
  - The Lord's Supper is the believer's remembrance of our Lord's death until He comes and should be preceded by careful spiritual self-examination of the participant (**Mt 28:18-20; 1 Cor 11:23-28**)



## Immanuel Statement of Faith – The Church

- We believe that the church is expressed in local congregations of believers established under the headship of Christ and the authority of Scripture (Gal 1:2; 1 Cor 1:2; 1 Thes 1:1; Rev 1:11)
  - Individual congregations governed by elders (1 Tim 3:1-7), men meeting biblical standards...[who] guard the purity of church doctrine, shepherd the flock and oversee church matters (Acts 20:28; Heb 13:17).
  - Deacons are responsible for assisting the elders in the work of the ministry (Acts 6:1-6; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8-13).





# Immanuel Membership Requirements

- That you have personally trusted Jesus Christ alone as your Savior.
- That you have confessed your faith through believer's baptism.
- That you be supportive of and not teach against the constitution, bylaws and statement-of-faith.
- That you agree to abide by our discipline/restoration policy as explained in the church bylaws.



# The DTS Seven non-negotiables

For Dallas Theological Seminary...

For students:

7 Essential Doctrinal  
Commitment Statements

For board and faculty:

21 full doctrinal articles

1. The Trinity
2. The full deity and humanity of Christ
3. The spiritual lostness of the human race
4. The substitutionary atonement and bodily resurrection of Christ
5. Salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone
6. The physical return of Christ
7. The authority and inerrancy of Scripture

Where is *your* line for non-negotiable doctrinal stances and why?



## Complementary Roles

- Immanuel recognizes that both men and women may occupy positions of leadership, but that “Scriptures teach ultimate responsibility for leadership within the church is conferred upon qualified men, selected as elders, under the headship of Christ.”



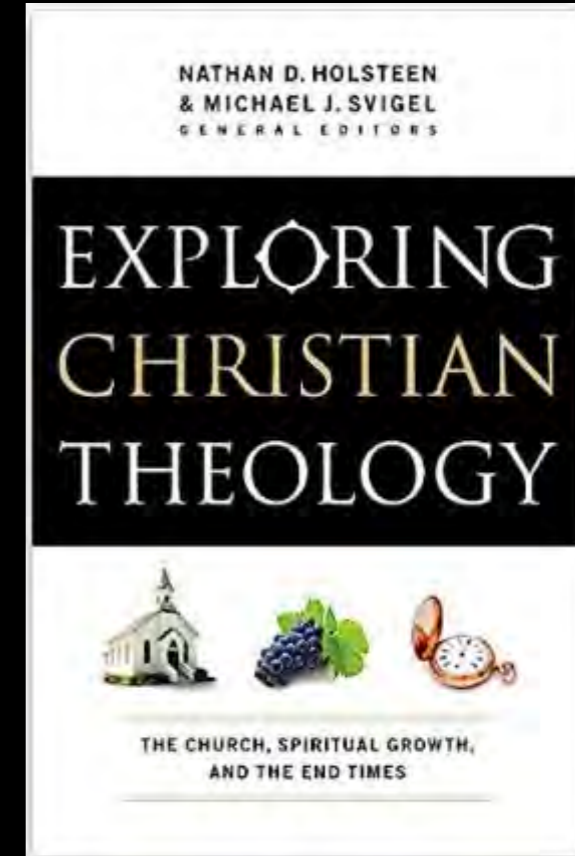
# Recent Southern Baptist Convention Issue

- Baptist Faith and Message 2000
  - Article 4: “Its two scriptural offices are that of pastor/elder/overseer and deacon. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor/elder/overseer is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.”
- Constitutional amendment affirmed
  - A church in cooperation with the denomination “affirms, appoints, or employs only men as any kind of pastor or elder as qualified by Scripture.”



# Seven Facts Never to Forget

1. The central principle of ecclesiology is a saving relationship with God in Christ.
2. The visible aspects of the church must serve, honor, and develop the invisible reality of the church.
3. Variety (diversity) in Christ's body is God's design.
4. Scripture is not silent on how we ought to "do" this thing called *church*.
5. Sanctification and justification are inseparably bound together.
6. Sanctification is a work of the Holy Spirit that involves the believer's responsible participation.
7. Sanctification is a team sport.

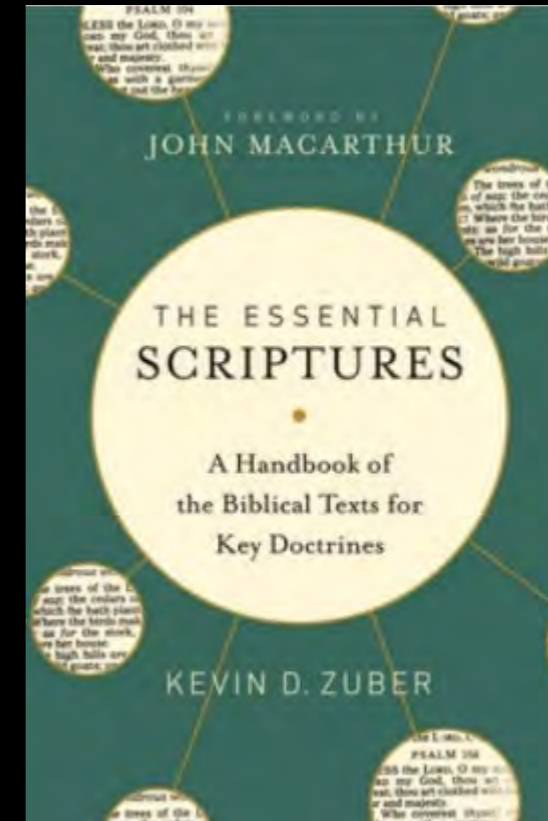


Nathan D. Holsteen, Created in Christ Jesus: Church, Churches, and the Christian Life, in Exploring Christian Theology: The Church, Spiritual Growth, and the End Times, vol. III (2014), 82.



# The Essential Scriptures

- Drawing from the literal and trustworthy New American Standard Bible, scholar and theologian Kevin Zuber gives you the biblical underpinnings for every doctrine, organized around the primary headings of systematic theology:
  - Prolegomena
  - Bibliology
  - Theology Proper
  - Christology
  - Pneumatology
  - Anthropology and Hamartiology
  - Soteriology
  - Angelology
  - Ecclesiology
  - Eschatology



[Dr. Kevin Zuber Interview - The Essential Scriptures \(michaelincontext.com\)](http://michaelincontext.com)



## Our Command – Matthew 28:19

- <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and *make* disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit



## Elements of the Church

- The church comprises believers from its beginning at Pentecost until the return of Christ (**Acts 2; 1 Thes 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:51-58**)
- Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the church carries out Christ's work in the world (**John 15:26; Acts 1:8**)
- The purpose of the church is to worship, praise, and glorify God by proclaiming the gospel of Christ Jesus to the entire world (**Mt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8**)





# Apostles Creed

- I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He arose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. **I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.**



# Nicene Creed

I believe in one God the Father Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets. **And one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.** I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.



## The Purpose of the Local Church

“To worship, praise, and glorify God by proclaiming the gospel of Christ Jesus to the entire world, by teaching His Word, by seeking Him through earnest prayer, by equipping the saints to walk, serve, and fellowship in the power of the Holy Spirit, and by keeping the ordinances.”

(Mt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8, 2:42-46; 1 Cor 11:24,25; 14:26; Eph 4:11-16; Col 1:24-28; 1 Tim 4:11)