**Second Dimension – Christianity Experienced**

**Segment VI – The Culmination (Concepts 54-60)Progressive Bible Concepts - #56 “The Centrality of the Church”**

**Introduction:**

* Is the church an organism or an institution?
* How do you define the church?

**Session Overview:**

* Definition – gathering, assembly, congregation
* Forms of the Church
* Foundation of the Church
* Images of the Church
* Marks of the True Church
* Characteristics of a Healthy Church

**Etymology:**

* OT – *qal* - the word means ‘to c\_\_\_\_\_\_’
* NT – *ekklesia* – *ek* out; *kaleo call;* the word means ‘to call o\_\_\_\_’
* Synagogue – *sun* – t\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; *ago* – c\_\_\_\_\_\_. Hence, an assembly called ‘out’ or called ‘together’ by God.
* Church – *kerk* or *kirche* is derived from the word *kuriake* which means ‘b\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the L\_\_\_\_\_\_’ – designating the body of believers who are connected to Jesus, its head.

**Definition & Characteristics:**

* Definition – *“the a\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God’s called ones who belong to Him”*
* The NT tends to refer to the church as those who by f\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the person and work of Jesus Christ have entered into a new relationship with God and other l\_\_\_\_\_\_-m\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ believers, who are the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit on earth, who have been given the task of p\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the present and future reign of God in the world, both by the verbal declaration of the word and the administration of the s\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The church is f\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on the past work of Christ in his death, resurrection, and ascension, points to the return of Christ in the future, and s\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to live in love by the power of the Holy Spirit in the present. *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms, pg 26*

**Various Forms of the Church:**

1. The c\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ church – specific to a c\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. The d\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ church – meets in a h\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. The r\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ church – a group of churches in a region
4. The v\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Church – professing believers worldwide at any given point in time
5. The u\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Church – true believers on earth and in heaven of all time

**New Testament Forms:**

1. A Local church – designates a group of believers in some defined l\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ “

*“And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him to A\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. And for an entire year they met with the c\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”* Acts 11:26

**The gathering together of all believers in a given community.**

1. A domestic church – designates a group of believers meeting in a h\_\_\_\_\_\_ – *“Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.”* Romans 16:23

Church buildings were forbidden, non-existent, or ill-advised due to persecution in the first century. Wealthy or prominent persons set aside l\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ r\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in their homes for worship and fellowship.

1. A network of churches – designates a group of churches in a g\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ region – “*So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.” Acts 9:31*

May imply an o\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ connection among these churches like a diocese, presbytery, district, or an association.

1. The Visible Church – designates the worldwide body of those who outwardly p\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Christ and c\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for worship purposes under the s\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of spiritual leaders at a given point in time.

*“Give no offense either to Jews or Greeks or to the church of God…”* I Cor 10:32

The body of professing believers on earth at any given point in history.

1. The Universal Church *–* the entire group of believers in heaven and earth, p\_\_\_\_\_\_, p\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and f\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who are spiritually united to Christ as their Lord and savior*.*

*“And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the c\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”* Eph 1:22, 23

*“…that He might p\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to Himself the church in all her g\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.” Eph 5:27*

*“And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every t\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and t\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and p\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and n\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” Rev 5:9*

*“After these things I looked, and behold, a great m\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands;” Rev 7:9*

**Jesus’ Vision for the Church:**

*“I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”* Matthew 18:16

* *You are Peter* – *petros* – masc – s\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ stone, detached stone which is carried around, thrown or easily moved
* *Upon this rock – petra –* fem – b\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ upon which foundations were built; c\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ rock from which tombs were hewn; used by Josephus to describe the m\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ fitted stone blocks in the towers of Jerusalem
* *I will build My church – fut ind act* – b\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, c\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* *The gates – pule -* a l\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ type of gate in the w\_\_\_\_\_\_ of a city, palace, or temple; opposed to a smaller door to a house/room
* *Of Hades – adou –* region of the departed lost s\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* *Will not overpower it – katisxuo – fut ind act –* overpower, have mastery over, p\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, win out, d\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, overcome

**NT Images:**

1. P\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and S\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the T\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ – I Tim 3:15
2. F\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God – Eph 2:19
3. B\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Christ – I Cor 12:27
4. T\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God – Eph 3:21
5. C\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God – Heb 12:22
6. F\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ – John 10:14-16

**NT Images – Pillar and Support:**

* *“…but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the c\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the living God, the p\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and s\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the t\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” I Tim 3:15*
* *The church is the r\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (v\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) of revealed t\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that flows in and out of the g\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.*

**NT Images – Family:**

* *“While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. Someone said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.” But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, “Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My b\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and s\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and m\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” Matt 12:46-50*
* *The church is a reservoir of g\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for u\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sinners.*

**NT Images – Body:**

* *“For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, s\_\_ a\_\_\_\_\_\_ is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all b\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ into one b\_\_\_\_\_\_…for the body is not one member, but many. If the foot says, “Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear says, “Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body*. *If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be?”*
* *If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now G\_\_\_\_ has p\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He d\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. If they were all one member, where would the body be? But now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; or again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” I Cor 12:12-21*

***The church is a body with deep i\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ members.***

**NT Images – Temple:**

* *“And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God,* *you also, as living s\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy p\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, to offer up spiritual s\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For this is contained in Scripture: “Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.” This precious value, then, is for you who believe;*
* *“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may p\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the e\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Him who has called you out of darkness into His m\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. I Peter 2:4-10.*

***The church is a temple of God-centered w\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.***

**NT Images – City of God:**

* *“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the c\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the living God, the h\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and c\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.” Heb 12:22-24*

***The church is a community with s\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that brings o\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.***

**NT Images – Flock:**

* *“I am the good s\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the s\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also and they will hear My voice; and they will become one f\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with one s\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” John 10:14-16*

***The church is a s\_\_\_\_\_\_ place for believers in a h\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ world.***

**NT Images:**

1. Pillar and Support of the Truth – I Tim 3:15
2. Family of God – Eph 2:19
3. Body of Christ – I Cor 12:27
4. Temple of God – Eph 3:21
5. City of God – Heb 12:22
6. Flock – John 10:14-16

**Marks of the Church:**

1. The T\_\_\_\_\_\_ P\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the Word of God – *“Preach the word, in season and out of season…”* II Tim 4:2
2. The R\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ A\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the Sacraments – *“…baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit…”* Matthew 28:19; *“Do this in remembrance of me…”* I Cor 11:23-30
3. The F\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ E\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Church Discipline – *“If your brother sins, rebuke him…if he does not listen, tell it to the church…”* Matthew 18:15-17, I Cor 5

**Tensions:**

* “Life is recognizable in its e\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
* “F\_\_\_\_\_\_ (expression) follows f\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (intent, purpose). Popularized by an American architect, Louis Sullivan.
* “O\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (life) precedes o\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (structure) – structure supports life.
* Individual is above the institution
* Function d\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the form
* Organism i\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the organization
* Individual v\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the institution

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**Summary – Concept 56**

* God has graciously established His church as the caretaker of His eternal gospel, as the nurturing, discipling, and preserving organism for his people, and as an authenticating witness to the world.

**Next Week – Concept 57**

* The Sacraments