

The Baptist Faith and Message **Article 6 – The Church**

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

I. The ORIGIN of the Church

A New Testament church

Matthew 16:15-19 – “Upon this rock I will build My church.”

II. The OWNER of the Church

of the Lord Jesus Christ

You own something because you bought it.

When did Christ “buy” the church?

For you were slain and did purchase for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. Rev. 5:9

A. An AUTONOMOUS body

is an autonomous

After the foundation was laid by the apostles, NT churches were autonomous. Now that we have the Word of God, we need no higher ecclesiastical authority.

Example: Revelation 2-3, God speaks through an apostle to the pastor of the church.

Doesn't First Timothy 3:1 speak of the “bishop?”

The word “bishop” is simply a synonym for the pastor, shepherd, or overseer. The same word is used of Christ in 1 Peter 2:25 where Jesus is called the “bishop of our souls.” (KJV). The NASB translates the word as “shepherd” and “guardian.”

Incidentally, the office of bishop did not exist in the Catholic religion at the time of 1 Timothy.

Doesn't First Timothy 4:14 speak of the “presbytery?”

This simply refers to the group of leaders that anointed Timothy, thereby embracing and affirming him as their pastor.

Explain the autonomy of the SBC.

B. An ASSEMBLED bride

local congregation

Rom. 1:7, Col. 1:2, Philippians 1:1, Hebrews 10:23-25

Epistles were written to local churches.
Revelation 2-3 was written to local churches.

There are a few cases in which “church” refers to the universal church. Almost all instances refer to a local church.

You need a local church. Don’t look for a perfect church.

Do you know what you call a man who insists on finding a perfect wife? You call him, “single.”

C. An ACKNOWLEDGED believer

of baptized believers

See Acts 2:41

As we will see next week, water baptism is an acknowledgment by the church that the person is a believer.

D. An ACCEPTED belief

associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel

Acts 2:42

It is important what our members believe.

III. The ORDINANCES of the Church

observing the two ordinances of Christ

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:25

They are water baptism (Matthew 28:19) and the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:23-30)

IV. The OBLIGATIONS of the Church

governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.

A. Submission to Christ (governed by His laws)

Colossians 1:18 – *He is also is the head of the body, the church.* Colossians 1:18

Most of the things people have gotten mad with me about are things that I have ABSOLUTELY NO CONTROL OVER.

Where the Bible is silent we dare not speak.
Where the Bible speaks we dare not be silent.

B. Service to Christ *exercising the gifts*

But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 1 Corinthians 12:7

1 Corinthians 12-14 speaks of our spiritual gifts. These gifts are to be used in the context of the local church.

This is another reason you CANNOT be a faithful Christian without being a part of a local church. That's like being a faithful "eye" without being part of a body.

C. Soul-winning for Christ (*seeking to extend the gospel...*)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.
Romans 1:16

V. The OPERATION of the Church

Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord.

The church can express its democratic processes in many ways.

In Acts 6:3-6, the crowd "selected" their own leadership.

VI. The OFFICES of the Church

Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

A. A Plurality of Leadership

In the NT, there was spiritual authority granted to church leaders.

Page 91: There are only 2 offices. They are pastor and deacon. The NT words that Baptist identify with the pastoral office include terms translated as *bishop, elder, and pastor*. Each term adds to our understanding of the pastoral office and the pastor's responsibility. *Bishop* means *overseer* - someone who oversees the work of others. Jews used the word *elder* to designate someone who possessed dignity and wisdom. In the Christian church *elder* was used for someone who presided over assemblies and served as a counselor. The term *pastor* describes a shepherd who loves and cares for the believers who make up the congregation..

We find these in First Timothy 3. (TURN THERE)

There are three ways this plurality of leadership finds expression in SBC churches today.

1. Deacon-led

Pastor (and pastoral staff) - preacher of the word and protector of doctrine, primary caregiver to the body, assist deacons in administration

Deacons - assist pastor(s) in care giving to body and primary administrators in church

2. Staff -led

Pastor (and pastoral staff) - preacher of the Word and protector of doctrine, primary caregiver to the body, primary administrator

Deacons - assist pastors in care giving to body, assist pastors in administration

3. Elder-led

Pastors (and lay elders) - preacher of the Word (teaching pastor) and protector of doctrine (all elders including pastor) administration (pastor and elders) care giving to body (pastor and pastoral staff)

Deacons - assist pastor in care giving to body.

Which is the most biblical? Which are we?

B. A Restriction for Leadership

It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. 1 Timothy 3:1

The last phrase of the BFM deals with the exclusion of the office of pastor to male leadership.

This has nothing to do with ability but with authority.
It's not a matter of might but of right.

The operative issue here is one of authority, not function.

I may ask a woman to teach on a certain subject.
She is operating under my authority, not her own.

For this reason some Bible-loving churches allow women to teach in couples' classes.

There are differences of opinion here but the bottom line is a woman cannot Biblically pastor a church.

Groups that have deviated from this teaching are invariably groups who do not fully understand Scriptural authority.

If you profit from the teaching of a female pastor it is the power of God's Word at work.

Some say Paul was giving a societal reason.
Others say it was a situational reason.
But Paul refers to the fall into sin and cites a Scriptural reason.

(1 Timothy 3:1-13)

All parts of speech in these verses are masculine.

All pronouns, adjectives, and modifiers are masculine.

“Common sense” dictates that many of the qualifications could only apply to men.