

## Systematic Theology IV: Church and Sacraments

### Reformed Theological Seminary Washington DC

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#### Course description

This course is an introduction to the doctrines of the church and the sacraments. We will explore the centrality of the church in the work of Christ and examine the nature, structure, leadership and marks of the church, leading to a discussion of the sacraments of the church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Topics include the following: high and low views of the church, Simon Peter and the foundation of the church, the significance of Pentecost, Paul's metaphors for the church, church officers, marks of the church, the covenant, baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

#### Texts

J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book IV

Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*

E.P. Clowney, *The Church*

J. Murray, *Christian Baptism*

Robert Wilken, "Church as Culture" (electronic)

Cyprian, *On the Unity of the Catholic Church* (electronic)

Stanley Hauerwas, "Church as God's New Language," (electronic)

Stanley Hauerwas, "Peacemaking: the Virtue of the Church" (electronic)

#### Other helpful texts on Church and Sacraments (but not required)

L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 555-658

I.H. Marshall, *Last Supper, Lord's Supper*

R.B. Kuiper, *The Glorious Body of Christ*

D. Bannerman, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Church*

J. Bannerman, *The Church of Christ*

G. C. Berkouwer, *The Church*

G. C. Berkouwer, *The Sacraments*

G. Vos, *The Kingdom of God and the Church*

R. J. Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*

G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*

R. Bruce, *The Mystery of the Lord's Supper*

H. Kung, *The Church*

J. Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*

#### Evaluation

50% Exam—based on lectures and readings

10% Calvin reading assignments

10% Clowney reading report

10% Murray reading report

20% Paper—Please write a 1,500 word paper on any topic related to the course.

## Course Schedule

### Monday

- I. Introduction: Overview of the Doctrine of the Church
- II. The Building of the Church
  - A. The foundation of the church in the promise of Christ, Matt.16:18
  - B. The Church Jesus builds
  - C. Church and Kingdom
  - D. The "Peter Saying"
  - E. The Pattern of Church building
    - i. Mk.1:13-14 prototype
    - ii. The significance of Pentecost
    - iii. The pattern in Acts
- III. The Nature of the Church
  - A. Church as fulfillment of covenant community
  - B. Church as the assembly of Christ
  - C. Central designations and images of the Church

### Tuesday

- I. Leadership and Organization
  - A. Organization in Gospels
  - B. Organization in Acts
  - C. Eldership
  - D. Diaconate
  - E. Ministry of Women in early church
- II. Attributes of the Church
- III. Marks of the Church

### Wednesday

- I. Sacraments
  - A. Introduction and definition
  - B. Number of sacraments
  - C. Sign and Seal
  - D. Covenant
- II. Baptism
  - A. Significance
  - B. Mode of baptism
  - C. Subjects of baptism
- III. Lord's Supper
  - A. Institution
  - B. Function
  - C. Meaning
    - i. Memorial
    - ii. Blessing
    - iii. Communion
    - iv. Proclamation
    - v. Anticipation
  - D. The Presence of Christ

## Calvin Assignments

### Calvin, *Institutes*, Book IV

Why are there external aids? Why a Church? What is the Church? Is the Roman Catholic Church a true church? According to Calvin, how did the Catholics defend their traditional worship and doctrine? What is the standard by which true worship is measured? What does the Church do? How is discipline administered? For what purpose did God institute discipline? How does Calvin define a sacrament? What sacraments does Calvin admit? What does Baptism achieve? What happens in the Lord's Supper? Can you figure out what the Catholic position on the Lord's Supper is that he is rejecting? Why does he reject it? Why was the Supper instituted? What good does it do? How do the words of consecration work for Calvin?

### Calvin, *Institutes*, pp. 1276-1359

1. According to Calvin, why is the Word important in the sacrament? Give detail.
2. How can the word "sacrament" be variously used?
3. What does Calvin think of rebaptisms? Why?
4. What do you make of Calvin's "seed (of repentance and faith)" in the infants of believers

### Calvin, *Institutes*, pp. 1359-1484

1. List the terms in which Calvin describes our communion with Christ in the Sacred Supper. Be expansive and give details.
2. Why is Calvin so upset about the Roman Mass?
3. What Roman sacraments does Calvin deny and why?
4. What does Calvin think of Roman orders and why?

## Reading Report

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did you read the entire book?
2. Summarize in one paragraph the thesis and argument of the text.
3. Summarize in one paragraph the author's method of proving her or his thesis. How does she or he "get there"?
4. For you, what are some of the main points of the book?
5. What were some key points or passages that you think are relevant for a course on the church and sacraments?
5. Internal positive assessment: Assuming the author's point of view and being aware of what the author hoped and intended to do, write at least two paragraphs about some strengths of the text. To what extent did the author "pull it off" and accomplish a significant part of what she or he intended?
6. Internal negative assessment: Assuming the author's point of view and being aware of what the author hoped and intended to do, write at least two paragraphs about some weaknesses of the text. How many of your reservations about the text can be expressed from a point of view intrinsic to the text or assuming the author's point of view?
7. External positive evaluation: From your perspective and evaluating things in terms of your own commitments and purposes, what are some strengths of the text? Please write at least two paragraphs.
8. External negative evaluation: From your perspective and evaluating things in terms of your own commitments and purposes, what are some weaknesses of the text? Please write at least two paragraphs.