

Countryside Baptist Church, Pasig City

Baptist Ministerial Seminary

Sunday Seminary Lecture on **The Church Covenant**

Lectured by: Deacon Eduardo Marin, D.Min.

Lesson 1: Introduction: Church as Covenant Community October 1, 2017

Broad Outline with tentative dates:

I.	Introduction: Church as Covenant Community	October 1
II.	Church Covenant, Paragraph 1 (part 1)	October 8
III.	Church Covenant, Paragraph 1 (part 2)	October 15 (27 th Anniversary)
IV.	Church Covenant, Paragraph 2 (part 1)	October 22
V.	Church Covenant, Paragraph 2 (part 2)	October 29
VI.	Church Covenant, Paragraph 2 (part 3)	November 5
VII.	Church Covenant, Paragraph 3 (part 1)	November 12
VIII.	Church Covenant, Paragraph 3 (part 2)	November 19
IX.	Church Covenant, Paragraph 3 (part 3)	November 27
X.	Church Covenant, Paragraph 4 (part 1)	December 3
XI.	Church Covenant, Paragraph 4 (part 2)	December 10
XII.	Church Covenant, Paragraph 5 (part 1)	December 17
XIII.	Church Covenant, Paragraph 5 (part 2)	December 24
XIV.	Concluding Reflections, Final Exam	December 31

Reference:

- (1) The Church Covenant by Wayne Reynolds
- (2) Lectures on Dogmatics 8: Doctrine of the Church (c) 2014 by Noel Espinosa

The Early Churches

1. In the Gospels – the only reference: Matt. 18.15-17
2. In the Book of Acts – The Jerusalem Church, The Antioch Church

Pauline Picture of the Local Church: Ephesians 4.1-16

Note: The description here is the ideal body-life that every local church must aspire after.

1. The unity of the church stands on fellowship with the Spirit and faith
 - The fact of oneness (indicative) becomes a duty of 'endeavoring to keep the unity' (imperative)
 - The common individual experience turns into a community pledge
2. The ministry of the church is built on teaching leaders and gifted members.
 - Christ Himself gives the men who will lead the church in teaching and ministry
 - With the experience of grace is the promised provision of gifts to every member
 - No one is without any gift; and no one has all the gifts – mutual reliance by each on all; and by all on each
3. The commitment of the church is communal service to one another
 - The community is aspiring after growth in the stature of the fullness of Christ
 - Everyone in the church has a share and supply for the whole community

"In a healthy Church there is a continual work of building up: construction, not destruction, is its proper business - promoting peace, purity, prayerfulness, trust, activity in the work of the

Lord, but all in love, the absence of which makes winter instead of summer, declension instead of progress, death instead of life." (Pulpit Commentary)

Point: The NT churches are a rich source of example of the body-life of the church today

The Church as COVENANT COMMUNITY

This is a good descriptive terminology for the local church

- It covers the essentials of the church as we see in our models
- It links the church with the covenant community of the OT and the New Covenant context of the NT

Point: The composition of the church is created by the covenanting of its members.

1. Voluntarily Pledged

Note: Pledge is the basic concept of the covenant. Between two or more equal parties, it carries the nature of a solemn and legally binding agreement. A covenant stipulates binding obligations, with penalty upon violation.

Point: The members enter into the church voluntarily, but once entered, they are pledged

- (a) Baptismal Entry: Baptism is the initiating/covenanting ordinance of confessed discipleship
 - (1) All disciples of Christ are assumed to be baptized
 - (2) the efficacy of baptism is oriented in the reality of faith in the gospel
 - (3) Baptism identifies the disciples with Christ and His saving death-resurrection
 - (4) Baptism incorporates the baptized into the local church and unites with its faith
- (b) Confessional unity – the church is composed of those who pledge to keep the confessed faith of the church
- (c) Ministerial mutuality – the church is composed of those who pledge to serve one another

2. Regularly Gathered

Note: In the usage of *ekklesia*, we have seen how the idea of gathering is central.

Point: The identity of the church as *church* is vitally grounded on the fact of its gathering.

- This is rooted in the OT *qahal*, congregation of YHWH gathered in the presence of God
- This is in contrast to the idea of a parochial/ territorial/ denominational church
- This is contrary to the modern practice of remote-control church, e.g. TV church, Internet Church, Multicast Megachurch, etc.

3. Instructionally Ordered

Note: The leaders of the church are described in terms of their teaching functions

Point: The church is governed around the interest of teaching, and being ruled by, the Word

- This is grounded on the apostolic identity of the church
- This is contrary to the primarily managerial/ psychological understanding of leadership

4. Divinely Mandated

The functions of the church are derived from her identity as belonging to the Triune God

Point: The tasks of the church are those that are defined by God himself, not the people in, or outside, the church

- The church is not primarily a sociological/ cultural unit to derive its tasks from society
- The church is much less a commercial enterprise to define its tasks by the market

Covenant commitment is the missing component in many churches today.