



# **NEW LIFE**

## **BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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*“For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:9)*

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## **The Prevailing Church**

*By Dr. Simon J. Kistemaker, professor emeritus of New Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida. Adapted from TABLETALK from Ligonier Ministries – December 2008 & January 2009*

The word church is fundamentally a Christian word and belongs exclusively to Christianity. Although other religions have terms such as synagogue and mosque, only Christians legitimately call their house of worship “church.”

There are churches that are named after places and people, but they can never claim origin or ownership, because Christ owns the church. Actually, Jesus told Simon Peter: “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church” (Matt. 16:18; see also 18:17). The Greek word for church is ekklesia, which means being called out of this world of humanity to form a body of believers that belongs exclusively to Jesus. This is not to say that there is no continuity with God’s people of the Old Testament era. Of course there is. It is better to say that the church consists of a new company of believers guided by the message of both prophets and apostles. In other words, these believers find their origin in both the Old and New Testaments. There is a golden thread that is woven throughout the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation with this divine message: “I will be your God and you shall be my people.”

The church is universal and exists throughout the world in spite of oppression and persecution. All believers everywhere recite the words of the Apostles’ Creed: “I believe...in the holy catholic (universal) church, the communion of saints.” And that church will remain until this world comes to an end. It received the promise Jesus gave the church as a last word before His ascension: “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). Indeed, this is a reassuring promise to every believer. Jesus accompanies us every step on life’s way and during every moment of each day.

In His parting words Jesus said much more to His disciples and to all His followers. He gave the church the words that are known as the Great Commission (vv. 19–20). In effect He said, after you have gone out into the world with the gospel of salvation, you are to make disciples of all nations. He did not intend to say that Jewish apostles had to go out only to fellow Jews living in dispersion but rather that the gospel should be preached to all people worldwide.

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Paul, who was called the Apostle to the Gentiles, established churches that admitted both Jews and Gentiles. Indeed, during his first missionary journey he established the churches of Lystra and Derbe in the central part of Turkey, which was completely Gentile. And while Paul was a prisoner in Rome for two years in his own rented house that became a mission headquarters, he sent missionaries throughout the Roman Empire, that is, to the end of the world (Acts 28:28–31; compare 1:8). Similarly, the apostle Thomas went as far as the southwestern coast of India to the state of Kerala. Even today the Christians there bear the name of Saint Thomas in their language, Mar Thoma. Their tradition goes back to the middle of the first century and provides the information that Thomas established seven churches there.

The apostles understood the command of Jesus literally: “make disciples of all nations.” This command is an imperative with continued force. The word disciple is not to be realized by merely making converts, for this term actually means being a learner, that is, one who receives adequate training. It is telling indeed that in the book of Acts, Luke introduces various people with the term disciple. For instance, in Acts 9:10 he identified Ananias of Damascus as a disciple whom Jesus sent as an emissary to Paul. In other words, in the four Gospels the immediate followers of Jesus are known as the twelve disciples. But after Pentecost, these twelve are designated as apostles and new converts become known as disciples.

When Jesus said, “Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19), He told us to do this by following two steps: first, by baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; and second, by teaching them to observe all that Jesus commanded. After an initial period of instruction, prospective members are baptized in the name of the triune God and become an essential part of the church that gives them both privileges and duties.

We are in a vital relationship with the triune God, which means that the Father calls us His sons and daughters, that the Son regards us as His brothers and sisters, and that the Holy Spirit dwells within us. There is still more, for Paul mentions that we are heirs and fellow heirs with Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17). What a source of comfort! This means that any time of day or night we may call on the Father’s name and ask Him to help us with insight, wisdom, and understanding because we are His offspring. We can call on Jesus anytime and anywhere because He is our brother. And we are able to call on the Holy Spirit to fill us with courage and to protect us from evil and harm.

Privileges and duties go together. In making disciples, Jesus commanded they be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and to teach them to observe all that He commanded. The second aspect of this commission (we dealt with the first last month), teaching disciples to obey Jesus, is first and foremost the duty of pastors and teachers — to teach the people the Scriptures and secondly to exhort them to faithfully commit the Word to heart. To put it in simple terms, the people look to their pastor for instruction; they see him as the key person in the church.

It is a fact of life that people come to the worship service usually for only one hour, half of which is taken up by singing and praying. This implies that the second half is for biblical instruction for a period that lasts more or less for thirty minutes. As a result, unless there is diligent Scripture reading at home, a knowledge of the Bible’s content leaves much to be desired. The well-known statistician George Barna conducted a survey of Bible knowledge among American church-goers and came to this conclusion.

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It is also quite striking that the aspect of church life that receives the greatest amounts of time, attention, and energy — that of teaching people the content of the Bible — is one of the two areas in which people feel least equipped. The recent trend toward the adoption of technology to help in the teaching of important biblical truths is a welcome addition to the toolbox of our preachers and religious educators. Yet the research still suggests that most people do not feel as if they are learning enough about God, the Christian faith, or their role in the world — and most of them don't seem to care.

There is more. Last year the successful preacher Bill Hybels, pastor of the Willow Creek Community Church, reported that he had failed the twelve thousand members of his mega-church. He acknowledged that he made a mistake in not producing spiritually mature Christians. He reached people by the thousands, but he did not make them disciples. Hybels is not alone. Upon self-examination, pastors agree with him. The goal of every pastor is to equip church members to go into the workaday week with the knowledge of God's Word and apply it to every facet of life. That is, the one who buys and sells must realize that God's all-seeing eye always observes every transaction. To put it differently, all of us are always in the presence of God, a concept encapsulated in the Latin *coram Deo*.

On October 10, 1898, the Dutch theologian and statesman Dr. Abraham Kuyper delivered his Stone Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary. In them he set out a Christian worldview by stating that there is not so much as the space of a square inch of which Christ has not said, "It is mine." Therefore, anyone who fills a respectable occupation in life must always be subservient to Jesus in that occupation. Because in Him, so Paul writes, are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3). This means that all life's facts and figures are the property of Christ.

A distinction must be made between the concept that the church is an organization or an organism. In most organizations individual members are asked to pay annual dues, but when a member at some time fails to contribute the money, his membership is dropped as a matter of fact. This illustrates that an organization is not a living entity, as there is a businesslike approach to membership. By contrast, to say that the church is an organism, we immediately sense that an organism is alive. An organism throbs with life and constantly grows and expands. It takes an all-encompassing approach to life: the rearing of children in a Christian home; the relationship of husband and wife in an atmosphere of love and trust; the guiding and directing of teenagers to live a life that honors God; reaching out to those who are in need and supplying their wants; visiting the sick and the elderly; praying fervently for the coming of God's kingdom.

In other words, the church is not merely a place where people gather on Sunday morning for an hour or two. It is not merely listening to the pastor's sermon, which often is forgotten within twenty-four hours. It is taking the Word of God seriously into all the components of everyday life and applying Scripture's teachings to business and labor, to the relation of medical doctors and patients, to lawyers and their clients, to teachers and students, to the duties of government officials and ordinary citizens, to presidents, prime ministers, and legislators, and to every one of us in respect to those who have been given authority over us.

How then shall we live and look to the future? By trusting the Lord our God and by obeying His precepts. Living with Him day by day spells a future that is bright with radiant glory, for it is God who is leading us along life's pathway. With the psalmist we say, "Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture" (Ps. 100:3).

# WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

Our worship services begin promptly at **11.00 am** and **4.00 pm**.

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

| Worship Services   |   |   | WELCOME  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Morning</b>   | <b>Today: 02/08/2009</b>                  | <b>Next Week: 09/08/2009</b>                                | We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We like to welcome Betty Agyepong (Evelyn's mother), Hui Ning Lim, Janet Koh & sister, and Kim Hui to our worship services last Lord's Day.   |
| <i>Chairman:</i>   | Jonathan Kim                              | Joey Seow   |  |
| <i>Preacher:</i>   | Rev Timothy Ki                            | Rev Timothy Ki  |  |
| <i>Message:</i>  | Why do I have to be a Christian? – Part 3 | Why do I have to be a Christian? – Part 5                   |  |
| <i>Text:</i>   | Genesis 2:4-8                             | Hebrews 9:27  |  |
| <i>Organist:</i>   | Joy                                       | Anthony   |  |
| <b>Evening</b>   |   |   |  |
| <i>Chairman:</i>   | Jonathan Kim                              | Joey Seow   | <b>NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>  |
| <i>Preacher:</i>   | Rev Timothy Ki                            | Rev Timothy Ki  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Calling of Resident Minister:</b> Continue to pray for the Lord's calling for Rev Timothy Ki to serve as our resident minister. Rev Ki will be here for the months of July and August. Pray for his visa application.</li> <li>• <b>Pray for the recent bereavement of Melissa's brother in Malaysia.</b> Joey and family have flown to M'sia to be with Melissa's family. Pray that God will comfort the family in this time of bereavement.</li> <li>• <b>Pray for those who are sick:</b> - Yetta's mum (upcoming radiotherapy sessions), Constance (ankle), Douglas (knee pain), Barbara (Alzheimer's), Prema (thyroid and skin condition), Eld Jack Ford (old age and knees), Margaret (Asthma, Hay fever, recovering her voice), Yanning (back pain after fall), Brian (awaiting appointment for wisdom tooth extraction).</li> <li>• <b>Pray for those who are on travel:</b> Sophia, Lee-Wei, Joshua &amp; Grace (S'pore), Nicolas (Belgium), Joey &amp; Family (Singapore/Malaysia)</li> <li>• <b>Pray for those who are still progressing with their studies:</b> Yetta, Hubert, Joshua, Christiana and Janet</li> <li>• <b>Pray for those seeking employment:</b> Joy</li> <li>• <b>Pray for visa applications:</b> Grace (UK), Joshua (Student visa), Joy (Post studies visa)</li> <li>• <b>Pray for those looking for accommodation:</b> Joy</li> </ul> |
| <i>Message:</i>  | Why do I have to be a Christian? – Part 4 | Why do I have to be a Christian? – Part 6                   |  |
| <i>Text:</i>   | Genesis 2:4-8, Hebrews 9:27               | Luke 16:19-31   |  |
| <i>Pianist:</i>  | Hubert                                    | Anthony   |  |
| Other Duties   |   |   |  |
|  | <b>Today: 02/08/2009</b>                  | <b>Next Week: 09/08/2009</b>                                |  |
| <i>Ushers</i>  | Daniel / Yetta                            | Daniel / Evelyn   |  |
| <i>Sunday Sch:</i>   | No Sunday School                          | No Sunday School  |  |
| <i>Lunch:</i>  | Maureen                                   | Sharon  |  |
| <i>Washing-up:</i>   | Volunteers                                | Volunteers  |  |
| <i>PA Crew:</i>  | John                                      | John  |  |
| Appointments of the Week   |   |   |  |
| Fri 07 Aug   | 7:30pm                                    | <b>Young Adults Fellowship:</b><br>No YAF                   |  |
| Sat 08 Aug   | 4:00pm                                    | <b>Prayer Meeting &amp; Bible Study:</b><br>Led by John Poh |  |
| Worship Service Collections  |   |   |  |
| <b>Offering:</b> £412.00   |   | <b>Lunch:</b> £59.00  |  |
| <h2 style="margin: 0;"><u>The Hidden Life</u></h2> <p style="margin: 0;"><i>Adapted from "In Green Pastures" by J.R. Miller, D.D.</i></p> <p style="margin: 0;">We are all conscious of living in this world, even at our best, far below our best. We are conscious, too, of possibilities of character hidden within us undeveloped, and of powers of helpfulness in our life which we have barely begun to exercise, but which might be drawn out into activity. We see hints and gleams, and we have glimpses now and then, of far more glorious life than we have yet reached. The highest attainments here are but the beginnings of sanctified life. The peace, joy, love, unselfishness, service, purity, holiness, reached in the ripest experiences of earthly sainthood are only dim intimations of what we may become — ay, of what we shall become. Our life is hid, concealed, with Christ in God.</p> |   |   |  |