

HERE I STAND

ARTICLE OF FAITH #11

THE CHURCH

1 Corinthians | 12:12-27

We believe in the Church, the community that confesses Jesus Christ as Lord, the covenant people of God made new in Christ, the Body of Christ called together by the Holy Spirit through the Word. God calls the Church to express its life in the unity and fellowship of the Spirit; in worship through the preaching of the Word, observance of the sacraments, and ministry in His name; by obedience to Christ, holy living, and mutual accountability.

The mission of the Church in the world is to share in the redemptive and reconciling ministry of Christ in the power of the Spirit. The Church fulfills its mission by making disciples through evangelism, education, showing compassion, working for justice, and bearing witness to the kingdom of God. The Church is a historical reality that organizes itself in culturally conditioned forms, exists both as local congregations and as a universal body, and also sets apart persons called of God for specific ministries.

God calls the Church to live under His rule in anticipation of the consummation at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Exodus 19:3; Jeremiah 31:33;
Matthew 8:11; 10:7; 16:13-19, 24; 18:15-20; 28:19-20;
John 17:14-26; 20:21-23;
Acts 1:7-8; 2:32-47; 6:1-2; 13:1; 14:23;
Romans 2:28-29; 4:16; 10:9-15; 11:13-32; 12:1-8; 15:1-3;
1 Corinthians 3:59; 7:17; 11:1, 17-33; 12:3, 12-31; 14:26-40;
2 Corinthians 5:11-6:1; Galatians 5:6, 13-14; 6:1-5, 15;
Ephesians 4:1-17; 5:25-27; Philippians 2:1-16;
1 Thessalonians 4:1-12; 1 Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 10:19-25;
1 Peter 1:1-2, 13; 2:4-12, 21; 4:1-2, 10-11;
1 John 4:17; Jude 24; Revelation 5:9-10)

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1. One of our biggest limitations when it comes to looking at the Church is that we see it through our **human,**
finite eyes.

“One of our great allies at present is the Church itself. Do not misunderstand me. I do not mean the Church as we see her spread out through all time and space and rooted in eternity, terrible as an army with banners. That, I confess, is a spectacle which makes our boldest tempters uneasy. But fortunately it is quite invisible to these humans. All your patient sees is the half-finished, sham Gothic erection on the new building estate.

“When he goes inside, he sees the local grocer with rather an oily expression on his face bustling up to offer him one shiny little book containing a liturgy which neither of them understands, and one shabby little book containing corrupt texts of a number of religious lyrics, mostly bad, and in very small print. When he gets to his pew and looks round him he sees just that selection of his neighbours whom he has hitherto avoided. You want to lean pretty heavily on those neighbours.

“Make his mind flit to and fro between an expression like ‘the body of Christ’ and the actual faces in the next pew. It matters very little, of course, what kind of people that next pew really contains. You may know one of them to be a great warrior on the Enemy’s side. No matter. Your patient, thanks to Our Father Below, is a fool. Provided that any of those neighbours sing out of tune, or have boots that squeak, or double chins, or odd clothes, the patient will quite easily believe that their religion must therefore be somehow ridiculous.”

C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters

2. If we can be made to focus on the **temporal**, we miss the **eternal**.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-27

The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-27

And if the ear says, “I am not part of the body because I am not an eye,” would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-27

The eye can never say to the hand, “I don’t need you.” The head can’t say to the feet, “I don’t need you.” In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, while the more honorable parts do not require this special care.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-27

So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.



3. You are part of this church because God has **put** you **here** as a part of the body and each of you have a **role** to **play**.

4. Christianity exists
only in relationship.

5. In order for the Body to function, each member is **needed**, and each member must be **doing** their **part**.

6. Each one of you have
a **role** to **play** in the
Kingdom of God.

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