

**TRIUMPHANT LIVING**  
**Taught by BISHOP JOHN RODGERS**  
**In Christ in the Body of Christ**  
**Session: June 21, 2013**

Gracious Father, we pray for Your Holy Catholic Church; fill us with all truth, and in all truth, and all peace; where we are corrupt, purify us; where we are in error, direct us; where in anything we are amiss, reform us; wherever right, strengthen us; where we are in need, provide for us; where we are divided, reunite us, for the sake of Jesus Christ, Your Son and our Savior. Amen.

As I understand my assignment, which I got last Friday, {LAUGHTER}, Bruce came up and said, “Are you going to be there next Friday?” I said, “Sure.” He said, “Good.” {LAUGHTER}. He had me! Lucky me. He wanted to talk about **in** Christ as **in** the Body of Christ or **in** the church, so that is what we are looking at. I hope to dash through this outline and I guess my aim is to make it clear that it is a more radical thing to be **in** the Body of Christ than most of us tend to assume. It is something that we all need to be reminded of, I think, with some regularity. So just following the outline, do you all have copies of the outline? I think there are some there.

The introduction is to be **in** Christ is to be **in** the Body of Christ. That is to say, there is no way to be **in** Christ without at the same time being **in** the Body of Christ. You may not yet have gotten into the visible church but you are still in the Body of Christ in the sight of God. If He sees us **in** Christ from the beginning, He sees us also then **in** the Body of Christ in the church.

Next, the biblical context of the church...the relational biblical context of the church. First, God in Himself is relational. Quite unique amongst the understanding of Who God is in the world is the triune understanding of God, His Trinity. That is, within His Own self there is a community so to speak. Then He makes us in His image. These are the context of the church, where it shows up so to speak. He makes us in His image and we are in relation...it takes two just to get us born by the grace of God, but we are meant for society as well as for solitude. Then He takes His first step into the whole realm of redemption by calling Abraham to form Israel as His own people. That is a visible community. A nation amongst the nations at that point.

Then the next big step is Jesus and His twelve, His disciples. A community set apart around Jesus as the center. You might say there is a discussion that is going on and it still goes on between us and the synagogue and that is who is at the center of it? Moses and the law or Jesus and the gospel? In a way, you could say that the church is a reformed movement within God’s people, Israel; but that’s another whole discussion.

Then the big transition takes place in the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, and then Pentecost and some refer to Pentecost as the birthday of the church. The church basically as we know it, that is with the apostles and then the Scriptures taking the place of the apostles, the Holy Spirit, and the church as it now exists...more or less...in history until Christ comes again.

So that is really the three places where you might say the church begins...at the calling of Israel, then with Jesus calling apart His disciples...12 by the way, is a very significant thing it is not, indicating that He is re-doing

around Himself the historic people of Israel, and then Pentecost. My point simply is that all the way through God's work, it is relational. Never is it just an isolated individual...not even in the nature of God Himself.

I want to teach you...sorry I don't have a place to write. My students used to say I wrote in tongues on the blackboard {LAUGHTER} and I would like to ....I told them it was OK as long as I was there to interpret. But I want to teach you at least one Greek word, ecclesia. In general...behind the New Testament in the kind of culture of the time, ecclesia meant an assembly, and you see it in Acts where the people in Ephesus are assembled together to do a public work...the assembly. I am focusing on this word because it is the word the apostles chose and the New Testament chooses to translate "church." Actually, the word "church" comes from another word...it comes from *curiokum*, which means belonging to the Lord, but it translates this word ecclesia, the assembly. So when you ask yourself, "Who are we as **in** the Body of Christ?" What does that really mean? One of the key ways to get at that is to explore this word ecclesia...the assembly. We'll look at some of the metaphors; there are over 200 metaphors and I've put 20 in here...I should have put 200. There are over 200 metaphors of the church. I thought I would not try to do all of them this morning. {LAUGHTER}. I just did a few...some of the key ones...and we may not even get to all of them.

The word ecclesia is the word that the New Testament chooses to describe us in the most radical sense. It is "ec" meaning apart, and "clesia called," meaning called apart. We are a community called apart and called together...both senses. Called apart from other communities, but also called to assemble. Both meanings are present in this word and both meaning that we are a distinct community but also that we are a community that meets with some regularity for solemn business. Behind this word in the Old Testament, the Septuagint, which was the Greek translation of the Old Testament, used the word ecclesia to translate a Hebrew word quhal. Quhal was "Israel assembled before God" to have God speak, which is a big deal because when He spoke lightning broke forth and people died, other people repented. When you were doing solemn business with God, quhal meant people assembled before God. They translated the word ecclesia so that was in the background of the New Testament writers, and when they wanted to talk about what we are and who we are, they used this word ecclesia. I was in Philadelphia one time and I walked by a synagogue and it said on the side...my Hebrew has pretty much disappeared...like Atlantis...beneath the level of consciousness...but I could still read it and it said, "Que Dash Quhal Israel" the Holy Assembly of Israel. I said, "There is a synagogue that understands who it is." The Holy Assembly of Israel, gathered together, assembled on Saturdays to hear from the Living God.

And so it is with us. We are a community that exists. First our identity is simply that we exist simply and only by God's call to us in Jesus Christ. It is only as **in** Christ that we are in the Body. That's who we are. We are that group out of all mankind that through Christ, God has assembled. Then we are also that group that has one of its chief functions to worship God. The assembled to hear from God, be transformed by God, and also to give God His due...to worship Him and to glorify Him. That's behind this word about us. Who are we? We are the people who are assembled around Jesus Christ, called into being by that relationship. If you don't have that relationship, you simply are not "church." He is the heart, soul, head, and center of who we are. As such, then, we have a bond with one another that is unique. In many ways since we belong to Christ, we belong to one another. We have a mindset that is different. It's true that the church is not a nation amongst other nations, we are scattered amongst the nations, but we are communities of one thing. That is another thing that I wanted to point out, that ecclesia is used both of the local congregation, it is used of a region, and it is used of the

universal church—same name. It is kind of like having the measles, each one (measle) is part of one thing, it is the expression of one thing. So wherever people are **in** Christ together honoring Him in the gospel and so forth, there the church appears. We'll come back to that in a minute.

Ecclesia is a big, big category for us. Some of the metaphors that speak or spell it out a bit...the body of Christ and if we had time we could look all these passages up. Let's turn to 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:12-26. You can't do this with all of these but I'm going to list a bunch of text for you as we go along and just write them down on the sheet and you can look them up later, otherwise we would never get anywhere.

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:12-26. "For just as the body is one and has many members and all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, Jews, or Greeks, slaves are free." (All of the divisions that divide mankind are swept away in Christ. That's why they say, 'You're showing difference to this guy because he has a lot of money.' Wrong. You do not have the picture then and that is not what it is all about. It is about being **in** Christ and if you are **in** Christ, then we are brothers, sisters, and all those divisions disappear.) "And all were made to drink of one Spirit."

Notice that all in the body receive the same spirit...the Holy Spirit. There are not those who have the Spirit and then those who do not have the Spirit. We had to struggle with this in the charismatic renewal and sometimes it is taught that these people have the Spirit and these people do not. Wrong. If you do not have the Spirit, you are not **in** Christ. If you are **in** Christ, you have the Spirit. Now how much the Spirit is used, is another question and we can talk about that too.

"For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body, that would not make it any less it a part of the body.' And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body, that it would not make it any less a part of the body?' If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body, each one of them as he chose. If all were a single organ, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you, or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those parts of the body which we think less honorable, are invested with the greater honor, and our un-presentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together. If one member is honored, all rejoice together."

Obviously, in this context he is talking about spiritual gifts and our use of those gifts with one another in the life of the Body of Christ. Several things about this metaphor of the body and we could look at more text, Ephesians 1:22-23...just write that down...which speaks of authority. The head having authority in the body. Also Ephesians 5:11-27. So here are the various kinds of emphases that we need to understand about our selves. We are to be united in the body, and mutually independent given our gifts and calling. We are under one head who is Christ and have a common life and purpose. We are in the Body of Christ.

The Temple of the Holy Spirit. 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:4-9 emphasizes worship and also witness. We are set apart to declare His wondrous works to the world. These metaphors begin to trace out the kind of calling that goes with our

being in the Body of Christ. The temple is a place where God made His name to dwell that Israel might know and worship God. If we are a Temple in the Spirit, we are living stones built together, and then again, we have the unity and community, but also worship.

Worship is very central to us. Worship is first and foremost not about our getting something but giving something to God...giving Him his due; but in so doing then He speaks to us and our lives are being affected for good, for transformation. People of God begins with Abraham calling once no people, now you are a people He says, He sets His love upon them; but they're also meant to be a witness to the nations. If you go back to Genesis 12:1-2 you see a double vision from the very beginning...that they are to be God's own people, beloved of God but also through them all the families of the earth are to be blessed. So you have God's eye on Israel because He loves Israel, as He does us...the followers of this. But also He has an eye on the world and our being instruments of His mission to the world. Israel is a mixed body and we will see that the Body of Christ is a mixed body...not all in the Body of Christ are **in** the Body of Christ. That will come up in a minute.

This is what I think that is the main thing Bruce wanted me to get across today. But hang on, that comes up shortly. Again, they are to declare by word and deed, Israel and the new Israel, God's grace and mercy.

We are a family, page number 5. We are reborn into the church. It is not something that we initiate ourselves. I don't know about you but I had very little to say about my conception in my mother's womb. It was done...I was called into being as that sperm hit that egg and suddenly I appeared by God's grace and mercy and not by anything that I achieved. So it is with us being **in** Christ before the foundations of the world. So also, our entering into the visible Body of Christ is by a new birth. John 1:12-13, "Those who receive Christ, he gives the authority and the right to become children of God." Part of His family.

Adoption. Ephesians 1:5. "We are predestined for adoption in Christ." Brought into the family.

Galatians 4:5. "We are adopted as sons." And in the Bible, that includes the daughters under the sons. The feminists don't like that but that is just the way it is.

Community. We are one another fellowship. It would be worth all of our time to have Bruce someday just take all the "one another" passages and go through them. Turn to Colossians 3 with me, if you would. I'm accepting of the erradicality begins to show up here. Colossians 3:15-17. This little section is a kind of a peek into the early church, the house church; it is helpful to keep in mind that the church in the New Testament, the ecclesia...the assembly...on the whole were small groups in homes; sometimes in the big city they might have common meetings but mostly they had to be, since we could not have buildings we were kind of illegitimate so to speak at that point, they would meet in homes and their homes were only so big and they knew each other. This is a little peak of the life together in the New Testament church.

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, through which in deed you were called in the one body; and be thankful." This passage is filled with being thankful. "Let the word of Christ dwell in your richly. Teach and admonish one another, in all wisdom..." You know gang, you cannot admonish somebody if you do not have a relationship with them or if you do, it is not going to go anywhere. They'll just say, "Who are you do get in my face." You have to know...a good rule is to say three nice things before you say the one you really want to get across. {LAUGHTER} It certainly means that it cannot be done simply in the assembly of the worship service,

right? One of the mistakes...I think there are two prominent mistakes about who we are as God's people **in** Christ. One is to say, "Well the church is a building." We know better than that...church could be [UNCLEAR] buildings for 300 years. The other is to say, "Well, church is a worship service." That is partly right because worship is so important for us as a people. We are really born for that, constituted for that. But is not just that we are a community and there are certain things you cannot get done in a large group such as this or a large worship service; one being to admonish one another. What if in the middle of the service you just started to admonish the guy next to you? "Your feet really smell, why don't you take a bath once in awhile?" This would not go down well and would not be terribly effective. "Let the word of Christ dwell within you and richly teach and admonish one another, bear one another's burdens..."

On and one it goes and we read in Scripture. "As Christ laid down his life for us, so ought we to lay down our lives for one another." As Christ laid down His life for us...that is sacrificially, it is radical is what I'm trying to say. I think I told you this before but I went through an episode where I was trying to help a lady who had a rolled her car over on the verge of a highway, and I could hear the siren of the people coming as someone had called it in, and I was standing there trying to help her and I said, "What can we do to help you? I'm OK, I'm a Quaker and I'll just stay with the nearest Quakers." And I thought, "I wouldn't say I am an Episcopalian and I'll just stay with the nearest Episcopalian." {LAUGHTER} You see, you get a little whiff of what the New Testament is all about. Lay down your life for one another as Christ laid down His life for us.

There is a little picture here of the importance of music in our life of worship. "Sing psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs." Notice psalms, hymns, spiritual songs—it is a full range. So you can enjoy the classical music, you could enjoy standard hymns with our wonderful teaching, you can even enjoy the kind of contemporary carols or whatever we want to call them, a few of which are going to abide—but only a few. [LAUGHTER]. But that touch the heart often. But they are all there, they are all ours. Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. "And whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus." That is Bruce's big emphasis. You minister where you are. You are in ministry. Ministry is just to be in the body but outside of the assembled body, you are still in the body and still ministering. "But whatever you do, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

Another comment might be that we don't do enough thanksgiving. If you had a service where you ask for prayers, it is more petition by far than it is thanksgiving. We really rob ourselves of much joy in the Lord because of that. It is worth having a discipline of saying, "I will be thankful...I will think about what it is that I'm thankful for." And you start to think about it and you have a lot to thankful for. I may have mentioned this, I was getting the car fixed one morning some years ago. I dropped it off early in the morning at the dealer and somebody was coming to pick me up and I thought that I missed my quiet time and that I better take a portion of Scripture, meditate on it and be thankful. And I thought, what do I have to be thankful for...this is going to cost me more than I want, it's early in the morning, and this has upset my whole schedule," so I began to list the things I'm thankful for; about the time they came to pick me up I was in great humor. {LAUGHTER}. Thanksgiving...it mentions it three times in that passage.

We are "one another" fellowship with Christ. We want to make...if I can find the sheet here...which I put someplace...did I drop it? Where did I put my sheet? Here they are. I want to talk about two distinctions; and this is what I think Bruce was most interested in my getting across while we are considering today. The word

“ecclesia” —two distinctions—two biblical distinctions: universal, regional, and local...the church. The local expression of the church can be found in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:2, the epistles written to the Church of God, which is at Corinth; that is a specific congregation to which you can send a letter. It is visible and local. Philippi...to all the saints who are at Philippi, together with the overseers and the deacons, the Episcopoi and the Acconoi. 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians to the Church of Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Those are local congregations of Christ’s church...St. Stephens, McKeesport; or St. Stephens, Sewickley, and so forth.

Then it is regional. Galatians 1:2. To the churches of Ecclesiae, to the churches...plural...in Galatia. Galatia was a region. So here the same word “ecclesia” refers not just to a local congregation but to a whole region of congregations. Probably, where Paul had gone on his first missionary journey and planted churches.

Then there is the universal church. Matthew 16:18. “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my” (ecclesia) “church.” That is not a local church, it is not a region, it is The Church.

What we have to conclude is that each cropping of the church is still part of the church.

Ephesians 1:22; 3:10; Colossians 1:18. It is important to realize that church exists both universally, and regionally, and locally; and as such, each expression of the church should be in as close fellowship and relationship to each other expression of the church as is practical and possible. From mutual encouragement for practical ministry—one time I was giving a talk in D.C. and at one corner there is a Roman Catholic Church and on the other corner was a Presbyterian Church and on another part of the corner was an Anglican, an Episcopal Church. And where I was in the Episcopal Church they were having a series on death and dying and I suggested that was not a peculiarly Episcopal problem. It could have had one course for all three of the churches, since they were still dying amongst the Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches.

Now will come back to the nature of that unity of the church in a minute. But I want to talk about the Biblical marks of the visible church. You have the visible church...this distinction is also Biblical. The visible church is the church as it is seen by men. You can see the visible church. Church as we ourselves meet it, know it to be, belong to. But the church is also invisible as seen by God, where only God can see the heart, and only God knows who in the visible church are really **in** Christ and **in** the church and who are in the institution but not yet **in** Christ. Now it is inevitable if you are going to have kids baptized and you are waiting for them to kind of get the message in some sense; but not only that, you just have hypocrites and some do not even know that they are hypocrites because of their understanding of what it is to be part of the church is so superficial that they think they are fine. They don’t know that you have to be **in** Christ to be in the Body of Christ. They think, “Well, a buck a week, a little time on Sunday...that’s not too much, I’m kind of interested in that sort of thing and it makes me feel a little bit good; I can handle that.” That is not how to be in the Body of Christ. That is kind of what the popular view is. But that is so far off from what the New Testament has in mind.

God sees. He sees and He knows. St. Augustus said, “There are those who are of the Body of the church but not of the soul of the church; and there are those who are of the soul of the church that are not yet in the Body of the church.” They are waiting to hear the gospel and brought in. God has got them marked out from before the foundations of the world. So we have a job to help them find their natural, native home.

Biblical marks of a visible church:

- (1) Biblical doctrines centered in the gospel. Acts 2:42, “And they devoted themselves, to the apostles’ teaching, the breaking of the bread, and to the prayers” For the church devotes itself to the apostolic teaching.” If you are in a congregation that isn’t devoting themselves to the apostolic teaching, you have to ask yourself is it a visible church or is it just a religious organization? If everything goes by the name of the church is not the church; it doesn’t even qualify as a visible church. The Church of the Latter Day Saints does not get it done, for instance. Many in the Episcopal Church probably are not a church; so some of us felt like we had to leave at some point.
- (2) The Celebration of the sacraments of the gospel, both baptism and the Lord’s Supper are required of the assembly. The corporate worship of the church, which is both word and sacrament, as held before us in Scripture.
- (3) Ecclesiastical Discipline. All the New Testament epistles as you read them end up toward the end sort of instructing, urging, and inviting the leaders of congregations to discipline their congregation. There is no doubt in my mind that one of the reasons why the Episcopal Church went the way it did with its wonderful beginning and its sad ending...present...is that we gave up disciplining anybody about anything. That was just considered un-Christian. So the Bishops no longer knew what the clergy were teaching and certainly did not...I mean my goodness, a Bishop come and tell me what to teach and preach...who does he think he is. But, of course, his job is that he is responsible for the gospel in that dioceses I can just see the outrage if he has begun to meddle around and say something to the clergy on that level. Now, not in the Anglican church as we have reconstituted it but as I grew up in the Episcopal Church.
- (4) Holy Life, Affirming Biblical Ethical Standards. Romans 6; Colossians 3:1-14: You are saved in order to walk according to the ways of the Lord and you are praying for more freedom to do that more fully, and more joyfully, and more spontaneously.
- (5) The visible church is a mixed body of believers and non-believers until the Second Coming of Christ. Remember Christ’s parable: do not separate the wheat [UNCLEAR] because you will pull up wheat when you pull [UNCLEAR] and besides that you cannot always tell who is wheat and [UNCLEAR]. That really is not your job description.
- (6) Our job description is to take people at their confession seriously; and if they are living at odds with their confession in Christ, then you rebuke them, or discipline them. But you do not conclude that they are not a Christian. That just is not a decision that we can make. Though at some point it gets so extreme that you have your doubts. We had one guy that was actually asked to leave the congregation because he was endangering the women of the congregation. So it is a mixed body of believers until the Second Coming; that is just part of what you buy into in a visible church. You have to learn to live and work with that.

Each visible congregation is in principle united spiritually to all other visible congregations...the unity of the church. Hence, this word church being applied to all the different expressions of the church. Now I say spiritual unity; there must be unity in the teaching and in the celebration of the sacraments. We do not have to have everything alike, but we have to be able to say, yes, the gospel is central here. Yes, they do what Jesus said to do in terms of baptism of the Lord. Yes, they do call people to a Holy life. Yes, they will say no to people

who are openly violating the truth of the gospel either in their behavior or in their words. No, not everybody can teach bible studies here; if they are teaching strange doctrine, they will be disciplined about that.

Yes?

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT:** *[UNCLEAR] about discipline, I cannot remember a Bible study or a Sunday School class where anyone taught about how to discipline. I know the Bible says if your brother offends you go to him, but I don't know what you really do in the congregation of the church where you mentioned small churches during worship that you admonish one another I'm not sure what that means during a service. Where do we learn to be or how to discipline one another?*

Good question. I am not sure if I can answer that. As a Rector it would be my responsibility, if somebody were teaching a small Bible study group—which I think you have to have many—and I remember when I was in Switzerland when I was getting my Doctorate, I went to an Anglican service at the Cathedral there and then part of their Body life. The English pastor would not allow me to teach a Bible study until he got to know me and sat down and really explored my theological convictions. He was smart, you see. So part of it is preventative, part of it is you just do not say, “I volunteer.” Or, “I’m so happy to get somebody who is willing to do this... just anybody will do.” That is one of the problems.

When I was Dean of the Seminary and the Chapel we had manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit. I had to write a custom in the behavior to say, “If you are leading the service and somebody gets up and brings a message in the Spirit and interpretation...tongues and interpretation...or just a prophetic message, you’re responsible at that point to determine whether you believe it to be in accordance with Scripture or not; and if not, then you are responsible to say, “My spirit does not agree with that and, therefore, that must cease.” Now that is hard for us because we do not want to embarrass people in public. But it is in public that the thing is being done. Of course, whenever possible you just meet with the people personally and say...you know...you don’t try to surprise people at the Holy table...they are taking communion, and this person is living out of wedlock with somebody, and you are going to say that we have to deal with this. You do not surprise them and say, “I’m not giving you communion today.” You meet with them first, and ask, “What are we going to do here? You are an offense to the Body of Christ because you are violating the clear teaching of Scripture. I cannot offer you communion until you deal with this.” At which point, they usually go to another congregation and violate that one.

**BILL:** *[UNCLEAR. “But now I am writing to you not [UNCLEAR] if he is guilty of sexual immorality [UNCLEAR]...” [UNCLEAR] according to Paul in the church [UNCLEAR].*

Well, you do that in a variety of ways. If someone is caught in [UNCLEAR] alcoholism you would meet and helps and so forth and if the person is repentant and then you deal with it one way. If the person says, “No, I’m not repentant and I am going to continue to live with this woman because we can’t give up our social security, etc.,” and then you would say, “Well, you can make a choice. You can either choose man or serve God.” But you do that privately first. Then if not, take somebody with you. Then if not, you take it to the church, which is the leaders at least.

OK. We are talking sort of the unities, Spiritual unity. So first, it has to be unified spiritually. You have to have confidence at heart that you are faithful to the Scriptures. But then there is mutual recognition. Now we are into that whole ecumenical movement. It means a lot, say if you are a Baptist congregation, and over here there



is a Presbyterian congregation and you talk to each other and say, “We recognize you to be part of the Body of Christ.” It does not mean that we are going to merge, it does not mean that we are in the same denomination necessarily, but we recognize you as part of the Body of Christ. That means a lot.

From that there will come opportunities, it seems to me, or common ministry where there are poor in the area, or whatever. You explore that and you begin to see...I am not in favor of just meeting to be ecumenical. We all have so much on our plates...it is just another set of meetings and it is not going to get it done. It should be practical.

Now, you also want to not only include the congregations around you in so far as you can spiritually, but also the saints—past, present, and future. That is, those in heaven, those who have been Christians down through history, and those around you, not to be so isolated that you don’t pay attention as to how the church is set apart and done things in the past—referred to as tradition. I do not like to use the word “tradition” immediately because that has a negative connotation for many. But the church has been doing things for quite sometime and you are foolish to ignore the wisdom that has come through the work of the Spirit in the life and Body of Christ down through a long period of time. All to be tested by Scripture.

The ecumenical movement, I think, does not necessarily push on to other forms of the unity such as denominational unity, global unity—such as Anglican communion or other forms of that—the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Church has the strictest form of institutional belonging. I think they still give a certain freedom to local expression so that you are not as silly, but the Pope is in charge of every congregation. He has authority to act in any congregation.

The Eastern Orthodox are not quite so firmly organized, but they do have a global sense of belonging to each other; and they worked that out in a way that I do not fully comprehend. You have to be Eastern Orthodox to understand it I think.

Anglicans have kind of an Anglican community, which is in great trouble because it is a mix as the Episcopal Church was, so a division is in order on all levels I am afraid in the Anglican world.

The Lutherans, I think, tend to be more congregational in their heart but denomination in their way of behaving, but not international so much. The Presbyterians as well, not international.

So you have to kind of follow where the Lord is leading your manifestation of the church, what kind of degree of unity you are being led into. It is not one size fits all, I am afraid, in the present state of things.

What else do we need to say? The three chief activities of the church: corporate worship; giving God his due, and letting God get at us; family life growing into the likeness of Christ; perfect text is the one another text; but also Ephesians 4:13-16—till we reach the maturity—common life is aiming at a kind of unity in Christ and a quality of love that we never make it in this life, but we are moving in that direction. That is the goal. Then service to the world: evangelism, global missions, and works of mercy. These are all things that we are on this earth to do as activities. Where we are weakest, I think, in local evangelism and in caring for one another. The ministry of the church is the ministry of all believers. Ephesians 4:11-16. There it says, “God set apart certain leaders to equip the saints for the work of ministry.” That ministry is done in two contexts. One in the Body Life of the Church itself, but as Bruce constantly reminds us...wherever we are...both places. But also within the Body of Christ using the particular gifts, that God has given you to fit into this Body life that needs the

variety that God supplies. You have to assume that as the church grows, God will give the gifts necessary for the life of that church in the Body of Christ. So that is the big ministry.

Then we have the ordained ministry and in the New Testament we have two forms of that. One, the elders... presbyteroi from which we get the word presbyter and Presbyterian. Also used referring to the same group is Episcopoi or overseers.

Now Anglicans see in Timothy, for instance, the beginnings of a separate role for one of the presbyters. Timothy was in charge under an apostle...hence now all ministries as under the apostolic Scripture...under an apostle he was in charge of the region so he was a presbyter over presbyters in their congregation. Anglicans see that development beginning as early as the New Testament by 180 A.D. It is true that the entire church was under the Episcopal [UNCLEAR] 150 years that form of oversight shaped the church. Each sect is somewhat independent; I mean they were related, the Bishops would meet in groups and so forth and regions, but each diocese had a certain freedom.

The Presbyterians, of course, do not follow that line, or the Lutherans because they stick with elders. The last one is the deacons. The deacons wait tables, it comes from servant, a humble role. Jesus described Himself as a deacon. In Mark 10:45, He said, "I came not to be deaconed but to deacon." He came not to be served but to serve. That is kind of the motive and attitude that surrounds all leadership, it seems to me. But the big expression of the diakonoi is found in Acts 6:1-7, where they are set apart to deal with sort of administrative details and meant to care for the poor.

The diakonoi in the churches today is variously shaped. None of the present forms of ministry is exactly where they were in the New Testament.

Well, I think we have to stop that. That is kind of the ministry. My point is simply...I have a handout I can give you on ministry and I will reproduce it and bring it sometime. The main point, I think, that I wanted to make is really two points. Not everybody that is in the visible church **in** Christ and **in** the Body of Christ. That is one point and I think that is what Bruce particularly wanted me to get across. And secondly, to be in the Body of Christ is a far more radical thing than most people understand. It is to lay your life before the Lord and to be directed by Him.

Let us pray.

Lord, we give You thanks that You have called us to Yourself; and in calling us to Yourself, You have called us to each other and to a common life, and ministry, and mission in this world. Give us wisdom to know wherein each of us has a part to play, give us the heart and joy of playing it well. For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.