

Chapter 1 : Introduction to Church Planting : Rockbridge

Jesus Christ organized His Church during His mortal ministry. The Bible helps us understand that Jesus organized His Church with apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, and other Church officials who held the priesthood, which is the authority to act in God's name.

Thomas Fitzgerald An ever-growing number of persons from various backgrounds are becoming interested in the Orthodox Church. These individuals are discovering the ancient faith and rich traditions of the Orthodox Church. They have been attracted by her mystical vision of God and His Kingdom, by the beauty of her worship, by the purity of her Christian faith, and by her continuity with the past. These are only some of the treasures of the Church, which has a history reaching back to the time of the Apostles. It should not be forgotten that the Gospel of Christ was first preached and the first Christian communities were established in the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. It was in these eastern regions of the old Roman Empire that the Christian faith matured in its struggle against paganism and heresy. There, the great Fathers lived and taught. It was in the cities of the East that the fundamentals of our faith were proclaimed at the Seven Ecumenical Councils. The spirit of Christianity which was nurtured in the East had a particular favor. It was distinct, though not necessarily opposed, to that which developed in the Western portion of the Roman Empire and subsequent Medieval Kingdoms in the West. While Christianity in the West developed in lands which knew the legal and moral philosophy of Ancient Rome, Eastern Christianity developed in lands which knew the Semitic and Hellenistic cultures. While the West was concerned with the Passion of Christ and the sin of man, the East emphasized the Resurrection of Christ and the deification of man. While the West leaned toward a legalistic view of religion, the East espoused a more mystical theology. Since the Early Church was not monolithic, the two great traditions existed together for more than a thousand years until the Great Schism divided the Church. Today, Roman Catholics and Protestants are heirs to the Western tradition, and the Orthodox are heirs to the Eastern tradition. Orthodox Christians of the Eastern Churches call themselves Orthodox. This description comes to us from the fifth century and has two meanings which are closely related. All her activities, even her doctrinal formulations, are directed toward this goal. Occasionally, the word Catholic is also used to describe the Orthodox Church. This description, dating back to the second century, is embodied in the Nicene Creed, which acknowledges One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. From the Orthodox perspective, Catholic means that the Church is universal and also that she includes persons of all races and cultures. It also affirms that the Church has preserved the fullness of the Christian faith. It is not unusual for titles such as Greek, Russian, and Antiochian to be used in describing Orthodox Churches. These appellations refer to the cultural or national roots of a particular parish, diocese, or archdiocese. Orthodoxy in the West In our Western Hemisphere, the Orthodox Church has been developing into a valuable presence and distinctive witness for more than two hundred years. The first Greek Orthodox Christians arrived in the New World in , establishing a colony near the present city of St. One of the original buildings in which these immigrants gathered for religious services is still standing. It has recently been transformed into St. The Shrine, named in memory of a great missionary of the Orthodox Church, honors those first Orthodox immigrants. The chapel serves as a national religious landmark, bearing witness to the presence of Orthodoxy in America from the earliest days of its history. They, too, made a great contribution. The Orthodox Church in this country owes its origin to the devotion of so many immigrants from lands such as Greece, Russia, the Middle East, and the Balkans. In the great wave of immigrations in the 19th and 20th centuries, Orthodox Christians from many lands and cultures came to America in search of freedom and opportunity. Like the first Apostles, they carried with them a precious heritage and gift. To the New World they brought the ancient faith of the Orthodox Church. Many Orthodox Christians in America proudly trace their ancestry to the lands and cultures of Europe and Asia, but the Orthodox Church in the United States can no longer be seen as an immigrant Church. While the Orthodox Church contains individuals from numerous ethnic and cultural backgrounds, the majority of her membership is composed of persons who have been born in America. In recognition of this, Orthodoxy has been formally acknowledged as one of the Four Major Faiths in the United

States. Following the practice of the Early Church, Orthodoxy treasures the various cultures of its people, but it is not bound to any particular culture or people. The Orthodox Church welcomes all! They are grouped into nearly a dozen ecclesiastical jurisdictions. Undoubtedly, the Primate of the Archdiocese has been chiefly responsible for acquainting many non-Orthodox with the treasures of Orthodoxy. Diversity in Unity The Orthodox Church is an international federation of patriarchal, autocephalous, and autonomous churches. Each church is independent in her internal organization and follows her own particular customs. However, all the churches are united in the same faith and order. The Orthodox Church acknowledges that unity does not mean uniformity. Some churches are rich in history, such as the Church of Constantinople, while others are relatively young, such as the Church of Finland. Some are large, such as the Church of Russia, while others are small, such as the Church of Sinai. Each Church is led by a synod of bishops. The president of the synod is known as the Patriarch, Archbishop, Metropolitan, or Catholicos. Among the various bishops, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople is accorded a "place of honor" and is regarded as "first among equals. While the Archdiocese enjoys a good measure of internal autonomy and is headed by an Archbishop, it owes its spiritual allegiance to the Church of Constantinople. The pamphlets are authored by Fr. The pamphlet titles are as follows: House of God - Describes the interior of the church building. Worship - Discusses the form and characteristics of Orthodox worship. Liturgy - Describes the meaning and celebration of the Eucharist. Sacraments - Describes the meaning and importance of liturgical life. Spirituality - Discusses the meaning of theosis as the goal of Christian life. History - Sketches the great epochs of Orthodoxy. The Church - Outlines the procedure for becoming a member of the Orthodox Church.

Chapter 2 : The Millennial Generation - The Future of Christianity in America

"I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 1 Timothy But if I tarry long, that you may know how you ought to behave yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Series Introduction Todd B. Krause and Jonathan Slocum Old Church Slavonic is the name given to the language that is preserved in several manuscripts and a few inscriptions originating from the regions of the Moravian Empire, situated between the Vistula River and the easternmost extent of Carolingian influence, and the Bulgarian Empire, extending from the lower reaches of Macedonia in the south up beyond the Danube in the north. These are the regions of the first missionary work among the Slavs by the monks Cyril and Methodius, who devised in the 9th century AD the first full-fledged writing system to represent the indigenous language. The documents that survive are primarily ecclesiastical. They were produced in a religious tradition that used Old Church Slavonic as the liturgical medium very much the way Latin was used in the Roman Catholic Church.

Linguistic Heredity Although Old Church Slavonic OCS is the oldest documented Slavic language, it is not the language from which the other Slavic languages evolved any more than Sanskrit is the language from which the other Indo-European languages evolved. Rather, OCS is now thought to be a dialect of one of the branches of the Slavic languages. When the speech community became sufficiently separated from other PIE speakers to allow for independent language evolution, over time their dialect developed into what we may term Common Slavic CS or Proto-Slavic PSI. Subsequently the same process happened again whereby, through the course of migration and the vying for power of different neighboring and internal kingdoms or empires, divisions of the Common Slavic speech community became isolated from one another. East, West, and South Slavic. Certain linguistic features show Old Church Slavonic to be a member of the South Slavic group of languages. It is supposed, however, that in the 9th century the dialectal differences were still minor enough that mutual intelligibility was possible across a wide expanse of the Slavic-speaking community. This view is supported by the fact that the efforts of Cyril and Methodius were conducted through the medium of OCS alone; presumably they chose this language so that their translations would be suitable for conversion of the pan-Slavic community. It is not quite clear to what degree the language of the OCS manuscripts resembles the actual spoken language of the region. It is often assumed that the language is the same as that which was spoken in the centuries preceding the work of Cyril and Methodius; but by the time the extant manuscripts were written, the actual spoken language was beginning to diverge from the written language. Nevertheless, the written language continued to exert an influence of its own, even beyond the regions of its origin. For example, in the 11th century one finds in Old Russian, on the geographical extremity of the Slavic community, constant stylistic and lexical borrowings from OCS as its own literature develops.

Geographical Location The precise location of the archaic homeland of the Slavs is little more than conjecture. Most estimations center on a region bounded by the Bug river to the west, the Pripjat to the north, the Don to the east, and the Dnieper to the south. But there is no consensus, and these tentative boundaries shift depending on the particular linguistic or cultural attributes being discussed. Often linguistic evidence is cited in the defense of geographic conjectures. Hence it is assumed that the beech tree cannot be native to the original Slavic-speaking area, and because the easternmost extent of the red beech is along a line extending from modern Kaliningrad Koenigsberg to the mouth of the Danube, the Slavs could not have lived west of this line. A few tribes mentioned in Greek and Latin writings from the first few centuries AD are thought to be Slavic. The earliest references come from the first century AD, where the terms Venedi or Veneti presumably refer to Slavs. He claims that the Venedae lived to the north of the Goths, to the west of the Baltic tribes, and to the south of the Finns. Later the term Venetae is used in the sixth century by Jordanus, and then by Procopius, to denote both the Antes and the Sclaveni. They are agreed to have spoken the same language over a wide territory between the Dniester and Dnieper rivers; they appear to have migrated to the area after the Huns drove out the Goths in the fifth century. From here various groups seem to have split off and migrated to the south and west. The ancestors of the East Slavs remained for the most part sedentary while the West Slavs

pushed farther into Germany, though they were forced to retreat over the following centuries. The ancestors of the South Slavs pushed south into the Balkans and beyond to Greece, but were driven back from Greece in the next century. The South Slavs and West Slavs maintained contact over the region of Pannonia, but this was cut off with the advent of the Hungarians in the 9th century AD and the eastward expansion of the Germans. Language Contact LCS includes lexical borrowings from what must have been neighboring speech communities. Political and military vocabulary items were borrowed from the Germanic peoples to the west, such as Gmc. A few spiritual elements were borrowed from the Indo-Iranian speech community: The contacts of the Slavic speakers with these three different speech communities provide another set of clues to their original location. The OCS vocabulary, for its part, shows evidence of previous missionary work which had converted many of the Slavs to the Christian doctrine espoused by the Western Church. This was achieved primarily through the work of German priests, so that one finds a core Church vocabulary in OCS derived from Latin or German. Other terms were literal translations, or calques, of their German counterparts, e. History and Documents Despite the dialectal variation of the spoken Slavic languages, the language of the church remained quite consistent. It also remained the primary medium of the liturgy for centuries, though it underwent some changes through the course of time. In addition to its use in the ecclesiastical setting, Church Slavonic also remained for several centuries the literary language in various parts of the East and West Slavic speaking areas. Because of the Balkan origin of the earliest manuscripts, OCS is at times termed Old Bulgarian, though this nomenclature has fallen out of fashion. There are no clear-cut events or finds that identify the period of Old Church Slavonic. Linguists and historians, however, have for the most part settled upon a convention. The earliest date for the OCS period is given by our estimation of the missions of Cyril and Methodius in the middle of the ninth century. The latest date for OCS is given as roughly , after which it seems that manuscripts have more linguistic variation than they did before. Thus one may speak of the OCS period as extending from ca. This is certainly an oversimplification, since the language spoken by Cyril and Methodius must have been in use for quite some time prior to their work, and there are later texts that show definite affinity with the OCS discussed in grammars. The OCS corpus, limited to this time frame, is actually rather small. There are five manuscripts containing various portions of the Gospel. The oldest dated Slavic text is a gravestone inscription erected in by Samuel -- of Armenian ancestry according to one primary source -- who later became Tsar and established the so-called Western Bulgarian Empire centered around Ohrid in what is now Macedonia. Several manuscripts from Russian-speaking areas are dated before , but these have such East Slavic characteristics that they are excluded from discussions of the OCS corpus proper. Related Language Courses at UT Most but not all language courses taught at The University of Texas concern modern languages; sometimes courses are offered in ancient languages, though more often at the graduate level. Other online language courses for college credit are offered through the University Extension new window. The Old Slavonic Lessons.

An Introduction: Verified, Born, Hunted, Credentialed, & Distinct What His Deeds Preached: A Message, Ministry, and Person Defended & Confirmed! The Accolades of a Reformer during "The Time of Reformation".

Beginnings to Constantine 4 B. Author of thirteen New Testament epistles. Emphasizes the death and resurrection of Christ as the means of salvation. Jews oust Christians from the synagogues. Vigorously opposed docetism the idea that Jesus was not fully man. Closes the apostolic era. Writes his first Apology c. 150. Orthodoxy would eventually have to respond with their own canon. Excommunicated from the Christian Church Believed Jesus did not have a real body nor a human birth due to the corruption of matter doceticism Believed that there was no connection between the God of the Jews and Christians c. 180. Between the Academy and the church? Christians concerned with unity during this period. Died from injuries of Decian persecution Believed in the preexistence of souls Accepted universalism Most dominant thinker of his time Judged a heretic at the Fifth Ecumenical Council Helped pave the way for the doctrine of the Trinity " Controversy between East and West regarding the day to celebrate Easter. Third Century The Era of Apologetics c. 200. Adopted an allegorical interpretation of Scripture Some Alexandrians dabbled in Platonic dualism Responsible for a number of apologists including Clement of Alexandria and Origen c. 250. This would influence the Monastic movement for years to come. Christians commit idolatry if they worship a Jesus who is not fully God. There are many monasteries in the East by this time. Produced major statements in response to Nestorius defending the two nature of Christ and opposed him at the Council of Ephesus " Constantinople Creed helped settle the Trinitarian issue by reaffirming Nicene Orthodoxy and condemning Arianism along with Modalism. Affirmed Theotokos the notion that Mary was the bearer of Jesus as man and God Condemned Palagianism also Chalcedon to the Great Schism " The Council of Chalcedon Chalcedon ended up by setting the standard for Orthodox Christianity by answering questions from the council of Nicea and affirming the statements of Nicea, Constantinople, and Ephesus. Affirmed that Jesus had two natures in contrast to Monophysitism, Apollinarianism, and Nestorianism Nestorius was in exile and did not show up to the council, but some think that the conclusions of Chalcedon were somewhat Nestorian c. 450. Much theology came out of monasteries including many key theologians such as Anselm of Canterbury, Hugh of St Victor, Thomas Aquinas, and Bonaventure Sixth to Eleventh Centuries Development in East and West " Reign of Emperor Justinian in the East Byzantine theology emerged during this time Emphasized understanding salvation in terms of deification in contrast to a western legal understanding c. 500. The West emphasized this procession to protect against Arianism Political differences between Latin and Greek speakers Attempts of the Pope to increase authority Little theological interaction " Hugh of St. Intellectual vacuum in Italy Rich heritage from Roman Empire Greek-speaking intellectuals came from Constantinople " Fall of Constantinople to Muslim armies; however, eventually Islam is kept in check by defeat of the Moors in Spain c. 600. Disliked abuses in the Catholic Church such as the selling of indulgences, the corruption of the priesthood, the reliance upon works for salvation, etc. Believed justification was by faith alone sola fide Wanted to debate John Eck who was a leading Catholic theologian Excommunicated in December, Tried to get back into Church, but was not allowed Wanted to reform the Catholic Church, not start a new Church. The interpretation of Biblical passages was the main issue in the debate. The Catholic Church would not change their views since it could open the doors for Protestantism " James I authorizes the most popular version of the Bible for three hundred years " the King James Version " 30 Years War Resulted in the Peace of Westphalia which allowed Catholics and Protestants equal rights in the Holy Roman Empire Ended Reformation and brought in Enlightenment Secular world in Europe c. 1700. Branched in different directions including Nikolas Ludwig Graf von Zinzendorf and John Wesley - Writers of the French Revolution Denis Diderot " writer during the French Revolution who wrote Treaty on Tolerance in which he argued Deism should have not allowed religion to survive due to its archaic and discredited notions Jean-Jacques Rousseau " criticized the doctrine of original sin as impeding the progress of civilization Voltaire " demonstrated in his Candide the difficulties of believing in a theistic God as a result of natural evil " John Locke writes his Letters Concerning Toleration in which he

argued for religious toleration Arguments: Impossible for the state to adjudicate between competing religious claims Legal enforcement of religion would not lead to the desired result of religion Results of imposing uniformity are far worse than allowing diversity Would have huge effect on the emergence of the United States Wrote Reasonableness of Christianity in which he argued that the beliefs of Christianity were rational and open to investigation â€” Nikolas Ludwig Graf von Zinzendorf Emphasized religion of the heart based on a personal relationship with Jesus F. Schleiermacher and John Wesley would use his views â€” Jonathan Edwards â€” revivalist preacher and theologian in Massachusetts who helped spawn the Great Awakening which would lead to the questioning of the established religious hierarchy and fuel the American Revolution. Modern Christianity Present c. Wrote Church Dogmatics in which he stressed the importance of taking seriously the revelation of God through Scripture Accepted the resurrection of Jesus as a historical event beyond critical inquiry â€” Paul Tillich â€” one of the leaders of Liberal Protestantism The realization that Christianity needs reconstruction as a result of the changing world â€” faith in human experience. Desired for theology to establish a conversation between human culture and Christian faith Liberal Protestantism reached zenith in American in the s and 80s. Distinct from fundamentalism in acceptance of responsible Biblical criticism, emphasis on key fundamentals of the faith, and lack of an isolationist movement Notable Theologians include Carl F. An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought. Wayne House, Charts on Church History.

Chapter 4 : What is Orthodox Christianity? - Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

Church-Talk show to help you out. In this episode they talk about the need for passion, and spiritual groundedness, and integrity, and the need for an apprentice, and all those things you wish you'd remembered to say.

This may be sufficient, in some regard, for the mind of a heathen man—but not for a Jew. For a 1st century Jew to hear and understand the Gospel he would need to hear it preached just as Matthew wrote it Chapters 1 through 28 in full! The mind of a Jew would be utterly abhorrent to and unprepared for the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, if he was not first prepared by Matthew Chapters 1 through 28. Therein, from beginning to end, is one cohesive and scriptural argument which addresses every major controversy against Jesus Christ, refutes every major heresy of 1st century Judaism, confirms every event and doctrine relevant to the Gospel with infallible accuracy, to the end that a Jew might understand why and how Jesus of Nazareth is indisputably and unquestionably the long-looked-for Messiah promised to the Jews. What looks like, to a Gentile, an assortment of historical events randomly collected and chronicled is, to a Jew, a carefully thought-out and systematic argument Divinely inspired by God the Holy Ghost. The details and implications of the historical events accounted by Matthew what Jesus said and did were framed in perfect order and sharpness to unloose the common Jew from captivity and blind-servitude to the ignorance and dead religion of 1st century Judaism. All this being said, my reader, let us brace ourselves; we, being Gentiles, have need of some reflection and consideration as we read. Therefore if we are going to understand The Gospel of Matthew we need to understand the thought-process of a 1st century law-abiding Jew the audience to whom he wrote, and to understand this we must understand the Law. In this masterful piece of Divine-argument the writer of The Gospel of Matthew cites five historical facts which support and verify Jesus Christ as the Messiah according to Old Testament prophecy. The genealogical proof that Jesus is the Son of David, an heir to the Throne according to the flesh. The Virgin Birth 1: The predestinated circumstances which forced the birth of the child in Bethlehem 2: The death of Herod and the subsequent traveling of the family to Nazareth to take residence there 3: The Cry in the wilderness, John the Baptist 4: Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is the Judaism-Changer upon His arrival, which was imminent, Judaism will never be the same! For Jews, this is a staggering proclamation! For the first time in human history all Three Persons of the Trinity were sensibly present and sensibly distinct One from Another at one single location for a testimony to mankind! You may wonder the veracity of this credential, my reader. Moreover, secondarily, we must look at the manner and content by which the devil tempted Jesus of Nazareth. Think of it, my reader. Why would the devil be visiting Jesus of Nazareth unless, like Job, He was the most righteous man on earth in His time? These are not ordinary temptations undergone by ordinary human beings! The Devil tempted Jesus to command stones to become bread! I have never been tempted to do this, my reader; I do not suspect that you have either. This is because the Devil knew that Jesus was the Son of God. The fact that Jesus was the Son of God was somehow evident to the whole hoard of unclean spirits which resided under the leadership of Satan. The demons knew the real identity of Jesus of Nazareth, my reader. One can only imagine the celestial conversations which transpired in the invisible realm as a result of the incarnation and up-bringing of Jesus of Nazareth. With all the aforementioned details and verifications which credentialed Jesus as the Messiah and Christ, Matthew saw fit to overview a general introduction to His Ministry: Jesus Christ began His ministry in the Land of Zabulon according to the prophecy 4: The Spirit in which Christ came Lk. His purpose was not to bring a famine upon the Land to punish the wicked doers according to their evil deeds—no, my reader. Rather, it was to bring streams in desert places and spiritual health to a hell-bound people until the dry land becomes a pool of water Isa. But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works: He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: His intentions were not to abolish the Ceremonial or Moral Law, but to fulfill and uphold them both. Therefore let us understand: Having begun in the Land of Zabulon and from thence, being famed throughout the Land of Israel through miracles, the miracles made way for the message, The Sermon on the Mount. This being the case—the stage being set: Doubtlessly, these events were controverted and slandered as they were reportedly sounded throughout the

Land of Israel by the venomous tongues of bitter and envious Jews. In such a case, the events needed clarification by the true Disciples of Christ! What really happened? In what situational context? And what does it all mean? The following historical events which Matthew recounts in Chapter 8 through Chapter 13 are an answer to the former questions. The historical events were not ordered by Matthew for the purpose historical chronology event-to-event, like a historian would be minded so to write. Matthew recounted and ordered a selected number of historical events for the sake of Gospel argumentation; he was trying to systematically persuade the Jews that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. Therefore let us understand this most glorious fact:

Chapter 5 : Nativity of Jesus - Wikipedia

The more I think about church, the more the buildings change. My mind visit the buildings I've seen, from the neo-gothic stone giants that dot urban spaces to the first church we know, a house church from , currently on display at Yale University's Art Museum.

This generation is actually just slightly larger than the Baby Boom generation born from to Nearly 78 million Millennials were born between and Millennials are already having an impact on business, the workplace, churches, and other organizations. They certainly are having an impact on politics. The to year-old Millennials voted for Barack Obama in by an significant margin. Because of their impact in business, politics, and the church, they are simply too large and too influential to ignore. We should begin by noting that not only are Millennials the largest generation, they are also one of the most diverse. That means that for every trend we identify in this generation, there are also lots of exceptions. Here are just a few characteristics. That is the highest rate ever recorded for that age group. They are marrying later, if at all. The average age for first marriage has increased approximately five years since for both men and women. They may say that they are spiritual, but only a small fraction of them say that is important in their lives. Perhaps the most amazing response from the survey of Millennials was that they are hopeful. Consider their response to the simple statement: That was almost every respondent, 96 percent in total. One way to answer that question is to look at the characteristics of their parents. Baby Boomers wanted the best for themselves. They had a level of self-centeredness that eventually shifted toward meeting the needs of their children. They wanted everything to be perfect for the Millennial children. There was a high level of parental involvement. Sometimes the parents sit in on job interviews and even try to negotiate salaries. While previous generations might have rejected such advice, 87 percent of Millennials view their parents as a positive source of influence. While Baby Boomers tended to be antiauthoritarian, Millennials have a very positive attitude towards those who are older. Of the Millennials interviewed, 94 percent said they have great respect for older generations. They were asked to respond to the following statement: It is also worth noting that Millennials are marrying much later than any generation that had preceded them. Millennials also view marriage differently in part because of the political battles concerning same-sex marriage and the definition of marriage. In the survey of Millennials, they were asked to respond to this statement: The impact of technology on marriage and family is significant. The Millennial generation has grown up with the Internet, cell phones, and social media. Posting pictures on Facebook allows family members to immediately see what is happening to their children and grandchildren. Millennials are introducing their families to a variety of ways to stay connected. Motivating the Millennials How can we motivate the Millennial generation? The answer to that question is easy: Thom and Jess Rainer put it this way. The best connectors in religious institutions are relationships. The best way to get a Millennial involved in a service, activity, or ministry is through relationships. Millennials also see the world as a much smaller place since they can visit anywhere in the world either in person or on the Internet. And they are connected to people through the new media in ways that no other generation was able to do. Education is a high priority for Millennials. This generation is on pace to have significantly more college degrees than the rest of the nation as a whole. About a quarter of the current U. Their motivation for education and career are motivated more by family and friends. Religion is not much of a motivating factor for Millennials. Spiritual matters are not important to them. Only 13 percent of them viewed religion and spirituality as important. And even among those who described themselves as Christian, only 18 percent said their religion was important to them. Nearly two thirds 65 percent said their faith was important to them. Millennials voted for Barack Obama over John McCain in the election by a two-to-one margin 66 percent to 32 percent. It is also worth noting that only half of the Millennials were eligible to vote that year. A greater percentage of that generation will become eligible to vote in each new election cycle. Various polls, including exit polls, showed that this generation wanted more centralized power in government. And by more than a two-to-one margin 71 percent to 29 percent they thought the federal government should guarantee health-care coverage for all Americans. More than six out of ten felt that government should be responsible for providing for their retirement. Social

commentators made much of the influence of television on the Baby Boomers but the proliferation of Internet, smart phones, and social media has had an even greater impact on Millennials. When technology first comes on the scene, there are early adopters, then a significant majority, and finally laggards. Millennials fit into the category of early adopters. In the survey they were asked if they agree with the following statement: Millennials are quick to embrace new technology. There is one technology that Millennials always have in their hands: When asked how they most frequently communicate when not actually with the other person, they rated phone first 39 percent, then texting 37 percent, and then e-mail 16 percent. At the bottom was by letter 1 percent. The survey also noticed a difference between older and younger Millennials. Put simply, the younger you are, the more likely you are to communicate by texting. Social media is also a significant part of the lifestyle of a Millennial. Not surprisingly, the most popular social media site was Facebook 73 percent, followed by MySpace 49 percent as a distant second. They also like to read blogs 30 percent and write blogs 13 percent. But since blogs require more time and energy than other social media, they do not draw in the large numbers like Facebook and MySpace. Although social media can be accessed in many ways, still the most pervasive is through the computer. Millennials use computers both for work and for personal use. Most Millennials 83 percent use a computer for work and spend about 17 hours on it each week. One out of five Millennials use their computer for work for 40 or more hours per week. The responses ranged from 5 hours per week to 30 hours per week. The average was 17 hours per week. If you put these numbers together, you find something shocking. The average Millennial spends 17 hours per week on a computer for work, and spends the same amount of time on a computer for personal use. That totals 34 hours per week on a computer. The survey found that they are likely to have a syncretistic belief system. In other words, he or she will take portions of belief from various faiths and non-faiths and blend them together into a unique spiritual system. Thom and Jess Rainer found that this generation is less likely to care about religion or spiritual matters than previous generations. When they were asked in an open-ended question what was important to them, spiritual matters were sixth on the list. When asked to describe themselves, two-thirds 65 percent used the term Christian. Interestingly, nearly three in ten 28 percent picked either atheism, agnosticism, or no preference. In other words, they have moved completely away from certain belief in God. And when presented with seven statements about orthodox Christian belief, the researchers found that only 6 percent of Millennials could affirm them and thus could be properly defined as Evangelical. But more than one-fourth 26 percent said they believe they will go to heaven when they die because they have accepted Christ as their Savior. The Millennial generation illustrates that trend. Nearly two-thirds 65 percent rarely or never attend religious services. This might suggest that a number of Millennials who attend church do so as seekers. In other words, they are at least spiritually interested enough to visit a church even though they may not be saved. The Millennial generation presents a significant challenge for us as Christians. The largest and least religious generation in American history is here and making an impact. If the church and Christian organizations are to be vibrant and effective in the twenty-first century, pastors and Christian leaders need to know how to connect to the Millennials. The first step is understanding them and their beliefs. That is why I recommend the book by Thom and Jess Rainer and encourage you to visit our Web site www.

Church History is the study of what the Holy Spirit has wrought through the church from the end of the first century AD to the present day. Studying church history reminds us that we are part of a movement that is bigger than ourselves, our families, our church, and our denominations.

Photos Birth of the Church Fifty days after the resurrection, the disciples were together in Jerusalem. It was then, at the time of the spring harvest festival of Shavuot, seven weeks after the feast of Passover, that they experienced the empowerment that would make them a new community. There in Jerusalem, where people gathered from many lands for the festival, the new community experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, described as tongues of fire settling on their heads and enabling them to speak the good news of Jesus in all the languages on earth Acts 2: The expansion of the early church was also given energy by the conversion of a Jewish tentmaker named Saul. He became baptized as a Christian. For the rest of his life, he traveled the Mediterranean world nurturing small communities of Christians until he finally brought the gospel to Rome. He spoke in synagogues and to communities of Jews, affirming his faith in Christ as Messiah. However, he also spoke to Gentilesâ€”to those who were not Jewsâ€”convinced that the message of new life in Christ was not for his people alone, but for men and women everywhere. As an apostle to the Gentiles, he is known by the Roman form of his name, Paul. Paul insisted that new Greek converts need not first become circumcised Jews and keep Jewish food and calendrical law in order to become Christians. In this he disagreed with Peter, whom he understood to be the apostle to the Jews. A council in Jerusalem about 50 CE decided, with Paul, that Gentiles could become Christians, just as they were, without becoming Jews first. With this, the door was open for a new kind of Christian community. The Book of Acts 2: And day by day attending temple together, breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. Whether universal or a gathering of two or three, the church is a community of people. The images of community in the New Testament are powerful, organic images of belonging. Not all parts of the body of Christ, the church, have the same function, but all are members one of another, suffering together, rejoicing together. This powerful metaphor is extended through the central ritual of the community, the blessing and sharing of bread and wine. Through the preaching of Paul and other missionaries, the new Christian faith grew quickly, spreading throughout the Mediterranean world. Its primary competitor was not the sects or mystery religions of ancient Greece and Rome, but the cult of the emperor, to whom all were required to do honor. The new Christian community was seen as subversive because of its refusal to participate in the cult of the emperor. Christians were persecuted and martyred for their faith throughout the Roman empire. Thus, it was a new day entirely when, early in the fourth century, the Emperor Constantine himself became a Christian. Beginning with his reign, Christianity was not only made legal, but would become the official religion of the Empire.

Chapter 7 : An Introduction: Verified, Born, Hunted, Credentialed, & Distinct – The Church Realized

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Joseph intended to divorce her quietly, but an angel told him in a dream that he should take Mary as his wife and name the child Jesus, because he would save his people from their sins. Joseph awoke and did all that the angel commanded. Magi from the east came to Herod and asked him where they would find the King of the Jews, because they had seen his star. Advised by the chief priests and teachers, Herod sent the Magi to Bethlehem, where they worshiped the child and gave him gifts. When they had departed an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and warned him to take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt, for Herod intended to kill him. Gospel of Luke[edit] See also: When the time of the birth drew near the Roman Emperor commanded a census of all the world, and Joseph took Mary to Bethlehem, the city of David, as he was of the House of David. So it came to pass that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and as there was no room in the town the infant was laid in a manger while angels announced his birth and shepherds worshiped him as Messiah and Lord. In accordance with the Jewish law his parents presented the infant Jesus at the Temple in Jerusalem, where the righteous Simeon and Anna the Prophetess gave thanks to God who had sent his salvation. Joseph and Mary then returned to Nazareth. There "the child grew and became strong, and was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him. His genealogy goes back to Adam, demonstrating his common humanity, as do the lowly circumstances of his birth. Luke, writing for a gentile audience, portrays the infant Jesus as a savior for gentiles as well as Jews. Instead, the story of Jesus really is a new story: Jesus is at once the new Moses and the inverse of Moses. Nazarene title and Nazarene sect Scholars have debated whether Matthew 1: Fourth century documents such as the Codex Sinaiticus do not mention the prophet Isaiah in the statement in Matthew 1: Brown states that the 3rd century BCE translators of the Septuagint may have understood the Hebrew word "almah" to mean virgin in this context. Menken states that it is a demonym that refers to an "inhabitant of Nazareth". Birth of the new man[edit] He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. Just as the Johannine view of Jesus as the incarnate Logos proclaims the universal relevance of his birth, the Pauline perspective emphasizes the birth of a new man and a new world in the birth of Jesus. Unlike Adam, the new man born in Jesus obeys God and ushers in a world of morality and salvation. Adam, having corrupted himself by his disobedience, also infected humanity and left it with a curse as inheritance. The birth of Jesus, on the other hand, counterbalanced the fall of Adam, bringing forth redemption and repairing the damage done by Adam. The Nativity of Jesus thus began to serve as the starting point for "cosmic Christology" in which the birth, life and Resurrection of Jesus have universal implications. The Nativity and Resurrection of Jesus thus created the author and exemplar of a new humanity. He suggested the Virgin Mary as the "second eve" and wrote that the Virgin Mary had "untied the knot of sin bound up by the virgin Eve" and that just as Eve had tempted Adam to disobey God, Mary had set a path of obedience for the second Adam i. Jesus from the Annunciation to Calvary so that Jesus could bring about salvation, undoing the damage of Adam. For him, the uniqueness of the Nativity of Jesus was supplemented with the sign of the Majesty of the Creator through the ability of a powerful God to enter the world as a small newborn. The nativity of Jesus impacted the Christological issues about the Person of Christ from the earliest days of Christianity. Some of the debates involved the title Theotokos God bearer for the Virgin Mary and began to illustrate the impact of Mariology on Christology. Some of these viewpoints were eventually declared as heresies, others led to schisms and the formation of new branches of the Church. The Council of Ephesus debated hypostasis co-existing natures versus Monophysitism only one nature versus Miaphysitism two natures united as one versus Nestorianism disunion of two natures. In Chalcedon the hypostatic union was decreed, namely that Jesus is both fully divine and fully human, making this part of the creed of Orthodox Christianity. Leo gave 10 sermons on the nativity and 7 have survived, the one on December 25, demonstrates his concern to increase the importance of the feast of nativity and along with it emphasize the two natures of Christ in defense of the Christological doctrine of hypostatic union. Thus Leo used the occasion of the Nativity feast to establish boundaries for what could be

considered a heresy regarding the birth and nature of Christ. Should it be attributed to the person the Word or only to the assumed human nature of that person. Aquinas treated nativity in 8 separate articles in Summa Theologica each posing a separate question, e. This approach also resolved the Mariological problem of Mary receiving the title of Theotokos for under this scenario she is the " Mother of God ". Thus Calvin argued that Jesus was exempt from original sin because he was sanctified at the moment of birth so that his generation was without blemish; as generation has been blemishless before the fall of Adam. In the 2nd century, the Resurrection of Jesus became a separate feast as Easter and in the same century Epiphany began to be celebrated in the Churches of the East on January 6. In a sermon delivered in Antioch on December 25, c. In a sermon in , Gregory of Nyssa specifically related the feast of Nativity with that of the martyrdom of Saint Stephen , celebrated a day later. By the feast was also held in Iconium on that day. In his sermons Gerson emphasized the loving nature of Jesus at his Nativity, as well as his cosmic plan for the salvation of mankind. By the beginning of the 21st century these countries began to pay more attention to the sensitivities of non-Christians during the festivities at the end of the calendar year. Early Christians viewed Jesus as "the Lord" and the word Kyrios appears over times in the New Testament , referring to him. This image persisted among Christians as the predominant perception of Jesus for a number of centuries. Jesus was their Lord and Master who was to be served with all their hearts and who would one day judge their actions throughout their lives. The 13th century witnessed a major turning point in the development of a new "tender image of Jesus" within Christianity, as the Franciscans began to emphasize the humility of Jesus both at his birth and his death. The construction of the Nativity scene by Saint Francis of Assisi was instrumental in portraying a softer image of Jesus that contrasted with the powerful and radiant image at the Transfiguration , and emphasized how God had taken a humble path to his own birth. One element of the Franciscan approach was the emphasis on the humility of Jesus and the poverty of his birth: On one hand the introduction of the Nativity scene encouraged the tender image of Jesus, while on the other hand Francis of Assisi himself had a deep attachment to the sufferings of Jesus on the Cross and was said to have received the Stigmata as an expression of that love. The dual nature of Franciscan piety based both on joy of Nativity and the sacrifice at Calvary had a deep appeal among city dwellers and as the Franciscan Friars travelled, these emotions spread across the world, transforming the Kyrios image of Jesus to a more tender, loving, and compassionate image.

Chapter 8 : Introduction to City of Nauvoo v. Markham, Page 1

Rockbridge Seminary Course "Introduction to Church Planting" Is Dedicated in Honor of. Charles William Clary. Charles Clary is pastor of J Bar J Country Church, in Ruidoso, New Mexico, a church he planted after retiring from Tate Springs Baptist Church, in Arlington, Texas.

What Is a New Testament Church? Introduction One of the difficulties of human communication is that the same word conveys different meanings to different people. They think first of no school and secondly of playing outside with sleds and snowballs and coming inside to a warm fire and hot chocolate. To us snow may mean getting up early, hazardous driving conditions, cancelled appointments and plans, and dead batteries. Most people would associate this term with Sunday, stained glass and sermons. Even within the Christian community there is great variance as to what this term connotes. In the denominational and Bible church circles, it probably conveys the idea of Bible-believing, or New Testament-teaching. But if being a New Testament church is a goal to which we strive, we must surely have a more concise definition in mind. It is for this reason I would like to attempt to define what a New Testament church should be. In our first message, we shall attempt an overview or broad definition, and in subsequent messages we shall be much more specific. We will begin by describing the most generally accepted element of a New Testament church, that of its doctrinal foundation. A New Testament church is a church which derives its doctrine from the New Testament. We should all agree that a New Testament church is a church which believes and teaches the doctrines of the New Testament. Surely we are going to have some differences of opinion in some rather disputed areas of theology. We may not all agree as to the precise timing of the rapture with respect to other events, for example. There may be differences of opinion as to the exact extent of the atonement, but at least in my mind this does not make a church any less New Testament. Without adherence to these fundamentals, no church should have the right to call itself New Testament. If this were the only measure of a New Testament church, then every church which is orthodox in its doctrinal statement could be legitimately identified as a New Testament church, but there is much more that is necessary than this. A New Testament church is a church which is structured and governed in accordance with New Testament principles and practices. For example, Donald G. Miller, while insisting that the New Testament is to be our guide in church polity and practice, there is little agreement as to just how this works out and to what principles and practices of the New Testament we are obliged to follow. A godly and highly respected church leader, Dr. Gene Getz has written: But, is this not part of the genius of the New Testament? Once again we see freedom in form and structure, means and methods, patterns and programs. Getz is not saying that the New Testament gives us no principles for church life, for later on in his book he enumerates several. The difficulty that I have with this kind of approach is this: How do we distinguish between what is binding upon us in the New Testament and what is not? The answer which Dr. Getz and others would give is that we must separate New Testament practices from New Testament principles. We must adhere to the principles and follow the practices as best as we see fit. All of this is appealing, except for the distressing fact that Paul equated his practices with the principles that he taught: I exhort you therefore, be imitators of me. For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church 1 Corinthians 4: Unlike so many of us, Paul practiced what he preached and he preached what he practiced. Paul could instruct his readers to imitate his ways because they conformed with what he taught. This raises a very logical and legitimate question. Are you saying, then, that I am to believe that the truly New Testament church should carry out every practice recorded in the New Testament? Should we wash feet and greet one another with a holy kiss? Should we meet in the Temple or in private homes? Should we do away with full-time ministers and all make tents? Let me suggest some practical and I hope biblical guidelines for discerning what practices were binding in the New Testament times and are binding upon us today as well. The answer to these four questions should help us to discern what

New Testament practices we should persist in following today. Was the practice in question universally and consistently followed in the churches of the New Testament? Such was also the case with the head coverings in 1 Corinthians. On the other hand foot washing was not practiced by the church at all. It was a lesson taught to the disciples by our Lord as an example of humility. Surely we need to learn humility and to serve one another, but unless the craze of wearing no shoes or socks continues, such would be unnecessary. Nowhere in the Scriptures do we see any evidence of the New Testament churches continuing this practice as some kind of ordinance. The same thing can be said for meeting in houses. Although the church met in various private homes Romans. We must conclude that the church met wherever it was convenient to do so, and that no one kind of meeting place was superior to another. Is the New Testament practice directly related to a principle which we would violate by neglecting that practice? The New Testament churches knew nothing of having one man called the pastor who was the head of the church. Was this simply a practice of the ancient church which has long since been abolished for a new and better way of church government? Behind this practice of plurality rule by elders is the principle of the headship of our Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is to have the preeminence in the church Colossians 1: Conversely, there is no principle underlying the meeting of the church in private homes, other than that of practicality. There is no principle which dictates that the church should meet on Saturday evening, as some would suggest was done in the New Testament churches. Rather we are told in Scripture that we should not compel anyone to regard one day above another Romans. Is the practice in question a right or a responsibility? Paul often refused to be financially supported by those to whom he ministered. If Paul was obliged to work, that is if it was a responsibility, then we should follow his example. However in 1 Corinthians chapter 9 Paul clearly established the right of every minister of the gospel to be supported by those to whom he ministered. Paul chose to forego the right of personal support in order to preach the gospel without offense to any. We must not compel others to do what Paul did voluntarily as a matter of Christian liberty. Is there any higher principle involved, which might override a New Testament practice? In our culture, however, I am not certain that any type of kiss could be understood by those outside the household of God. In a case such as this there is a completely acceptable alternative, I believe. We must first ask ourselves what the principle behind this instruction is. I would understand it to be that Christians should give outward evidence of their deep and abiding love and affection for one another. In addition the Scriptures teach us that our relationships between members of the opposite sex should be in good taste and beyond criticism cf. Since greeting with a kiss may bring reproach to the name of our Lord we may carry out the principle of warmth and affection by an acceptable form of greeting, such as the handshake. What are these principles which distinguish a New Testament church from those which fall short? Let me briefly mention a few, while suggesting the application of these principles to church polity and practice. The universal church consists of every believer in Jesus Christ from the death of Christ to the rapture. Although we speak of the Baptist Church and the Lutheran Church and so on there is only one church. It is the obligation of the local church to demonstrate this unity, not by setting itself apart as distinct from other biblical churches, but by identifying with them. Some of us act as though if a letter were written to the church in Dallas it would be delivered only to whatever church we happen to belong to. We should accept any believer into our fellowship without discrimination of any kind, save for disciplinary reasons, Romans. As the Head of the church, Jesus Christ should have the pre-eminence. This would necessitate rule by a plurality e. The Old Testament distinction of laity and clergy has been abolished. The New Testament church cannot allow these laity-clergy distinctions to linger on. This holiness must be maintained by church discipline, cf. Men do this by assuming the leadership role, while women refrain from leadership in the church meetings Ephesians 5: I want to be the first to emphasize that the Scriptures leave a great deal of room for variation in the application of these principles. We should not expect New Testament churches to be carbon copies of one another. The Scriptures also are very informative in what they do not tell us. It would have been very comforting to the leadership of our assembly had the Scriptures spelled out precisely how to recognize elders, but such was not the case. Principles not only demand a latitude in application, they also require faith in application. A New Testament church is one that expresses the life of Christ in a tangible way. I have a very good friend who some time ago attended what was described as a New Testament meeting of the church. In terms of its form and structure it

would commonly be known as a New Testament church. That particular meeting left much to be desired as will happen in any church. You can have all the forms of a New Testament church and be absolutely lifeless and useless. This is why I must include this third characteristic of a New Testament church:

Chapter 9 : Introduction to Old Church Slavonic

While the Orthodox Church contains individuals from numerous ethnic and cultural backgrounds, the majority of her membership is composed of persons who have been born in America. In recognition of this, Orthodoxy has been formally acknowledged as one of the Four Major Faiths in the United States.

From there Paul went to Thessalonica Acts Next Paul journeyed to Athens When Paul arrived in Corinth, Silas and Timothy were not with him This seems to have limited the time and energy Paul could devote to preaching the gospel. Every Sabbath he would go to the synagogue and seek to persuade those attending to trust in Jesus as their Messiah. When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia Even so there were a number of Jewish converts, including Crispus, the president of the synagogue, who believed, along with his entire household. It was at this critical moment in time that God gave Paul direct guidance by means of a night vision. This vision must have been similar to the night vision God gave to Paul in Troas, when He directed him to Macedonia Acts I believe this is why Luke includes this historic decision in Acts. Because of the success of the gospel in Corinth, the Jews were beginning to feel threatened. No doubt a number of them severed their ties with the synagogue and identified themselves with Paul, who had moved his headquarters next door. Finally, the Jews determined to solve their problem legally, taking their case before Gallio, ruler of the province of Achaia. If Christianity were to be divorced from Judaism, then it would no longer enjoy the protection of the Roman government. Christians could then be persecuted and driven out of Achaia, with no interference from the Roman government. It all seemed like a brilliant scheme. The Jews brought Paul before Gallio and accused him of preaching a gospel that was contrary to the law, presumably Jewish law see verse 15 , but if so, then also contrary to the protections afforded by Roman law. The charges against Paul were similar to the charges the Jewish religious leaders brought against our Lord see Luke The case against Paul was formally presented, and the time had come for Paul to speak in his defense. But before Paul could speak a word, Gallio interrupted. Gallio could see through the whole scheme, and he wanted to have no part of it. To him this was just one more squabble among Jews about the interpretation of their laws. He refused to take sides or to give a ruling; he just drove them out of his court. In effect, he refused to hear the case, albeit not until after the prosecution had its chance to make its case. Frustrated and angry, the Jews turned on Sosthenes, the president of the synagogue. It must have been his idea to seek a ruling from Gallio, and it had completely backfired. The Jews had lost ground by this maneuver. As Sosthenes was being beaten by the others, Gallio looked on, without any sympathy for Sosthenes or for the rest of them. It was similar to the United States Supreme Court refusing to hear a case on appeal. The effect of refusing to hear a case is to uphold the decision of the lower court. Paul was a Roman citizen, and one who practiced and preached a religion Rome recognized and protected. For this man is a Roman. He promised Paul that he would not be harmed, and that there were many souls in Corinth who would come to faith. Who would have ever imagined that God would fulfill His promise by allowing the opposition to take Paul to court, and by the legal ruling of a Gentile ruler who despised Jews? This is nothing other than the handiwork of a sovereign God: Luke tells us in Acts When he left Corinth the apostle to the Gentiles made his way to Ephesus, where his initial ministry was very brief Acts Paul later returned to Ephesus where he stayed for three years Acts Do not even eat with such a person 1 Corinthians 5: Paul also heard that there was a serious case of immorality in the church 5: In addition, Paul received questions concerning marriage 7: While still in Ephesus It seeks to address some of the major problems in the church. Elitist Snobbery in the Church 1 Corinthians 10 I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to agree together, to end your divisions, and to be united by the same mind and purpose. I believe that this is not the case at all. Some of the other translations make this more apparent: He may have decided to do this for several reasons. First, Paul wanted the Corinthians to identify these men themselves. Secondly, there might be others that Paul did not know of, or who might emerge after Paul wrote this letter. Perhaps, too, he was giving some of these folks the benefit of the doubt at this time. Paul rebukes the Corinthians because there are divisions and quarrels in the church. This is the result of a religious snobbery associated by cliques that produced pride and conflict. Religious snobs want to be a part of a small group who

think of themselves as the spiritual elite. They are proud and smug because of their associations, especially with their leader, and they look down upon those who are not in their group. The elitism evident in Corinth was based upon two things: So then, no more boasting about mere mortals! For everything belongs to you 1 Corinthians 3: Note the element of pride here and also the element of divisiveness. The Corinthians were boasting of their close association with certain men, men they considered superior to others. By associating with them, the Corinthians felt superior to those who followed others. Taking pride in mere men was evil. The Corinthians had come to think too highly of themselves and of their newly discovered gurus with their sophisticated message and methods. In their elitist snobbery, they had begun to look down upon Paul and the other true apostles: Already you are rich! You have become kings without us! I wish you had become kings so that we could reign with you! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, we are dishonored! When we are verbally abused, we respond with a blessing, when persecuted, we endure, 13 when people lie about us, we answer in a friendly manner. It was not just the men and their magnetic personalities in whom the Corinthians boasted; it was also their message and their style of presentation. From the broader context we can infer that these charmers proclaimed a modified message, one that would eventually be exposed as a false gospel see 1 Corinthians 15 and 2 Corinthians His method was to proclaim in clear and simple words the truths of the gospel, rather than to use sophisticated trickery or manipulation: For we are not like so many others, hucksters who peddle the word of God for profit, but we are speaking in Christ before God as persons of sincerity, as persons sent from God 2 Corinthians 2: The Corinthians would do well not to prematurely appraise themselves and others, and wait until the coming of the Lord: In fact, I do not even judge myself. The one who judges me is the Lord. Wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the motives of hearts. Then each will receive recognition from God 1 Corinthians 4: Not many were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were members of the upper class. How could one boast in anything or anyone else? Whatever we are or have, we have received it from Him: For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? Soon, Paul will also be coming to Corinth. They would do well to deal with these matters before he arrives, so that he will not have to correct these problems himself: Shall I come to you with a rod or with love and a spirit of gentleness? Divisions provide the occasion for those who are wise and godly to stand out. Divisions may be caused by corrupt leaders, but they also tend to expose true leaders: For there must in fact be divisions among you so that those of you who are approved may be evident 1 Corinthians Sexual Improprieties Corinthians The Corinthians divided when they should have preserved Christian unity, and they were united when they should have divided. The main topic in chapters pertains to sexual conduct. This situation called for separation, for a kind of division. The man carried on his sin publicly, before the church Did he bring this wife to church? The heathen Corinthians were shocked by this kind of conduct, and yet the man did not repent. What is even worse, the saints in the church had apparently not even rebuked him. Somehow, instead of grieving over this terrible sin, they were puffed up with pride about it: In short, the Corinthians were not responsible for judging unbelievers outside the church, but they should have judged this sinner in their midst.