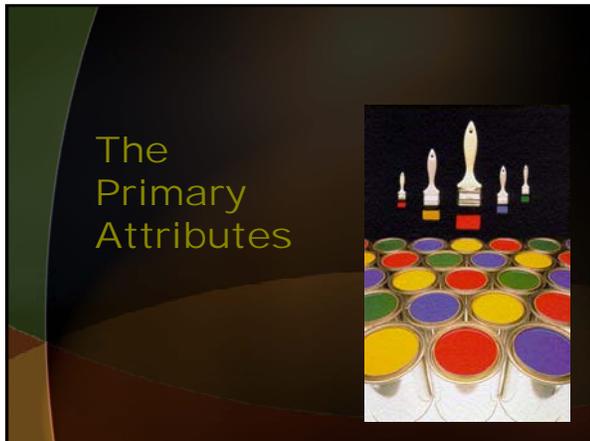


- ### Defining the Nature of the Church
- Key Words
 - Main Metaphors
 - Primary Attributes
 - Key Components of a church
 - Key Marks of healthy or pure church



- ### A Brief History
- After the death of the apostles, an obvious, rapid decline
 - Effort to determine what attributes identified the true church
 - Focus on external characteristics
 - Cyprian (bishop of Carthage; d. 258):
 - Bishops were the successors of the apostles
 - Together they formed the episcopate
 - This unity of bishops was the unity of the church
 - Augustine (354-430)

- ### A Brief History
- Old Roman Symbol (by Rufinus c. 390): "the holy church"
 - The Apostles' Creed (c. 700): "the holy catholic church"
 - 1st Council of Nicaea (325): "the catholic and apostolic church."
 - Council of Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (381): "[we believe] in one holy catholic and apostolic church."

- ### "One" – Unity or Oneness
- What It's Not
 - Demand for one visible organization
 - Insistence to ignore doctrinal differences to appear unified
 - License to ignore the sin or doctrinal error of an individual, church, or group of churches

"One" – Unity or Oneness

- What It Is
 - Since all Christians are united to Jesus Christ, all true members of the invisible church are united to one another.
 - An inherent, essential unity with all other true Christians.
 - John 10:14-16
 - John 17:20-23
 - Cf. Rom. 15:5-6; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; 12:12-13; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:14-16; 4:3-6; Phil. 2:2; Col. 3:12-14

"One" – Unity or Oneness

- Why It Matters
 - a) We are bound not only to the believers who are part of this church, but to all believers.
 - The fact that there is an inherent unity between all genuine Christians calls for a spirit of love and fellowship with all professing Christians unless they are:
 - 1) Living in a pattern of unrepentant sin (1 Cor. 5:9-13)
 - 2) Defending false doctrine (Gal. 2:4-5, 11-14).

"One" – Unity or Oneness

- Why It Matters
 - b) We have a responsibility toward other Christians outside our church.
 - The relationship between Jerusalem and Antioch (Acts 11:22; 15:2).
 - The Jerusalem conference (Acts 15:6 ff).
 - The right hand of fellowship extended by the 12 to Paul and Barnabas (Gal 2:9).
 - Paul's constant efforts to forge deep relations of love and mutual service between Gentile and Jewish Christians (2 Cor 8).

"One" – Unity or Oneness

- Why It Matters
 - c) The reality that the church is one protects us as a church from the "Elijah Syndrome."
 - Cf. 1 Kings 19:14 - Then he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."
 - God's response? Rom. 11:4 - But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL."

"One" – Unity or Oneness

- Why It Matters
 - d) Practically, this unity works out in ever-tightening, concentric circles:
 - **Fellowship:** profession of the biblical Christ and Gospel, belief in the fundamental doctrines of the Xn faith, and not living in a pattern of unrepentant sin.
 - **Partnership:** add, essential agreement in all major issues of the Christian faith
 - **Membership:** willingness to submit to the doctrine and distinctives of that particular church
 - **Leadership:** whole-hearted assent to the doctrine and distinctives determined as necessary by the elders of that church.

"Holy" – Holiness

- What It's Not
 - A claim to spiritual perfection for individuals or the church as a whole.
- What It Is
 - a) Positional sanctification of all those who belong to Christ.
 - 1 Cor. 1:2 - To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.
 - 1 Cor. 3:16-17 - Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.
 - b) Progressive sanctification of all those who belong to Christ.
 - John 17:15-17 - "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.
 - Eph. 5:25-27

"Holy" – Holiness

- Why It Matters
 - a) It demands that each of us live daily in way in keeping with our status.
 - Eph. 5:27 - that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.
 - b) It demands that we expend maximum effort individually to grow in personal holiness (1 Cor. 6:14–7:1)
 - c) It demands that we practice church discipline.
 - 1 Cor. 5:12-13 - Do you not judge those who are within *the church*? But those who are outside, God judges. REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES.

"Catholic" – Catholicity

- What It's Not
 - A recognition of the validity of the Roman Catholic Church
- What It Is
 - *Catholic* comes originally from Greek
 - *kath' holou* means "referring to the whole"
 - Transliterated into Latin as *catholicus*, meaning "universal or general"
 - In English, became *catholic*
 - 1st use: Ignatius of Antioch (d. 110)
 - "Where Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church."
 - The conversion of Constantine changed its meaning
 - "catholic church" meant imperial church

"Catholic" – Catholicity

- Geographically: it is not limited by place.
 - It includes all men everywhere throughout the inhabited earth.
 - Matt. 28:19 - "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
 - It includes even those saints now in heaven.
 - Heb. 12:23 - the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven.

"Catholic" – Catholicity

- Socially: it is not limited by kind of people.
 - Gal. 3:28 - There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
 - Col. 3:11 - there is no *distinction between* Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.
 - Rev. 5:9-10 - they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

"Catholic" – Catholicity

- Chronologically: it is not limited by time.
 - Matt. 28:20 - "until the end of the age"
 - Eph. 5:25 - Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.

"Catholic" – Catholicity

- Why It Matters
 - It compels us to pursue and accept all different kinds of people into the fellowship of this church (Jam. 2:1-13; Rev. 5:9-10).
 - It encourages us to stay connected with the church's past and tradition.
 - 2 Tim. 2:2 - the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
 - It reminds us of our responsibility to future generations.
 - 2 Tim. 2:2 - the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

"Apostolic" – Apostolicity

- What It's Not
 - Claim of a direct succession of apostolic authority
- What It Is
 - Primary sense: "originating with the apostles."
 - It emphasizes that the historical roots of our faith are in the continuity between Christ and his apostles.

"Apostolic" – Apostolicity

- To listen to his apostles and their teaching is to listen to him; but to reject them is to reject him.
 - Matt. 10:40 - "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."
 - Luke 10:16 - "The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me."
 - John 13:20 - "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

"Apostolic" – Apostolicity

- Why It Matters
 - The church must order its life by the Scripture (1 Tim. 3:14-15a).
 - The church must proclaim the Scripture (1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 4:1-5).
 - The church must defend the Scripture (1 Tim. 3:15b; 2 Tim. 1:14).
 - The church must pass on the truth of Scripture to the next generation (2 Tim. 2:2).

We believe in
"one, holy, catholic,
apostolic church."