

Year 3 (2012): Week 7

GUILD SEMINAR

Week 7 “The Spirit and the Church”

Overview:

1. Prayer
2. Vocabulary
3. Reconciliation Overview (Reminder)
4. The Holy Spirit gathers the church in faith
5. The Holy Spirit builds the church in love
6. The Holy Spirit sends the church in hope
7. Tensions

As time may permit

8. The Triune Character of Faith
9. Richard Hooker’s Ecclesiology

Vocabulary

Ecclesiology is the traditional name for the doctrine of the church. It comes from the Greek word *Ecclesia*, which means “gathering.”

Filioque is Latin for “and the Son,” and refers to a clause the western church added to the Nicene Creed. “We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father *and the Son*. As a result of ecumenical conversations with the Greek Orthodox Church, the Episcopal Church has agreed to drop the *filioque* clause from the next edition of the Book of Common Prayer.

Marks of the Church (Roman Catholic): Following the creed, the Roman Catholic Church has pointed to four marks, or “notes” that identify the true church: It is “One,” “Holy,” “Catholic,” and “Apostolic.”

Marks of the Church (Reformed): The Reformed tradition holds up a different set of criteria for distinguishing the true church: “Where the word of God is truly preached and taught, the sacraments rightly administered, and the church discipline faithfully exercised.”

The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral: in 1886, the Episcopal Church’s House of Bishops, meeting in Chicago, stated that “all who have been duly baptized with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, are members of the Holy Catholic Church.” Then it offered four principles on which the various branches of a divided church might re-unify. A slightly amended statement of the principles was affirmed by the Lambeth Conference of 1888.

Lambeth Conference of 1888: Resolution 11

That, in the opinion of this Conference, the following Articles supply a basis on which approach may be by God's blessing made towards Home Reunion:

(a) The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as "containing all things necessary to salvation," and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.

(b) The Apostles' Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.

(c) The two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself--Baptism and the Supper of the Lord--ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of Institution, and of the elements ordained by Him.

(d) The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church."



Reconciliation Overview (Reminder)

	God's movement in Christ	Sin in this light	Christ's work in this light	Spirit in Community	Spirit in each one
God in humility	Priestly sacrifice of Son of God	Pride (in face of God's humility)	Justification (God's no to our no)	Gathering a community in time	Faith overcomes fallenness and pride
Humanity exalted	Kingly home-coming of Son of Man	Sloth (inaction, misery, alienation)	Sanctification (our yes to God's yes)	Upbuilding representative humanity	Love overcomes misery and sloth
Truth made known	Prophetic witness to at-one-ment	Falsehood (of self-rejection)	Vocation (witness in sunlight and storm)	Sending into ministry and mission	Hope overcomes self-rejection

In Barth's theology, this sweep from above to below and below to above *is* reconciliation, *is* atonement. As we may see, it includes the work of the Holy Spirit in and through the Church.

The Holy Spirit Gathers the Church in Faith

Reconciliation begins with the priestly, sacrificial, obedient descent (kenosis) of the Son of God into “the far country.” There he is rejected by prideful humanity—prideful and looking “high” for the coming of God as Lord, when we should have been looking “low” for the coming of God as Servant. But the rejection is rejected, humanity is justified by grace, a community is gathered and individuals are awakened to faith.

Question for Discussion:

When was a time when you experienced the Holy Spirit gathering the church as a community in faith?

The Holy Spirit Builds the Church in Love

The royal ministry of the Son of Man is to gather humanity and return to God—lifting creation, the world, and time itself into the very Godhead. Now humanity's gaze is fixed too low, in a sinful state of sloth, but the Son's ministry is to sanctify, to build up the community in which individuals are spiritually "quicken" in the experience of love.

Question for Discussion:

When was a time when you experienced the Holy Spirit building the church as a community in love?

The Holy Spirit Sends the Church in Hope

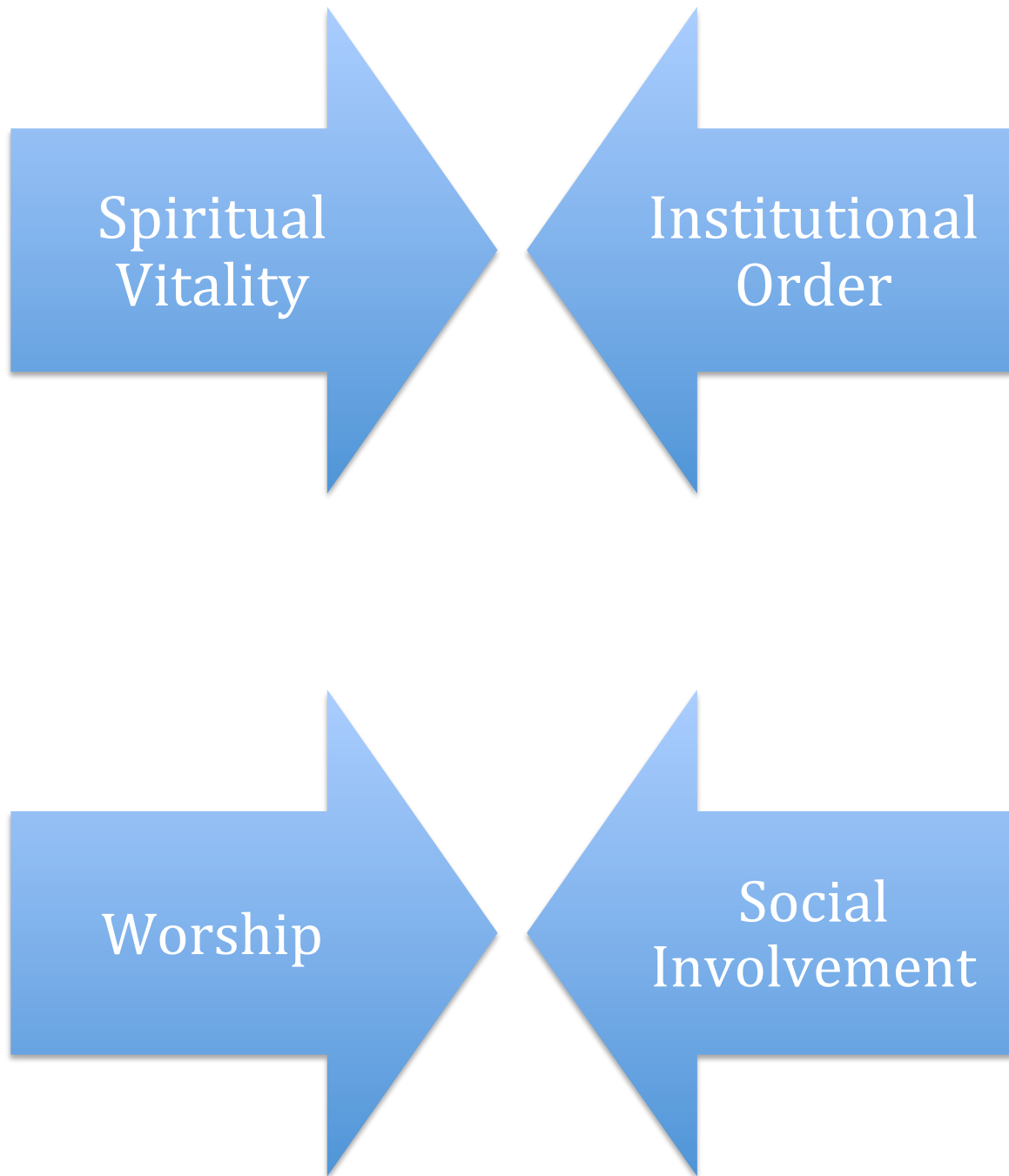
The prophetic ministry of the Son of God is to witness to the truth of reconciliation. As the light of the world he confronts the sin of falsehood, giving Christians a new vocation, sending the community into the world, stirring individuals with hope.

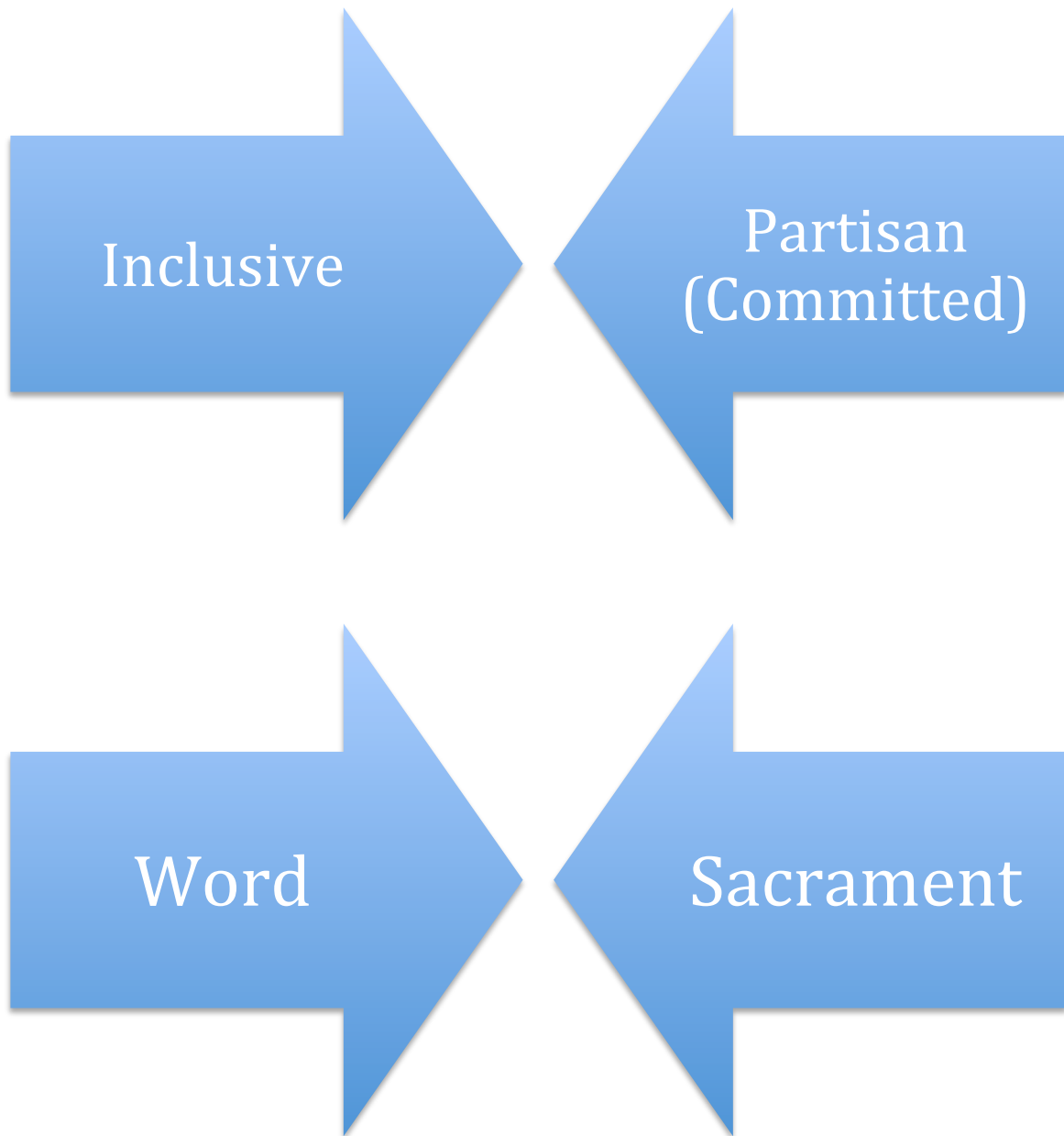
Question for Discussion:

When was a time when you experienced the Holy Spirit sending the church out into the world as a community inspired with hope?

Tensions

Migliore suggests there certain countervailing tendencies inherent to the church, with each of the tendencies requiring due attention.





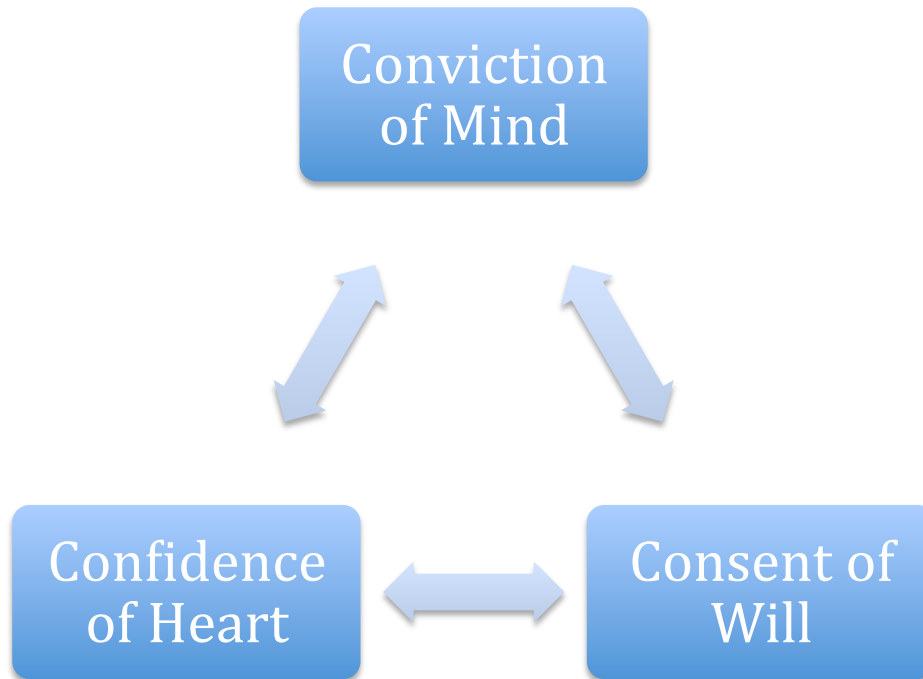
Question for Discussion:

Knowing the church today as you do, in what respects might it seem to be out of balance and in need of renewed attention and energy?

The Triune Character of Faith

We have at several points highlighted this as an appropriately balanced understanding of faith.

“[Faith] affects the whole of man’s nature. It commences with the conviction of the mind based on adequate evidence; it continues in the confidence of the heart or emotions based on conviction, and it is crowned in the consent of the will, by means of which the conviction and confidence are expressed in conduct.”¹



Question for Discussion:

Which of these aspects of faith seems to come most easily for you? Which seems most difficult?

¹ W.H. Griffith-Thomas, *The Principles of Theology* (London: Longmans, Green, 1930), xviii, quoted in Alister McGrath, *Dawkins’ God: Genes, Memes, and the Meaning of Life* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2005), 86.

Richard Hooker's Ecclesiology

The following is excerpted from Paul Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church*.² Captions have been inserted in italics just to re-enforce Avis's points along the way.

According to Hooker:

The Church is a two-natured society

"The Christian church is both a 'politic society' and a 'supernatural society.' While every politic society professes some religion, the church is distinguished from other politic societies by the nature of its fellowship and the profession of its distinctive faith."

The Church's distinctive fellowship is "supernatural."

"In other politic societies we associate with 'men simply considered as men' but in the church our fellowship . . . is with 'God, angels, and holy men.'"

The fellowship is distinguished and united by profession of faith in Christ.

"This supernatural society is distinguished from others and united in itself by its profession of the essential Christian faith: it consists of all 'them which call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.'"

Sanctification follows from profession.

"It is 'a community of men sanctified through the profession of that truth which God hath taught the world by his Son.'"

We should recognize a distinction between the mystical and visible church.

"With this supernatural society, however, we have to distinguish between the mystical and the visible church."

'Mystical' means hidden from perception by our senses.

"The mystical church . . . is known only to God: it is the mystical body of Christ because it must be affirmed of its members that 'the mystery of their conjunction is removed altogether from sense.'"

'Mystical' doesn't need 'political.'

² Paul Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church: Theological Resources in Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 48.

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“The mystical church has no need of an ecclesiastical polity.”

“Visible’ encompasses Israel before Christ and the Christian Church after Christ

“The visible church, on the other hand, is the company that God has called out to himself from the beginning of the world and consists of the Jewish Church before the coming of Christ and the Christian Church afterwards”

The Church includes many “churches” as ‘one sea’ comprised of ‘many oceans.’

“Just as the oceans of the world are continuous and form together one ‘main body of the sea, so the catholic church is in like sort divided into a number of distinct societies, every one of which is termed a church within itself.”

What identifies the Visible Church as such is baptism.

“The Christian church has its identity in its baptismal faith, for through baptism we are made members of one body.”

What unifies the church is “One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism.”

Hooker is quoted:

“The unity of which the visible body and church of Christ consists is that uniformity which all several persons thereunto belonging have, by reason of that *one Lord* whose servants they all profess themselves, that *one faith* which they all acknowledge, that *one baptism* wherewith they are all initiated. The visible church of Jesus Christ is therefore one in outward profession of those things which supernaturally appertain to the very essence of Christianity and are necessarily required in every particular Christian man.”

Avis continues:

The above passage is the key to Hooker’s ecclesiology

“This passage is the key to Hooker’s ecclesiology and the Anglican tradition that takes its direction from him. “

This Anglican position is different from the Reformed tradition’s identification of the “marks” of the church.

“[Hooker] identifies the church not by the marks of word, sacrament and discipline as the Reformers did . . .”

And it is different from the Catholic tradition’s identification of the “notes” of the church.

“. . . nor by the notes of antiquity, unity, universality, etc. . . . as Roman Catholic ecclesiology did . . .

Outward profession of faith identifies the visible church.

“. . . but by its outward profession of faith taken at face value.”

Avis also calls our attention to Hooker’s view concerning Christians whose views of faith and the church will turn out to have been in error:

“[Hooker] was convinced that they would not be condemned for their invincible ignorance but would enjoy the benefit of a general repentance and a general confession in casting themselves on the mercy of God. The puritan rigor in this matter provokes Hooker to one of his rare outbursts of personal moral passion: ‘Let me die if it ever be proved that simply an error doth exclude . . . utterly from hope of life. Surely I must confess unto you, if it be an error to think God may be merciful to save men even when they err, my greatest comfort is my error; were it not for the love I bear unto this error, I would neither wish to speak nor to live.’”³

³ Avis, 51.