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Class: TH601 NA/NOS Systematic Theology II: Christ and the Church

### QUESTIONS

1. Bird used five terms to describe the shape of the church. What are they?
2. The Nicene Creed lists four marks of the church. Briefly explain them.
3. What are the marks of the church as defined by the Reformers?
4. What are the three main models for church government?
5. Bird provides some adverse effects of multisite churches. State one.

### ANSWERS

1. The terms Bird used to describe the shape of the church are eschatological, Trinitarian, diaconal, fellowshiping, and holistic community.
2. The ancient view of the fourfold marks of the church is: one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. The church is *one* because it shares a single body, the body of Christ, the risen Lord. It is *holy* because it is called by God and sanctified by Christ through the Spirit. It is *catholic* because it is spread worldwide and traverses geographic and ethnic boundaries. It is *apostolic* because it holds to the apostles' teachings and is sent out by Christ into the world.
3. Reformers defined the marks of the church as the preaching of the Word, the proper administration of sacraments, and (for some) the application of church discipline.
4. The three main models of church government are Episcopalianism, Presbyterianism, and Congregationalism.
5. Bird states that one of the biggest dangers of multisite churches is that it risks amplifying the very worst of Western evangelical subculture, which is consumerism, corporatism, and celebrity-pastor cults.

### TERMS

*Episcopalianism*: this form of church governance is centered around the bishop and practiced by the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox, and Lutheran churches. The bishop manages a diocese and oversees several priests and parishes.

*Presbyterianism*: this form of church government focuses on a plurality of elders constituting a "session" as the head of a congregation. The session includes "teaching elders" (i.e., ordained

pastors) and "ruling elders" (lay folks who lead). The elders from many local churches then comprise a presbytery with ruling authority over the regional churches.

*Congregationalism*: the churches are governed by the democratic rule of the congregation. The primary element is the independence and autonomy of the local congregation from all other ecclesial authorities. Congregational churches can also join associations. Baptists, Anabaptists, Church of Christ, Pentecostals, and independent Bible churches practice this form of church governance.

## **SUMMARY**

In this section, Bird talks about the marks of a church, highlighting the ancient and Reformers' views. Next, he examines unity of the church and why Christians should actively pursue unity with other believers. Bird also discusses the varying forms of church governance—he concludes that the single most important factor in the church's governance is not the structure or model but the Christian character of the leaders. Finally, he concluded that evangelism, making disciples, administering the sacraments, kingdom work, and worship should be part of our understanding of the church's purpose.