5-3-1 Assignment 10 on Bird, Sec. 8.3-8.5

QUESTIONS

1. What are five key defining characteristics of the community of the Christian church, according to Bird?

2. Based on the Nicene Creed, what are the four descriptive marks of the true church?

3. What are the criticisms Bird gives against the episcopalianism form of church governance?[1]

4. What are several Biblical evidences Bird gives for justifying aspects of congregationalism?

5. Which five activities does Bird claim should feature in the purpose of the church?

Answers

1. The church is an eschatological, Trinitarian, diaconal, fellowshipping, and holistic community.

2. ecclesia una (**one**), sancta (**holy**), catholica (**catholic**), et apostolica (**apostolic**).

3. Dubious infallibility/authority claims, NT bishops = pastors, plurality of elders primary, hard to reform.

4. Early Christian congregations visibly independent, Judas replacement elected Titus chosen by churches

5. Evangelism, making disciples, administering of the sacraments, Kingdom work, and worship.

TERMS

diakonos: servant. The diaconate was established by the apostles in Acts 6 to ensure needs of community.

episkopos: overseer/bishop. In NT perhaps synonym with *presbyteros*, but connotes hierarchical structure.

presbyteros: elder. Also in NT, but later gave rise to form of church governance in contrast to *episkopos*.

SUMMARY

In three lucid expositions, Bird frames the shape, the marks, and the governance of the church. By shape, Bird means the characteristics of the community of believers, i.e. that it needs to be Trinitarian and serving in focus (see above for complete list). As for marks, Bird iterates through "one holy catholic and apostolic church". He takes a moment to rant against proponents of disunity, and then, in a highly informative section on church governance, Bird fleshes out the details of Episcopalianism, Prebyterianism, and Congregationalism. This section touches on what Bird calls "multisite" churches (a catch term for multi-congregation, virtual, etc.) concluding with reflections and exhortations of purpose.

---

[1] Michael F. Bird, Evangelical Theology, A Biblical and Systematic Introduction (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 848.