

03 The Attributes of the Church

The church must be fruitful regardless of size. God will look at the fruit of each church. Fruitfulness means the conversion of people, the spiritual growth of the saints, and the power of the Gospel that transforms lives. Is our church fruitful?

1. The Church is Apostolic

The church is founded upon the apostolic gospel and is called to carry out an apostolic mission.

1) Jesus called the Twelve. (Lk. 6:13; Mt. 10:2)

2) Whoever received the apostles received Christ, whoever rejected the apostles rejected Christ. (Mt. 10:40; Jn. 20:21-23)

3) To deny the authority of the Scriptures is to destroy the apostolic foundation.

4) The apostolic calling of the church: the Great Commission

2. The Church is Holy

“To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints...” (1 Co. 1:2)

Paul refers to the church as ones called to be a holy people.

1) God’s communicable(shared) attribute: holiness

2) “...You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.” (Lv. 19:2)

3) “Woe is me! For I am lost...” (Is. 6:5)

1) Jesus’s last intercession (Jn. 17:21-22)

2) One Father, one Son, one Spirit (Ep. 4:4)

4) Both a declaration and a call

3) To unite all things in him (Ep. 1:10)

5) A joyous privilege and purpose of salvation

4) One confession of faith (the Apostles’ Creed)

3. The Church is One

Jesus Christ builds one church on the foundation of the apostolic witnesses. As the church is one with the Father, so it is one in Jesus Christ, the one Shepherd who gathers one flock. (Jn. 10:16; Ep. 4:5)

5) One vision and mission

2) Catholicity calls us to move beyond denominational borders and to love one another passionately beyond race, culture, language, and status.

- Let us consider the case of Seungdong Church in Korea. Is our church carrying out the catholic gospel?

6) Diversity in unity, not uniformity

- Reference: The Church by Edmund Clowney

4. The Church is Catholic (universal)

“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Ga. 3:27-28)

The catholicity of the church refers to God’s universal grace that is given equally to everyone called by God.

1) Catholicity means that Christ is Lord over all people.

“For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Ro. 10:12-13)

- Understanding catholicity within Roman Catholicism and pantheism

What is your only comfort in life and in death?
Jesus Christ.

The Heidelberg Catechism

Q & A 1

Q) What is your only comfort in life and in death?

A) That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven; in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.