

# Theology

“...one fundamental aspect of the problem is that a majority of church members have no clear understanding of who they are or what they are called to be as the people of God.” Findley Edge, *The Greening of the Church*.

“..the average church member’s understanding of ‘what it means to be a Christian’ is so shallow and superficial as to constitute a major perversion of the gospel.” Findley Edge

## Metaphors for the Church...

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Major</b></p> <p>Major metaphors of the Church tend to emphasize the corporate nature of the Church and a connection with the Old Testament understanding of God’s relationship with God’s people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Body of Christ</li> <li>❑ Fellowship of the Saints</li> <li>❑ The People of God</li> <li>❑ Community of Faith</li> <li>❑ Kingdom</li> <li>❑ The New Creation</li> <li>❑ The New Israel</li> <li>❑ A Mystery</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Minor</b></p> <p>Minor metaphors of the Church tend to focus on illustrating God’s relationship with the Church and the Church’s relationship to the world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salt of the earth</li> <li>• The boat</li> <li>• The Ark</li> <li>• Fish and Fish Net</li> <li>• Unleavened bread</li> <li>• Vineyard</li> <li>• Fig Tree</li> <li>• Olive Tree</li> <li>• Bride of Christ</li> <li>• The Elect Lady</li> <li>• Citizens</li> <li>• Exiles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Table of the Lord</li> <li>• The Altar</li> <li>• The Cup of the Lord</li> <li>• Wine</li> <li>• Branches of the Vine</li> <li>• God’s Planting</li> <li>• God’s Vineyard</li> <li>• God’s Building</li> <li>• Building on the Rock</li> <li>• Wearers of the White Robes</li> <li>• The Poor</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Emphases</b></p> <p>Understanding the nature of the Church through metaphors tends to highlight the following points:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature of the church is more corporate than individual</li> <li>• The Church has a vertical relationship with God, who is the source of the Church’s being</li> <li>• The Church has a horizontal relationship to the world that is in keeping with the purpose of God for the Church</li> <li>• Any one metaphor is inadequate to contain a full understanding of the <i>nature</i> of the Church</li> <li>• Any single expression of the Church—in terms of form and polity—cannot fully be equated with the Church.</li> </ul>
---	--

## *Some Major Theological Issues....*

<b>Theology</b>	<b>Practice</b>
In this column, articulate your response as to what theology your congregation adheres to:	In this column give evidence that your congregation holds that theology by the way it engages in its practice(s):
What primary metaphor of Church informs our congregation?	
What is our theology of Christian calling?	
What is our theology of Worship?	
What is our theology of Christian Discipleship?	
What is our theology of what constitutes membership in our church?	
What is our theology of how the Church engages in and with the world?	

