



# I AM THE CHURCH

Week 1: Let's Get Real About The CHURCH

# COMMUNITY LEARNING COVENANT





1. Use chat for questions and comments.




## 2. Be Respectful

---


- All questions and comments should acknowledge the sacred value of people. For example, "Is my comment or question a barrier or bridge to deeper learning?"
- The virtual chat space is a community, not a monologue.





3. When possible, avoid generalizations by pointing out specific passages or pages in the book.

---



4. If we do not get to your questions/comments; or want the question/comment to remain confidential, etc., please email questions/comments to [pastor@lhmbc.net](mailto:pastor@lhmbc.net). You can expect that we will do some level of follow-up.

---





5. Invite  
friends and  
family.

---



# TOP 10 CHALLENGES FOR 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

---

1. OUTDATED MEMBERSHIP MODEL



2. 90% OF AMERICAN CHURCHES ARE DECLINING OR GROWING SLOWER THAN SURROUNDING COMMUNITY



3. AN INCREASINGLY CORPORATE MODEL TO WHAT BEGAN AS AN ORGANIC SOCIAL MOVEMENT



4. UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS



5. INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNAL/SPIRITUAL FORMATION OUTSIDE OF INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH



# TOP 10 CHALLENGES FOR 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

---

6. ORGANIZATIONAL BOREDOM AND CULTURAL EMPHASIS ON AUTONOMOUS INDIVIDUAL



7. CONSUMER APPROACH TO CHURCH MEMBERSHIP



8. DECREASING DENOMINATIONAL FIDELITY/CONNECTION



9. DISTRUST OF AUTHORITY



10. THE MYTH OF SAMENESS VS. UNITY IN DIFFERENCE

WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN  
WE SAY CHURCH  
MEMBERSHIP?





# WHAT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP DOES NOT MEAN...

1. Church membership is NOT about **AFFILIATION**; it's about **PARTICIPATION**.





# WHAT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP DOES NOT MEAN...

2. Church  
membership is  
NOT about a  
**DENOMINATION**



# WHAT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP DOES NOT MEAN...

3. Church is NOT  
a **BUILDING**; it's  
a **BODY** -

1 Corinthians  
3:17

# 1 CORINTHIANS 3:16-17



Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.



WHAT IS THE  
CHURCH?



# WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

---

1. THE CHURCH IS  
INCARNATIONAL



1a. It is MADE BY God -  
MATTHEW 16:13-18,



1b. It is MADE UP of Humanity -  
ROMANS 12:5

# 1. THE CHURCH IS INCARNATIONAL

## **MADE BY GOD -**

### **Matthew 16:13-18**

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” <sup>14</sup> And they said, “Some say John the Baptist but others Elijah and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” <sup>15</sup> He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

## **MADE UP OF HUMANITY -**

### **Romans 12:5**

<sup>5</sup> so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.





# WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

2. THE CHURCH  
IS A  
COMMUNITY -  
MATTHEW  
18:19-20

# MATTHEW 18:19-20

---

<sup>19</sup> Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup> For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”



# WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

---

3. THE CHURCH IS FOR **ENCOURAGEMENT** AND  
**ACCOUNTABILITY** - HEBREWS 10:24-25

# HEBREWS 10:24-25

<sup>24</sup> And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching

# WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

4. THE CHURCH BELONGS TO GOD - EPHESIANS 1:20-22

# EPHESIANS 1:20-22

---

<sup>20</sup> God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,<sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. <sup>22</sup> And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

# WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

---

5. THE CHURCH IS **FRAGILE** –  
ROMANS 16:17; EPHESIANS 4:1-6



## 5. THE CHURCH IS FRAGILE

### **ROMANS 16:17**

<sup>17</sup> I urge you, brothers and sisters, to keep an eye on those who create dissensions and hindrances, in opposition to the teaching that you have learned; avoid them

### **EPHESIANS 4:1-6**

I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,<sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,<sup>3</sup> making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: <sup>4</sup> there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling,<sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

# WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

6. THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST -

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12

# 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

---



# WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

---

7. THE CHURCH IS **AN ORGANISM** - EPHESIANS 4:14-16

## EPHESIANS 4:14-16

<sup>14</sup> We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming; <sup>15</sup> but speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

# WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

8. THE CHURCH IS  
PROPHETICALLY  
COUNTERCULTURAL -

1 TIMOTHY 3:15

# 1 TIMOTHY


## 3:15

<sup>14</sup> I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, <sup>15</sup> if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.



9. THE CHURCH IS  
LOCAL **AND** UNIVERSAL





SO WHAT'S IT ALL MEAN?

# JAMES CONE'S DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH

"The people of God, whose primary task is that of **being Christ to the world** by **proclaiming the message of the gospel** (kerygma), by **rendering services of liberation** (diakonia), and by **being itself a manifestation of the nature of the new society** (koinonia)."

Source: Joseph W. Caldwell



# AFFIRMATION FOR THE WEEK

“GOD DID NOT GIVE US LOCAL CHURCHES TO BECOME COUNTRY CLUBS WHERE MEMBERSHIP MEANS WE HAVE PRIVILEGES AND PERKS. GOD PLACED US IN CHURCHES TO SERVE, CARE FOR OTHERS, PRAY FOR LEADERS, LEARN, TEACH, AND GIVE FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL.” - PG. 6.