



**Life Together in the
Church, WCF
Chapters 25-26**

Jesus is Head of the Church

WCF Chapters 25-26

Jesus is the Head of the Invisible Church – WCF 25.1

WCF 25.1. The catholic (that is, universal) church, which is invisible, consists of all the elect who have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ its head. This church is his bride, his body, and the fullness of him who fills all in all.

WCF Chapter 25 – Jesus is the Head of the Church

WCF 25.1B - The church is Christ's

A. Spouse (Eph 5) relational image

B. Body (Eph. 1:22, Col. 1:18) – physical image

C. Fullness (Eph 1:23)

Jesus is the Head of the Church – Fullness of Christ

Ephesians 1:22: “And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”

“Every ministry is given by Christ. Every office is of his design. Every servant is to do his will. Every law is his creation. Every gift has been purchased by his own blood. The church is his. If we are to learn anything about the subject of the church, we are to learn it in Christ’s school.” Van DixHoorn

25.2 – Jesus is Head of the Visible Church

25.2-A. The visible church, which is also catholic (that is, universal) under the gospel (that is, not confined to one nation, as it was before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world who profess the true religion, together with their children.

- Universal and Visible
- Professors and ‘their children’

The Visible Church – ...to Professors

1Cor. 1:2: “To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:”

The Visible Church

WCF 25.2-B It is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, outside of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.

- The church as Kingdom
- House and Family

25.3 – The Ministry of the Visible Church

WCF 25.3. To this universal, visible church Christ has given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the age. For this purpose he makes these means effectual by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise.

The Ministry of the Visible Church

The Gifts of the Visible Church

WCF 25.3. To this universal, visible church Christ has given the *ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God*

The Ministry of the Visible Church

Gathering and perfecting –

WCF 25.3. To this universal, visible church Christ has given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God *for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life,*

The Ministry of the Visible Church

Ephesians 4:8 Therefore it says, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.” ...11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

The Ministry of the Visible Church

To the end of time by the spirit

WCF 25.3. To this universal, visible church Christ has given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, *to the end of the age. For this purpose he makes these means effectual by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise.*

The Ministry of the Visible Church

Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

The Marks of the Visible Church

WCF 25.4. This universal church has been sometimes more and sometimes less visible. Particular churches, which are members of this universal church, are more or less pure to the extent to which the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, the ordinances are administered, and public worship is performed more or less purely in them.

The Visible Church as a Mixed Bag

WCF 25.5. The purest churches on earth are subject to both mixture and error, and some have so degenerated that they have become no churches of Christ at all, but rather synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, there shall always be a church on earth to worship God according to his will.

25.6 – Jesus is the Only Head of the Church

WCF 25.6. There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can the Pope of Rome be its head in any sense.

Matt. 23:8: “But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. 9 And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. 10 Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ.”

25.6 – Jesus is the Only Head of the Church

1Pet. 5:1: “So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

United to Christ and to One
Another
WCF Chapter 26

United to Christ and to One Another

26.1 – how we are united to Christ and how we are to find communion with the saints

26.2 – how we are told to hold communion with one another in corporate worship and outside corporate worship

26.3 the limits of union and communion with Christ and his people

26.1-A – How we are United to Christ

WCF 26.1-A All saints—who are united to Jesus Christ their head by his Spirit and by faith—have fellowship with him in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory.

26.1 –How we are to Find Communion with the Saints

WCF 26.1-B “And, being united to one another in love, they participate in each other's gifts and graces and are obligated to perform those public and private duties which lead to their mutual good, both inwardly and outwardly.”

Eph 4:15: “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

26.1 – How we are to Find Communion with the Saints

1Cor. 12:7: “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

1Th. 5:11: “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”

1 Th. 5:14: “And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.”

26.1 –How we are to Find Communion with the Saints

Rom. 1:11: “For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— 12 that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine.”

John 13:34: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Gal. 6:10: “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

26.2 –Communing with One Another Inside and Outside Corporate Worship

WCF 26.2-A. It is the duty of professing saints to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God and in performing such other spiritual services as help them to edify one another.

Heb. 10:24: “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,” 25 “not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

26.2 –Communing with One Another Inside and Outside Corporate Worship

WCF 26.2B “It is their duty also to come to the aid of one another in material things according to their various abilities and necessities. As God affords opportunity, this communion is to be extended to all those in every place who call on the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Acts 2:42-47

26.2 –Communing with One Another Inside and Outside Corporate Worship

Acts 2:42: “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

26.3 – Limits of Union and Communion with Christ and His People

WCF 26.3-A The communion which the saints have with Christ does not make them in any way partakers of the substance of his Godhead, or in any respect equal with Christ.

WCF 26.3-B To affirm either is irreverent and blasphemous. Nor does their fellowship with one another as saints take away or infringe upon any person's title to, or right to, his own goods and possessions.