

**Nauset Baptist Church**  
**Church Membership Matters Course**  
**Session 9: Congregationalism & Our Local Fellowship**  
Revised: January 28, 2012

## **Congregationalism**

### **I. Congregationalism—What it Means**

- A. Mistaken conceptions of Congregationalism (Democracy?)
- B. Correct conception of Congregationalism (Final earthly court of appeal)
- C. Three areas in the NT where the congregation has authority
  - 1. Matters of Disputes between Believers & Discipline

**Matthew 18:15-17** (Cf. Acts 6:1-5; 1 Cor. 5:12; 6:4)

<sup>15</sup> *“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. <sup>16</sup> But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ <sup>17</sup> If he refuses to listen to them, **tell it to the church**; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.*

### **1 Corinthians 5:5-13**

<sup>4</sup> ***When you are assembled** in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, <sup>5</sup> hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.*

<sup>6</sup> *Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? <sup>7</sup> Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. <sup>8</sup> Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.*

<sup>9</sup> *I have written you in my letter **not to associate with sexually immoral people**—<sup>10</sup> not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. <sup>11</sup> But now I am writing you that **you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.***

<sup>12</sup> *What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? <sup>13</sup> God will judge those outside. “Expel the wicked man from among you.”*

- 2. Matters of Doctrine

**2 Timothy 4:3** (Cf. Galatians 1:8)

*For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, **they will gather around them** a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.*

- 3. Matters of Church Membership

**2 Corinthians 2:5-8**

*If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent—not to put it too severely. <sup>6</sup> The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. <sup>7</sup> Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. <sup>8</sup> I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.*

### **II. Congregationalism—What it Doesn’t Mean**

- A. Biblical Examples of erring congregations
- B. Historical Examples of erring congregations
- C. The Picture is incomplete, but Clear

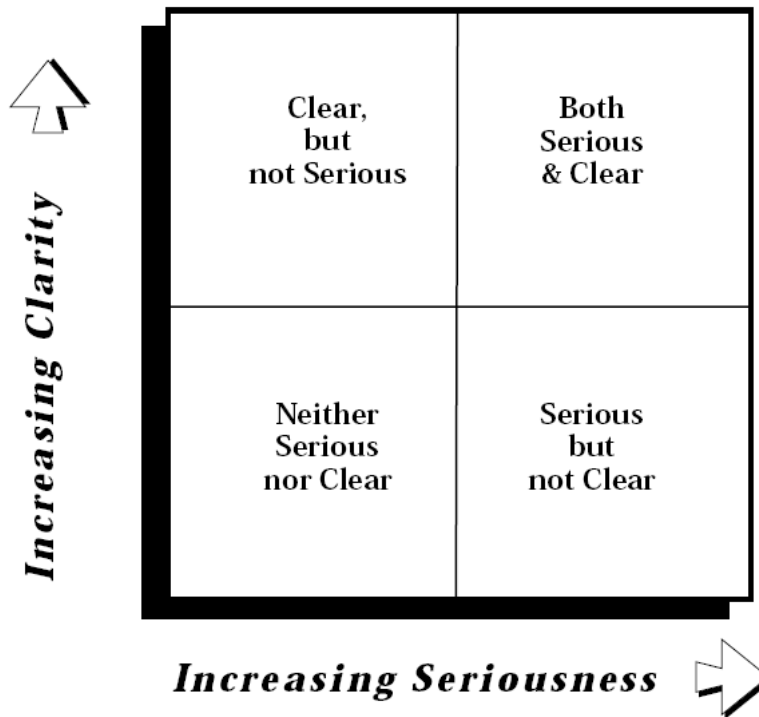
### III. Congregationalism—Why it is Important

- A. To Maintain Doctrinal Fidelity in Congregations
- B. Congregationalism’s historical record

*“Friends, the verdict of history is in. While it is clear that no certain polity prevents churches from error, from declension, and from sterility, the more centralized polities seem to have a worse track record than does congregationalism in maintaining a faithful, vital, evangelical witness. (Congregationalism’s record is particularly enhanced in the case when the purity and visibility of the church is protected through a biblical practice of believer baptism and a rejection of infant baptism.)” – Mark Devor “A Display of God’s Glory”*

### IV. Congregationalism—How it Works

- A. The account a Leader must give
- B. Trusting Leaders



1. Matters clear, but not serious:
  - Should we paint the exterior of the building purple?
  -
2. Matters neither serious nor clear
  - Should we close our services with prayer or with a time of silence?
3. Matters both serious and clear
  - Should we continue to require belief that Jesus is fully God and fully man in order to be a member of our church?
4. Matters serious, but not clear
  - Should we acknowledge this person as an elder or affirm this membership action
  - Should we allocate this serious expenditure
  - Should we make this directional decision as a congregation

C. Encourage and Trust your Leaders! (Quote p. 42)

## Our Local Fellowship

### *When do we meet as a church?*

Each main meeting we have is to be a reflection of the body of Christ. It is when men and women who may have nothing in common other than Christ all come together. *1 Corinthians 12* speaks of the body of Christ and of the different parts making up that body; that is its members. We are told that the eye or head cannot say to the hand or feet that they are not needed. Each member is given gifts to build Christ's church. So in our three main meetings, all the hands aren't getting in one room and the feet in another. Instead, these three meetings have the opportunity to teach us how all of these parts work together for the glory of God and the growth of His kingdom.

**Sundays** – As we are to give God our first fruits in tithing, so we also set aside our first day of the week for worship to God

–Worship service (obtain bulletin)

- Hear God's word preached (Main part of our life together)
- Prepare beforehand on Saturday night (a sleepless night will give way to an inattentive morning)
- Prepare beforehand on Sunday morning 15 minutes prior to service and focus on worshipping God by singing
  - Lord's Supper – first Sunday of each month

**4:00/7:00 PM on Wednesdays** – Prayer & Bible study

YOUR MINISTRY after first becoming a member is to **ATTEND REGULARLY**. This will let us get to know one another. It will honor God. Take time to greet those around you – write down their names. Let this be your perpetual service to the church. Also, be **praying through the membership directory** – a page a day. Prayer is a normal part of a Christian's life, and praying through the directory is a great way to get to know others in the church. Get together with other members for fellowship, prayer, encouragement, etc.

### **Member's Meetings**

Why even have member's meeting? (Conviction that the church be congregational)

- We hear reports on Membership.
- We also vote on Finances, Buildings & Property, Elder/Deacon matters, and various other church matters such as budget, leadership positions, and ...
- Discipline
  - We do practice discipline as we are commanded to in scripture
  - We practice discipline in order to bring about repentance in areas of unrepentant sin
  - Discipline may sound harsh to our ears, but it is one way God commands us to love each other
- Care list – (Explain it and emphasize finding another church promptly when you move out of the area and that this should be a top priority that factors into where you move to.)
- Pray in preparation for members meetings as we seek to glorify God

### **What are some of the ministries at NBC that members can be involved in?**

- Hospitality (or just attendance in coming early and staying late and reaching out)
- Funerals, marriages, visiting the sick, potluck, raking leaves, shoveling snow, helping others move, preparation for service and cleanup afterwards
- Missions & Outreach
  - Christianity explained (individually, at work)

- Short term mission trips?
- Support Missionaries
- Materials & Media, books table, email ministry, web site
- Ushers
- Music: Help in leading the worship of God through singing or playing an instrument
- Children's Ministry
- Administration

### ***Finances***

- Scripture suggests that what a person does with their money is a good indicator of where their heart is and where their trust is. (e.g. Zaccheus in Luke 19 "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount. Jesus replied, "Today, salvation has come to this house.")
- Giving to the church is a good thing and will honor God.
- We expect members of the church to give primarily to this church to help support the ministry that is benefiting them.
- If you are a Christian, you know that God wants us to grow in every aspect of our Christian life, and this includes our tithing. We encourage members to begin tithing at 10% and go from there (*I Cor. 16:1-2 keeping with one's income*).
- We want members of the church to be joyous in the privilege of being able to share in God's work here at NBC and to remember the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, he became poor for our sakes that we might become rich.

### ***Prayer***

#### ***What is next?***

If this is your final session and you would like to join the church, you'll need to have an appointment to meet with our Elders: Pastor, Steve Kitchen and Al Sabel. Before this meeting you will need to have read the ***Statement of Faith, Church Covenant***, and the ***Nine Marks Booklet***.