

# Appendix: A Sevenfold Believers' Church Typology

The typology used in this paper is based primarily on Durnbaugh, Estep, Bender, Littell, Williams, and Yoder, as noted.

The Believers' Church is primarily "Christianity as discipleship." As a type or model distilled somewhat artificially from its various historical manifestations, it demonstrates most basically seven characteristics. Below are listed the seven elements, accompanied by descriptive phrases from the authors noted. The typology was arrived at deductively, based primarily on the elements noted by these authors.

1) *Voluntary adult membership based on a covenant-commitment to Jesus Christ, emphasizing obedience to Jesus as necessary evidence of faith in Him.*

Voluntary membership of those confessing Jesus Christ as Lord — (Durnbaugh).

The covenant is made between God and themselves and with each other to live faithfully as disciples of Christ — (Durnbaugh).

Membership is voluntary and witting — (Littell).

Free, voluntary membership — (Yoder).

Gathered church of committed believers — (Williams).

Those personally claimed by Christ — (Littell).

2) *A community or brotherhood of discipline, edification,*

*correction, and mutual aid, in conscious separation from the world, as the primary visible expression of the Church.*

Faithful admonition and edification — (Durnbaugh).

Mutual aid and responsibility — (Durnbaugh).

Separation from the world — (Durnbaugh, Littell).

Mutual correction, support, and abiding hope — (Williams).

Disciplined community — (Williams).

Disciplines applied to members — (Yoder).

Internal integrity and church discipline — (Littell).

The church is visible . . . a brotherhood — (Yoder).

The church as a brotherhood of committed believers — (H. Bender).

Discipleship, conceived in terms of Christian community — (Littell).

The empirical church as primarily a fellowship . . . of the regenerate — (Estep).

*3) A life of good works, service, and witness, as an expression of Christian love and obedience, incumbent on all believers — thus an emphasis on the ministry of the laity, rather than of a special ministerial church as “a missionary minority.”*

Discipleship as implying evangelism, ethics, and social action; love as the only adequate motivation of the Christian life — (Estep).

The Church is missionary — (Yoder).

A new ethic of love — (H. Bender).

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Perform Christian works; higher level of life than the common man — (Durnbaugh).

Mission and witness — (Littell).

4) *The Spirit and the Word as comprising the sole basis of authority, implying a de-emphasis on or rejection of church tradition and creeds.*

The Word given in the scriptures and apprehended through the Holy Spirit provides the sole authority — (Durnbaugh).

The Church is led by the Spirit and the Word — (Yoder).

An appeal to the New Testament as the ultimate authority in the church — (Estep).

An openness to truth under the Spirit's direction — (Estep).

An acceptance of the theology of the ancient symbols with a corresponding rejection of all creeds — (Estep).

5) *Primitivism and Restitutionism — belief in the normative nature of the early church, with an attempt to restore the essential elements of early church life and practice.*

Primitivism, or the principle of restoration of the apostolic pattern — (Estep). (Littell sees this as the most basic element in the Believers' Church concept).

6) *A pragmatic, functional approach to church order and structure.*

Neither complete formalism nor complete spontaneity; forms evolve from the group, and can be changed if need be — (Durnbaugh).

7) *A belief in the universal Church as the Body of Christ.*

The true church is representative of the claims of the

Universal Church in one place — (Littell).