

Part 1 – The Mighty List of Confusing Church Words

Alb — A full-length white garment worn by the pastor.

Altar — The box like structure at the front of the sanctuary. In the Old Testament times, it was where God came down to earth as either a tongue of fire or a cloud to be with His people. After Jesus came to earth, it came to symbolize his grave – where God once again came down to earth, this time in bodily form!

Anathema — The Greek word for cursed or condemned

Anointing — A biblical term to describe the application of oil (a symbol of the Holy Spirit) in an act of consecrating sacred objects or persons, such as a priest or King. It also refers to an endowment of God's Spirit, blessing, or approval upon a servant of God. The Messiah literally means "anointed one." "But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you..." (1 John 2:27).

Apocalypse — From the Greek, APOKALYPSIS, meaning "revelation or unveiling," as used in Rev. 1:1. The New Testament book of Revelation is frequently referred to as the Apocalypse.

Apostle — A person sent by God. One of five office gifts described in Ephesians 4:11.

Atonement — Literally, "a covering," as in covering our sins from God's sight. It is used in reference to a sinner's reconciliation with God through the sufferings of Christ. "Help us, O God of our salvation, For the glory of Your name; And deliver us, and provide atonement for our sins, For Your name's sake!" (Psa. 79:9).

Apology — A theological term to describe a contention made in defense of the Christian faith. It is derived from the Greek, APOLOGIA, meaning "a defense in conduct or procedure." Apologetics is the study of this explanation or defense.

Baptism — The act of being immersed in water in obedience to scripture, as a statement of faith in Christ. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

Baptismal — A term describing the event of baptizing or the place where baptisms are performed.

Body of Christ — The universal "collection" of all believers. "Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually" (1 Cor. 12:27).

Called — To be chosen of God for a particular purpose. "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God..." (1 Cor. 1:1).

Canticles — From Latin, CANTICUM which means a "song." Often interchanged as the title of the Old Testament book, Song of Solomon.

Chalice — The vessel which holds the wine that becomes the Precious Blood of Christ.

Chancel — The space around the altar, including the chairs where the pastor(s) sit(s), the pulpit and the lectern.

Chasuble — A heavy, intricately woven piece of clothing worn by the pastor over his other vestments. It symbolizes the yoke of Christ and of the priesthood.

Communion/Eucharist/The Lord's Supper — A memorial supper of bread and wine, which in a mystery we cannot understand, becomes not only bread and wine, but also the broken body and shed blood of Jesus. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:16).

Contrition — An expression of humility, sorrow or repentance for sin. "The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit" (Psa. 34:18).

Covenant — A sacred, irrevocable promise between God and man. "You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Acts 3:25).

Creed — A statement of beliefs which include the fundamentals considered necessary to salvation.

Deacon — Literally a servant. An office of servant ministry within the church. "But let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless" (1 Tim. 3:10).

Demon — A devil, an agent of Satan.

Demon possessed — To have a demon or demons. Sometimes interpreted as being possessed by demons. "When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick" (Matt. 8:16).

Denomination — A cluster of individual churches, which have unified together due to their agreement on certain issues, and perhaps due to their disagreement with the viewpoints of other churches or denominations.

Devil — A reference to Satan, or one of his demon agents. "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11).

Disciple — One who is taught or trained. "And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:27).

Doctrine — A teaching; That which is taught as the belief of a church. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16).

Ecclesiastical — A term from the Greek, EKKLESIA, pertaining to the church or used in association with clergymen.

Edification — To build up and strengthen. "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church" (1 Cor. 14:4).

Elder — A mature believer charged with spiritual supervision and ministry within the church. Elder and bishop are generally used interchangeably in the New Testament. "Let the elders who

rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine" (1 Tim. 5:17).

Epistles — Letters written under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to be read as instruction to the churches. "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren" (1 Thes. 5:27).

Eschatology — A theological term to describe the study of last events.

Evangelist — A proclaimer or preacher of the good news. One of five office gifts described in Ephesians 4:11.

Fall of Man — Mankind's estranged condition from God through sin, as originated with the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the garden.

Fasting — Abstaining from eating food for specified periods of time. "So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed" (Acts 14:23).

Fellowship — The spiritual relationship between believers and the Lord, and the gathering together of Christians in the name of Jesus. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:6-7).

Fishers of men — A term Jesus first used to describe the soul-winning mission of his disciples. "And He said to them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19).

Fornication — Any act of unsanctioned sexual behavior or perversion, especially used in association with sex outside the realm of marriage. "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;" (Eph. 5:3).

Gospel — Literally, "good news." The story of Christ's life, His death and resurrection, as described from different perspectives by eye-witness authors, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Their four individual records of Christ are each called a Gospel, entitled with each authors name — which comprise the first four books of the New Testament. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

Hallelujah — A variation of a Hebrew word, Allelujah, which means Praise the Lord. "After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power to the Lord our God!" (Rev. 19:1).

Heaven — The eternal realm and dwelling place of God. "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mat 18:3).

Hell — From the Greek, GEHENNA (valley of Ge-Hinnom) used figuratively to describe the place of everlasting punishment for the unrighteous. (Also used for SHEOL and HADES, "the

abode of the dead.") "And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire" (Matt. 18:9).

Hymn — A special song, sung in churches to praise God. A hymn is special in that it must both be biblically correct, and be teaching something about God to the people.

Hymnal — A collection of hymns, all of which are tested by a special board of clergy and lay people, and approved for use in our church services.

Indulgence — A term used by the Roman Catholic church to describe a remission of temporal punishment due to sins. The sale of indulgences by the church was the one of the first issues refuted by Martin Luther which inadvertently brought about the Reformation.

Inspired — A term which means originated of God or God breathed. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16).

Intercession — To intercede in behalf of another person or cause in prayer. "...It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34).

Jehovah (Yahweh) — The English rendering of the Hebrew consonants, JHVA. This is God's sacred name, used over 7,000 times in the Old Testament. The Jews considered this name to be so sacred that when reading scripture aloud, they preferred not to utter it, but would use the word Adonai, which means "Lord," in its place. The transliteral pronunciation, Jehovah, was formed from the Hebrew consonants JHVA and the vowels from Adonai. However, scholars of ancient Hebrew say that JHVA was originally pronounced as "Yahweh." The King James Version translated it as Jehovah, while new translations use Yahweh or Lord. "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth." (Psalms 83:18 KJV)

Justified — To be made just and right in God's sight which occurs through our faith in Christ. "...being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24).

Laity — The laymen or non-clergy members of the church.

Lake of fire — The place of everlasting punishment — hell, GEHENNA. "And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15).

Lamb of God — A figurative term to describe Jesus as the lamb sacrifice for our sins, relating from the lamb sacrifices of the Old Testament. "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Laying on of hands — The act of placing hands upon a person, in conjunction with prayer, to invoke God's blessing or anointing. "...they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:18).

Lectern/Ambo — a tall stand with a sloping top to hold a book or notes, from which someone, typically a preacher or lecturer, can read while standing up. In most churches, it is on the right-hand side (looking from the pews toward the altar)

Lectionary - The book containing the biblical readings arranged for the celebration of Mass.

Litany — A prescribed form of prayer made by minister or priest with congregational responses.

Liturgy — This is a prescribed form or collection of forms for public worship. In liturgical churches, the rite and ceremony is more prominent than the emphasis on preaching, evangelism, or spontaneous expressions of worship.

Lucifer — The name of one of the Lord's three archangels, who rebelled and was cast out of Heaven to the earth, where he dwells as Satan or the Devil. "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!" (Isa. 14:12).

Manifestation — The act of making obvious or bringing out in the open. "In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 John 4:9).

Mass – Another (older) name for a church service.

Messiah — A reference to Jesus Christ. Literally, "The Anointed One" (Dan. 9:25).

Minister — One who serves in a ministerial role of a church, as to preach sermons or conduct religious services, or to perform some service to the spiritual benefit of others. It literally means to serve, help or encourage. "...I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power" (Eph. 3:7).

Nave — The part of the church where the congregation sits.

Offering — A gift given from our own possessions or riches. "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, In what way have we robbed You? In tithes and offerings" (Mal. 3:8).

Omnipotent — A theological term to describe the all-powerful characteristics of God.

Omnipresent — A theological term to express God's characteristic of being everywhere at once.

Omniscient — A theological term to describe God's all-knowing characteristics.

Ordained — Chosen, authorized or endorsed. Generally used to describe God's approval. Ordination of a minister is the act of recognizing God's endorsement upon an individual for a ministry office, implemented by the laying on of hands or the issuance of ministerial credentials. "...He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

Orthodoxy — A belief in doctrines which are considered correct or sound.

Pastor — By modern tradition, a person who is a minister and spiritual overseer of a church congregation — an elder or bishop. A pastor literally means "a shepherd," a metaphoric description of one who cares for and leads a flock of God's sheep. One of five office gifts described in Ephesians 4:11.

Paten — The "plate" that holds the bread that becomes the Sacred Body of Christ.

Penitent — feeling or showing sorrow and regret for having done wrong; repentant. a person who repents their sins or wrongdoings and seeks forgiveness from God.

Pentateuch — A reference to the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, & Deuteronomy.

Pews — The traditional bench-long seats in churches. The term originated from the French word, PUIE, "a raised place," which was used to describe the boxed, balcony seats in a theater. In precolonial days, the term became identified with the enclosed boxed seats in a church sanctuary, and later to all church bench seats. Other tradition says that the term originated from pioneer days when bathing was sometimes infrequent, and the bench seats retained the odor from users.

Prophecy — The act of speaking from the mind of God. Either to forthtell or foretell. "...for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21).

Prophet — One who speaks in God's behalf, either to proclaim His written Word or to speak from His supernatural revelation. One of five office gifts described in Eph. 4:11.

Pulpit — The podium from which a minister preaches. The term was used in the King James Version, where a pulpit was something stood on for elevation when speaking to a crowd. "And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood..." (Nehemiah 8:4 KJV). In most churches, it is on the left-hand side (looking from the pews toward the altar)

Rebuke — An expression of disapproval or reprimand. "Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him" (Luke 17:3).

Reconciliation — A term which means being brought back. "And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled" (Col. 1:21).

Redeemed — A term which means bought or purchased. "...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

Reformation — The 16th-century movement, started primarily by Martin Luther, for the reform of abuses in the Roman Catholic Church ending in the establishment of the Lutheran, Reformed and Protestant Churches.

Regenerated — A theological term, describing the state of new life, resulting from the new birth in Christ.

Repent — To be remorseful for sin, and to turn around and go in a new direction. "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).

Saints — Persons who are separated unto God. A term which refers to all believers. "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19).

Salvation — A term which describes the rescue of our soul from eternal death. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

Sanctified — To be made separate for holy use. "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor" (1 Thes. 4:3-4).

Sanctuary — Often used to describe the auditorium used for church gatherings. The term originates from reference to the temple or tabernacle, coming from the term "sanctify," to set apart for the Lord's use. "Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, And bless the LORD" (Psa. 134:2).

Secular — That which is not sacred or ecclesiastical. It pertains to things not Christian or church related, such as unbelieving society.

Second Coming — A reference to the end-time return of Jesus Christ to the earth, His second appearance, which He promised and which is predicted throughout the Old and New Testaments. "You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand" (James 5:8).

Soteriology — A theological term used to describe the doctrine of salvation. Taken from the Greek word for salvation, SOTERIA.

Stanza — The correct term for a single "verse" of a hymn. Technically, a verse is just the words of the hymn (while the music is the score). In our hymnal, each stanza is numbered.

Stole — A long strip of fabric worn around the neck. It matches the color of the day. Pastors wear the stole around the neck and over the breast.

Testament — A sacred covenant or promise, as in the Old or New Testaments. "But their minds were hardened. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ" (2 Cor. 3:14).

Testimony — A solemn affirmation of some fact. In modern church tradition this frequently describes a public testimonial of thanksgiving to God for an answered prayer. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death" (Rev. 12:11).

Theology — The study of God (from the Greek word for God, THEO).

Throne of grace — A term which refers to God's presence and His character of granting undeserved favor through prayer. "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

Tithe — The first ten percent of our increase or income which God claims as His. "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now in this, says the LORD of hosts, If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10).

Transgression — A biblical term to describe sin, a violation of God's law, or disobedience to God. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4 KJV).

Trespass — A sin or offense. "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25).

Trinity — A theological term which describes the three persons of the Godhead, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A church which embraces this doctrine is called "Trinitarian." "For there are three who bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one" (1 John 5:7).

Witness — To share the Gospel of Christ with others; to bear witness of His presence in our life. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Word — "The" Word, God's Word, the Bible. Jesus Christ is the Word who was made flesh. "Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).

Part 2 – Church Colours

White: White symbolizes light, purity, innocence, joy, and glory. It is used on certain feast days and during Christmas and Easter Season. It may also be used in funeral services.

Green: Green, the natural color of life, points to the hope of life eternal. It is used in Ordinary Time.

Gold: Gold is the colour of victory. Because of its brightness metallic gold also symbolizes the presence of God. It is used for Easter and Christmas day.

Violet: Violet symbolizes melancholy and somberness. It is used in the penitential seasons of Lent.

Red: Red connotes both fire and blood. It is used on the feasts of martyrs, on Palm Sunday, Pentecost, and on similar feasts.

Rose: Rose symbolizes joy in the midst of a penitential season (rose being between violet and white). It may be worn only on two days in the year: Gaudete Sunday (Third Sunday of Advent) and Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent).

Blue: Blue symbolizes Penance, sacrifice, preparation. It is used in Advent.

Black: Black symbolizes death and mourning. It is the standard color for the pastor's everyday clothing, but is also sometimes used at funeral masses or the anniversary of the death of loved ones. It is used on Good Friday.

Part 3 – Church Gestures

Standing: Standing shows a special level of respect and readiness, e.g., during the Gospel reading. It is also the normal posture when singing or when praying in common.

Genuflection: A genuflection is made by bending the right knee to the ground. It is given to the Blessed Sacrament when entering or leaving the church or when passing in front of the tabernacle. In addition, a genuflection is customarily made when acknowledging the Incarnation or the death of Christ.

Kiss: The Book of the Gospels and the altar are customarily venerated with a kiss.

Profound bow (bow at the waist): A profound bow is made to the altar whenever one passes in front of it during Mass and during the Creed at the words that refer directly to the Incarnation: “By the power of the Holy Spirit, he was born of the Virgin Mary and became man.”

Bow of the head: A bow of the head is made during Mass at the name of Jesus, of the three Divine Persons mentioned together (e.g., “Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit”), of Mary, and of the saint in whose honor the Mass is celebrated.

Sitting: Sitting signifies attentiveness, especially to the readings from Sacred Scripture or during the preparation of the altar.

Kneeling: Kneeling signifies adoration of God and humility before him.