



# The Church Vs. the Churches

# The Organization of the N.T. Church

# The Universal Church

- ▶ Universal church is headquartered, or ruled, from heaven
- ▶ Christ rules as its head from heaven's throne – Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:20-23
- ▶ There is **no earthly headquarters**, or head of the church, on earth
- ▶ The individual Christian is the largest unit of the body of Christ, the universal church – Jn. 15:5-6; 8:31-32

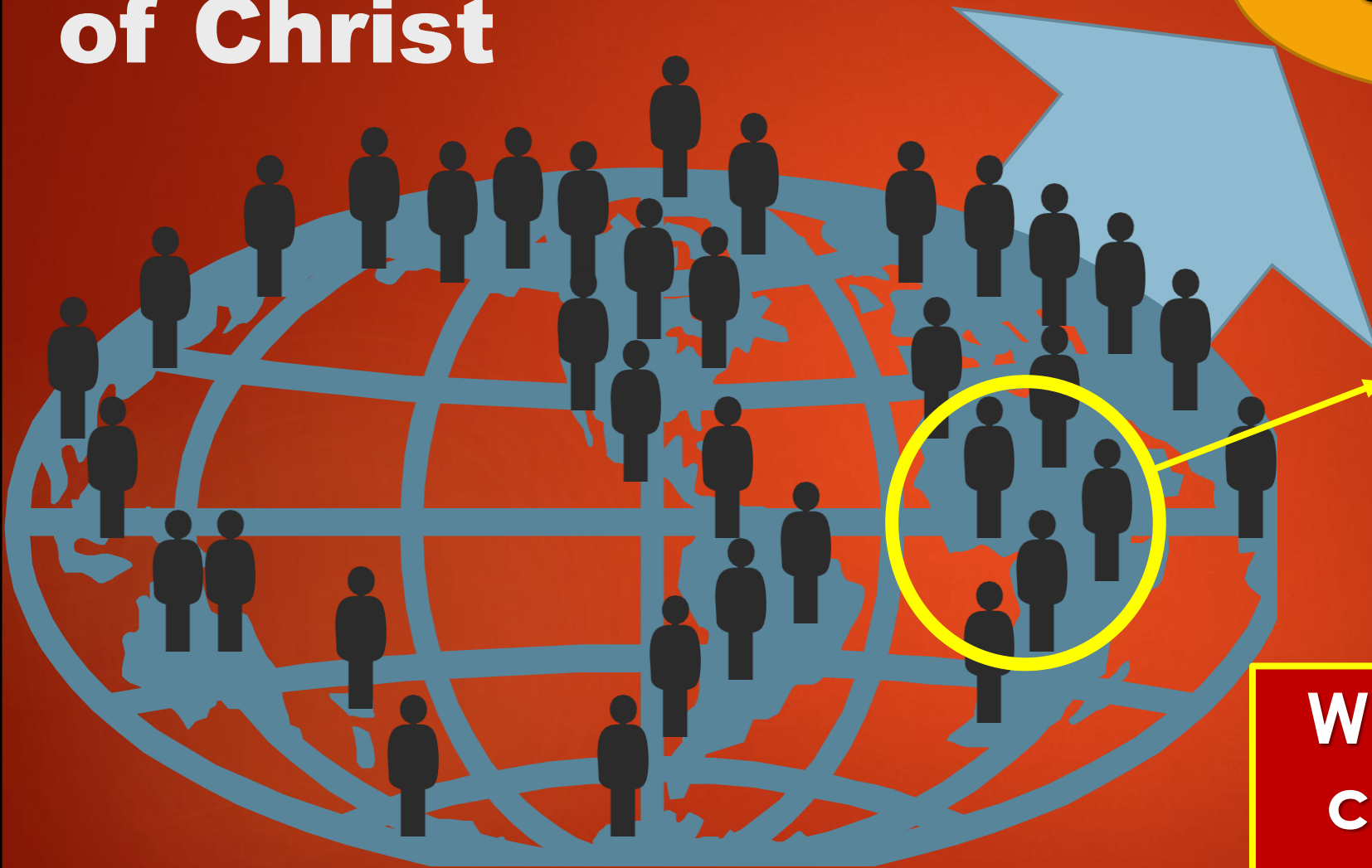
# The Local Church

- ▶ When the gospel was preached, local churches followed – Acts 11:22, 26, etc.
- ▶ Elders were appointed in each local church – Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23
- ▶ Elders are to rule, shepherd (pastor), and oversee (bishop) the local church – 1 Tim. 5:17; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-2
- ▶ Under the elders are deacons and saints, including the preacher – Phil. 1:1

# The Church—Body of Christ

Jesus

5



Local Church  
Elders  
Deacon  
Saints  
(Phil. 1:1)

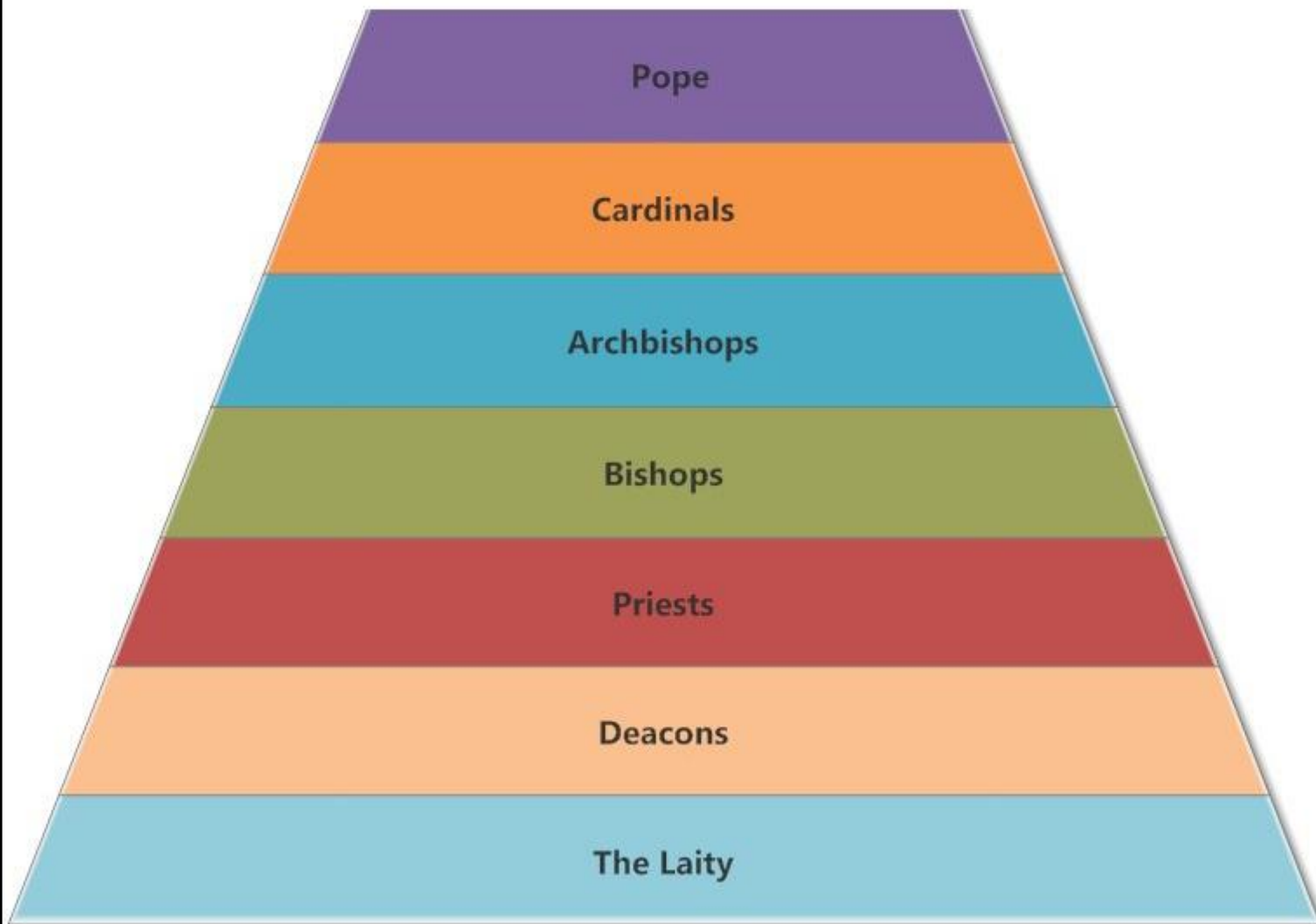
We will do well not to  
change this – 1 Cor.  
4:6; Rev. 22:18-19

John 15:5-6; 8:31-32

# The Churches

# The Roman Catholic Church

# *HIERARCHY OF* The Catholic Church



- ▶ Pope claims to stand in the place of Christ on earth as head of the universal church
- ▶ Pope claims to speak as God, to speak infallible truth, when speaking “ex-cathedra,” or from the Pope’s chair.
- ▶ Note the organizational structure and the separation of the priests from the members/laity – 1 Pet. 2:4-5



# How Does This Compare?

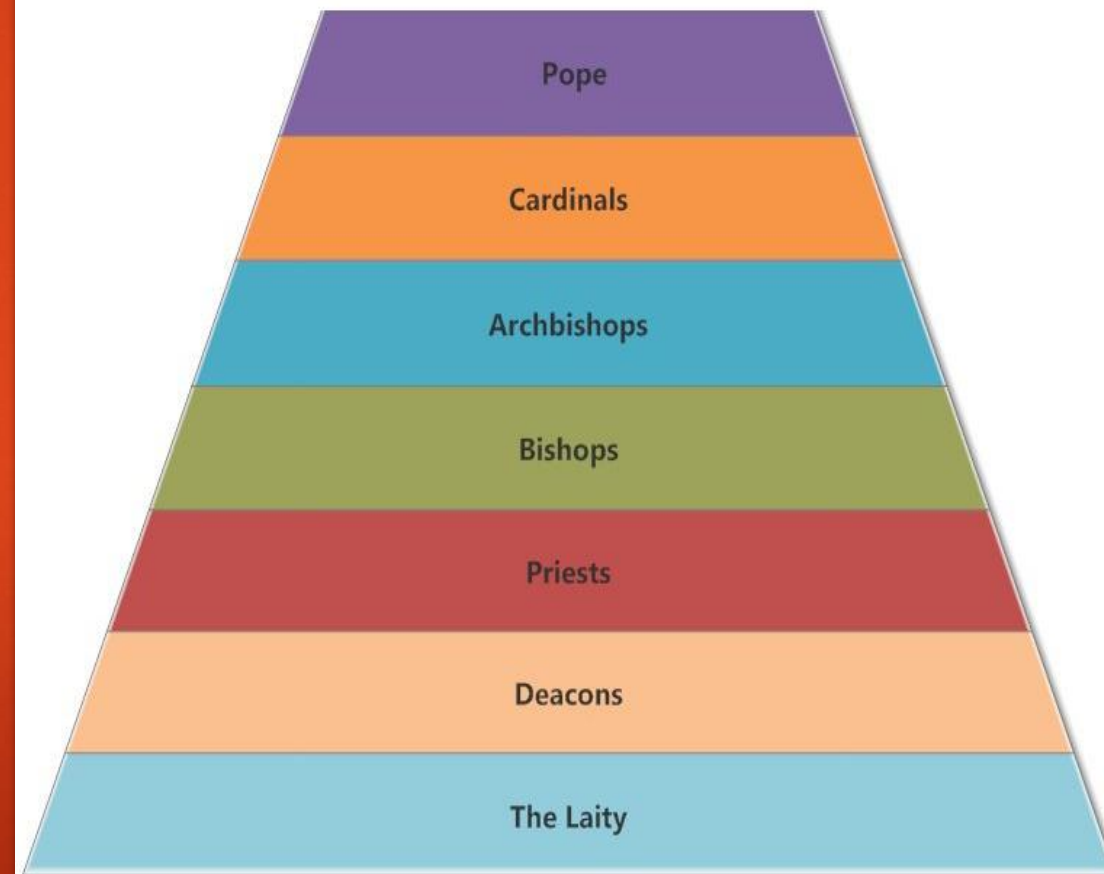
The N.T. Church

**Jesus**



Local Church  
Elders,  
Deacons,  
Saints  
(Phil. 1:1;  
Acts 20:28)

## *HIERARCHY OF* **The Catholic Church**



# The Methodist Church

# Methodist Church Organization

- ▶ **General Conference** – made up of 1000 delegates from the annual conferences, meets every 4 years, sets policy and speaks for the denomination
- ▶ **Jurisdictional Conferences** – 5 geographical regions in US comprised of 15 annual conferences each
- ▶ **Central Conferences** – In Africa, Europe, and the Philippines
- ▶ **Annual Conferences** – geographical entity, or body, of lay and clergy members meeting yearly—**the fundamental body of the church**
- ▶ **Districts** – each church is part of a district
- ▶ **Local churches** – the visible presence of the body of Christ...with board of trustees, nominations committee, finance committee, and church council

# How Does This Compare?

The N.T. Church

Jesus



Local Church  
Elders  
Deacons  
Saints  
(Phil. 1:1;  
Acts 20:28)

## Methodist Church

- ▶ General Conference
- ▶ Jurisdictional Conferences
- ▶ Central Conferences
- ▶ Annual Conferences
- ▶ Districts
- ▶ Local Churches
  - ▶ Board of Trustees/male/female
  - ▶ Nominations Committee
  - ▶ Finance committee
  - ▶ Church Council

# The Episcopal Church

# Episcopal Church Organization

- ▶ **Bicameral General Convention** – governs church, made up of the House of Bishops and House of Deputies, meets every 3 years
- ▶ **Executive Council**– governs church during interim years
  - ▶ **House of Bishops** – made up of all bishops with jurisdiction, every bishop coadjutor, every suffragan bishop, every retired bishop, every bishop elected to an office created by General Convention, and every bishop who has resigned because of mission strategy
  - ▶ **House of Deputies**– composed of up to four lay and four clerical deputies from each of the jurisdictions, domestic and overseas
  - ▶ **70 denominational boards**, committees, commissions, subcommittees, and task forces
- ▶ **Local churches** – has a vestry, or bishop's committee, which elects a local priest, or rector, who has spiritual jurisdiction in the parish

# How Does This Compare?

The N.T. Church

Jesus



Local Church  
Elders  
Deacons  
Saints  
(Phil. 1:1;  
Acts 20:28)

## Episcopal Church

- ▶ General Convention
  - ▶ House of Bishops
  - ▶ House of Deputies
- ▶ Executive Council
- ▶ 70 boards, committees, commissions, subcommittees, and task forces
- ▶ Local Churches
  - ▶ Vestry, or Bishop's committee
  - ▶ Priest, or Rector, with spiritual jurisdiction over the parish

# The Southern Baptist Church



# The Southern Baptist Church

- ▶ Claim local churches are autonomous, but must subscribe to beliefs consistent with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)
- ▶ All SB churches do much of their work through the SBC, which oversees...
  - ▶ International and domestic missions
  - ▶ Theological education
  - ▶ Advocacy for religious liberty
  - ▶ Production of church resources
  - ▶ Insurance and retirement for pastors and church workers
  - ▶ Christian education
  - ▶ Benevolent and social services

# Local SB Church Organization

- ▶ Pastor, council of deacons/elders, members
- ▶ “To the surprise of many and chagrin of others, **the New Testament does not give specific institutional structural guidelines to the church.** Whatever structure it does portray **is quite simple** and obviously met the needs of the local bodies **at that time.**” ([www.SBCLife.net](http://www.SBCLife.net))
- ▶ No specific organization approved
  - ▶ Rejects organization revealed in 1 Pet. 5:1-4 as being unspecific about structure of local church

# The Southern Baptist Church

The N.T. Church

Jesus



Local Church  
Elders  
Deacons  
Saints  
(Phil. 1:1;  
Acts 20:28)

## Southern Baptist Church

- ▶ Claims autonomous local churches
- ▶ Works through **SBC**, which oversees...
  - ▶ International and domestic missions
  - ▶ Theological education
  - ▶ Advocacy for religious liberty
  - ▶ Production of church resources
  - ▶ Insurance and retirement for pastors and church workers
  - ▶ Christian education
  - ▶ Benevolent and social services
- ▶ Local church organization unspecified—generally with Pastoral control