Title: An assessment of the ecclesiology suggested by the faith and order commission of the world council of churches from the conservative Christian viewpoint

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Abstract:

The purpose of this research is to assess the ecclesiology of the FOC. It seeks to answer the question, what are the similarities and differences between the FOC’s ecclesiology and that of conservative Christians?

The study reveals some similarities as well as differences between FOC’s ecclesiology and that of conservative Christians. Regarding the nature and mission of the church, both hold that the church is a community called by God for a purpose; the church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic; the visible and the invisible churches are not identical to each other; mission cannot be separated from the church; and the purpose of mission is to help individual sinners to repent. But they differ on the following: nature of the church as one, holy, catholic and apostolic church; the church as sacramental; the function of the church metaphors in the Bible; the visible and invisible churches; and the purpose of mission.

In relation to the ministry of the church, the FOC and conservative Christians have common understanding on the calling of whole people of God, on the view of the ordained minister, and on the succession in the apostolic tradition. But they differ on the following: the roles, pattern of ordained minister, and on ordination as a sacramental sign. Regarding the
authority of the church, they have the same view on the head and the source of authority in the church. But there are disagreements regarding the sources of church authority besides the Bible.

In relation to the ordinances of the church, both believe that baptism is a symbol, and that immersion is the most vivid expression of the meaning of baptism. But they differ on the interpretation of the symbolism baptism, infant baptism, and rebaptism. In relation to the Lord’s Supper, both agree that the Lord’s Supper is a memorial and a fellowship of the faithful. But they differ on the meaning of the Lord’s Supper, on the understanding of the context of Exodus 24, on the practice of the ordinance of foot washing, and on Christ’s presence in the Lord’s Supper. Regarding the church unity, both believe that the unity of the church is important, but differ on the understanding of unity.