

An Explanation (Part Three)

By

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Here it is, the final part of this subject on the “church” versus the “ekklesian” of Jesus Christ. As was pointed out in the other two parts, the word “church” is very inappropriate to use for the Greek word “ekklesian,” as used by Jesus, his Apostles, and early Greek and Christian writers.

My writing are not intended to create controversy, but to express honest conviction. “Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, ‘I believe, and so I spoke,’ we too believe, and so we speak” (2 Corinthians 4:13). Still, when varied views are presented, research is stimulated and this encourages growth in understanding. This is good because we thereby learn from each other. It is our desire that all who cannot share our views write us the reasons why. On the other hand, as is proven, there are many who would grieve the Holy Spirit and would hurl bricks and even more at me. They write hate-letters proving that they are not God’s children. “He who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him” (1 John 3:15).

I praise God if I am insulted because of the name of Christ. I am a Christian and will remain one until my sojourn in this world is finished. “:Therefore I am always confident and know that as long as I am at home in this body I am away from the Lord. I live by faith, not by sight. I am confident and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So I make it my goal to please him” (See 2 Corinthians 5:6). The Apostle Peter tells us: “However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name” (1 Peter 4:16). I do, and whenever men ridicule me because I speak out as a Christian, I rejoice that I can suffer for the name of my savior, Jesus the Christ.

The original term, ekklesian, in the New Testament Scriptures designates all of the ones called out of the world by God without a single, solitary exception. Every person on this earth who has responded to the divine call of the Good News, is by a divine act constituted a part or member of the ekklesia. Every person who has been called out of darkness, has by the same token, been called into the light. One cannot be called out of darkness and not be called into the Light, for otherwise, he would still be in darkness.

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of the darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people, but now you are God’s people” (1 Peter 2:9–10).

The ekklesia is composed of God’s people. All who are numbered among God’s people are in the ekklesia of God, the called of God. There is not one of God’s people on this earth who is not a part of this ekklesia. Those who have heard and responded to the Apostles message, the Good News, have been put into the ekklesia by God (See Acts 2:41, 47).

This being true, there is only one “church” on earth now, and there has never been more than one since Pentecost, when it was proclaimed and started. (See Acts 2 in full). Notice that I have, because of the fleshy way of speaking, changed to using the current expression “church.” I do this not because it is a correct way of speaking God’s word, but of the infirmity of the flesh, and is the term people use today in place of the word Jesus used, *ekklesia*. But I do not forget its real meaning, and use the modern word in its original thought. So, let’s move on. Jesus never proclaimed that he would build more than one kind of church, and his Apostles make that mighty clear. If we are to use the word church as the rendering for *ekklesian*, it must embrace all of God’s people; all those who have answered the call of the Gospel, without a single exception. If we talk about “other churches,” we imply that there are other called out people; and since we can only become one of the called out or elect by an act of God, it is an admission that he has more than one body, a direct contradiction of what God says in the Scriptures—his holy word!

In every instance in which the Scriptures speak on this matter, it is affirmed that there is only one body.

“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function; so in Christ, we who are many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Romans 12:4–5).

The many includes all who have obeyed the apostles message and are thus “in Christ.” It is inconceivable that any could be members of the body and not be attached to the head, and thus be real members of the body. If this “body” is the “church,” there can never, while Jesus is the head, be more than one church. And he is the only head.

“To body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12).

That part, “So it is with Christ,” forever precludes the thought of more than one single church. It is stupid and absurd, in the light of Scriptures, to ask a person with what church he is affiliated with. If he is one of the elect, a part of the body, he is in the church; if he is not one of the elect, he is not affiliated with the church at all. (I speak according to the Scriptures and spiritually.)

It is equally ridiculous to talk about “uniting with the church of your choice.” In order to have a choice, there must be more than one item to select from. Any man has the choice as to whether he will respond to the call of the Gospel or to reject the call. There is no middle road. It is a case of answering or not answering. If a person rejects the call, he is not one of the called out members of the church. If he accepts and obeys the call, he has no choice of which church he wants. He is added to the only one there is, the company of “called out people”—the *ekklesian*/church of Christ. And, it is God who is the one who “adds” a person to the church, not man!

One has no more freedom to accept the church of his choice as he does to accept the God of his choice, or the Lord of his choice. Is light beginning to shine on you? Read on...

“For by one spirit were we all immersed into one body—whether Jew or Greek, slave or free, and we were all given the one spirit to drink” (1 Corinthians 12:13, see also Galatians 3:26–29).

No one who was ever baptized by the leading of the spirit was ever immersed into other than the one body—the church. Of course, the spirit could not lead one to be immersed into any other body, for there is no other.

“There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to that one hope that belongs to your call” (Ephesians 4:4).

One body—the church; one spirit—of Jesus Christ; one call—“the one believing and being immersed shall be saved.” Notice how the one body and the one spirit are tied in with the calling. The called ones constitute this one body. As there is only one body, there is also only one spirit. “For by one spirit we were all immersed into one body.” A person may just as well talk about what spirit will give him access into the body as to talk about which church he will join.

“Anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ does not belong to him” (Romans 8:9).

Just as the above is true, so is it true that “anyone who is not a member of the one body of Christ does not belong to him” (See Romans 8:9–17). So, you have no more choice of bodies than you do of spirits: for, “there is one body, and one spirit.”

We are told that God ordained only one kind of church—the ekklesian. But men have created other churches (i.e., institutions). This cannot be a real church of Christ, for men have no power to call men out of the world and save them. They can only proclaim God’s Gospel. To make such a statement necessitates a shifting of terms and definitions to get from “church” to “churches.” It is very true that men have brought into existence institutions that they call churches, but these are not and cannot be churches in God’s terms. The Holy Record says, “There is one body!” One could just as consistently affirm that there is more than one Lord as to assert that there are more than one church. Ridiculous! “There are that are called churches,” just as “there are that are called gods.” All worldly concepts

When a person reads the Scriptures of God, he is struck by the fact that division is sinful. In fact, divisions are called sects, and sects is the meaning of the Greek word “aireseos”—heresy. Heresy as defined in modern dictionaries do not expound upon the original use of the word, but only give what men now use the word for. It is true that some dictionaries give the true meaning, but by including what men have appropriated the word to mean by their ecclesiastical jargon and use of it, a person can be very deceived. I urge you to use some common sense. If we are to understand what the spirit of Christ meant when talking through the Apostles, we must use the meanings of the word he used. What about all these divisions or sects that are tearing Christ’s body to shreds? What does God’s word say?

“Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you immersed into the name of Paul?” (1 Corinthians 1:13).

The Apostle Paul was just showing the fallacy of being divided and giving honor to the one leading the sect. In fact, all of chapters 1, 2, and 3 of 1st Corinthians are dedicated by Paul to show the ignorance of following any leader who would hold his group up as the correct and only assembly. Let me put Paul’s words in the context of this fallacy to show what he demonstrated.

“Is Christ divided? Was Paul—or Peter, or Mary, or Luther, or Calvin, or the Pope, or Matthew, or Joseph, or Wesley, or Anne, or Mark, or any other name, crucified for you? Were you immersed (baptized) into any of these names?”

Reader, do you see how degrading and ignorant it is to give honor to any name of a person that subtracts from Christ’s name? I urge you to read these three chapters in the first letter of Paul’s to the Corinthians. I say the same things as the apostle Paul. I am heartbroken at how men have torn the “body of Christ”—the church of Christ, into so many sinful sects. I abhor the dogmas that have cut off Christ’s name from his ekklesia, and substituted honor to dead humans; and to top that off, to a building made by human hands and not by the hand of God (See 1 Corinthians 3:16–23 and 2 Corinthians 6:16–18).

When certain ones in the early church of Christ tried to make circumcision a “Canon Law that had to be obeyed to become a member, the Apostle Paul was really grieved. He said: I wish that they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves.” He then added, “You who are trying to be justified by Law have been alienated from Christ: you have fallen away from grace.” He continued: “You are observing special days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.” (Read Galatians in full.)

Paul did not believe in keeping the traditions and customs of religious practice. He said that they were man-made and negated the grace and mercy of God. Paul’s letter to the Galatians has much to show you of what I am talking about. Read it! Let’s not be deceived by men who make rules for church members where Christ and his Apostles gave us freedom. Read and understand all the Scriptural references I have brought out in all three of these articles. Heed the words of the Apostle Paul:

“I appeal to you brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought” (1 Corinthians 1:10).

My friends, what I have shown you in these three articles is truth. It is light. If it causes you to see the truth, I have lit your torch for Christ. Now let it shine. Tell it to the whole world, starting in your own backyard. Don’t hide the light. Jesus said that “You are the light of the world, so let your light shine!”

If my message is not light, there is no light that I could ever give you to see with. I ask all of you to understand our plea for unity or oneness. All we are trying to do and be is what Christ Jesus said we are to do and be. Take a light from our torch and light up the world for Christ.

“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a cover. Instead they put it on a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14–16).

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