

Part 1: The Church is Not the Body of Christ

The church's acts and doctrine are distinct from the body of Christ. We often hear "the church is the body of Christ," nothing is further from the truth.

It is common knowledge that the word "church" is not a biblical word and is a word translators substituted for "ekklesia" which is interpreted as "called out assembly." There is no valid reason whatsoever for translators to use "church" for the Greek word "ekklesia."

In fact, noting the history of the word "church," it doesn't exist during the apostolic era.¹ Fitting however, is that the word emphasizes a place where people under the authority of a master or lord assemble. The word emphasizes a place. Think, "temple." It is fair to say that the word is a contemporary projection of what we see regarding Old Testament era temple worship. It is a place where those under the authority of a master assemble to pay homage.

What was specifically intended by the New Testament authors in using the word, "ekklesia"?

It was a common Greek word referring to a process of direct Democracy. An ekklesia was a public assembly where those who had voting rights were called out from among the common people to decide public policy and the legislation of laws. Normally, these assemblies were restricted to males that were a minimum age or older, and the upper crust of society. Before the New Testament era, the word had no connection to Christianity. In Scripture the word is borrowed to denote the following idea: God's people called out from what is common for a purpose. When put together with certain Bible passages, ekklesia is the people of God called out from what is common and into God's kingdom.² Interestingly, this also closely coincides with the meaning of sanctification which is biblically defined as a process of separating from what is common or unholy.³

The ekklesia of God are His called people. The same word also refers to God's people meeting together. Ekklesia occurs 114 times in the New Testament. The word refers to the collective followers of God 103 times while only referring to a meeting 11 times.⁴ From among these eleven instances something important needs to be pointed out.

Ekklesia is God's people called out from among what is common; in this case, the commonality of the world, or the present world kingdom. Ekklesia also refers to a meeting of God's people in various places, and for the most part, these were meetings in private homes referred to as "households." A household is a family, or one's relatives; dwelling in the same house and sharing meals together is assumed. A house (oikia) is a dwelling place where we assume families dwell, and a household (oikiakos) is a family or relatives at large that we assume dwell together in various dwellings (oikia). "Oikos had a broader range than oikia. Oikos is the whole of person's

¹ <https://www.etymonline.com/word/Church>

² <http://briansbits.com/ekklesia.php>

³ <https://paulspassingthoughts.com/?s=andy+young+sanctification>

⁴ <http://briansbits.com/ekklesia.php>

possessions, his whole estate, whereas oikia is simply his residence and only occasionally includes its contents."⁵

The point we are heading toward is this: for all practical purposes, the ecclesia of God and the "household of God" are the same thing.

Galatians 6:10 - So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household [oikeios⁶] of faith.

Ephesians 2:19 - So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household [oikeios] of God,

In regard to Ephesians 2:19, the antonym for this whole series of words concerning "house" whether "master of the house" or "servant of a house" etc., etc., is "stranger." We are no longer strangers to God's household. God's ekklesia is also His household or literal relatives. In Acts 14:23 we find,

And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

"In every church" comes from kata ekklesia. Kata is in the distributive sense and that's why this verse should be translated "from ekklesia to ekklesia" as the same phrase is translated in Acts 5:42 and 20:20.

And every day, in the temple and from [kata] house [oikos] to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

"House" only appears in the Greek text once but is rightly translated "from house to house" because of kata or "kat."⁷ Acts 20:20 is another example:

how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house,

This is important to note because the word "church" denotes a place where one is subservient to a master or lord whereas ekklesia is a people belonging to God's household. The fact that God's people meet in private homes is a statement regarding that truth. In other words, meeting in private homes as a family is a gospel statement.

Romans 16:3 - Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 4 who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. 5 Greet also the church [ekklesia] in their house [oikos].

Colossians 4:15 - Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church [ekklesia] in her house [oikos].

⁵ Spiros Zodhiates: The Complete Word Study Dictionary; AMG Publishers, 1992; p. 1029

⁶ Belonging to a certain household. One belonging to a certain house, id ref. 5

⁷ <http://briansbits.com/ekklesia.php>

Philemon 1:2 - and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church [ekklesia] in your house [oikos]:

The ekklesia is also the body of Christ. Ephesians 5:23, Colossians 1:18 and 1:24 state this specifically. Throughout the New Testament, the illustration is that of a human body with Christ being the head. **Ekklesia is God's called out people from the world and into a body.** They are called **out of** and called **into**.⁸ They are called on to believe the gospel which results in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Spirit was established in Christ—it is following Christ in spiritual death and resurrection. Though it is a mystery, it should be thought of in a literal sense; a literal death and resurrection takes place through the Spirit when one believes in Christ.

Romans 6:1 - What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. 13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. 14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

According to Scripture, believing in Christ results in being baptized INTO Christ by the Spirit and likewise Christ being IN believers as well. Therefore, our bodies are now the temple in which the Spirit and Christ dwell.

1Corinthians 6:19 - Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,

Ephesians 3:14 - For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you,

⁸ <http://briansbits.com/ekklesia.php>

being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 4:30 - And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

With all of this in mind, note that we receive the Spirit by faith:

Galatians 3:3 - Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?

Romans 10:17 - So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

This brings us back to the calling. Who are the called? It is everyone.

Luke 5:32 - I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

There is also a sense in which those who are called also call upon the Lord:

Romans 10:10 - For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11 For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. 13 For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

This now brings us to a summary of these points before we move on to a major church lie. The gospel is a call to all humanity to come out from the world and into God's household (family). When an individual hears the gospel and believes it, they call on the Lord leading to a miraculous and supernatural new birth. Though this is not experienced as a literal physical death and somehow returning to our mother's womb, it is nevertheless a literal death and new birth in a spiritual sense. Therefore, a real change in the saved person's state of being takes place:

2Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

The saved individual is called out from the world and into God's family which functions and exist as a body:

Ephesians 4:4 - There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

1 Corinthians 12:12 - For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” 22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, 24 which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, 25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

Obviously, in the scriptural accounts, the answered call takes place in a myriad of various places and circumstances. AND, at the moment any person calls on the Lord, the new birth takes place at that moment and said person is sealed by the Spirit until the day of redemption (the glorification of the body upon resurrection). In all likelihood, a sound gospel has been presented by a true manifestation of God's functioning family, and it would behoove the convert to join in with that new family accordingly. This should be a family-like culture endowed with their Father's characteristics.

How then, can it be, that church orthodoxy claims that being one with Christ and His body is **synonymous** with formal church membership which places an individual (at least in this present age for the most part) voluntarily under the authority of popes, pastors, and so-called elders? Though Catholicism has its own version of this and has never been shy about admitting it openly, the best example is Protestantism. Though confused Protestants deny this orthodoxy intellectually, most Protestant leaders are proffering it openly in our day while the fact remains that it is stated definitively in the founding documents of Protestantism.

The idea that water baptism initiates one into formal church membership and simultaneously makes one part of the spiritual body of Christ is official Protestant doctrine. Furthermore, this doctrine states that the onetime water baptism performed in church for initiation into the spiritual

body of Christ and church membership has ongoing cleansing effects as long as one remains in good standing with the church.

I. Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church; but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in the newness of life. Which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in His Church until the end of the world.

II. The outward element to be used in this sacrament is water, wherewith the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by a minister of the Gospel, lawfully called thereunto.

~ The Westminster Confession of Faith chapter XXXVIII

Protestants are quick to point out, in order to circumvent alarm, that water baptism is merely a public confession, but several elements of its confession make that claim contradictory. First, water baptism is referred to as a "sacrament." We must ask; "what is a sacrament?" The very definition of a sacrament follows: it is an outward demonstration/initiation of something that is actually taking place in the spiritual realm.⁹ The smoking gun is Protestantism's "means of grace."¹⁰ When something is a "means," it refers to what is used specifically to bring something about. We then ask what is meant by "grace"?

Grace, in Christian theology, the spontaneous, unmerited gift of the divine favour in the salvation of sinners, and the divine influence operating in man for his regeneration and sanctification. The English term is the usual translation for the Greek *charis*, which occurs in the New Testament about 150 times (two-thirds of these in writings attributed to Paul). Although the word must sometimes be translated in other ways, the fundamental meaning in the New Testament and in subsequent theological usage is that contained in the Letter of Paul to Titus: "For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men" (2:11).¹¹

Water baptism is not the primary point here, but what one of the foremost standards of Protestantism, the Westminster Confession of Faith, states about church membership: it ingrafts us into Christ, and the means of being ingrafted into the body of Christ can only take place in the church where sacraments occur and MUST be performed by a "lawfully" "called" minister of the gospel.

As aforementioned in the Introduction, church attempts to be accountable to no teaching through diversity. Church claims that different branches and variant sizes and colors of the same fruit are not necessarily from the same kind of tree. Hence, in this case, Protestants will quickly point to the London Baptist Confession not agreeing with the Westminster Confession on every point. In

⁹ <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/sacrament?s=t> | <https://www.britannica.com/topic/sacrament>

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Means_of_grace

¹¹ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/grace-religion>

truth, the two agree on all the major roots and are the same kind of tree; it is a church tree. This point is best examined by considering a statement from the largest Protestant denomination in our day:

VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

~ The 2000 Baptist Faith and Message; Southern Baptist Convention

This document would represent the most relevant statement of faith for contemporary purposes while staying true to so-called "historical precedent." Still, we see the same Protestant roots; church is a membership ("covenant") in an institution comprised of "officers" and "governed," supposedly, by God's law. Lastly, it states this institution governed by officers over those who have entered into a written membership covenant IS the body of Christ. Also, strongly implied are the ideas that fellowship in the gospel, gifts, privileges, ordinances, and rights are only found in church membership.

In contrast, the Bible never speaks of bodyship being a formal membership in an institution, pastors or deacons being an office, or the ekklesia being "governed" by laws of any kind. Additionally, New Testament accounts of new birth are never restricted to a place or formal meetings of any sort overseen by institutional officers. Regarding the point of salvation ingrafting one into Christ through the baptism of the Spirit, Christ stated: "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."¹² In other words, there is no formal activity that coincides with salvation in a certain place or overseen (or seen period) by anyone. The individual calls on the Lord wherever he may be and in the midst of whatever one might be doing and God does the rest apart from any human activity.

The church is NOT the body of Christ, it is not His family, nor is it the gospel.

¹² John 3:8 ESV