

Ecclesiology Part 1

Ekklesia – translated church, means assembly or gathering

The New Testament also has two words, derived from the Septuagint, namely, *ekklesia*, from *ek* and *kaleo*, “to call out,” and *sunagoge*, from *sun* and *ago*, meaning “to come or to bring together.” The latter is used exclusively to denote either the religious gatherings of the Jews or the buildings in which they assembled for public worship.

The term *ekklesia*, however, generally designates the Church of the New Testament, though in a few places it denotes common civil assemblies. (Acts 19:32,39,41). In other words, in Greek usage, it does not designate the people, but to the meeting itself.

Jesus applied this term to His gathering in Matthew 16:18 (Jesus was the first one to use the word in the New Testament, and He applied it to the company that gathered about Him, recognized Him publicly as their Lord, and accepted the principles of the Kingdom of God. It was the *ekklesia* of the Messiah.)

Matt. 16:18 -- “And I also say to you that you are Peter (petros, a stone), and upon this rock (petra – large rock, bedrock) I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.

Church – from kuriokon or “the Lord’s” – found in Revelation 1:10 (kuriokos – belonging to kurios or Lord) & 1Cor. 11:18-20 (kuriokos)

Old English/Celtic – Kirke, and kirk.

Ekklesia used 69 times in the Greek translation of the OT, usually translating the Hebrew “Gahal,” meaning assembly – not necessarily religious and not necessarily human (Ps. 89:5 -- And the heavens will praise Thy wonders, O LORD; Thy faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones.)

God has always called His people to Himself and has always gathered them into groups. (Heb. 10:25 -- Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.)

Some people differentiate between visible and invisible church. Invisible is the church as God sees it. The visible church is what we see. The public “church” is a mix of saved and unsaved, believers and unbelievers. Even apostle John wrote about those who were once among them but who later went out to make manifest that they were never of us. So, the church in God’s eyes is a different entity than the meetings in buildings on Sunday mornings. The Reformers – Luther and Calvin particularly – made a difference between the visible (Catholic) church and the invisible church whom they said taught the truth.

2Tim. 2:19 -- Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness.”

Paul’s epistles were specifically to the church, or the called out meetings –

Church in city – like Corinth or Philippi – although they were separate groups meeting separate places, they were collectively the church of Christ.

1Cor. 1:1-3 -- Paul, called *as* an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their *Lord* and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Phil. 1:1-2 -- Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Church in a particular house –

Philem. 1-3 -- Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved *brother* and fellow worker, and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your

house: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rom. 16:3-5 -- Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; also *greet* the church that is in their house. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.

Church in an area --

Acts 9:31 -- So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and, going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

Church universal –

1Cor 12: 28 –And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, *various* kinds of tongues.

So, whether you meet in a home, in a city church, in a public facility, etc. it's still Biblically a legitimate church.

The Nature of the Church

Wayne Grudem -- “The Church is the community of all true believers (in Christ) for all time.” (The church is everyone for whom Christ died – which may indeed include OT saints who believed God and looked forward to the redemption He would provide through His Messiah.)

Louis Berkhof – “The Reformed conception is that Christ, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, unites men with Himself, endows them with true faith, and thus constitutes the Church as His body, the *communio fidelium* or *sanctorum*. In Roman Catholic theology, however, the discussion of the Church takes precedence over everything else, preceding even the discussion of the doctrine of God and of divine revelation. The Church, it is said, has been instrumental in producing

the Bible and therefore takes precedence over it; it is moreover the dispenser of all supernatural graces. It is not Christ that leads us to the Church, but the Church that leads us to Christ. All the emphasis falls, not on the invisible Church as the *communio fidelium* (*communion of believers*), but on the visible Church as the *mater fidelium* (*mother of the church or of believers*). The Reformation broke with this Roman Catholic view of the Church and centered attention once more on the Church as a spiritual organism. It emphasized the fact that there is no Church apart from the redemptive work of Christ and from the renewing operations of the Holy Spirit; and that, therefore, the discussion of these logically precedes the consideration of the doctrine of the Church.”

Other Names For The Church

Bride of Christ

Eph. 5:25 -- Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.

2Corinthians 11:2 -- For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.

Body of Christ

Eph. 1:18-23 -- *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the **church, which is His body**, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.

Colossians 1:18 -- He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

Read: **1Cor. 12:11-27**

The idea of “body” stresses the unity of the Church, whether local or universal, and particularly the fact that this unity is organic, and that the organism of the Church stands in vital relationship to Jesus Christ as her glorious head. (Berkhof)

Ekklesiology Week 2

The Assembly of the Firstborn

Hebrews 12:22-23 -- But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect. (ekklesia of the firstborn)

The Flock (False prophets come in sheep's clothing)

Acts 20:29-32 – “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

Church in the Wilderness

Acts 7:38 -- “This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and *who was* with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you.

Some confusion has come from the KJV phrase “church in the wilderness.” Same word: ekklesia It simply means the gathering or assembly of the people of Israel, it is not a statement that confirms covenantalism or one-for-one equality

Metaphors:

Family –

Titus 2:1-8 -- But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored. Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.

Hebrews 2:10-13 -- For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, "I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN, IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE." And again, "I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM." And again, "BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME."

Branches of a vine –

John 15:5 -- "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Field and building --

1Cor. 3:5-9 --What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one;

but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

Temple of God –

1Cor 3:16-17 -- Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

1Peter 2: 4-5 -- And coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Temple and House –

Eph. 2:19-22 -- So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

God's House --

Heb. 3:4-6 – For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

Household of God –

1Tim. 3:15 -- but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support (*or ground*) of the truth.

Defining the Church

Louis Berkhof (again) --

Protestants assert that the unity of the Church is not primarily of an external, but of an internal and spiritual character. It is the unity of the mystical body of Jesus Christ, of which all believers are members. This body is controlled by one Head, Jesus Christ, who is also the King of the Church, and is animated by one Spirit, the Spirit of Christ. This unity implies that all those who belong to the Church share in the same faith, are cemented together by the common bond of love, and have the same glorious outlook upon the future. This inner unity seeks and also acquires, relatively speaking, outward expression in the profession and Christian conduct of believers, in their public worship of the same God in Christ, and in their participation in the same sacraments. There can be no doubt about the fact that the Bible asserts the unity, not only of the invisible, but also of the visible Church. The figure of the body, as it is found in I Cor. 12:12-31, implies this unity. Moreover, in Eph. 4:4-16, where Paul stresses the unity of the Church, he evidently also has the visible Church in mind, for he speaks of the appointment of office-bearers in the Church and of their labors in behalf of the ideal unity of the Church. Because of the unity of the Church one local church was admonished to supply the needs of another, and the council of Jerusalem undertook to settle a question that arose in Antioch. The Church of Rome strongly emphasized the unity of the visible Church and expressed it in its hierarchical organization. And when the Reformers broke with Rome, they did not deny the unity of the visible Church but maintained it. However, they did not find the bond of union in the ecclesiastical organization of the Church, but in the true preaching of the Word and the right administration of the sacraments. This is also the case in the Belgic Confession. We quote only the following statements from it: "We believe and profess one catholic or universal Church, which is a holy congregation of true believers, all expecting their salvation in Jesus Christ, being washed by His blood, sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit."

The marks by which the true Church is known are these: "If the pure doctrine of the Gospel is preached therein; if it maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if Church

discipline is exercised in punishing sin; in short, if all things are managed according to the pure Word of God; all things contrary thereto rejected, and Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only Head of the Church. Hereby the true Church may certainly be known, from which no man has a right to separate himself."

Marks of the church --- Berkhof pdf pg. 638 (bookmarked)

Church structure: authority, overseers. Some apostles, etc.

Find notes on Deacons, elders, etc.

Activity/worship in church : regulative principle