

THE BODY of CHRIST

CHRISTIAN INTERNATIONAL
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INTRODUCTION

In Book 1, lesson 7, pages 18-19, In Christ Jesus - our Identity, we learned that when we were born again, we were baptized into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit and become a member of His body. From Ephesians 1:22,23 identify the Body of Christ.

When we, then, were baptized into His body, we become a member of His Body, which is the Church. By virtue of being in Christ Jesus we then became a member of the Church.

The purpose of this lesson is to show the relationship, of those who are in Christ Jesus, to the Church, which, then, is the Body of Christ.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

THE CHURCH IS A DIVINELY CONSTITUTED BODY:

1. of which Jesus is the Head; and
Ephesians 1:22
Colossians 1:18
John 15:5
2. through which the Gospel is preached and believers are nurtured.
Colossians 1:28

DEFINITION THE CHURCH FROM MEANING AND WORD USAGE

1. Lets begin with a literal definition of the Greek word ekklesia which is translated church in the New Testament. Ekklesia, from ek, out of, and klesis, a calling or assembling.
2. Before and during the time of Christ and the First century Church the primary usage of the word ekklesia referred to the assembling of the lawful body of citizens who made up the governing bodies in the different cities.
Acts 19:39
3. In the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament written 285 - 247 B.C.) we see that ekklesia was used to designate the gathering of Israel.
Acts 7:38
4. In Acts 19:21-32 (32) we see there was a riotous mob assembled (ekklesia) for the purpose of trying Paul.

Conclusions: We would note from the above meaning and usages of the word, that ekklesia is the assembling, gathering together of called out ones to carry out specific purposes. Therefore, the NT Church is a body made up

of the citizens of the kingdom of God (those in Christ Jesus) who are assembled, gathered together to carry out the specific purposes of the body, under the direction of Jesus, who is the head.

DEFINITION FROM PAUL'S USAGE IN THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES.

What do these Scriptures have in common?

Romans 16:1

1 Corinthians 1:2

Col 4:16

Galatians 1:2,22

Acts 14:23

1 Corinthians 16:19b

Col 4:15

Rom 16: 5

Hebrews 2:12

Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures, with the exception of Hebrews 2:12, ekklesia in each of the Scriptures is referring to a specific Church in a specific location. Therefore, the Church, ekklesia, is LOCAL in nature. Hebrews 2:12, likewise shows the Church, ekklesia, to be local in nature.

DEFINITION AND ORIGIN OF THE ENGLISH WORD CHURCH.

1. The English word church comes from the Greek word kuriakon, which has the meaning of belonging to the Lord. In every instance kuriakon is translated the Lord's in the New Testament.
Romans 14:8.
2. The ekklesia never refers to a building or to a denomination in the New Testament. When houses or structures were built for the assembling of those belonging to the Lord's they were called kuriake, "the Lord's house".
3. The English word church is not a translation but rather is a transliteration of the Greek word kuriake.

SO, WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

1. The ekklesia, or the NT Church is the Body of Christ, which is made up of the kuriakon, the ones belonging to the Lord (Romans 14:8).
2. The ekklesia is local in nature and therefore is not universal.

3. The Universal Church of Saints is a New Testament concept only as it refers to the body of believers, the kuriakon, those who belong to the Lord, and is not the ekklesia (Body of Christ).
4. The ekklesia since it is the Body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22,23) is then the physical manifestation of Christ on earth today.
5. Therefore, when one is born again, baptized into the body of Christ, he becomes a member of a local ekklesia (Church). Thus he/you do not join the ekklesia, a local church, you become a part of it when you become a child of God.

RELATIONSHIP OF THOSE IN CHRIST JESUS TO THE BODY OF CHRIST

What do the following Scriptures have to say about our relationship in the body of Christ?

1 Corinthians 12:20

1 Corinthians 12:27

Romans 12:5

Ephesians 5:21

Philippians 2:2-4

Galatians 5:13

Ephesians 5:30-32

Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures that the ekklesia, the Church, is not an organization. But is a living, breathing, moving Body of Christ - A LIVING ORGANISM - THE FAMILY OF GOD. The members of which are inter-dependent upon each other, accountable to and responsible for each other.

RESPONSE TO THE TRUTH

It is only when those who are in Christ Jesus know, understand, submit themselves to and exercise the correct relationship with their brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ (local ekklesia, church) will that Body of Christ function effectively according to our Father God's will and plan for it.

Are you will to be dependent upon, accountable to, and responsible for you brothers and sisters in the body?

Yes ___ No ___

If your response is no. Are you willing to allow God to give you the willingness? Yes ___ No ___