



...Set For the Defence of the Gospel. (Phil 1:17)

DEFENDER OF TRUTH

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T H E M E :

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

DEFENDER OF TRUTH

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EDITORIAL

This edition of the Defender of Truth deals with the Church of Christ. Over the years, the church has been deemed unimportant and subject to the whims and caprices of man. The number of churches in the world are uncountable with varying doctrines and practices. Is this the will of God? We shall find out in this edition.

IS THE CHURCH NECESSARY FOR SALVATION?

There are a lot of conflicting beliefs and statements from many who profess Christianity about what the Church is and whether it is has anything to do with the salvation of man. Beliefs ranging from those who say that the church is unimportant and that the relationship of an individual with God is the only thing required for salvation to those who say that you need to attend a 'Bible believing church'. In fact, many believe that the doctrines and practices of a church has no effect on the salvation of the members. The aim of this article is to examine what the Holy Scriptures reveal about the church and its relevance to mankind.

Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary Of Old and New Testament Words define the word church thus: *ekklesia*, from *ek*, "out of," and *klesis*, "a calling" (*kaleo*, "to call"), was used among the Greeks of a body of citizens "gathered" to discuss the affairs of state, Acts 19:39. In the Septuagint it is used to designate the "gathering" of Israel, summoned for any definite purpose, or a "gathering" regarded as representative of the whole nation. In Acts 7:38 it is used of Israel; in 19:32, 41, of a riotous mob. It has two applications to companies of Christians, (a) to the whole company of the redeemed throughout the present era, the company of which Christ said, "I will build My Church," Matt. 16:18, and which is further described as "the Church which is His Body," Eph. 1:22; 5:23, (b) in the singular number (e.g., Matt. 18:17, RV marg., "congregation"), to a company consisting of professed believers, e.g., Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:13; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:5, and in the plural, with reference to churches in a district.(emphasis added)ⁱ

Our focus is on the application to companies or groups of Christians in which it is applied to the all who have put on Christ through baptism into Him, Gal. 3:27 regardless of location, gender or race commonly referred to as the Universal church. It is clear that the Bible refers to the church as people called out from the world of sin by the gospel into Christ.

The Scriptures reveal that God's eternal purpose is that the manifold wisdom of God be made known by the church. Ephesians 4:12. It is God's everlasting plan. Daniel's interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2:28-44 reveal four great world kingdoms which existed; Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman. He further revealed that "in the days of these kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed..." Jesus Christ was born during the reign of Roman Emperors and His ministry which culminated in His death for the redemption of mankind and establishment of the church was during this period in fulfillment of this prophecy Luke 3:1; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:1-4. Please note that one of the descriptive terms used for the church in the New Testament is the kingdom of God. Mark 9:1; Colossians 1:13.

The beginning of the church or kingdom is also a subject of prophecy. Isaiah and Micah prophesied regarding the time- in latter days, and place- Zion also called Jerusalem. Isaiah 2:1-3; Micah 4:1-3. Dave Miller says this about God's eternal purpose in the church – "But as one goes through the Old Testament, one is struck with the fact that even as God predicted the coming Christ, He likewise offered glimpses of the kingdom of Christ—the church of Christ—and how it would be linked to Christ and His atoning work at the cross. Indeed, before Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden together; before the skies, seas, and land were populated by birds, fish, and animals; before the Sun, Moon, and stars were situated in the Universe; and before our planet Earth was but a dark, watery, formless mass—God purposed to bring into being **the church of Christ**. Scripture describes this divine intention as "eternal." Central to the great

purposes of God from eternity has been both the sending of His Son and the creation of the church of Christ—the blood-bought body of Jesus and living organism of the redeemed. Read Paul's statement: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known **by the church** the manifold wisdom of God, according to **the eternal** purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:10-11, emp. added)ⁱⁱ

Our Lord Jesus Christ promised His disciples that some of them would still be alive when the kingdom of God **will present with power** Mark 9:1. He also told them in Luke 24:46-49 that "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you **are endued with power from on high**." (Emphasis added). In Acts 1:8 we are also told that **the power** was to come with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came on day of Pentecost Acts 2:1-4. Thus, we can conclude from these verses of scripture that the kingdom came on the day of Pentecost in the city of Jerusalem. This kingdom is the church. The church was purposed by God, prophesied in the Old Testament and established in Jerusalem according to prophecy. This proves that the church is not to be taken lightly any man.

Apart from the fact that the church is God's plan, the Bible makes it clear that man cannot obtain eternal salvation without being a member of the church.

1. The church is the composed of the saved. Those who believed, repented and were baptized on the day of Pentecost were added to the church. Acts 2:47
2. The church is the fulness of Christ and it is the body of Christ Ephesians 1:22-23- "*And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all*"ⁱⁱⁱ. Colossians 1:18. To be in Christ, a person must be in His body Galatians 3:27. Jesus Christ is the head of the church.
3. Christ loves the church and gave Himself for it. He is the Saviour of the body. Ephesians 5:22-32.
4. Christ purchased the church with His blood. Acts 20:28- "*therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood*"^{iv}.
5. The church is enrolled in heaven Hebrews 12:23

This church which we are referring to is not denominational in nature. The body of Christ is one Ephesians 4:4. All that we read of in the New Testament are Christians being members of the church that Jesus built Matthew 16:18. There are no Catholics, Methodists, Pentecostal, etc. in the New Testament. Simply Christians who are members of the church of Christ.

You need to be a member of the church of Christ in order to be saved. You cannot be a Christian without being in Christ and His church. I urge all readers who are not members of the church of Christ to make haste to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, repent of their sins, be baptized and be added to the church.

ⁱ Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words

ⁱⁱ Dave Miller- *What the Bible Says About the Church of Christ*

ⁱⁱⁱ New King James Version

^{iv} Ibid

THE NAME OF THE CHURCH

by Opemipo Oluwole

"..... And the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out". Jhn.10:3



The Greatest Work of God on the surface of the earth is the church, she is originated from the mind of God right from Eternity where He dwells; "to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church..... According to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" Eph.3:10-11. "For thus says the High and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy....." Isa.57:15

This eternal plan that through the church, God's wisdom shall be broadcasted to all men and all principalities, has been accomplished (i.e fulfilled) in Christ Jesus. This church is revealed as "the church of the firstborn" who are registered in Heaven. Heb.12:23. The spiritual awareness that God planned for a church in eternity and registered her in Heaven reflects the importance of this subject amid the denominated or divisive religious organizations

"For our God is not the author of confusion but of peace as in all the churches of the saints" 1Cor.14:33.

Name is one of the identity marks for the New Testament church, but people often pay less attention to the name of the church because it often leads to public arguments and unhealthy relationships.

WHAT IS IN A NAME?

The ancestors of the Israelite nation (which is a shadow for the New Testament church) had their names changed by God;

- ❖ Abram to Abraham (i.e. a father of many nations) Gen.17:5
- ❖ Sarai to Sarah (i.e a mother of nations) Gen.17:15-16
- ❖ Jacob to Israel (i.e prince with God) Gen.32:27-28, would anyone dispute this fact that "name" is important to God?

God even promised through one of His Holy prophets i.e. Prophet Isaiah that in the Messianic days, He will give His people "A New name". Isa.62:2. In the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, Disciples of Christ who are the people of

God under the New Testament era were first called "Christians" in the city of Antioch, Acts.11:26. The name "Christian" means "the followers of Christ". The word appears 3 times in the New Testament scripture; Acts.26:28, 1Pet.4:16.

In every community of the first century, where Christians assembled for worship, they are called;

- ❖ "The churches of Christ" Rom.16:16.
- ❖ "The church of God" 1Cor.1:2



WHY WOULD THE CHURCH BE NAMED AFTER CHRIST?

Jesus while promising to build the church, He called her... "My Church" (Suggesting the owner) Matt.16:18.

Paul, the Apostle of Christ reminded Ephesian church elders that "Christ purchased the church with His own blood" Acts.20:28. Hence, the church does not belong to the presbyters/Elders/Bishops/Pastors! It is Christ's possession. Titus.2:14. Thus no man has the right to claim church ownership not to talk of giving it a name. The whole family of God in Heaven and on the earth is named after Christ, Eph.3:14-15. Christ is the Husband for the church having paid the Bride-price through His blood. The Bride (i.e. the church) must wear her husband's name! Eph.5:23-25.

The name of Christ is a name which is exalted above every name; every knee must bow at the name of Jesus, Phil.2:9-

10; for all authority have been given to Him, Matt.28:18-20. Salvation is found only in the name of Christ; "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" Acts.4:12, 1Cor.1:13.

Zechariah prophesied that the "Branch" shall build the Temple of the Lord and He shall bear the glory, Zech.6:12-13. Jesus Christ, the Branch from the root of Jesse bears the glory of the eternally-planned church as the church is named after her builder! Matt.16:18, 1Cor.3:11, Col.1:18. Thus, the prophecy is fulfilled!

Remember, you can only give a name to a thing that belongs to you. The church belongs to no mortal man except Christ. Hence no man nor spirit is qualified to give a new or another name to the church of Christ. Thus, the name; "the church of Christ" is not a sectarian or denominational name that originate from men! But it is an inspired and scriptural name that reflects the Builder and the owner of the saved ones (i.e. church) Rom.16:16.

The Lord does the addition of newly saved souls to His church from the Pentecost day till the close of this present world, Acts 2:47. If the same Gospel seed that was planted by Peter and Paul in the first century which produced "Christians" and the assembly of those Christians in different cities were called "the church of Christ", is planted today, without tampering with the seed, would it produce something different for us now? I believe your honest answer is No! Lk.8:11, Heb.4:12.

IV. DANGER OF WEARING OTHER NAMES?

Given the confusion that the denominational churches have created, each church with its peculiar name, doctrines, worship, organization, etc. It is important to learn about the impending doom that is coming upon the divisive ones or the children of the disobedient, Rom.1:18, Eph.5:5-7. Here below are the dangers of wearing other religious names apart from "Christians" (i.e. as an individual) or "the church of Christ" (i.e. as an assembly);

1. It leads to strife, envy, and division, 1Cor.1:10-13, 3:3-4.
2. It opposes the Lord's Prayer for the oneness of all believers Jhn. 17:20-23.
3. It promotes false prophets, false teachers, and their heresies thereby weakening the power of truth! Matt.15:14, 2Pet.2:1-3.
4. "Wearing other names" presents God as the Author of confusion, 1Cor.14:33.
5. It amounts to the works of the flesh (i.e. sedition and heresies) thereby preventing a person from inheriting God's kingdom. Gal.5:19-21.
6. It brings a divine curse because sectarian names exist based on "addition to and subtraction from" the word of God.

Rev.22:18-19.

7. There is no salvation in "other name under heaven given among men" (i.e. All the names of denominational churches on the earth). In other words, the forgiveness of sins is not guaranteed when we put on man-made names in religion, Acts.4:10-12. Such names have separated you from Christ, 1Cor.1:12, 3:21-23.

CONCLUSION:

From this article so far, we have learnt what's in a name, why the name "church of Christ", and the danger of wearing other names? Why would you say that the name of the church does not matter" if not that you are seeking an easy escape route from the troubles that denominationalism has caused? Would you say that those names that "the church founders" gave to their churches were directed by "Holy Spirit when the same Spirit pleaded that there should be no division among us but that we should speak the same thing (1Cor.1:10)?.

I am of Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Jehovah witness, C.A.C, Winners, Redeem, Deeper, Baptist, C&S, and Celestial, etc where can we find all those appellations in our Bible? Is Christ divided? If a Methodist stop following Wesley, a Catholic stop following popes, Jehovah Witness stop following Russell' doctrines, a "Redeem"/Deeper member stop following their General overseers, and everyone cleaves Only to Christ and His new testament teachings, shall we not be Christians only and be a members of one church, THE CHURCH OF CHRIST (which is undenominational).

It is not too late for you to repent, for our God is great in compassion and long-suffering, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance!

Hear His voice once more; "*Therefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord.....*" 2Cor.6:17. For your name to be written in the book of life, you must believe God's words, repent of your sins, and be baptized into the doctrine of Christ (2Jhn.1:9-11), into the church of the Firstborn (i.e. Christ) which are registered in Heaven. Acts.2:38, 47, Heb.12:23. Baptism by water immersion into any denominational church does not save (Matt.15:8-9, 13)

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THE UNDENOMINATIONAL NATURE OF THE CHURCH

by Jobalo Oshikanlu

Bible Gems: “**There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all**” (Ephesians 4:4-6). “**Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment ... Is Christ divided?**” (1 Corinthians 1:10,12-13).ⁱ

The word “church” is the English Bible translation of “Ekklesia”, the actual term used in the original Greek New Testament. The term means “To Call Out”. The Church then in the New Testament Scriptures means “A Called Out Body of People”. The Church includes, therefore, all who have been called out into God's service and could not be correctly used in a denominational sense.

The Church universal is always referred to in the scriptures in the singular, rather than the plural. Jesus called it “My Church” (Matthew 16:18). Ephesians 1:22-23 refers to “The Church, which is His Body”. The Church is the Family of God (Hebrews 3:6; Ephesians 2:19; 3:15). All of God's children are in His one Family, as God has but one family, and this family is the Church. Therefore, all of God's children are in the Church. The Church is also the Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:22,32). There is but one bridegroom, Christ. There is but one bride, the Church.

“There is one body”, the Holy Spirit declares in Ephesians 4:4. That body is, of course, the body of Christ, the Church, which is composed of all God's people. Jews and Gentiles alike have been reconciled to God in this one Body. Seven essentials to unity are given in this passage (Ephesians 4:4-6), beginning with Paul instructing the reader about the importance of knowing that there is only ONE body. By understanding that the Church is the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18; 3:15; 1 Corinthians 12:13), one understands that this plea for unity in one body is not a plea for denominational union because no denominations existed during the days of the Apostles when this scripture was written. Believers are to be united in one body – the Church. If all would follow the Word of God, learn to speak the same things (1 Corinthians 1:10), and abide by the essentials of unity (Ephesians 4:4-6), then unity would be the result.

By the one Spirit we are baptized into one body (1 Corinthians 12:13). This expression of being baptized into Christ – the body of Christ, the Church – can be easily understood from carefully reading through the book of Acts of the Apostles. In every single case of conversion in that book, the person was baptized – baptism being an expression of obedience to the command of Christ and union with Him (Romans 6:1-6). All the divisions of the so-called Christian world would fade away if we could learn the lesson taught in Ephesians 4:4-6. We must understand that it is not talking about various “bodies of belief”, as though one church could believe one thing and another church could believe something entirely different. There is a body of teaching that we are to follow in the New Testament and its basic foundation is outlined in Ephesians 4:4-6.



DENOMINATIONALISM vs NON-DENOMINATIONALISM:

The term “denomination” is predominantly a modern term, as a discussion of denominationalism was non-existent in the first century. Only one Church was established (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:41,47). The word “denomination” suggests a fraction or part of the whole. But the Church of God is not a part or fraction of

anything.

Denominationalism came into prominence in the 16th century after the Church had been in a state of apostasy for some time, and after which Christianity continued to fragment unceasingly. Today, the Christian landscape is divided, confused, and increasingly ineffective in reaching the unbelieving world (compare with the Lord's expectations in John 17:18-23). A denomination has been aptly defined as “a doctrinally distinct body of professed Christians, but not the only Christians, who believe that they have been saved by grace through faith in Christ apart from any other requirement and who have denominated themselves with a distinctive name by which they distinguish their characteristic doctrine and practice from other denominations”ⁱⁱ. Inherently, denominationalism is a desire to perpetuate division within the Christian world. Therefore, the concept of denominationalism is contrary to biblical teaching as the Holy Spirit sternly warned against Christians denominating in any form (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

Certain forms of denominationalism lay some claim to being “undenominational” or “non-denominational”. Such churches were increasingly common in the western world in recent decades. The marketing campaign of these churches presents a religious group that will accept almost anyone or any belief. Because denominationalism is a marking of certain beliefs through an official creed or statement, these churches claim to have no creed or doctrinal statements. Rather, almost any belief or practice is accepted in these groups. Many people are led astray through these churches because of the partial truth proclaimed. On the one hand, the desire to unite is commendable. But on the other hand, this unity is achieved through an absence of truth (John 8:32). With no standards or conditions to meet, of course, unity is easy to establish!

Unfortunately, we see the contrary in the scriptures. Paul the Apostle, instead of welcoming the Judaizers into fellowship (he could have rationalized that these people believed in Christ after all), instructed the Galatians to reject what according to the Holy Spirit amounted to the preaching of “another gospel” (Galatians 1:9-10). He also commanded the Ephesian elders to guard against false teachers swaying the flock of God away into error (Acts 20:28-30). The Bible teaches that unity through the truth will solidify the Church. On the other hand, a truthless unity produces wavering believers: “*until we all come to the unity of the*

faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting” (Ephesians 4:13-14).

Another example of denominations claiming to be undenominational or reacting to the presence of denominations in the world is the various inter-denominational fellowships, associations, and alliances where people maintain their separate denominational identities within a quasi-form of unity. Sometimes a church claims even to be not a church but simply a “prayer house” or a “fellowship” or the like. Indeed, even churches of Christ have sometimes found themselves attacked as “just another denomination” with non-denominationalism as a façade. Clearly, to be merely labeled as undenominational does not fully capture the essence of the Church of Christ. The character of the churches of Christ is not found merely in a reaction to the sinful practices of dividing the Body of Christ, but their true identity is located in the desire to restore the purity of the Church as found in the Bible. “*That He (Christ) might reconcile them both to God in ONE BODY through the cross*” is the Holy Spirit's stated objective (Ephesians 2:16a). This unity is not based on opinion or man-made creed or clergy but the divine truth of the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:15).

Consequently, churches of Christ are not so much undenominational in character as anti-denominational. God is very much against a splintered church. The will of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit is to bring all nations into the one Church of Christ. Christ is not pleased when people become hyphenated Christians. There is no such thing as a Catholic Church Christian, a Baptist Christian, an Anglican Christian, a Redeem Christian, a Deeper Life Christian, a Jehovah's Witness Christian, or even a Church of Christ Christian. All people should be Christians only, without the hyphenated identities that the world of denominationalism has brought upon us. The Holy Spirit declares: “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26-28).

The reader's attention is drawn to the Holy Spirit's explicit warning, since the first century, of the impending apostasy and denominationalization of the Christian world through a perversion of the teachings of Christ and a descent into merchandising and religion for financial gain. *“But there were false prophets, too, in those days, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly tell their lies about God, turning against even their Master who bought them; but theirs will be a swift and terrible end. Many will follow their evil teaching that there is nothing wrong with sexual sin. And because of them Christ and his way will be scoffed at. **These teachers in their greed will tell you anything to get hold of your money.** But God condemned them long ago and their destruction is on the way”* (2 Peter 2:1-3, TLB). See also 1 Timothy 4:1-3.

PRESERVING THE UNDENOMINATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH

To preserve the undenominational character of the Church, the Church MUST:

- a) Wear no denominational names (1 Corinthians 1:12-15; Colossians 3:17; Acts 4:11,12).
- b) Have no denominational creed, recognizing no authority but Christ (Matthew 28:18,20; 1 Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 6:2).
- c) Have no denominational or secular organization. The only organization recognized by the New Testament for the work of the Church is the local church with its elders, deacons, and evangelists (Philippians 1:1; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).
- d) Have uncorrupted worship, following the New Testament plan (Philippians 4:9; Hebrews 8:5; John 4:24; John 1:17).
- e) Have no entangling alliances. The Church must not lose its identity in any movement and must remain free from political, economic, and secular involvements (Philippians 2:12,16; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18).
- f) Have no denominational requirements for membership. The Church must ask people to do only what people were told to do in the New Testament days (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:41).

CONCLUSION

The only explanation for the existence of denominations in the world today is (1) disregard for Christ's authority, and (2) corruption of God's plan for the doctrine, work, and worship of the Church. Every person who accepts the Lord Jesus Christ must work toward the eradication of denominationalism. To that end, you must proceed by:

1. Believing the unadulterated truth concerning Jesus Christ, His gospel and the Church (John 3:35-36; 8:24; Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28);
2. Repenting of all sins (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30-31);
3. Confessing faith in Christ (Romans 10:9-10);
4. Getting baptized (immersed) in water for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16); and
5. Regularly worshipping and serving God as a member of a local church of Christ, and not some denomination of man.

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ⁱ Except where otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James' version (NKJV).

ⁱⁱ Edward C. Wharton, *The Church of Christ*.

THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

by Osamagbe Lesley EGHAREVBA

King David, who was a man after God's own heart said in Psalm 138:1-2; *"I will praise You with my whole heart; Before the gods, I will sing praises to You. I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your loving-kindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name."* Indeed, worship is an extremely important obligation that humans have to render. And who should our worship be directed to? In His debate with Satan, Christ declared that only God is worthy of worship (Matthew 4:10). From the Bible, we learned that one could worship God in vain (Matthew 15:8-9), in ignorance (Acts 17:23), willfully (Colossians 2:20-23), and in truth (John 4:23-24). Since man's whole duty is to "fear God and keep His commandment" (Ecclesiastes 12:13), our focus and interest should be on how we can worship God "in Spirit and in truth" (John 4:24) to be pleasing to Him. And so, in this piece, we shall beam our searchlight on how faithful Christians can and should worship God as a church that Christ purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28); the only body to which the saved are added (Acts 2:47).



What is Worship?

Worship simply means to do or render obeisance. The Greek word most commonly translated "worship" in the New Testament is "proskuneo" and it means "to express in attitude or gesture one's complete dependence on or submission to a high authority" (Bauer's Lexicon cited by Edwards, 2019). When this act of gesture is done towards God, it must be done "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). And so, worship involves specific actions with a sincere heart, commanded by God.

The first mention of the word is found in Genesis 22:5 where it is recorded that Abraham said to his servants "Stay here with the

donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." In this example, Abraham is referring to the very act that he would be performing as worship (that is, to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering, an act to be done in obedience to God). In John 12:20, Acts 8:27, and Acts 24:11, we find three different sets of individuals who traveled some distance to worship God. They were not worshiping while on the journeys; but the very act they carried out in obedience to God, constitutes their worship. The essence of all of these is to show that all of the things we do in life do not constitute worship unto God but those specific acts that we do in obedience to God's command constitute worship. And so, those who teach that coming together as a church for worship does not matter (cf. I Corinthians 11:17, 20) and that one can just stay in his room on Sunday morning and worship, are wrong in their supposition.

New Testament Worship

Reading through the New Testament in Acts 2:42, we find that the early Christians "continued steadfastly in **the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers.**" In verse 47, we find that they were "**praising God** and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." These acts constitute Christian worship or put differently, the New Testament worship. Since the first century Christians worshiped God acceptably and we can find their pattern of worship from the approved examples written about them in the New Testament, we believe that if we follow their examples from the scripture, worshiping when they worshiped and how they worshiped then we are assured of being the true worshipers written about in scripture, doing so in Spirit and in truth. Let us take these items of worship and talk about them one after the other.

Teaching the Truth as Authorized by the New Testament

Christians are to continue steadfastly in the study of God's word. This means that they are to continue to teach the truth as authorized by God. We are to abide in the doctrine of Christ (II John 9). One of the things that Christians are to do when they come together is to teach themselves (I Corinthians 14:26) and this teaching is necessary for the saints to "observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded" (Matthew 28:20) and so that

they might be saved (II Timothy 4:1-4.). Passages such as Acts 20:7, Romans 1:15 further show that teaching was important and was practiced in the Church's worship. It is important to state here that women are not allowed to preach or teach publicly but to learn in silence with all subjection. (I Timothy 2:11-12; I Corinthians 14:34-35). However, they can teach the children and other women (Titus 2.35,) and also men in private situations (Acts 18:26).

Giving on the first day of the Week as Authorized by the New Testament

Giving (collection) for the Lord's work is another act of worship. God authorizes giving as He has prospered us (I Corinthians 16:1-2) and Christians are encouraged to give bountifully (II Corinthians 9:6-7; Luke 6:38). In this way, a child of God shows his love for the Lord as the funds will be used for the Lord's work. Nowhere do we find in the New Testament where the members of the church are billed or levied. They were not even required to pay tithe and it is not the acceptable method of raising money for the Lord's work in the New Testament.

Partaking of the Lord's Supper as Authorized by the New Testament

Jesus instituted a feast known as the Lord's Supper which is to be done in His remembrance (Luke 22:19-20; Matthew 26:26-28). We find the church in Corinth also commanded to observe this feast as Paul received it of the Lord and gave it to them (I Corinthians 11:23-30). We find the church at Troas partake of this feast upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). This is the only New Testament example that gives us the time and frequency that the Lord's Supper should be taken. Since it was observed upon the first day of the week and not upon the first day of the month or year, it means the Lord's Supper was observed every week by the early Christians and such approved example serves as the authority for faithful Christians today to observe the Lord's Supper every first day of the week in remembrance of Christ.

Praying as Authorized by the New Testament

We are commanded to pray everywhere (I Timothy 2:8) and without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:17). We find the early Christians pray together as a church on different occasions (Acts 2:42; 4:24-30; 12:5, 16:25). This example is binding as we are expected to follow the apostolic examples as well (Philippians 3:17). In the New Testament example, we find that the decent,

orderly, and approved manner of saying prayers is for the men to lead in prayers while others say "Amen" (I Timothy 2:8; I Corinthians 14:16).

Singing as Authorized by the New Testament

A careful study of the New Testament will reveal that the singing of the early church was not accompanied by any mechanical instrument. Several passages that talk about singing in the New Testament worship did not include instrumental music but vocal music with the use of one's voice only. We are to continually praise God with the fruit of our lips (Hebrews 13:15). In addition, we are to teach and admonish one another in singing (Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16.) Men today use instrumental music in their worship but God did not authorize such in the New Testament. Even Jesus sang without the use of instruments (Matthew 26:30). Christians are not governed by the Old Testament laws (Hebrews 7:12).

CONCLUSION

These aforementioned points are the acts that constitute proper worship of God today in Spirit and in truth. You will find no other authorized actions within the worship of the New Testament church. We would show our loving desire to bow our hearts down to God while we do these things.

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THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

by Kayode Adekunle



Introduction

The word church as used in the New Testament is derived from the greek word “ekklesia” which means “the called out”. Jesus Christ said **“I will build my church”** Matt16:18. What He was saying here is that He will call out His own people from the world into His own Kingdom. Paul says this to the Christians in Colossae **“giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love”** Col 1:12-13. The kingdom as used here refers to the church. Christians are the called out people and they are called into the Body of Christ, which is the Church Eph1:22-23; Col1:18.

One of the unique nature of the Church as seen in the New Testament, which differentiates it from denominations, is the way it is organized. The Church is seen in two senses in the New Testament. The Universal sense and the Local sense. The Universal sense pictures all the saved people in the world. Luke says in Acts 2:47 **“praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved”**. The Church as used here refers to the universal Body and Kingdom of Christ, the following Bible passages further help to illustrate this Matt16:18; 1Cor15:24; Eph1:22-23; Col1:12-13; Col1:18; 1Tim3:15. It must be emphasized however, that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church Eph1:22-23 and the Universal Church is not physically organized. Hence, the kinds of structure we see presently in the world with denominations having universal organizations with different heads like the Pope, General Overseers, Senior Pastors, General Superintendent is an aberration and it totally negates the New Testament precepts.

Organization of the Local Church

The Church is only organized locally in the New Testament. The local Church comprises of a group of Christians in a locality who

come together for the purpose of worship and to carry out other functions of the church like evangelism, benevolence and edification. We see the examples of the following local churches in the New Testament, the Church in Jerusalem Acts 8:1; the Church in Antioch Acts 13:1; the Church in Corinth 1Cor1:2; the Churches in Galatia 1Cor16:1; Gal1:2; the Church in Ephesus Eph1:1; the Church in Colossae Col1:2.

A fully grown local church is self-governing with Elders and Deacons running its affairs. An example of a scripturally organized local church is the church at Philippi **“Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons”**. Phil 1:1. We also see the elders at work in the church at Jerusalem Acts15:6.

The Elders

It must be noted that the New Testament only stipulates the plurality of the elders in each of the local churches. The implication of this is that there cannot be only one elder in a local church. The elders are to act as overseers and shepherd as a results they are bishops and pastors. It must be emphasized here that all these words only describe the functions of these men they are not different titles as we see them being misused in the world today. Paul says this to the elders in Ephesus **“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood”** Acts 20:28. Peter has this admonition for his fellow elders **“The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock”** 1Peter 5:1-3. In Titus 1:5-7, the words elders and bishops are used interchangeably, while the word pastor is used in Eph4:11. The terms overseer, elder and pastor are descriptions of the dignity and functions of the men who are so designated. And from the qualifications needed to take on these roles in the church as shown in the New Testament, it is very clear that only men can take up these roles, women are not permitted to usurp authority over men 1Tim 2:12. It must be mentioned that the work of the elders are only restricted to the local church which they are members of. Elders in a particular local church cannot oversee the affairs of another local church.

Specific Work of the Elders

1. To feed, tend and shepherd Acts 20; 28; 1Pet5:1-3. This simply means the elders are expected to feed the flock (the church) with the word of God which is the spiritual food they need to be able to grow.
2. To act as pastors (Eph4:11) which means they are to take care of or manage the affairs of the local church 1Tim3:5
3. To watch over the souls of the brethren under their care. This amounts to exercising constant vigilance in such a way that false doctrine or teachers are quickly detected. Paul told the Ephesian elders to watch out for false teachers that will come up amongst the brethren Acts20:19-20
4. To rule over the church. Heb13:17; 1Tim3:4; 5; 12; 5:17. To rule means they are to act as leaders and decision takers, a perfect example is seen in the case of the church at Jerusalem Acts15. They rule by taking charge of the affairs of the local church in their care 1Thess5:12

Qualifications of an Elder

Men who desire to become elders are expected to meet some qualifications as spelt out by the New Testament, this is pertinent because of how sensitive their jobs are. These qualifications are spelt out in 1Tim3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-7

1. I Tim. 3:2-7. Without reproach, husband of one wife, temperate, sober minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach, no brawler, no striker, gentle, not contentious, no lover of money, ruling well his own household, not a novice, of good reputation without
2. Titus 1:6-9. Blameless, husband of one wife, self-control, sober-minded, given to hospitality, able to exhort and convict the gainsayer, no brawler, no striker, not soon angry, not self-willed, not greedy of filthy lucre, having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly, just holy, a lover of good.

The Deacons

The New Testament reveals some special group of men in the church called the deacons. Phil 1: 1; 1Tim 3:8; 12. These men are set apart for a special work. Something very close to this is the scenario we have in Acts 6:1-7. The men here were appointed by the church in Jerusalem to take care of a peculiar situation that

arose in the church. The word deacon is from the Greek word “diakonos” which primarily means servant, a helper or a servant.. This does not suggest a slave or a subservient person, it is only emphasizing service and stewardship. The meaning of the word can be understood from two senses; the general sense and the specific (special) sense. In the general sense, it means anyone carrying out any kind of an assigned task a few examples come to mind in this regard Christ Rom 15:8; Paul Eph3:7, Col1:23; Phoebe Rom16:1. In a special sense, the word deacon refers to a particular set of men appointed by the church called deacons. The Church in Philippi has deacons Phil1:1, their qualifications are stated in 1Tim3:8-12. It must be emphasized here that it is very clear from the qualifications revealed by the bible that women cannot be deacons in the church in this special or specific sense. What we see in denominations with women being appointed deaconesses is an aberration which is totally against the New Testament precepts.

The work of the Deacons

The New Testament does not specifically spell out the work of the Deacons. However, the situation very close to having the understanding of what these men can do is the one we have in the Church at Jerusalem when some men were appointed to carry out some tasks for the church Acts6:1-7. Moreover, if we consider the fact that the oversight functions of the elders are clearly spelt out in the New Testament, then we can safely say that the deacons are not to rule over the church or carry out any oversight functions, they are simply to act as servants of the local church where they are members. One thing we can also safely submit is that their qualifications also give a clue as to what their functions are in a local church.

Qualifications of a Deacon

1. I Tim. 3:8-13. (a). Grave. (b). Not double tongued. (c). Not given to much wine. (d). Not greedy for money. (e). Holding the faith in a pure conscience. (f). Proved. (g). Husband of one wife. (h). Ruling their children and homes well.
2. Acts 6:1-6. (a). "A man of honest report", a good reputation both within and without the Church. (b). "Full of the Holy Spirit," bearing its fruits in his life (Gal. 5:22-24). (c). "Full of Wisdom," a man of prudence and sound judgment.

The Evangelist

Apart from the elders and the deacons, the New Testament also reveals some men who play important roles in the running of a local church. A local church is expected to have an evangelist and where such is in place, he fits in into one of the personnel that Christ puts in place by Himself, to work to see that a local church carries out the divine mission it is established to carry out Eph 4:11-12. **“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,”** It is important to mention that the Apostles and the prophets are no longer in existence in the church today. The Apostles are the twelve men that Jesus Christ appointed to work with Him and Paul whom He later commissioned to take the gospel to the gentiles. The Apostles were instrumental to the establishment of the church and they and the prophets were present in the early church to stabilize the brethren and pass the message across to them. These sets of people have done their own bit and they have gone, so, there are no apostles and prophets in the church any longer. Apart from the pastors (who are the elders) the evangelist and the teachers play important roles today in helping a local church to actualize its mission of evangelism, benevolence and edification.

The word evangelist comes from the Greek word “euaggelistes” which means the proclaimer of good news. The term is used only three times in the New Testament Acts 21:8; Eph 4:11; 11Tim 4:5. Other words used in the New Testament to show the same person and work are preacher and minister. The Greek term for preacher is 'kerux' which is used of a herald, messenger or a proclaimer while the Greek term for minister is 'diakonos' which describes a servant 1 Tim 4:6. We must however note that, this word is not only used to describe a preacher alone, it is also used to describe deacons and other servants of a local church. 1Tim 3:8; 12.

The Work of the Evangelist

It must first be mentioned that as a member of the church, his duties or obligations are the same as any other member. However, as an evangelist, he has some special responsibilities. What are these responsibilities?

1. He is to preach the word to unbelievers 1 Tim 4: 1-5
2. He is to put the brethren in the mind of truth 1 Tim 4:6. The evangelist is told to teach the brethren concerning prayer, modesty, the role of women and men in the church 1Tim 2.

3. He is to work with every group in the church; older men and women; younger men and women; widows; elders; servants; employers; the rich 1 Tim 5;6 Tit 2:1-6
4. He is to reprove sinners (even elders, if the occasion comes up) 1 Tim 5:19-21
5. He is to set things in order, which means he is to direct the procedure for the appointment of elders and teach their qualifications Tit 1:5; 1Tim 3:1-5
6. He is to teach and train teachers who will in turn teach others 11Tim 2:2
7. He is to teach against false doctrine and silence false teachers 1Tim 4:13; Titus 1:11;13

Qualifications of an Evangelist:

1. "Keep thyself pure" (I Tim. 5:22). (2.) Gentle, apt to teach, forbearing (II Tim. 2:22-26). (3). Diligent (II Tim. 2:15, 16). (4). Steadfast in the faith, loyal in the truth, refusing false speculative doctrines and uncompromising toward those that teach them (I Tim. 6:3-11; 4:1, 6; II Tim. 3:14-17; 4:1-5). (5). An example to them that believe (I Tim. 4:12). (6.) Careful both as to himself and what he teaches (I Tim. 4:16).

Conclusion

The church was established out of the wisdom of God Eph 3:9-11, and that is why everything about the church including the way it should be organized and run is clearly spelt out by God Himself in the New Testament Eph 4:11-12. God demands ultimate loyalty to His will and whatever we do as Christians must be done in conformity to His will. The local church as we see in the New Testament is autonomous, that is, self-governing. Each local church is expected to grow to the level of having elders (to be assisted by deacons) to run its affairs. Able men in local churches are encouraged to desire and aspire to occupy these positions so that the church of God can continue to grow as He desires. Members in local churches are enjoined to co-operate with their evangelists, encourage them by sharing in all good things with them Gal 6:6 and where elders are in place, they must be honored for the sake of their work and be obeyed Heb 13:17. When this is done, the church will make the desired progress and God will be glorified

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THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

by **Oladapo Olawale**

In fulfillment of His eternal plan for the salvation of man (Ephesians 3:8 -11), God created the church here on earth (Matthew 16:18, Acts 2). Being an organization designed and established by God, the church necessarily has a God-given (divine) mission or work. Just like most human organizations have their lofty goals and mission, God has an even glorious purpose and mission for His magnificent institution. The church is not an inactive organization, although the passiveness of some members may give this false impression. The church likened to a vineyard shows that it is indeed a place of work (Matthew 20:1)!

The New Testament which is the constitution (rule book) of this divine organization reveals to us God's mission for the church. Firstly, the scriptures reveal to us that this mission is neither political nor social (John 18:36; 1 Corinthians 4:20), it is spiritual by design and geared towards saving souls. Secondly, the church's mission as planned by God is to be carried out through the local church. God has given no work to the universal church; it is the local church(es) that fulfill the divine mission of the church. Therefore, when we speak of the work which God has given the church to do, we are referring to the work which every local congregation must do.

Again, from the scriptures, we understand that the church's mission is limited in scope; the work of the church is not every and all work. Every human institution has its peculiar mission, goals, and objectives it sets out to achieve; no human institution carries out every work. The church in the same vein is not all things to everyone in all circumstances as we shall consider later in this article. It is also noteworthy to mention that the work of the church is different from the work individuals can do. For instance, whilst an individual may engage in business and join politics, the church has no such responsibility.

What is this mission God has given the church to carry out as revealed in the scriptures?

(a) PREACHING THE GOSPEL

First and foremost, the local church has a duty to spread the gospel to the lost world around them. The gospel is the power of God to save mankind from eternal condemnation (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 15: 1-8). Whilst on earth, Christ's mission primarily was to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). Christ equally charged His disciples to preach the gospel to every creature (Matthew 28:18 -19; Mark 16:15-16) thereby making the work of evangelism a mission of the church. The church being the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15) is also charged to hold fast the word of life (Philippians 2:11).

In Matthew 13:3- 9, Jesus showed that the church is the agency through which the seed is sown. In Luke 8:11, Christ further explained that the seed is the word of God. It thus becomes the obligation of the church to ensure that the word of God is sown in

the hearts of men all over the world. In fulfilling its divine mandate, the local church may print tracts to circulate to the community, conduct a gospel meeting, organize door-to-door (one-on-one) preaching, conduct radio and/or television programs, etc. The local congregation may adopt every scriptural means at its disposal to spread the gospel in its community.

The church also fulfills its mission to preach the gospel by sending people out to do this work and supporting them. The early church sent gospel preachers to spread the word of God (Acts 13:1-2; Phil. 4:15; 2 Cor. 11:8). The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 11:22-23). Similarly, the church in Antioch sent out Paul and Barnabas on a missionary journey (Acts 13:1a, 2-3).

Paul commended the Thessalonian church for sounding out the gospel in Macedonia and beyond (1 Thess. 1:8). While Paul preached at Corinth, he received financial support from the churches of Macedonia. He took wages of other churches to do a service at Corinth (2 Cor. 11: 8). Congregations in Macedonia helped spread the gospel through Paul. The church at Philippi assisted Paul financially in preaching the gospel (Phil. 4:15-16).

Without a doubt, churches of the first century were focused on preaching the gospel. Churches today need to emulate their passion and interest in the lost and exert every effort to take the gospel to the world.

(b) EDIFICATION OF ITS MEMBERS (EVANGELIZING THE SAVED)

Edification simply means to build up, encourage or lift towards maturity. The church must build up every member towards spiritual maturity. This part of the church work is often described as evangelizing or preaching the gospel to the saved to perfect them. In Ephesians 4:11-12, Paul wrote that God had given apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for "perfecting the saints." This work is to be done so that the saints grow into mature men and no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:13-16). Christians are built up through the study of God's word. The Apostle Paul first urged the Ephesian elders to feed the flock of God and commended them to the word of grace, which can build up, and to give an inheritance among all them which are sanctified (Acts 20:28, 32). For any Christian to grow into maturity, he starts with desiring and feeding on the milk of God's word (1 Peter 2:2) before proceeding to solid food (Hebrews 5:12 -14; 1 Corinthians 3:2).

One of the purposes for the gathering of the saints is to teach God's word to edify the members (1 Cor. 14:12, 26). Christians must exercise themselves to grow. The mature believer is the one who, having studied God's word, "by reason of use" has his "senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14). By the study

of God's word, the Christian must grow to be able to differentiate between that which is good and that which is evil.

As can be seen in Acts 20:28, 32, and 1 Peter 5: 1 – 4, the elders play a crucial role in the work of edification including teaching the word of God. Deacons serving along with elders in a local church also have an inherent responsibility of edifying the saints in their assignment.

Quite significantly, individual members of a local congregation have the responsibility of edifying one another. Hebrews 3:13 says: "... but exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Individual Christians have the responsibility of encouraging those around them. This can also be done through singing to one another, (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16) visiting or calling one another via the telephone to ask about themselves, and fellowshiping from house to house.

The Bible study programs, special meetings, prayer meetings, lectureships, publication of bulletins, usage of tracts, etc. are just a few programs of work in which the church can be scripturally involved in helping to edify its members.

(c) BENEVOLENCE (CARING FOR THE NEEDY)

The work of benevolence by the local congregations as discussed in the New Testament was that of relieving the needs of the saints. See Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37; 6:1-6; 11:27-30; Rom. 15:25-26; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; and 2 Cor. 8-9. These passages show that the early church relieved the needs of its members. Relieving the needs of the poor of the whole world was never given to the church, so far as we can read from the New Testament. The benevolent work of the church towards its needy is limited to certain real class of needy who do not have Christian relatives that can take care of them. Paul stated this: "If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened; that it may relieve them those who are really widows" (1 Tim. 5:16). It is not possible for the church to take care of all the needy of the world as in so doing it would exhaust all its resources and be left to do no other work given to it by God.

To carry out this work, the local church may give money to any of its needy members, purchase basic and essential items for them, pay a health bill, pay for the education of the children of the members, etc. The local church may even find it necessary, on occasions, to provide accommodation in which some of its poor can live. All these works would reflect the local church fulfilling its divine mission of benevolence.

THINGS THAT ARE NOT THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Many today advocate that the church engages in activities that are outside of its divine mandate, most of which are in the realm of

individual responsibilities. These suggestions range from the imaginary to the ridiculous. Some of these non-scriptural assignments include:

- (a) Recreation/Entertainment: Many try to shift their responsibility of providing recreation for themselves and give that duty to the church. God has not established the church as a place for entertainment and recreation. Nor is it the duty of the church to provide the facilities for such activities.
- (b) Secular business: The church has no authority to engage in business, or raise money through seemingly innocuous business ventures such as printing and publishing companies, farms, apartment houses, schools, and hospitals, etc. In Luke 19:46 Jews who did this in the temple were rebuked by Jesus and accused of converting the spiritual place into a robber's den. There is also no authority for using the church facilities to make a profit such as renting the church hall for weddings and receptions. The church's money is derived from the voluntary contributions of the saints. (1 Corinthians 16:1 – 2).
- (c) Secular Education: Others try to make it the business of the church to provide secular education. The church teaches the bible and not Mathematics, Biology, Literature, etc. The church neither has the authority to establish, build, fund, and oversee schools nor contribute its funds to schools established by individuals. This will be a perversion of the divine mission of the church.
- (d) Politics: The church does not engage in politics neither does it sponsor a political candidate or use its platform to promote campaigns and other political activities.

CONCLUSION

The mission of the church is neither secular, political, nor social, it is spiritual. This mission as given by God involves the responsibility of preaching the gospel to those who are lost and those who are already saved and helping the poor saints. The church must not neglect to fulfill its God-given mission just as it must ensure that it does not corrupt this mission with the wisdom of men.

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¹ The Universal Church is that conglomeration of people everywhere who have been called out of the world of sin through obedience to the gospel in baptism (Acts 2:38; 47; 1 Corinthians 12:13). The church in a local sense is a group of saved people joined together for worship and fellowship in service to God in a community or locality (Acts 14:23). The local church has been designed by God with a pattern of organization having elders and deacons overseeing the divine mandate/mission (Philippians 1:1). The Universal Church, being at large, is thus not organized to fulfill the mission of the church. The divine mission can only be fulfilled through a local church

² Extraordinary and special circumstances may necessitate that the church extends its benevolence to non-Christians. For instance, in cases of natural disasters, war, and crisis, famine, or other extreme situations. In such instances, mercy and kindness dictate that the church helps needy non-Christians by accommodating them and feeding them (Matthew 12:1 – 8). This is however an exceptional circumstance and not the rule.