

ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD “CHURCH”

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ETYMOLOGY: The study of the origin and history of words

One morning, while at breakfast, I was making a list of basic thought-provoking questions. The first question that I listed was, “How does the Bible define the church?” So I began to check out a few resources. I did a web search for the etymology of the word “church”. That turned into a great lesson. As always, be a good Berean and study this out for yourself.

The word Greek word *ecclesia* translated as “church” in Eph 1:22-23 is the subject of this scrutiny.

CHURCH (Wikipedia)

[The etymology of this word is generally assumed to be from the Greek, *kurios oikos* (house of the Lord); but this is most improbable, as the word existed in all the Celtic dialects long before the introduction of the Greek. No doubt the word means ‘a circle.’

The places of worship among the German and Celtic nations were always circular (witness circular Stonehenge, the most ancient stone megaliths on earth).

Compare Anglo-Saxon 'circe', a small church, with 'circol', a circle. In Scotland it is called "Kirk" and in Germany it is "Kirche," in England it is the word "Circe" (the "c" having a "k" sound).

"Kirke/Circe" was also the name of a Goddess. Kirke or Circe was the daughter of the Sun god, who was famous for taming wild animals for her “circus”.]

(Quote) [www.paleothea.com]

Circe

[Circe was an evil, or perhaps just cruelly quirky, sorceress. She was very powerful and turned all of Odysseus' men into swine (they barely escaped). She also had the power to purify and cleanse the Argonauts of the murder of Apsyrtus. Her name means "Falcon" and that seems pretty appropriate for her character. Circe was the daughter of Helios (the Sun) and Perse, and was the aunt of Medea. She was wayyyyy dangerous because she was so powerful and so bored.]

(Quote) [www.iahushua.com]

Circe, Kirke, Kirche and Kerk

[This is the word used in most English versions as a rendering of the New Testament's Greek word *ekklesia*. *Ekklesia* really means "a calling out", a meeting or a gathering. *Ekklesia* is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *qahal*, which means an assembly or a congregation. Neither *ekklesia* nor *qahal* means a building.

Ecclesiastical (Catholic) sources give the origin as *kuriakon* or *kyriakon* in Greek. However, to accept this, one has to stretch your imagination in an attempt to see any resemblance. Also, because *kuriakon* means a building (the house of *Kurios*=Lord), and not a gathering or meeting of people, as the words *ekklesia* and *qahal* imply, therefore this explanation can only be regarded as distorted, even if it is true. Our common dictionaries, however, are honest in revealing to us the true origin. They all trace the word back to its Old English or Anglo-Saxon root, namely *circe*. And the origin of *circe*? Any encyclopaedia,

or dictionary of mythology, will reveal who Circe was. She was the goddess-daughter of Helios, the Sun-deity! Again, another form of Sun-worship, this time the daughter of the Sun-deity]

I have discovered that “Circe” is a character of witchcraft or sorcery in books, plays, movies, video games, Disney productions. She is very much alive in the minds of many today. The question is, in the Bible, as the word “church”, does she play the character of the false bride of Christ?

(Quote)(Love-unlimited.org)(Dutch)

[The name “church” was added in the Bible by the people who’ve translated the Word. But is that translation correct? The word church originates from the Greek word “ku-ri-a-kos” or “ku-ri-a-kon”, in our Dutch and English languages translated as “Kerk” and “Church”. These Greek words are coming from the root word “Kurios”, which means “lord”. The literal meaning of the name “church” is “pertains to, or belongs to, a lord”. Now the question is if these words, that can be translated as “church”, do appear in the Bible. The answer is yes, they do appear twice. In 1 Corinthians 11:20 and in Revelation 1:10. Oh, then what’s the problem? First of all, the two times that these words do appear, they point to something that belongs to the Lord. In the case of 1 Corinthians 11:20 it points to the Lord’s supper. In Revelation 1:10 it points to the day of the Lord. But in both cases it is certainly not pointing to the body of Christ. Secondly, in the other 115 times the translation “church” is used, it actually says something completely different: a different name and a totally different meaning. In the other 115 times the translation “church” is used, it actually says “ecclesia” (or related words) and not “ku-ri-a-kos” or “ku-ri-a-kon”.]

When I returned home to my study resources I searched further.

Noah Webster 1828 Dictionary

CHURCH, *n.* [Sax. *Circe, circ or cyric*; Scots, *kirk* which retains the Saxon pronunciation; D. *kirke*; G. *kirche*; SW. *kyrckia*; Dan. *Kirke*; Gr *xupiaxov*, a temple of God, from *xupiaxos*, pertaining to a Lord or to our Lord Jesus Christ, from *xupios*, a Lord]

Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words 1940

CHURCH is referred to the definition for ASSEMBLY or CONGREGATION (Very interesting)

Strong’s Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words 2001

CHURCH is from *ekklesia*, congregation (Also very interesting)

Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible

CHURCH is listed as found in 114 verses under the Greek form 1577 *ekklesia*, a calling out – assembly, church.

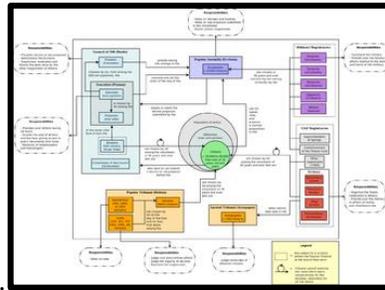
Whence the word "church", then in Scriptures?

How did this translation of *ekklesia* to “church” come about? Just because the word “church” is found in Strong’s as a translation of Greek *ekklesia* or Latin *ecclesia* does not mean it is a correct translation.

How did the Dictionary stretch to define “church” (circe) to mean “house of the Lord” or “of pertaining to the Lord Jesus Christ”?

Is this a perversion that has sneaked in? We must be diligent in our study

Ecclesia (ancient Athens) From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



Constitution of the Athenians, 4th century BC. The ecclesia is represented by the small blue box in the top center of the image. This diagram is based on Aristotle's *Constitution of the Athenians*.

[The **ecclesia** or **ekklesia** (Greek: ἐκκλησία) was the principal assembly of the democracy of ancient Athens. It was the popular assembly, open to all male citizens as soon as they qualified for citizenship. In 594 BC, Solon allowed all Athenian citizens to participate, regardless of class. The assembly was responsible for declaring war, military strategy and electing the strategoi and other officials. It was responsible for nominating and electing magistrates, thus indirectly electing the members of the Areopagus. It had the final say on legislation and the right to call magistrates to account after their year of office. A typical meeting of the Assembly probably contained around 6000 people, out of a total citizen population of 30,000–60,000. It originally met once every month, but later met three or four times per month. The agenda for the ekklesia was established by the Boule, the popular council. Votes were taken by a show of hands, counting of stones and voting using broken pottery. A quorum of 6,000 members was required sometimes to do business. The ecclesia elected by lot annually the Boule.

In ancient Greece an ekklesiasterion was a building specifically built for the purpose of holding the supreme meetings of the ecclesia. Like many other cities Athens did not have an ekklesiasterion. Instead, the regular meetings of the assembly were held on the Pnyx and two annual meetings took place in the Theater of Dionysus. Around 300 BC the meetings of the ekklesia were moved to the theater. The meetings of the assembly could attract large audiences: 6,000 citizens might have attended in Athens during the fifth century BC.]

Quote (love-unlimited.org)(Dutch)

[In the time that the New Testament was written, an ecclesia was a governing body. It was not the type of governing body that had the authority to make laws, but they had the authority to execute the laws that were set by the higher governing body, the “boule”, a counsel of 500 people. The ecclesia was allowed to submit a decree or law proposal before the boule, but it was the boule who decided and approved the decrees or proposals. In our Dutch system the Ecclesia can be compared with the Second Chamber (I believe in other nations this is known as the House or Parliament) and the Boule with the First Chamber (the Senate or Upper House). The parliament is reigning, but nothing happens unless the senate has approved it. The ecclesia was formed of (and open for) all native and free male citizens, with two years military service. The agenda of the ecclesia was established by the Boule.

(My comment) In the U. S. we have an assembly in Washington D. C. that is a “called out” or elected governing body; albeit not currently functioning very well because of political disunity.

The meaning of the word “ecclesia” is best defined as “the called-out (ones)”, coming from the word

“ecc” (= out) and “kaleo” (= call). Putting all this in context, it leads to the meaning of a group of people who are called out of another group of people, as a governing body, with the obvious aim to reign. Now compare that meaning with the meaning of the word “church” (belongs to the Lord). There is nothing wrong with belonging to the Lord, in fact it is an honor. But God wants us to understand the task and privilege we have, as a governing body of Christ, for which we will be held accountable. And as we know by now, name is identity. So name is a big deal. By renaming “the governing body of Christ” (ecclesia) to “belongs to the Lord” (kuriakos/kuriakon/church), it has been stripped (in name) of its true identity, the true aim and the true authority. Every time we call the governing body of Christ “the church” it is a proclamation of degradation.]

It is interesting that the governing body of a college fraternity is often called “the ecclesia”.

Please understand “*ekklesia*” is not the Greek word for “church”.

Lying awake early one morning, the Holy Spirit said to me, by its true etymology “the meaning of the word “church” is a place of false worship”. The light came on! That’s it! That was an ‘AHAH’ moment!

Whence the word “church”, then in Scriptures?

In Welch’s book *Dispensational Truth*, fourth edition, 1981, there is a page (28) devoted to the definition of the word “church”. He points out the various different “churches” identified in the Scriptures. But we can take this “right division” even further.

The Companion Bible in Appendices 113 *The Kingdom and the Church* and 186 *Church* discuss the usages of the Hebrew *kahal* which occurs 123 times in the Old Testament and *ekklesia* which occurs 115 times in the New Testament both of which refer to an assembly or a gathering of called out ones. Again this falls short of the real problem with the usage of the word “church” in the translations, which is using a definition of one word to define **another** word. So we must take it one step further.

Oscar Baker wrote 32 articles in *Truth for Today* concerning several doctrinal aspects of the church, but nothing like this scrutiny of the use of the word “church” in Scriptures. We will take it even deeper.

Are you ready to go deeper?

How did the word “church” find its way into the Bible in the first place? Since “church” is an English word, this had to occur in the (mis)translation into the English.

Jerome’s Latin Vulgate Eph 1:22 reads *Et omnia subiecit sub pedibus ejus: et ipsum dedit caput supra omnem ecclesiam*. (“**Ecclesiam**” today means “of the Catholic Church”)

John Wycliffe, the “Morning Star of the Reformation”, of Yorkshire, England, may have unintentionally been the culprit. He translated the Latin into English (1382) because he didn’t know Greek. He translated Matthew 16:18 using a commonly known English word for a place of worship “chirche” for *ecclesiam*.

William Tyndale, in his first English New Testament translation (1526), uniformly translated the Greek *ekklesia* as “congregation” and only used the word “churches” to translate Acts 19:37 for heathen temples! (And it eventually cost him his life because Rome did not allow any Bibles other than in Latin.)

Miles Coverdale’s 1535 Bible was a completion of Tyndale’s 1526 work by adding the Old Testament in English thereby the translation of *ekklesia* stood as “congregation”.

The translation was changed to “churche” in the **1568 Bishop’s Bible** and the **1599 Geneva Bible**.

The **1582 Catholic Rheims** translation of the New Testament uses the word “Church”

1604-1611 KJV

King James issued over a dozen rules that the translators had to follow. He disliked the Geneva Bible, the Bible used by the Puritans, because he believed that some of the comments in the margin notes were seditious and did not show enough respect for kings. King James' new translation was to have no commentary in the margins.

King James favoured the hierarchical structure of the Church of England and wanted the new translation to use words that supported a bishop-led hierarchy. In keeping with his preferred views on church government, he specified, "The old ecclesiastical ("**ecclesiastical**" means from the Roman Catholic Church) words [are] to be kept; as the word *church* [is] not to be translated *congregation*." King James also ruled that only his new Bible could be read in England's churches. The political motives of King James had a direct influence on the translation of the KJV.

His Majesty's instructions to the translators were these:

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE TRANSLATORS.

#3 of 15... The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, as the word *church*, not to be translated *congregation*.

#14 of 15... These translations to be used, when they agree better with the text than the Bishops' Bible: Tyndale's, Coverdale's, Matthew's [Rogers'], Whitchurch's [Cranmer's], Geneva."

See how easily Satan can influence men to change or even pervert the original meaning of His words in order to subtly distort the truth. The thing to keep in mind is that at the time of these first English translations the only well-established Christian organization was the Roman Catholic. By committing the sin of presumption (Ps 19:13) it claimed to represent true Christianity as it still attempts to do today. The Catholic Church wielded great political power and authority in that part of the world. In fact the *Gunpowder Plot* was a Jesuit attempt to blow up the Parliament and King James in his first year in England.

But let's go way back before William Tyndale to the earliest attempts to translate parts of Scriptures into Anglo-Saxon like the Wessex Gospels in 990 A.D., or Venerable Bede in the 7th Century, or Aldheim, Bishop of Sherborne. Could they have introduced the Anglo-Saxon word "Chirche" in place of *ecclesia*? John Wycliffe of Yorkshire translated the word "chirche" for *ecclesia* which he could have picked up from these earlier partial translations.

Who changed the meaning of *ecclesia* to mean a place rather than a called-out people?

Let's back up in time and see how this could have come about.

Because people do not understand Satan's power of deception and how he works in the doctrinal realm, they are unaware how Satan understood the mystery of the body of Christ revealed to Paul and how he proceeded to create an imitation that claimed itself to be the "Mystical Church" and "the Body of Christ".

It is my opinion that the source of this perversion is Satan's imitation church established in Rome. The first council of this non-Biblical institution was the Council of Nicaea in A. D. 325. The purpose of this

council was to adopt a creed and set forth a canon of laws and create its own man-made governing body. Christians were being persecuted in Rome not because of their belief in Jesus Christ, but because they would not worship the pagan gods as well. Early Christians met in homes or caves or secret places because of persecution. There were no established places of worship.

Constantine was a pagan emperor who embraced Christianity in the fourth century but infused it with paganism. Constantine confiscated pagan temples and converted them to Christian “temples”. The first physical church structures were man’s attempt to imitate God’s Holy Temple using pagan “circles” containing idols and relics. Some early church architecture resembled the public meeting hall next to the Roman palace called a basilica. A Cathedral is an imitation throne of authority. A Chapel comes from the word “cape” from which a relic of a torn cloak of St. Martin was used to make a tent for worship by a chaplain. All of these circumvent true worship.

By the usurpation of the Holy Spirit by the Pope, focus shifted from God’s “calling out” of a company of people to the physical structure housing a man-made religion. The Council of Nicaea was the first assembly to take these steps. Canon XI of the Council of Nicaea describes in detail a physical religious structure divided into four parts including an outer court, porch, temple, and altar. The word *naos* (or *naas*) in the NT referred to the inner temple, while *hieron* was the outer court. Similarly, the main body of this imitation temple was also called the *naos* or *Nave*.

The people, called the “laity”, were divided into groups. The **weepers and sinners** were the lowest order who had to remain outside and beg for prayers of the faithful. The second class of penitents were restricted to the first section within the church and were made up of **hearers** only; such as Jews, heretics, and even the demon-possessed. The third order was called the **kneelers and the prostrators** who could enter the main body of the Nave. The next order was **the believers or the faithful** who could fully participate in the Divine Mysteries (sacraments) and were in full communion with the Church. The highest group was **the order of the clergy**: Bishops, Priests, and Deacons who alone could enter the raised portion of the building called the Sanctuary where existed the altar and holy table and the Bishop’s throne. This is the doctrine and practice of the Nicolaitanes referred to in Revelation 2:6 and 2:15 (Gr. conquer the people) which is the same meaning of the Hebrew “Balaam” Rev. 2:14.

Thereby the “assembly” or “called out ones” (*ecclesia*) became a place instead of a calling-out.

About the time of the Reformation and the translation of Bibles, The Council of Trent (1545–1563) condemned Protestantism (and any Christianity outside the Catholic Church) and their belief in justification by faith alone and their belief in the primacy of the Bible as the only source of revealed truth. It placed tradition on equal authority with the Scriptures as a rule of faith. It confirmed Jerome’s Latin Vulgate to be authoritative for the text of Scripture.

Translated Bibles were confiscated and burned along with those found to possess them. Maybe early believers saw the evil in that was growing in the organized church better than believers do today. The “church” had become a place; a place of worship; a place of false worship using relics and idolatry and clerical hierarchy and a control of the laity: the doctrine and practice of the Nicolaitanes.

My Catholic Bible (New American Bible 1972) contains an encyclopedic dictionary which has the following definitions for the word “**church**”:

- 1.) A place where Christians assemble; a building devoted to divine worship, It is from the Greek *Kyriakon* meaning the “Lord’s house”, used to designate the House of God from the beginning of the fourth century. (Council of Nicaea A.D. 325 mentioned above)

2.) The *Catholic Church*. The body of Christians who profess the faith of Christ...united under one visible head, the Pope, who is the Vicar of Christ on earth. (“church” means the Catholic Church)

Look again at the first definition. It is a place. “Church” is from the Greek *Kyriakon* which means “House of the Lord”. **No, that is not true.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon “circe”. The Greek form *Kyriakon* is not found in the original language of the Scriptures: it is not from the Word of God. *Kurios* means “supreme in authority” (God, Lord, master, Sir). *Kyriakon* or *Kuriakon* simply could mean “of the Lord” or “of the master”. It does not even mean a building.

By the second definition, the Roman Catholic Church falsely claims to be THE ONLY TRUE CHURCH, thereby claiming every translation of the word *ecclesia* in the New Testament refers to the Catholic Church.

An interesting observation is that the first verse where the word “church” is found in the New Testament is Matt 16:18, which is the verse on which the Roman Catholic Church plants its flag and claims its foundation. Thereafter, in their mind, every use of the word “church” in the New Testament implies the Catholic Church.

It is my belief that after three or four centuries, those English Catholics, such as Venerable Bede, who translated segments of the New Testament into the Anglo-Saxon language had been taught to believe that the *ecclesia* represented a place of worship. The Anglo-Saxon word they understood to mean a place of worship came from the word used for a place of idol worship in the occult word which is “chirche” which derives from “circe” or “sirse” of “kirk” or “kirche”. When King Ethelbert invited Augustine to bring monks to Canterbury, England, the Canterbury Cathedral became the “ecclesiastical” center of England.

Where did the “church” begin?

Did the church begin at Matthew 16, or Acts 2, or Acts 13, or after Acts 28? Are you thinking what I am thinking? Are you ready for this? This is another early morning revelation and it is a hard saying!!

If we want to know where the “church” began in Scriptures according to its true etymology, we must take this perversion back to its genesis, Genesis 11. We must go back the first brick and mortar “church”, the **Tower of Babel**. There are two Books of Revelation. One is written in the heavens. According to Josephus, this one was established by Adam, Seth, and Enoch and is laid out in a circle starting with Virgo and ending with Leo. The corrupt seed of Ham, Cush and Nimrod perverted God’s witness in the stars by turning astronomy into astrology making false gods of the constellations and planets. The Tower of Babel, “whose top with the heavens”, (see CB note on Gen 11:4) was erected in rebellion of God and used for worship of the Zodiac. This is where the circular places of pagan worship come from. Notice how church steeples and spires reach to the heavens as a resemblance of the Tower of Babel.

What happened in 325 A.D. was the reinstatement of the Tower of Babel. The word “church” today has its roots in the Tower of Babel. Satan imitates God’s confusion of Nimrod’s people at Babel by creating doctrinal confusion among Christians, resulting in thousands of divisions, whether denominations or non-denominations (as in “let us make a name”). The “church” began at Babel in Genesis and will end in Babylon in Revelation 18. It is no coincidence that Rev 18:4 caused me to leave the Catholic Church at age 30.

The Sun-deity worship and Circe tie in to the history of the Roman Catholic Church. Roman Catholicism is saturated with pagan influences too numerous to mention. The reason they celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25 is to coincide with the worship of the sun god and the celebration of the winter solstice.

To this very day the occult refer to themselves as “churches”, e.g. the Church of Illumination, the Church of Wicca (witchcraft). It is no wonder there are many warnings of the occult infiltrating the churches. Duh, that is the where the word “church” comes from!

Hebrews 10:24-25

In a desperate attempt to find a mandate “to go to church” in the New Testament, the scripture verse most quoted by many Christians is Hebrews 10:24-25

*²⁴ And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: ²⁵Not 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.*

This word translated “assembling” is the Greek form 1997 *episunagoge* = gathering upon the same place or gathering together, The same word *episunagoge* is used in 2 Thes 2:1.

*² Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our **gathering together** unto him...*

This comes from the Greek form 4864 *sunagoge* means assembly or congregation of people from which comes “synagogue” which now means a place where Jews gather.

May I refer you to the last two paragraphs of Appendix 19 of the Companion Bible:

[This is why Satan is quite content that the “*letter*” of Scripture should be accepted in Genesis 3, as he himself accepted the letter of Ps 91:11. He himself could say “It is written” (Matt 4:6) so as the *letter* of what is written could be put instead of the truth that is conveyed by it; and so long as it is misquoted or misapplied.

This is his object, perpetuating the traditions of the “snake” and the “apple”, because it ministers to the acceptance of his lie, the hiding of God’s truth, the support of tradition, the jeers of the infidel, the opposition of the critics, and the stumbling of the weak in faith.]

The Greek form *ekklesia* is mistranslated in most English Bibles as “church” thereby deceiving the very elect if that were possible.

How is that deceiving you ask? To man the word “church” now means a place, or by association, a denomination. God’s intention was to convey the concept of a group of people called out of a broader group of people for a specific calling and purpose. Over time in the Scriptures there were different called-out groups to be distinguished. By the use of one wrong word, the doctrine is perverted, which creates confusion instead of unity. It robs the believer of understanding and the associated rewards.

It may be true that each Christian assembly has a governing body even if we remove the designation of “church”. And some of the members of each assembly may be “called out” from among sinners to be saved in Christ. And I am sure each assembly believes that they are members of the body of Christ by their own self-election and declaration by their creeds. However, if it were by God’s election, they would come to a completely different understanding from the Scriptures.

Let us recap what we have learned so far.

The word “church” is derived from “circe”, which has pagan origins and meanings. According to the etymology and definition of the word “church”, it is a place for worship of a god. From its foundation the word church came to be a place of pagan worship or worship of false gods. The word “church” could be defined as a place of false worship.

The word “church” does not come from “*kyriakon*” (of the master) as the Roman Church would like you to believe. That is a false etymology. The word “church” is a false translation of the Greek form “*ekklesia*”. The word “church” should not appear in the correct English translation of the Bible. The world’s use of the word “church” as it stands today, ironically, may be correct by its true definition.

Even the Dictionaries have taken the bait to stretch the meaning of the word “church”. The word “church” does not come from *kuriakos* which, means “of the Lord”, and does not come from *kahal or ecclesia* which means an assembly or called out governing body. It is wrong to use those Greek forms as the origin of the word “church”. Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance is party to the lie. The word “church” should not be included in the translation of “*ekklesia*”. This is an invention of the evil one.

It was in 325 A. D. when the *ecclesia* was changed from a called-out people to a place of worship. This triggered an error in the early Anglo-Saxon translations of the New Testament which has survived to this day in most English translations to the demise of the truth of the Scriptures among Christians.

When you research the etymology of the word “church” or just a definition of “church” in a Christian Encyclopedia, you will find all the mistranslated uses and man-made doctrines of “*ekklesia*” because of the lack of right division. This invention perpetuates the lie to those whose understanding has been darkened (Eph 4:18). Because the word “*ekklesia*” has been erroneously translated and the definition perverted, Satan can keep believers from knowing the truth of the gospel of the Mystery.

Does this not also tie into the difference in the New Testament between the mystery of iniquity (wrong worship) and the mystery of godliness (correct worship)?

Satan has a will. And many (including myself) are easily taken captive by it. Sometimes we unknowingly speak it, teach it and ardently defend it. Many write volumes explaining it; which leads many a Bible student astray. I thank my Lord and my Head Christ Jesus for revealing to us His truth in the light.

The “church” under Right Division

As always, the use of the principle of right division (2 Tim 2:15) and the understanding of dispensational truth regarding the Body of Christ enables a deeper layer of scrutiny than that which is possible by traditional theology. There has been no version of the Bible published under the principle of right division and the understanding of dispensational truth; not even an English one.

Therefore, translating the Greek *ecclesia* as “church” is not “walking upright in the truth”, (as Paul would say to Peter). The Greek form *ecclesia* should never be translated as the English word “church”. Whenever we refer to the Body of Christ, of which we are a part, the word “church” is a complete misnomer and somewhat degrading.

Factually and actually the word “church” is not found in the original language anywhere in God’s Word!! So we should rightly divide it out of our mind and out of our conversation.

Just recently I have been saying that, “I don’t go to church because *I am* the church”. Is that correct? Absolutely not! I have just admonished myself by this study.

I have also declared,”the church is not a building or a denomination; it is the Body of Christ”. Is that correct? Absolutely not! I have just learned a great lesson (a renewing of the mind) by this study that, by its etymology, the church is a place and the Body of Christ is an elect assembly of people.

This you know: under the present dispensation of the Mystery we are “called out ones” to a specific calling and purpose. We are a “called out governing body (assembly)”; a body with Christ as the Head of the assembly. We are called out to a heavenly calling and purpose which is separate from the earthly calling and purpose of Israel. We are being called out from among those who believe that they are of the kingdom calling with Israel.

The expression “the church, which is His body” in Ephesians 1:22-23 is not a correct translation. It should be translated something like “and made Him the Head over all things to those called out to be His governing body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all”.

After checking many other English translations of Ephesians 1:22-23, I was delighted to find two translations that agree with what I just stated. John Nelson Darby’s 1890 translation and Robert Young’s 1898 translation use the word “assembly” instead of the word “church”.

DARBY Eph 1: 22 and has put all things under his feet, and gave him [to be] head over all things to the assembly, ²³ which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all:

YLT Eph 1:22 and all things He did put under his feet, and did give him -- head over all things to the assembly, ²³ which is his body, the fulness of Him who is filling the all in all,

This brings to mind that one denomination which uses the correct translation in their name: The Assemblies of God (although they are Pentecostal in doctrine). The Jehovah’s Witnesses meet at a Kingdom Hall. The Friends (Quakers) have Meeting Places. Not all denominations use the term “church”.

Even the seven assemblies in Asia in the Book of Revelation are admonished by the Lord for their misguided doctrines and practices that came from the deception of the evil one.

Therefore we are hereby admonished to refer to ourselves as the “Body of Christ” and not “the church, which is His body” which has been so impressed in my mind. “Church” has pagan roots and was brought into the Bible by Satan through the political Roman church to “circumvent” the meaning. Our calling is far removed from the “traditional” and counterfeit understanding of “church”. We are not a “church” of any kind, as the corruption of God’s word so deceives. Although we are “of the Lord”, but even so are other groups in their respective dispensations.

So, what is the answer to my original question, “how does the Bible define the church?” It does not define the church, because the word “church” is not found in the correct translation of the original words of God. Church is man’s word originating from pagan worship and a political church. It is not God’s word. The “church” is not the body of Christ.

Trying to convince a Christian today that the word “church” is not in God’s Word, is like trying to convince a Christian that Christmas is a pagan holiday or that we are not under the New Covenant. That egg is already fried, and my momma says you can’t “un-fry” an egg! But the Holy Spirit can un-fry that egg.

Nevertheless, let us cheer and claim a victory! We have just quenched a major fiery dart of the evil one! In fact, we may have quenched a rocket grenade! Alleluia.

May all the glory of this study be given to the Lord and His Holy Spirit who leads us to all truth. Grace and peace from our Lord and Head, Christ Jesus, to all the elect members of the Body of Christ

SUPPLEMENT

Ecclesiam (Wikipedia)

Ecclesiam suam is an encyclical of Pope Paul VI on the Catholic Church given at St. Peter's, Rome, on the Feast of the Transfiguration, 6 August 1964, the second year of his Pontificate. It is considered an important document, which identified the Catholic Church with the Body of Christ. A later Council document *Lumen gentium* stated that the Church *subsists in* the Body of Christ, raising questions as to the difference between *is* and *subsists in*.

Pope Paul called the **Church founded by Jesus Christ as a loving mother of all men.**^[1] In light of the ongoing Vatican Council he did not want to offer new insights or doctrinal definitions. He asked for a deeper self-knowledge, renewal and dialogue.^[2] He also realized that the Church itself was engulfed and shaken by a tidal wave of change, and was deeply affected by the climate of the world.^[3] He quotes the encyclical *Mystici corporis* of Pope Pius XII, as a key document: *Consider, then, this splendid utterance of Our predecessor:*

- *"The doctrine of the **Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church,** a doctrine revealed originally from the lips of the Redeemer Himself, and making manifest the inestimable boon of our most intimate union with **so august a Head,** has a surpassing splendor which commends it to the meditation of all who are moved by the divine Spirit, and with the light which it sheds on their minds, is a powerful stimulus to the salutary conduct which it enjoins."*^[4]

Paul VI considers *Mystici Corporis*, **the doctrine of the Church as Mystical Body of Christ,** timely and urgent and relevant to the needs of the Church in his day. A richer understanding of the *Mystical Body*, will result in a better view of its theological and spiritual significance.

This statement was important, when the Council defined the Church to *subsist in* the Body of Christ, rather than *to be* the Body of Christ, as Pius XII and all Popes before him had taught. A potential reversal of a vital teaching of the reigning Pope Paul VI, would have surely been noted inside and outside the Church at the time. Therefore, the phrase "subsists in" of Vatican II, is interpreted as not to undermine the identity of the "Church of Christ" and the "Catholic Church". John XXIII argued this point, when he opened Vatican II, "The Council ... wishes to transmit Catholic doctrine, whole and entire, without alteration or deviation." Pope Paul VI, who in *Ecclesiam suam* had supported the interpretation of Pius XII, claimed also total identity of the old with the new: "There is no better comment to make than to say that this promulgation really changes nothing of the traditional doctrine.

What Christ willed, we also will.

What was, still is.

*What the **Church** has taught down through the centuries, we also teach."*^[5]

In *Ecclesiam suam*, Paul VI **invited separated Churches to unity,** stating that the continued papacy is essential for any unity, because without it, in the words of Jerome: "There would be as many schisms in the Church as there are priests."^[6] In this encyclical, Paul VI attempted to present the Marian teachings of the Church in view of her new ecumenical orientation. *Ecclesiam suam* called the Virgin Mary **the ideal of Christian perfection.** Pope Paul VI regarded **"devotion to the Mother of God as of paramount importance in living the life of the Gospel."**^[7]