

**Must Christians Be Part
Of A Local Church?**

- Thirty+ years ago, apostates led many into error
 - Denied we must be part of local church
 - Elders are merely older men
- Recent book reproduces some of these false teachings . . .
 - Even denies existence of local churches

I. Loose Thinking, Careless Remarks

Paul refused Corinth's wages (18).

- Cherry picking fallacy
- 2 Co.11:8, established right to receive them.
- 1 Co.9:...3-7, others received wages.

Misrepresentation: “Giving into ‘collective treasury’ of local church is thought to fulfill the personal obligation to live a personal life, share the gospel, or give to the poor” (21).

- Straw man fallacy
- Man abuses role as father . . .

“The pulpit is a raised platform and takes center stage for many Protestant churches” (53).

- Neh.8:4-5, Ezra
- 1 Co.14

“Building church buildings...and having ‘church services’ to receive our weekly blessings do not find its origin among the apostles of Christ” (55).

- Composition fallacy
- How does he know what buildings NT churches had?
- 1 Co.11:20,22, ‘you’...‘come together’
- 1 Co.14:23, whole church...
- Ac.20:7-9, place?

“We do deny that one must be a member of one of these local church organizations in order to do the work God has assigned his people” (58).

- 1 Co.1:10 . . . 5:1, among you
 - 5:2, you . . . from among you
 - 5:4, you . . . gathered together
 - 5:6-7, leaven . . . whole lump . . .
 - 5:9, you . . . not keep company...

“The word [Gk., church], when applied to God’s people, was never intended to describe a physical meeting” (59).

- 1 Co.11:18, 22, body-less spirits?
- 1 Co.14:23...?

“We read the Bible with the lens handed down to us by the tradition to which we belong” (87).

- Explains a lot.
- All truth is subjective?

“Members of the church organization are ‘faithful members’ as long as they attend the services, and are seen giving into the collection plate” (91).

- Straw man
- Distortion. Attacks NT pattern
- Hb.10:25; 1 Co.16:1-3

“The actual work of evangelism or benevolence is not the collective action of an organization. It is the individual work of Christians” (92).

- False dilemma.
- Evangelism: 2 Co.11:8; Ph.4
- Benevolence: Ac.4-6; 1 Co.16:1-3...

“Barnabas, an individual, did not give it to the church organization (collective) for them to decide how to spend it. He gave it to the poor. B. gave to the needy saints through the apostles” (93).

- Can't have it both ways
- Ac.4:36-37 (35)

“Work of shepherd...shepherds sheep who are in proximity to him” (101).

- No flock? Random sheep just show up... like visitors at a park, or truck stop?
- 1 Pt.5:1-2, among you; 2-3, flock.

I. Loose Thinking, Careless Remarks

II. How Does NT
Use 'Church'?

Universally of all redeemed in heaven and earth

“...from whom the whole family in heaven
and earth is named” – Eph.3:15.

- ‘Family’: play on words:
 - ‘Family’ comes from ‘father’ (v.14):
“descendant from same Father.”
 - Lk.2:4, house / lineage [family]
 - Ep.2:18-19, household of God (sg.)

Geographically of local churches in a region

“...Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied” – Acts 9:31

“...And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ”
– Gal.1:22. [Rv.1:4]

Locally of a body of believers

- 1 Co.12:19; 14:23 – ‘...if the whole church comes together in one place’
– adjective; **verb**; adverbial phrase
- Local group, whether assembled or unassembled.

“...As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison” – Ac.8:3.

ATR Grammar

“ἐκκλησία ... In the LXX the word is used as the equivalent of לְקָהָל , the assembly of the Israelites as a whole. In the N.T. ‘assembly’ at times, as in 1 Cor.11:18, but usually...the idea of the word is that of body or company of believers whether assembled or not, the body of Christ. This is true at times where the idea of assembly is impossible, as in Ac. 8:3. The word in this sense of body of Christians is used either in the local (Ac. 8:3) or the general sense (Mt. 16:18). In the general sense the word does not differ greatly from one aspect of the word βασιλεία.”

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III. Did Local Churches
Exist In NT?

Definition of church (BDAG)

‘ἐκκλησία, of a specific Christian group
assembly, gathering ordinarily involving
worship and discussion of matters of concern
to the community: **Mt 18:17**...*when you
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When: not ‘if’; implies regularity, as NT shows

You: implies specific, local group. 1 Co.11:19, divisions among you...?

Come together: this group assembles

As an assembly: ‘you’ (pl.); assembly (sg.)

Definition of church (Th.)

‘As appears from 1 Co.14:23, the whole Corinthian church was accustomed to assemble in one and the same place.’

Corinth is distinct from others (14:33; 16:1,19)

1. Location: Corinth, not Philippi; two different churches.
2. Membership: 1:10-11 (‘among you’). Who?
3. Function: 16:1-3, pooled own funds, from own treasury, chose own messengers.