

The Church in Three Senses

1 Cor. 1:2

Introduction:

- A. Little interest in seriously studying about the church – even among members.
 - 1. Ignorance and indifference of basic Bible teaching about the church abounds.
 - 2. Children growing up and adults growing old not knowing or caring what the church is.
 - a. Have been told “ought to go to church” – little more.
 - b. Have not made the connection between the church and their eternal well-being.
 - c. Many leave it because they have no appreciation for its nature and importance.
 - d. Few understand difference New Testament usage of “church” and modern usage.
- B. The New Testament uses “church” three closely related senses – all three in 1 Corinthians.
 - 1. Same basic meaning – “ekklesia” meaning “called out (assembly)”
 - 2. Different connotations governed by the context.
 - 3. Each has reference to God’s people – saved people – Christians.

Discussion:

I. God’s People *Everywhere*

- A. Paul had persecuted “the church of God” (1 Cor. 15:9) – not any particular location (cf. Acts 9:1-3)
- B. Includes all who are “written in heaven” – possibly including dead Christians (Heb. 12:23)
- C. Made up of all who are saved -- baptized believers (Acts 2:38, 47; Acts 5:14; 1 Cor 12:13)
- D. Other obvious references to “universal” church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22,23)
- E. No organization, no function, no meetings – just each Christian ruled by Christ.

II. God’s People *Locally*.

- A. Paul wrote to “the church of God *at Corinth*” (1 Cor. 1:2)
- B. Paul wrote of churches other localities (1 Cor. 16:1, 19).
- C. Local churches were disciples joined together by mutual consent (cf. Acts 9:26).
 - 1. Sometimes without oversight – before overseers qualified and appointed. (Acts 14:21-23).
 - 2. With oversight when men are qualified and appointed. (Cf. Phil. 1:1; Acts 20:17, 28).
 - 3. No organizational ties to each other – only a common doctrine and practice (1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 16:1).
- D. Local church given work to do.
 - 1. Preach the gospel (Phil. 4:15-16; 2 Cor. 11:8)
 - 2. Relieve poor saints (1 Cor. 16:1, 2)
 - 3. Edify itself (Eph. 4:16).
 - 4. To assemble for worship.

III. God’s People *Assembled*.

- A. Paul spoke of the “whole church” coming together in one place (1 Cor. 14:23).
 - 1. Could not be speaking universal – obvious the church at that place - Corinth.
 - 2. This assembly is called “the church” (vv. 28, 34, 35; cf. ch 11:20-22)
 - 3. Christians are assembled together for worship and edification (cf. Heb. 10:25).
- B. One is “in the church” universally and locally even when “at home” (11:33-34; 14:35)

Conclusion:

- A. Each called “church” – each of God, of Christ, etc.
- B. No denominational names – not denominational structure.
- C. Simply God’s people in different capacities.