

**The
Local, Visible
Church**



The Local, Visible Church

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That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

—First Timothy 3:15

Church doctrine is important.

One of the most important and vital resources God has given to believers is the church. Yet for all its importance, few understand the biblical doctrine and nature of the church. Subsequently, Satan has deceived the saints and robbed them of a precious resource essential for spiritual growth. Christendom and the mission work of Christ have been crippled because of the prevailing ignorance of church doctrine and the subsequent neglect of its proper use. Understanding what the church is additionally equips Christians to serve Christ and to overcome the spirit of anti-Christ.

Church doctrine is important for several reasons. Ephesians 5:23-27 and 32 tell us that the church is the bride of Christ. He is working with the church to prepare it to be a spotless, holy, and unblemished bride. There is a relationship that Christ has with His bride that is particularly special. No Christian should miss out on this special experience. In addition, the church is the training center for Christ's children. Ephesians 4:11-12 explain that God has placed leaders in the church to help mature the saints, to conduct his ministry, and to edify His children. Further, Ephesians 4:13-16 show us that Christ's church is important because it protects the saints and provides rehabilitation to the wounded. There are more reasons that make the church important, but those mentioned are sufficient to emphasize that it is important for Christians to study and learn the biblical doctrine of the church. Christ did not build His church to be a museum piece. He did not build it to be a conversational piece. Christ built His church to be a stronghold for His children in a world ruled by Satan, to be a sanctuary from the harsh world of sin, to be a testimony of hope, righteousness, salvation, and the power of Christ to hopeless souls. Christ's church was built to be a dynamic institution of social, political, cultural, and spiritual activity based on the authority and guidelines of His Word. Its proper role is to be the very hub of personal and family life, a community of saints committed to a common purpose, common law, and common teaching. A thriving church needs its members to understand what they are and who they are. They need to realize the

significance of the church in order to understand their role and responsibility. Christians need to understand the nature of the church to make good decisions on critical matters.

Christ's church is local and visible.

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” There are three things we learn about the church from this verse. First, it is Christ’s church. Second, it did not exist prior to His announcing that He would build His church. Third, the church will resist the powers of hell to destroy it.

The second point that the church did not exist prior to His announcing that He would build it shows us that the church of God is not the same as the family of God. Believers prior to the coming of Christ were saved and born again just as believers are today. Paul spoke of Abraham’s salvation in Romans 4:3 saying, “For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” We become a part of the family of God when we are saved. Every believer is in the family of God. However, being in the family of God does not make you a part of the church of God.

There is a great deal of confusion today about the nature of the church. When I first became involved with Christians and various Christian groups, I was told that as a believer I was automatically a part of the church of God, namely, the universal, invisible church of God. The notion of a universal, invisible church is noble in that it generates a feeling of community and unity among believers. However, the idea of creating a sense of unity among believers by broadening the definition of the word *church* has done more harm than good. By making the words *church* and *family* synonymous, many believers have neglected the intended use of and benefit of the church. The fact is, a universal, invisible church is nonexistent in the Bible. The Bible and the early Christians knew only of local, visible churches.

Christ's church is an ecclesia

The Greek word in the Bible translated into the word *church* is *ecclesia*. *Ecclesia* is one of three Greek words commonly used to refer to an assembly of people. *Sunago* means “to go or lead together” and is translated in the Bible from its various forms to mean assembly or

assemble eight times. *Paneguris* is used one time in the Bible and is translated *assembly*. *Ecclesia* means “that which is called out” and is used one hundred-fifteen times in the Bible and is translated *assembly* three times and *church* one hundred-twelve times.

The word *ecclesia* is narrow in its meaning and was used in Greek language to refer to local, visible gatherings of people with a common cause or purpose. The noun *ecclesia* is made up of two words, the preposition, *ek*, meaning “out”, and the verb, *kaleo*, meaning “to call” or “to summon.”¹ Dr. A.T. Robertson, a Greek linguist, points out that the classical usage of *ecclesia* was applied to describe a calling-out of people from their homes.² In defining *ecclesia*, Liddell and Scott give the illustration of “an assembly of the citizens summoned by the crier.”³ The people would gather together as an assembly (*ecclesia*) to participate in an event of specified purpose. H.E. Dana claims that “there were in the classical usage of this term four elements pertinent to its New Testament meaning: (i) the assembly was local; (ii) it was autonomous; (iii) it presupposes definite qualifications; (iv) it was conducted on democratic principles.”⁴

Examples of ecclesia referring to local assemblies

The usage of the word *ecclesia* to mean local assemblies as described by Dana can be shown by quoting both secular and biblical Greek sources. For example, Thucydides 2, 22: says, “Pericles, seeing them angry at the present state of things ... did not call them to an assembly (*ecclesia*) or any other meeting.” Demonsthenes 378, 24: says, “When after this the assembly (*ecclesia*) adjourned, they came together and planned.... For the future still being uncertain, meetings and speeches of all sorts took place in the market-place. They were afraid an assembly (*ecclesia*) would be summoned suddenly....” Clearly, Dana’s depiction of *ecclesia* is not limited to or unique to biblical application. With regard to biblical usage, Dr. Earl Radmacher explains that the selection of the word *ecclesia* in the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Hebrew old testament, never included meaning that went beyond a simple assembly.⁵

In the English Bible, the word *church* is used one hundred twelve times to translate the word *ecclesia*. Three times the word *assembly* is used. Of the one hundred twelve times the word *church* occurs in the Bible, ninety-four times the word *church* refers to a specific church or churches that could be locally and visibly identified.⁶ For example, in the book of Revelation, seven churches are addressed: the church of Ephesus in 2:1, the church in Smyrna in 2:8; the church in Pergamos

in 2:12, the church in Thyatira in 2:18, the church in Sardis in 3:1, the church in Philadelphia in 3:7, and the church of the Laodiceans in 3:14. There is no mistaking the fact, that *ecclesia* refers to local assemblies of believers.

There are verses that refer to local assemblies of believers that are less obvious in their meaning, but are easily understood after a closer look at the passage. For example, First Corinthians 12:28 says, “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. “ Paul is referring to the local church at Corinth. He is correcting the problem of division among the church members because of the different gifts and talents they possess. Some thought certain gifts were more important than others, therefore, some members were more important than others. Paul explained that everyone in their church was important and that their differences were an important asset which enabled them to meet the needs of all the church members. In verse twenty-seven, Paul declares to them, “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” Paul tells them that as a church they are the body of Christ. Therefore, they need to be in unity with one another as one body with many members of differing abilities. Every church begins as a mission with apostles (or missionaries); then come a variety of teachers and members of different gifts that God adds to the church to strengthen the church. The only way to properly understand this verse is by putting it into its context: that of the local, visible church (assembly) at Corinth.

Acts 20: 28 is another verse that refers to a specific church when the context is understood. It says, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” Verse seventeen shows that Paul was talking to the elders of the Ephesian church, saying, “And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church...”

Generic references to the church

Eighteen verses with the word *church* refer to churches generically and are often used by proponents of the universal church doctrine to support their view.⁷ For example, Ephesians 5:23 says, “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.” To a universalist, this verse refers to the universal, invisible church. However, the misuse of the word *church* is easy to demonstrate because of the generic use of the words

husband and *wife*. No one would argue for a universal, invisible husband and wife even though the words are singular. The *husband* in this verse refers to all husbands. The *wife* refers to all wives. Likewise, the word *church* is used generically to refer to the local, visible churches (assemblies of believers who are members of a church).⁸

Another verse with a generic use of the word *church* is Matthew 16:18. Jesus says, “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” In Acts 1:15, we see that the church He built was assembled in Jerusalem and consisted of at least one hundred twenty believers. From this church in Jerusalem, other local, visible churches were established, which in turn, organized other local, visible churches. The church that Jesus built resulted in and continues as local, visible assemblies of believers.

Because of (1) the meaning of the word *ecclesia*, (2) the presentation of Christ’s church as a local, visible assembly of believers in the book of Acts, (3) the numerous verses of specific churches referred to, and (4) the unquestionable generic reference to the church in Ephesians 5:23, the only justifiable understanding of the word *church* is that it means a local, visible assembly of believers.⁹

The origin of the universal, invisible church doctrine

Some prominent preachers in America adhere to the universal, invisible church teaching, but admit that the Bible and the early Christians had no notion of a universal, invisible church. A liberal theologian who believes in the universal church doctrine admitted that historically and biblically “that there was no single comprehensive organization of the churches; nor can a universal pattern of organization be traced among all the churches severally...Not only was there no such thing as “organic union”; there was a great amount of regional, even local, independence....”¹⁰ With regard to application, Dr. Earl Radmacher, President of the Southwestern Conservative Baptist seminary and proponent of the universal church, wrote that “the new testament assumes that every Christian will take the necessary steps to give outward evidence of his relationship to Christ and His body. The new testament knows of no believer who does not submit himself for baptism and join the local church.”¹¹ If the obvious, exclusive teaching

in the Bible about the nature of the church is local and visible, then how did the notion of a universal, invisible church arise?

Dr. Radmacher describes in his book, *The Nature of the Church*, the development of the universal, invisible church doctrine. “During the first four centuries there gradually developed a trend toward external unity.” One of the reasons for this trend was “the development of the ecumenical domination. It was inevitable that the bishops of the great cities should gain preeminence in influence and prestige because the churches in smaller towns and villages turned to them for advice. This resulted in the metropolitan bishop. Likewise, it was inevitable that bishops from the greatest and most ancient churches would have influence over the others. Thus, the pattern of an episcopacy for the whole (or universal) church was developing. Hand in hand with this growth of the episcopacy was the blossoming of the universal consciousness and practical disappearance of the concept of the local congregation as related to Christ.” Man’s doctrine of a universal church replaced God’s doctrine of the local church.

Of course, restructuring local churches into a universal hierarchy required that the smaller churches forsake their autonomy. Churches became dependent on notable bishops and churches and less dependent on the Holy Spirit for guidance. Jesus Christ was replaced as the head of local churches by the influential men (bishops) of the new universal church, and churches came under the governing control of men. Radmacher points out that eventually “the local churches were no longer conceived of as separate units, but as part of the universal church. They were regarded as true churches as long as they were loyal to the Catholic church as a whole.”¹²

Universalizing the church was facilitated by “the development of Roman supremacy. The concept of a universal church, which began to find expression with Ignatius and was definitely advocated by Irenaeus, demanded a centralizing of authority and control.”¹³ Augustine laid the foundations for papal supremacy, and “became the first to distinguish an invisible church within the one, holy, visible, catholic. The local churches were no longer conceived of as separate units, but as part of the universal church.”

This viewpoint, however, was not shared by all churches and Christians. There were congregations which maintained their autonomy and resisted the political and physical threats of the Catholic (universal) church to conform to this new, universal concept of the church. These churches have been labeled by some as free churches.

Gunner Westin, an authority of the free church movement states that, “these congregations may be defined, therefore, as free churches because they won adherents and members who when they freely accepted the word, turned away from the life of sin and voluntarily were baptized.” Gunner adds that “it can be established that the primitive Christian assembly [that is the early church during the time of the Apostles] was a free church in that it had no relationship, subordinate or coordinate with any constituted authority [such as a dominant church or bishop] or the state.”¹⁴

Radmacher points out that the external unity that the Catholic church was striving for, whereby all churches pledged allegiance to a given hierarchy of churches and ultimately the Roman church, was achieved by the local, free churches without a centralized man-made authority. He states that, “Among these groups it was not possible to discover any centralized church authority, for the local churches were independent, yet with a real sense of relationship one to another.”

The doctrine of the universal church has gone through an evolution of meaning since its inception because it is not a doctrine supported by the Scriptures. It has been defined and redefined to suit the conveniences and agendas of men. During the Protestant reformation, the meaning of the word *church* was broadened to include believers who were baptized into churches other than the Catholic church, and eventually, the word *church* was redefined to include all believers making it synonymous with the family of God. However, the notion of a universal church is not supported by the Scriptures and its origin as a doctrine can be demonstrated to be man-made. Its widespread acceptance continues only because few understand the true, local nature of the church, and because even fewer recognize the harm of redefining the word *church* to being synonymous with the family of God.

The danger of the universal church doctrine

As I mentioned earlier, I was a victim of the universal church doctrine. I considered myself to be in the church of God as a believer. Subsequently, local church membership was unimportant to me. In fact, I and those I associated with, disdained local churches because they represented to us obsolete, establishments of religion. Unfortu-

nately, many churches reinforced my image of them as nothing more than social clubs. However, because of my ignorance of biblical church doctrine, I did not search for a good, local church home. I had no idea that I was being robbed of a resource that God had provided for me. My ignorance of the role and importance of the local was sustained because I interpreted verses with a universal church definition. Subsequently, I suffered spiritually because I did not receive ministry from a local church, and a local church suffered because of my lack of participation. Many Christians are being harmed spiritually, as I was, because they are not members of a local church. Moreover, an indeterminable number of people have suffered spiritually because of local churches lacking in participating membership. The universal, invisible church doctrine contributes to this problem.

Another harm that the universal church doctrine is responsible for is the falsifying of the Gospel. In an outward show of unity, churches pledged allegiance to a centralized, spiritual government of men in Rome. This organizational structure gave the church external unity as long as all the churches conformed to the teachings and opinions of the Roman church. Over time, however, the emphasis on external unity resulted in neglecting the unity in lifestyle, morals, and the traditional doctrines especially the Gospel message. In fact, membership in a Catholic church required only that one be baptized and keep the sacraments. The testimony of redemption was not necessary. Consequently, the visible, universal church that man created became corrupted with unregenerate members. The inclusion of unregenerate members in the new universal church was obvious, so Augustine created a new doctrine—the doctrine of the invisible church. He explained that there was a universal, visible church to which both the lost and saved belonged, but there was a universal, invisible church to which only the saved belonged. However, to be in the universal, invisible church, it was necessary to be in the universal, visible church. Consequently, because baptism was a prerequisite to being a part of the visible church, it became essential for salvation. This eventually led to the notion that infants could be saved if they were baptized. Other erroneous teachings about salvation resulted including the idea that repentance could be granted only by the Catholic church, that Catholic confessionals were essential for salvation, and that removal of one's membership from the Catholic church resulted in loss of salvation.¹³

Presently, the attempt to achieve visible unity among churches and Christians continues in the name of the universal, invisible church. The ecumenical movement of today is moving down the same path as the

Catholic church of the middle ages. In an attempt to show visible unity among believers in the family of God or the “universal, invisible church,” unity in truth is sacrificed, opening the door for continued corruption of the Gospel message and ignorance among Christians about spiritual growth and resources. Unity is a desirable thing to God and all believers. However, Jesus made it very clear that unity with Him required following Him in truth. He did not compromise His teaching of truth for the sake of unity in group appearance.

Human invention of centralized, spiritual organizations and hierarchies results from man’s efforts to improve upon God’s design of the local church. However, we see that the development of such noble endeavors have resulted in corrupt organizations, false doctrines, and loss of spiritual benefit to believers. Man cannot improve upon God’s design, strategy, and doctrine. The local church should be esteemed above all other institutions in the world because it was built by Christ, and its design and purpose is superior to anything that man can build.

The importance of understanding the nature of the church

Unfortunately, the universal church doctrine has fostered neglect of Christ’s local churches. Believers have suffered from their neglect of utilizing this vital resource of God. The ministry of Christ has suffered because of the failure of believers to participate in local churches. Church ministries continue, even with the crippling loss of members, but how much more could be accomplished if all believers were participating church members. The biblical doctrine of Christ’s church needs to be taught, understood, and defended so that believers can maximize their growth as children of God. Believers who are not baptized, participating members of a local church are failing Christ as well as themselves. A correct understanding of the role and responsibility of the church will lead believers to make good decisions such as finding the church God desires to add them to, being baptized, receiving instruction and counsel from their Holy Spirit appointed pastors, and participating in their church ministries.

Some Christians feel justified in their neglect and rejection of the local church. J.N. Darby expressed his disgust for the corruption he

saw in churches and denominations by saying, “I fully recognize that there was an organization in apostolic and scriptural times, but affirm that what now exists is not the scriptural organization at all, but mere human invention, each sect arranging itself according to its own convenience, so that as an external body, the church is ruined; and though much may be enjoyed of what belongs to the church, I believe from scripture that the ruin is without remedy....”¹⁵ There are many corrupt and ruined churches today, however, Darby overlooked a special promise in Matthew 16:18 in which Jesus Christ said of His church that “even the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” God promises that there will always be local, visible churches which teach and practice His doctrines. Believers will never be without the resource of a local church. There is no excuse for not being a baptized believer and participating in a local church ministry. God will lead every believer to a good church home if they sincerely seek one.

Appendix A

References to local, visible churches

1. Matthew 18:17 Can be applied practically to local church discipline only.
2. Acts 2:47, the church at Jerusalem (*cf* Acts 1:13 & 2:41)
3. Acts 5:11, the church at Jerusalem
4. Acts 7:38, the church in the wilderness (Israel)
5. Acts 8:1, the church at Jerusalem
6. Acts 8:3, the church at Jerusalem (*cf*. Acts 8:1 & 4)
7. Acts 11:22, church in Jerusalem
8. Acts 11:26, the church at Antioch
9. Acts 12:1, the church at Jerusalem
10. Acts 12:5, the church at Jerusalem
11. Acts 13:1, the church at Antioch
12. Acts 14:23, in every church
13. Acts 14:27, the church at Antioch
14. Acts 15:3, the church at Antioch
15. Acts 15:4, the church at Jerusalem
16. Acts 15:22, the church at Jerusalem
17. Acts 18:22, the church at Caesarea
18. Acts 20:17, the church in Ephesus
19. Acts 20:28, the church in Ephesus (*cf*. Acts 20:17)
20. Romans 16:1, the church at Cenchrea
21. Romans 16:5, the church in Aquilla and Priscilla's house
22. Romans 16:23, the whole church, saluteth you.
23. First Corinthians 1:2, the church of God which is at Corinth
24. First Corinthians 4:17, in every church.
25. First Corinthians 6:4, the church at Corinth
26. First Corinthians 10:32, the church at Corinth
27. First Corinthians 11:18, the church at Corinth
28. First Corinthians 11:22, the church at Corinth
29. First Corinthians 12:28, the church at Corinth (*cf*. 1Cor. 1:2, 10 & 12:25-27)
30. First Corinthians 16:19, the church in Aquilla and Priscilla's house
31. Second Corinthians 1:1, the church at Corinth
32. First Corinthians 14:4, the church at Corinth
34. First Corinthians 14:5, the church at Corinth
35. First Corinthians 14:12, the church at Corinth

36. First Corinthians 14:19, the church at Corinth
37. First Corinthians 14:23, the church at Corinth
38. First Corinthians 14:28, the church at Corinth
39. First Corinthians 14:35, Can be contextually and practically applied to local churches only.
40. Philippians 4:15, no church among several
41. Colossians 4:15, the church in the house of Nymphas
42. Colossians 4:16, the church of the Laodiceans
43. First Thessalonians 1:1, the church of the Thessalonians
44. Second Thessalonians 1:1, the church of the Thessalonians
45. First Timothy 3:5, Can be contextually and practically applied to a local church only.
46. First Timothy 3:15, The church Timothy pastored
47. First Timothy 5:16, the church at Ephesus
48. Philemon 2, the church in the house of Apphia
49. James 5:14, addressed to an unidentified assembly (James 2:2)
50. First Peter 5:13, The church that is at Babylon
51. Third John 6, the church of John's membership
52. Third John 9, the church of Gaius' membership
53. Third John 10, the church of Gaius' membership
54. Revelation 2:1, the church of Ephesus
55. Revelation 2:8, the church in Smyrna
56. Revelation 2:12, the church in Pergamos
57. Revelation 2:18, the church in Thyatira
58. Revelation 3:1, the church in Sardis
59. Revelation 3:7, the church in Philadelphia
60. Revelation 3:14, the church of the Laodiceans

Appendix B

References to more than one local church (plural)

1. Acts 9:31
2. Acts 15:41
3. Acts 16:5
4. Acts 19:37
5. Romans 16:4
6. Romans 16:16
7. First Corinthians 7:17
8. First Corinthians 11:16
9. First Corinthians 14:33
10. First Corinthians 14:34
11. First Corinthians 16:1
12. First Corinthians 16:19
13. Second Corinthians 8:1
14. Second Corinthians 8:18
15. Second Corinthians 8:19
16. Second Corinthians 8:23
17. Second Corinthians 8:24
18. Second Corinthians 11:8
19. Second Corinthians 11:28
20. Second Corinthians 12:13
21. Galatians 1:2
22. Galatians 1:22
23. First Thessalonians 2:14
24. Second Thessalonians 1:4
25. Revelation 1:4
26. Revelation 1:11
27. Revelation 1:20
28. Revelation 2:7
29. Revelation 2:11
30. Revelation 2:17
31. Revelation 2:23
32. Revelation 2:29
33. Revelation 3:6
34. Revelation 3:13
35. Revelation 3:22
36. Revelation 22:16

Appendix C

Seventeen generic references to local, visible churches as a group.

1. Matthew 16:18, Christ built one kind of church, and it did not exist prior to His announcement in this verse. Thus, it cannot refer to the family of God.
2. First Corinthians 15:9, The book of Acts records Paul's persecution of the churches (*cf.* Acts 9:31).
3. Galatians 1:13, "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it." (See comment in number 2).
4. Ephesians 1:22, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church...."
5. Ephesians 3:10, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God...."
6. Ephesians 3:21, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
7. Ephesians 5:23, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." (Obvious generic reference to the church as is the reference to the husband and the wife.)
8. Ephesians 5:24, "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." (See comment in number 7)
9. Ephesians 5:25, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." (See comment in number 7)
10. Ephesians 5:27, "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (See comment in number 7)
11. Ephesians 5:29, "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." (See comment in number 7)
12. Ephesians 5:32, "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." (See comment in number 7)
13. Philippians 3:6, "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touch-

ing the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.” (See comment in number 2)

14. Colossians 1:18, “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”
15. Colossians 1:24, “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church.”
16. Hebrews 2:12, “Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.”
17. Hebrews 12:23, “To the general assembly and church of the firstborn.”

Notes

- ¹Vincent, Marvin. *Word Studies in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1924. I:93.
- ²Robertson, A.T. *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1934, p.174.
- ³Liddell, Henry George and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1953, p. 206.
- ⁴Dana, H.E. *A Manual of Ecclesiology*. Kansas City, KS: Central Seminary Press, 1944, p. 26.
- ⁵Radmacher, Earl D., *The Nature of the Church*. Portland, Oregon: Western Baptist Press, 1972, pp. 40, 123, 342.
- ⁶See Appendixes A and B
- ⁷See Appendix C
- ⁸Can a Christian serve Christ without a local church? Luke 9:49-50 describes a man helping others in the name of Christ though he was not a part of the twelve disciples' group that followed Christ. The disciples saw him ministering to others and said, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us." The Lord was not encouraging "lone ranger" ministries. He was teaching His disciples that anything done in the name of Christ and for His sake should not be discouraged. It is possible to have a ministry outside of a local church. However, it is not the best way. Ask yourself if you would have preferred a ministry apart from Christ or with Christ among His disciples. We should follow the example of Priscilla and Aquilla and instruct unbaptized and unchurched believers in "the way of God more perfectly."
- ⁹Knox, John. *The Early Church and the Coming Great Church*. New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1955, p. 83.
- ¹⁰Radmacher, *The Nature of the Church*, p. 190.
- ¹¹Ibid., p. 39.
- ¹²Ibid., pp. 38-39.
- ¹³Westin, Gunner. *The Free Church Through the Ages*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1954. pp. 1-2.
- ¹⁴Radmacher, *The Nature of the Church*, p. 36.
- ¹⁵Darby, John Nelson. *The Collected Writings of John Nelson Darby*. London: G. Morrish, 1857-67, XIV:517.

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