

INFALLIBLE

Proofs

Concerning the

LOCAL CHURCH

Joel Saripalli

DEDICATED

to those Faithful Baptist Martyrs (Revelation 2:12,13), who endured the persecutions brought upon them by the "Universal" (Catholic) Church, due to their firm conviction regarding the LOCAL CHURCH. Truly, they were "MORE THAN CONQUERORS!"

...Joel Saripalli

Permission granted December 2002, for the Bryan Station Baptist Church to print this book.

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I. INTRODUCTION

"The Christian Church", "The Church Age", "The Rapture of the Church", "The Church..." this and "The Church..." that, et. al., are some of the most frequently used phrases by many preachers and teachers. Scores of books fill the shelves of book stores on the subject of "The Church". What exactly do the preachers, teachers and authors of these books mean by "The Church?"

This book is an expose'. It is set forth with the honest intention of clarifying, what many today in the Ecumenical world claim to be, "The Church" as opposed to what the Scriptures teach. Also, the Scriptural perspective of the true nature of the church will be set forth. The author sincerely requests the reader, to do so, with-out any reservations or bias or any preconceived notions. May the mind of the reader be open to the truth and his/her heart never be content with anything, but the TRUTH.

The best way to examine the veracity of a subject is to question it. To gain greater insight, we must scruti-nize and diagnose. If this be true, then it can certainly be applied to the subject of the church. "What is the church? How would you explain it?" For if the "What" can be defined, then the "Who", the "Why", the "Where", the "When" and the "How" can also be answered with little or no confusion at all. We shall begin our quest into the subject of the church by scrutinizing some basic defini-tions that are available to us on the subject.

Pastor Edgar C. Carlisle states the definitions of the church as such, in his booklet on "God's church, family and kingdoms"; There are among Christian denominations, three primary definitions of the word church. Down through the centuries Baptists have believed the church is an assembly of saints meeting at a specific place at specific times. This is the local, visible interpretation.

"Roman Catholics teach that the church is uni-versal or Catholic. They insist that everywhere Catholics meet to worship they all compose the Lord's church. This is the universal visible church theory."

"Protestants insist that all the saints since the Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two comprise the church. They may or may not meet with other believers to wor-ship. Protestants call all of these saints the body of Christ. This is the universal invisible church theory." (Pgs 1&2)

M.L. Moser, Jr. in his book, "Ecumenicalism under the spotlight", goes along the same lines in presenting the different definitions; "In seeking to define the word 'church' today, we find three basic definitions of the term. I choose to call them the 'Catholic Definition,' the 'Protestant Definition', and the 'Bible Definition.' Let us not these definitions...

Roman Catholic Definition.

The definition of the Roman Catholic Church is that the church is both visible and universal. Indeed the word 'catholic' means 'universal.' They teach that the Catholic Church includes all the members of the Roman Catholic churches throughout the world, thus being both visible and universal.

Protestant Definition.

This definition varies in that the church is defined as being invisible and universal...After separating from the Roman Catholic Church,...they were no longer members of that church, a new definition had to be devised. It had to be modified...broad enough to include all, whether Presbyterian, Lutheran, Reformed, or what, and because it did encompass all various groups, it was assumed that it was invisible, and not limited to a particular church body. Thus it was universal, including all believers, but invisible. This is the doctrine of the Protestants today and expressed in the so-called Apostle's creed, 'I believe in the holy catholic church.'

Bible Definition.

The third definition...is the Bible definition. Neither of the two above fits the Bible definition of the church. In seeking to define the word church, we cannot use our dictionaries, since the word is defined as to its current usage, therefore we must refer back to the Greek language and to its meaning at the time the word was used by our Lord. For this purpose, I quote...Dr. Roy Beamon, Professor of Languages and Biblical Introduction in the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He defines the word 'church' in this manner:

The Greek word for church, ekklesia, does come from two Greek words, meaning called-out...As the Greeks used the word, it referred to a called-out meeting or gathering. The proper English for the Greek term is assembly or congregation...a violation of linguistic principles is made by those who make 'church' in Ephesians refer to all the saved at the present time. The word means local assembly or an assembly as an institution.

Note then that the definition of the word 'church' as used in the New Testament involves both a 'calling-out' and a 'calling-together' and true Baptists have always accepted this definition of the New Testament." (Pgs 11&12)

Of the above mentioned three basic definitions, the second one, that is the Protestant Definition is the most popular and widely accepted. This definition was popularized to the most part by the footnotes given in the Scofield Bible. But there have been those who have stretched this same Protestant definition even further. The "much sung hero" of the "Sword of the Lord" publications, John R. Rice, for example. In his booklet on the "Churches and the Church", he states

that "...the Church or Body of Christ includes all the saved people of all Ages." (i.e. Past, Present and Future). (Pg 10)

And so, beginning with the late John R. Rice, every major modern day Ecumenical evangelical preaches nothing but the Universal Invisible Church Theory. Preachers such as the late Curtis Hutson, Jerry Falwell, Chuck Swindoll, Warren Wiersbe, Jack Van Impe, Oral Roberts, Billy Graham, R. B. Theime, et. al., have all promoted this position of the church.

As stated above, we have the Roman Catholic, the Protestant and the Bible/Baptist definitions which are the three basic definitions concerning THE CHURCH. All other explanations concerning the church are mere variants of these three definitions. But for our study's sake, we will further sum up these three definitions and all of their variants into two major categories;

1) Universal Church - This definition states that all believers, throughout the world, past, present and future, whether visible or invisible, comprise a Universal body of Christ. Whenever this definition is implied, the word 'church' is always spelt with a capital "C".

2) Local Church - This definition states that a church is a body of Baptized believers, assembling them-selves in a Specific Place at Specific Periods for Specific Purposes.

Having summed up all of the various definitions into two major categories, it is noteworthy to see that each one of these two definitions is a total contrast to the other. There is a great difference or conflict between the two, yet there are multitudes who claim that the Bible teaches both of these positions. Does the Bible indeed positively teach two subjects that are so conflicting to each other. at the same time? Or is it a semantical error made by those who claim to be Bible "gurus"?

Another great problem is that there are many who tend to be passive about most of the Bible doctrine. They insist that "it does not make any difference what or how one believes!" This kind of an attitude is what Ecumenicalism is all about. It is an attitude that says, "It's all the same in the end anyway." If this is true, then we might as well give up all that we believe and stand for. We might as well, all become Hindus or join the New Age Movement. God forbid! The Bible encourages us to STUDY it and find out the truth about every subject that it deals with. II Timothy 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Thus we shall now proceed to critique these two interpretations in a systematic and scriptural order. That is to find out, "What is the TRUE CHURCH?"

II. ETYMOLOGICALLY

It first needs to be mentioned that the word 'church' most definitely does not apply to a denomination, sect or even a building (such as a Cathedral). Many are under this false notion and would very loosely call a building, "a church." Before we deal with the English word, church, we shall first go to the Greek language, for our New Testament was originally written in that language. The Greek word behind our, English word, church, as mentioned previously is "Ekklesia." We shall Etymologically diagnose this word to see whether it applies to a Universal or a Local church.

It is a fact that Alexander the Great came up with his own 'code' language for his military, during his reign. This language came to be known as 'Koine' Greek. It was "Koine Greek" that was internationally spoken during the days of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord, speaking in this language, in Matthew 16:18 said, "...upon this rock I will build my EKKLESIA..." This word was already in common usage by the Greeks and was well understood as to its significance. We shall refer to certain authorities of the Greek language and derive the Etymology of the word EKKLESIA.

The late Dr. B.H. Carrol (1834-1914), Founder and first President of the renowned Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas defines the term thus in his book "Ecclesia"; "Etymologically...its...an organized assembly, whose members have been properly called out from private homes or business to attend to public affairs. This definition necessarily implies prescribed conditions of membership." (Pg 8)

Dr. Frank A. Godsoe, D.D., Th.D., explains in his book on "The House of God"; "...an organized Assembly, its members called out from private homes to attend public affairs, and having prescribed, conditions of membership. That meaning applies to (1) Christ's Assembly, (2) To a self-governing Greek state, Acts 19:39, "But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly." (3) To National Israel, Acts 7:38, "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us." (Pg 9)

Edward Overby, the author of "The Meaning of Ekklesia in the New Testament", has compiled the following definitions in his writing;

"...an assembly of the people convened at the public place of council for the purpose of deliberating." (A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, J.H. Thayer)

"an assembly of the citizens summoned by the crier, the legislative assembly." (A Greek-English Lexicon, R. Scott and H.G. Liddell)

"...the lawful assembly in a free Greek city of all those possessed of the rights of citizenship, for the transaction of public affairs." (Synonyms of the New Testament, R.C. Trench)

"...The assembly of the people, which in Greek cities had the power to final decision in public affairs." (A Dictionary of Classical Antiquities, Oskar Seyffert)

"In every case the word means an organized Body..." (A Greek and English Lexicon, Greville Ewing)

"In classical use ekklesia meant an assembly." (A Manual of Ecclesiology, H.E. Dana)

Pastor Jerry D. Locke writes in "A study of the New Testament Church" that; "The English word 'church' is taken from the Greek word 'ekklesia' which means 'called-out.' It always denotes an assembly." (Lesson 1)

Buell H. Kazee, author of "The CHURCH and the Ordinances" explains; "Ekklesia was a Greek word that would have been understood by all who used this universal language in the days of the apostles as meaning a visible assembly even after it had acquired a Christian significance. Christianity did not change the meaning of the word but adopted it as a fit description of this divine institution." (Pg 16)

"The CHURCH that Jesus Built," a book by Dr. Roy Mason. Dr. Mason, himself, was a former proponent of the Universal, Invisible Church Theory and after much research of the subject, he comes to the following conclusion in his book. "After careful study of all the passages in which the word ecclesia occurs in the New Testament,...and after examining...the word in classical Greek, I submit the proposition that the church that Jesus founded was the local assembly, and that to use the word ecclesia to designate a "universal", or "invisible" Church is to pervert its meaning, and to fall into serious error."

He continues, "What then, let us ask, did the word mean as understood by the people of that day? Says Dr. George W. McDaniel (The churches of the New Testament), Both with the Greeks and the Jews, the word denoted as assembly of the people...Among the Greeks ecclesia was an assembly of the citizens of a free city-state gathered by a herald blowing a horn through the streets of a town.

Dr. Jesse B. Thomas says in his book, 'The CHURCH and the Kingdoms'...'It was the organized assembly of the authorized voters of the local community met to transact business of common concern...' This meaning applies substantially alike to the ecclesia of a self-governing Greek state (Acts 19:39 ...lawful assembly.), the Old Testament ecclesia or convocation of National Israel (Acts 7:38) and to the New Testament ecclesia. When our Lord says: 'On this rock I will build my ecclesia,...'"

From the above mentioned quotes, it should be striking the reader as to the possible meaning of the term ekklesia or as it has been translated into English, "church". But we shall proceed to quote a few more authors in order to establish a concrete meaning of the word, Etymologically.

A German historian and theologian, Adolph Ha-nack, who is renowned among the historians of primitive Christianity and highly esteemed, refutes the

idea of a universal, invisible church. His statements in connection with this topic carry great weight. In his "History of Dogma", he mentions that; "No one thought of the des-perate idea of an invisible church; this notion would probably have brought about a lapse from pure Christ-ianity far more rapidly than the idea of the Holy Catholic Church." (Pg 83)

Darrel Owens, in his lessons on "The Church in the New Testament", states; "The Greek word ecclesia literally means called out. It was commonly used as a term to designate an assembly of people called out from their homes to a certain designated place for the purpose of taking care of some kind of business. Such an assembly is spoken of in Acts 19:39." (Pgs 13-14)

Dr Harold P. Chiolero's definition; "Ekklesia means a called out ASSEMBLY from some place to a particular place, for a particular purpose..."

Finally I quote, Dean Rosco Brong from his notes on "The Church In Ephesians", "In the Bible the word 'church' ...means assembly only and always. It never refers to an unknown, unassembled, confused and scattered multitude. Such a 'church' exists only in the imagination of heretics desperately trying to justify their schisms." (Pg 17c)

James H. Strong defines the Greek words "Ek" as "from, out" and "Kaleo" as "call". The combination of these two words gives us "Ekkaleo" or "Ekklesia", which Strong defines as "a calling out, i.e. (concr.) a popular meeting,...assembly, church." The ample quotations and definitions mentioned above should be deemed satis-factory. A clear "picture" as to the true nature of the New Testament Ekklesia or church has been set forth, Ety-mologically. However, let us sum up all of the preceding statements into one concrete definition which we shall be able to use throughout our subsequent chapters.

Ekklesia or church is an assembly or a group of people meeting in a specific place at specific periods for specific purposes. This definition is very contrary to the popular idea of a Universal, Invisible Church. Even the "brain" behind the Revision Committee of 1871-1881, Fenton John Anthony Hort, who somewhat believed in the Universal, Invisible Church Theory, had problems with it. For he readily admits, in his book "The Christian Ecclesia", that it is without historical foundation.

In the Bible the definition of Ekklesia applies to three distinct groups;

- 1) A self-governing Greek state or Legislative assembly. (Acts 19:39)
- 2) The convocation of Old Testament Israel. (Acts 7:38)
- 3) The group of twelve apostles whom Christ chose and all the groups that followed in-line with the apostles doctrine. Luke 6:13, "And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles." John 15:16, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you..."

In the Old Testament, God chose twelve tribes with the intention of establishing a nation that would be a witness for Him. But Israel, desperately, failed Him, thus He divorced them. Jeremiah 3:6-8, "The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath

done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also." Matthew 23:37-39, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

In the New Testament, God became Man and came down to earth, during which time He chose a new group and made a NEW COVENANT/TESTAMENT with them and personally trained them in order to send them out to be witnesses for Him. This Jesus did, personally, by choosing twelve men, whom He called Apostles. He also referred to this group as being "MY EKKLESIA" or "MY CHURCH" as opposed to the Greek and the Jewish Ekklesias. Luke 6:12-16, "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor." This passage is paralleled in Mark 3:13-19, "And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils: And Simon he surnamed Peter; And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder: And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite, And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house." Paul reemphasizes both of these passages in I Corinthians 12:28, "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles..."

Note that these events took place very much prior to the day of Pentecost. This is another Biblical FACT that is very contrary to the modern day Ecumenical preaching that "The Church started on the day of Pentecost!" We shall refer to this FACT again in a later chapter.

These twelve apostles gathered themselves around Jesus, Mark 3:14, "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him..." Mark 6:30, "And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus..." as an assembly which was VISIBLE and LOCAL, giving EKKLESIA a true meaning in every sense of the word. These apostles, being VISIBLE, were LOCATED in and around Jerusalem and they remained there, even after Christ's ascension, as we see throughout the

first part of the book of Acts. Acts 8:1, "...And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles."

After having grasped the meaning of EKKLESIA and its application to the three different groups, we shall conclude this chapter by dealing with how this word came to be translated as CHURCH in English and also the significance of this English word.

Over the years, some of the most vicious attacks have been made against THE BOOK, i.e. the Authorized Version of 1611 also known as the King James Version, hereafter referred to as the A. V. A favorite "soap-box" of the critics of the A.V. has been the word "church" about which they comment, that the A.V. translators had made a "blunder" at this point. One such critic, sadly, is J.H. Melton. He was a Professor at the Independent Baptist College, Dallas, Texas, under whom I had studied for several years. Bro. J.H. Melton, in a monograph entitled "To the Baptist Brethren" makes several allegations against the A.V. He claims that one of the "most grievous errors" in the A.V. is the usage of the word "CHURCH". He forcefully blames the A.V. as having promulgated the idea of a Universal, Invisible Church.

In dealing with this "issue", I quote Pastor Jerry D. Locke, from his compilation "A Study of the New Testament Church." "The English word 'church' has an inter-esting history. 'Church', Based upon a slang expression for 'power', the early Greek name for a powerful man's residence was Kuriakon. This term passed into Latin and was picked up by pioneer Christians, who applied it to the house of God, source and author of all power.' ('Why you say it.' Garrison)

The Greek word, 'kuriakon', meant, 'a powerful man's residence.' Various forms of this word entered into most of the languages of Europe.

'English, church; Scottish, kirk, Anglo-Saxon, cyric; German, kirche; Danish, kyrke; Swedish, kyrka; Russian, zerkow'. The New Directory for Baptist Churches, Hiscox

The word 'church originally meant, 'a powerful man's house' or 'the Lord's house,' meaning 'the ruling man.'"

Bro. J.H. Melton was brilliantly countered in a booklet titled "A Response", by Dr. Ken Johnson. Dr. Johnson's reply is enough to silence the allegations of many a critic, including Bro. Melton. Let us note; "While honesty demands the admission of the meaning of 'Kuriakos' as meaning that which belongs to the Lord, it is also equally demanded that Bro. Melton's insisting 'ekklesia' means 'assembly' has a problem of equal or greater existence in his own usage.

'Assembly' in English comes from the Old French meaning a gathering of persons. 'Ekklesia' is from two Greek words meaning 'out' and 'to call.' The full thrust means in the New Testament theological usage a local visible body called out for a specific purpose. Jesus called this 'my church' in Matthew 16:18 which certainly gives the connotation of belonging to the Lord. Even the sixth meaning of 'church' in the Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary states the meaning as 'A

body of Christian believers having the same creed, rites, etc.' (p.148). The word 'church' goes back in English (Middle English) with the meaning relative to 'kurios' - a lord, originally mighty and this from kuros - strength c/f Sanskrit cura - a hero. (See Walter W. Skeat, Etymological Dictionary of the English Language. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1901, p.90). In 1340 The Apostle's Creed in English translated ultimately from Greek states, 'Ich y-leve ine ye holy gost. Holy cherche general ische.' (See A.C. Champneys, History of English. London: Rivington, Percival and Co., 1893, p.263). It is to be noted the date is 1340 or 271 years before the King James Version and the word 'cherche' -church is even THEN translated as such for 'ekklisia.' It is also a fact Wickliff uses 'churche' even though he translates the New Testament from Latin; the point is in 1380 he uses the term 'church' as opposed to assembly (Matthew 16:18). It would in fact be more to the point for Bro. Melton to take Scripture and define 'church' theologically rather than blunder in 1611 'archaic hard to understand English' trying to dig up an 'error'." (Pg. 10)

So we see from the above that there is really no word in English that is the equivalent of 'Ekklesia'. This Greek term is two words in one. Neither 'assembly' nor 'church' is an equivalent, but the latter word, i.e. 'church', is and has been the most widely acceptable translation. Its literal meaning being "that which belongs to the Lord" or "the Lord's house" with the emphasis always on the Spiritual house, which is made up of baptized believers, covenanted together and meeting in a specific place at specific periods with the specific purpose of carrying out the Lord's commands. Indeed Jesus Christ IS Lord and His Ekklesia is compared to a "Temple," "House, or Building, in the Bible, quite frequently. I Corinthians 3:16, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God..." Hebrews 3:1-6, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." I Peter 2:5, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacri-fices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." et. al. Only the lack of a proper understanding of the term 'church' would make one want to apply it to a physical building, such as a Cathedral, a denomination or even to the entire "Christendom."

Thus Etymologically, the Greek word EKKLESIA and its English translation CHURCH, could apply to nothing but a LOCAL and VISIBLE group of people. The term, as seen before, subsequently applies to three groups; 1) Israel, 2) Greek Legislative Assembly and 3) Christ's CHURCH. It is used in three different senses;

1) Generic / Abstract

- 2) Specific / Particular and
- 3) Futuristic / Prospective

The context determines the sense in which it is used. For further inquisition, we shall proceed into the Scriptural aspect of our study to see whether the church is LOCAL and VISIBLE or UNIVERSAL and INVISIBLE.

III. SCRIPTURALLY

Our study in this chapter may seem strenuous to the casual reader, but to those who wish to delve deeper into Scriptural truths, it is very beneficial. I urge the serious student to take THE BOOK, i.e. A.V. 1611, and go through each reference given, not only in this chapter, but those mentioned throughout this book. Space does not permit the author to quote all of the Scriptures, and so the reader is begged to confirm each one, personally.

The reason for emphasizing the A.V. 1611, is due to the fact that most of the "so-called" Bible versions, or rather perversions, are very misleading on the CHURCH topic. For example, the reader will find the word "church" in Acts 2:47, "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." is missing in most of the "modern" translations. Also, the word "churches" in Acts 9:31, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea..." is mentioned as "church" in these counterfeit books. Upon examining Acts 9:31, the reader will find that Luke was recording the events that took place in the churches (plural) that were existing "...throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria..." Any normal person will agree that there would have been many churches throughout these provinces, but to say that there was only "the church" (singular) throughout these different areas is to insinuate a UNIVERSAL CHURCH and a deliberate perversion of the Scriptures. These are just a couple of examples that show the superiority of the A.V. Also, one will find that it is only in the A.V. or KJV that we are commanded to "STUDY" the word of God. This word mentioned only twice in the New Testament, i.e. in I Thessalonians 4:11, "And that ye study to be quiet..." and II Timothy 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God..." is found both times in the A.V., but is missing in the counterfeits.

Since the New Testament was written in Greek and Ekklesia being a Greek word, we shall take each passage wherever this word is mentioned and examine them, contextually, to see whether the Bible is referring to a UNIVERSAL, INVISIBLE CHURCH or a LOCAL, VISIBLE CHURCH. Also, at the end of each explanation, we shall state the 'sense' in which the word is mentioned. Whether

it be Abstract, Particular or Prospective. One "rule of thumb" is to always pay attention to the context. This, in itself, eliminates most of the confusion. Let us note;

1) Matthew 16:18, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church..." Many hold this passage as referring to a Uni-versal Church. This passage will be further dealt with in our succeeding chapters. However, it is worth mention-ing here that in Matthew 18:17, "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." Christ instructs His apostles about the manner in which differences should be settled amidst the members of a church. This would be impossible to do in a Church that is Universal and Invisible. Differences arise among members of local congregations. When has one ever heard of a quarrel in a Universal Invisible Church and much more seen one settled? (Local, Abstract)

2) Matthew 18:17 quoted above, how can a hearing be summoned by a Universal, Invisible Church? Even the cross-reference in the Scofield Bible refer to this as an "assembly." Just imagine a "Universal, Invisible Assembly!" (Local, Abstract)

3) Matthew 18:17, The word 'church' is mentioned twice in this verse. Previously, the accused was speaking to his local church but now the local church is reprimanding the guilty. (Local, Abstract)

4) Acts 2:47, "...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." This passage is clearly speaking of the first church which Christ established in Jerusalem. Acts 1:12-15, "Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty.)" and Acts 2:41-47, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and single-ness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." These verses make this point clear. Verse 46 clearly mentions that they gathered "...in

the temple..." It would be rather impossible to gather an entire Universal Church into a SINGLE temple. (Local, Particular)

5) Acts 5:11, "And great fear came upon all the church..." Dr. Luke's narrative of the events that took place in the first church which was located in Jerusalem are described in the book of Acts Chapters 1-8. He then follows the scattered mobs of this church to the other areas, into which they went and established more local churches as foretold by their FOUNDER in Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Thus Acts 5:11, upon examining its context, is most definitely a reference to the Jerusalem church. (Local, Particular)

6) Acts 7:38, "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina..." Here we have Stephen's "defense" and he is referring to the Nation of Israel. As mentioned in our previous chapter, Ekklesia applied to three different groups in the Bible. This is the only instance where it refers to Israel. Even then, we see that it was an assembly LOCATED in the wilderness and not something Universal and Invisible. (Local, Particular)

7) Acts 8:1 quoted earlier. This passage is self-explanatory. It mentions the location "...the church which was at Jerusalem..." (Local Particular)

8) Acts 8:3, "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church..." Up until this time there were no other churches in existence, other than the one in Jerusalem. It was after the death of Stephen that they were scattered and began other churches throughout Judaea, Galilee and Samaria. (Local, Particular)

9) Acts 9:31, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria..." This verse proves our above mentioned statement to be true. Most of the New Age Bible (Per) Versions have deliberately (mis) translated the word 'churches' (plural) as 'church' (singular). This is a clear identification of the Jesuits, who are behind each counterfeit "Bible", trying to propagate their Catholic/Universal Church. (Local, Particular)

10) Acts 11:22, "...the church which was in Jerusalem..." Another self-explanatory passage. (Local, Particular)

11) Acts 11:26, "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." A comparison of this passage to Acts 13:1, "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch..." This church was at Antioch and they assembled a whole year "with the church." Can any rational person imagine the assembling of an entire Universal Church? And that for a whole year? (Local, Particular)

12) Acts 12:1-3, "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also..." Herod would have had a hard time tracking down a Universal,

Invisible Church. Also, the names James, John and Peter indicate that these were the same apostles that were set in the first church, which was at Jerusalem. (Local, Particular)

13) Acts 12:5,6,11,12, "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers...And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying." Here we have the assembly of a group of people at a specific period ("the same night" vs. 6), in a specific place ("the house of Mary" vs. 12) and for a specific purpose ("prayer was made...for him" vs. 5). It would be insane for anyone to argue that this was a Universal, Invisible Church. (Local, Particular)

14) Acts 13:1, "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch..." This church, as referred to in Acts 11:26, was LOCAL to the city of Antioch. (Local, Particular)

15) Acts 14:23, "And when they had ordained them elders in every church..." In the verses preceding this passage, we note that the apostles were on their first missionary journey and had just come through Iconium, Derbe, Lystra (Vs. 19-21) and some other places. The word "every" implies that there were several churches. It is hard enough to imagine ONE Universal Church and to say that there are many Universal Churches is absurd. Even Scofield refers to these as "churches (Local)." (Local, Particular)

16) Acts 14:27, "And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles." Acts 13:1-3, "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." Acts 14:26, "And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled." Acts 14:14 "Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul..." These verses specify that these apostles to the Gentiles were sent from "the church in Antioch" and thus they returned to this LOCAL church upon completion of their journey, and gathered them together, Acts 14:27 and "...rehearsed all that God had done with them..." (Local, Particular)

17) Acts 15:3, "And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren." This again is a reference to the

church in Antioch. Acts chapters 13-15 narrate its missionary efforts. (Local, Particular)

18) Acts 15:4, "And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them." Clear reference is made here to the city of Jerusalem. The word 'church' being in the singular indicates to us that there was no other church in this city, in those days, save the one which the Lord Himself established. This was the LOCAL church in Jerusalem. (Local, Particular)

19) Acts 15:22, "Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren." This again was the same church in Jerusalem. The issue that so "upset" the church in Antioch, caused them to send chosen men to the church in Jerusalem, in order to confirm whether circumcision was essential for salvation. This issue need-ed critical attention and thus the Jerusalem church sent delegates from its own members, in order to settle the issue. (Local, Particular)

20) Acts 15:41, "And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches." Dr. Luke is referring to several churches. Namely, those in Syria and Cilicia, which were started by Paul and Barnabas on their second missionary journey.(Local, Particular)

21) Acts 16:5, "And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." Paul and Barnabas, still on their second mission-ary journey, went through the churches which they had started on their first journey. The word 'churches' (plural) is referring to those churches in Derbe, Lystra and Iconium (Vs 1&2). (Local, Particular)

22) Acts 18:22, "And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch." This was the church in Caesarea. If it was a Universal Church, then pray tell, why went he up to Caesarea? The futility of such an argument is obvious. (Local, Particular)

23) Acts 19:32, "Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together." Here the word normally rendered 'church' is translated as 'assembly' in order to distinguish between "that which belongs to the Lord" and that which does not. As seen earlier, Ekklesia applies to three different groups in the Bible. 1) Israel, 2) Greek Legis-lative Assembly and 3) Christ's church. This passage applies to the Greek assembly which met in the city of Ephesus. This same assembly is seen in the next two verses. (Local, Particular)

24) Acts 19:39, "But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly." Same as above. It would be worthwhile to mention here that neither Christ nor His apostles ever coined the word Ekklesia. It was a term of popular usage in the Greek world, even before Christ's first advent. (Local, Particular)

25) Acts 19:41, "And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly." Same as the two pre-ceding verses. This was a Greek assembly,

which met, in order to condemn Paul, while he was in the city of Ephesus.
(Local, Particular)

26) Acts 20:17, "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church." Paul's ministry in the city of Ephesus is recorded in Acts 19 and 20. It is self-evident here that Paul called for the elders of the Ephesian church. (Local, Particular)

27) Acts 20:28, "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." Same as above. The church that Paul instructed these elders to feed was the Ephesian church. (Local, Particular)

28) Romans 16:1, "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea" Self-explanatory verse. Not Universal! (Local, Particular)

29) Romans 16:4, "Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles." The word is 'churches' (plural), indicating all the churches of the Gentiles. (Local, Particular)

30) Romans 16:5 "Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epae-netus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ." This was the church that gathered in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. Imagine gathering an entire Universal Church into one house. If this was the case, then Aquila and Priscilla probably had the biggest house in the world. A house so large that even the Roman Emperors would have been outdone. To pursue such a train of thought is utterly ridiculous. (Local, Particular)

31) Romans 16:16, "Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you." Again, the word 'churches' (plural) is used. Any one will agree that there cannot be more than ONE Universal Church, for there is but one Universe. But it will most readily be accepted, by the mind that is open to the truth, that there can be as many local churches as there are locations. The plural usage of the word, churches, always applies to various locations. (Local, Particular)

32) Romans 16:23 "Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother." Gaius was Paul's host in the city of Corinth, I Corinthians 1:14, and since Paul mentions that Gaius was not only his host, but of the whole church, then this could be no other church than the one in Corinth. It would be sense-less to argue that an entire Universal Church gathered in Gaius' house. If so, then instead of Aquila and Priscilla, it would have been Gaius who probably had the largest house in the world. (Local, Particular)

33) I Corinthians 1:2 "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." Paul now is

addressing the "...church of God which is at Corinth..." not Universal. (Local, Particular)

34) I Corinthians 4:17, "For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church." If there really was such a thing as the Universal Church, it would have spared Paul from such extensive travels. He could have taught every one in it at the same time. But Paul never claimed or even indicated any such a monstrosity. He personally traveled to every particular church, regardless of where they were located and taught them. (Local, Particular)

35) I Corinthians 6:4, "If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church." Determine the con-text. Who is Paul addressing? Indeed it was the church at Corinth. Paul wrote this epistle while he was at Ephesus and sent it to Corinth. (Local, Particular)

36) I Corinthians 7:17, "But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches." By now the plural usage of the word 'churches' should have taken a concrete meaning in the understanding of the reader, that several particular assemblies are being referred to. (Local, Particular)

37) I Corinthians 10:32, "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God." This "...church of God..." was at Corinth. I Corinthians 1:2, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth..." Even Scofield says 'local' and 'visible'. (Local, Particular)

38) I Corinthians 11:16, "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." 'churches' plural. (Local, Particular)

39) I Corinthians 11:18, "For first of all, when ye come together in the church..." If there was a Universal Church, then Paul would have been a part of it. And if Paul was a part of it, then he would include himself in this verse. He would have said, "...when WE come together in the church," instead of "...when YE come together." He is obviously speaking particularly or specifically to the Corinthian church. (Local, Particular)

40) I Corinthians 11:22, "What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not?..." Again, "the church of God" he is referring to is the Corinthian church. If Paul was writing to a Universal Church then why does he address it to the city of Corinth? Is Corinth, the entire Universe? (Local, Particular)

41) I Corinthians 12:28, "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles..." Refer to our previous chapters and it will be seen that Paul is referring to Luke 6:13 and Mark 3:13-14, where God (Jesus Christ) first set the apostles in His church, which He established in Jerusalem. (Local, Particular)

42) I Corinthians 14:4, "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church." Paul in this chapter

rebukes the Corinthian church for their undiscipline and lack of understanding regarding the gift of tongues. (Local, Particular)

43) I Corinthians 14:5, "I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied; for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying." Same as above. Even Scofield admits that this applies to "churches (local)." (Local, Particular)

44) I Corinthians 14:12, "Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church." Same as above. (Local, Particular)

45) I Corinthians 14:19, "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." Same as above. This verse is for those who are under the influ-ence of Pentecostalism / Charismaticism. If this entire chapter were read with an unbiased mind, it would con-vince the reader that Pentecostalism / Charismaticism are unscriptural. (Local, Particular)

46) I Corinthians 14:23, "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place..." ONE PLACE (emphasis mine). When has the entire Universal Church come into one place? (Local, Particular)

47) I Corinthians 14:28, "But if there be no inter-preter, let him keep silence in the church..." Same as above. (Local, Particular)

48) I Corinthians 14:33, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." Refer to our notes on Romans 16:16 and I Corinthians 7:17. "churches", plural. (Local, Particular)

49) I Corinthians 14:34, "Let your women keep silence in the churches..." Same as above. (Local, Particular)

50) I Corinthians 14:35, "And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." Refer to Note #42. (Local, Particular)

51) I Corinthians 15:9, "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." The only church, that the Bible records Paul as persecuting, was the one in Jerusalem. Paul could never have persecuted a Universal, Invisible Church, for it would have been intangible. (Local, Particular)

52) I Corinthians 16:1, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye." "churches", plural. (Local, Particular)

53) I Corinthians 16:19, "The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house." Same as above. (Local, Particular)

54) I Corinthians 16:19 Quoted above. The word Ekklesia is mentioned twice in this verse. Refer to our note on Romans 16:5. (Local, Particular)

55) II Corinthians 1:1, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the

saints which are in all Achaia." Refer to our note on I Corinthians 1:2. This was addressed to the church at Corinth. It had an address. What address does a Universal Church have? (Local, Particular)

56) II Corinthians 8:1, "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia." (Local, Particular)

57) II Corinthians 8:18, "And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches." Refer notes #31 and #36. (Local, Particular)

58) II Corinthians 8:19, "And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches..." Same as above. (Local, Particular)

59) II Corinthians 8:23, "Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you: or our brethren be inquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ." Same as above. (Local, Particular)

60) II Corinthians 8:24, "Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf." Same as above. (Local, Particular)

61) II Corinthians 11:8, "I robbed other churches..." How was it possible for Paul to rob a church that is Universal and Invisible? It is beyond one's imagination. But here the word 'churches' is plural thus leaving no scope for a Universal Church. These were "churches (local)" as even Scofield admits. (Local, Particular)

62) II Corinthians 11:28, "Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." If there really was a Universal, Invisible Church then Paul would have had to worry about only ONE church, relieving him of a lot of stress. Also, his stress would have been as "invisible" as that "Church." But that was not the case. Paul laments that the care of "all the churches" was upon him. There were scores of local churches, located in many different locations. Refer to our note #34. (Local, Particular)

63) II Corinthians 12:13, "For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches..." Refer to note #31 and #36. (Local, Particular)

64) Galatians 1:2, "And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia." (Local, Particular)

65) 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." Refer to our notes #8 and #51. (Local, Particular)

66) Galatians 1:22, "And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ." Not the "Church in Judaea" but "the churches of Judaea." (Local, Particular)

67) Ephesians 1:22, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church," This and the following nine verses are the most beloved passages of the proponents of the Universal, Invisible Church. Mr. Scofield calls this the "true" church. Not even the slightest indication of such a "Church" was made in all of the preceding sixty-six references. Yet the

Universal Churchites claim that the Bible suddenly introduces us to a new subject. A subject so foreign and contrary to all of the preceding sixty-six passages.

I suspect a problem with the understanding of the Universal Churchite. My question to them is that, "if Paul was speaking of a Universal Church, then why does he address it to the city of Ephesus? Does the Universal Church exist in Ephesus?" It will readily be agreed by any honest Bible student that there was a church already in existence at Ephesus. Refer to our notes #26 and #27. This being true, Ephesians 1:23 beautifully fits in with Ephesians 3:19, where Paul is praying PARTICULARLY for the Ephesian church.

As seen in our previous chapters, Ekklesia, had three different usages. 1) Generic/Abstract, 2) Specific /Particular and 3) Futuristic/Prospective. Here is a classic example of the word being used in a Generic/Abstract sense. Paul continues such usage in the next nine references. Christ is the Head of;

- 1) Any CHURCH - Generic/Abstract (Wherever it may be)
- 2) Every CHURCH - Specific/Particular (Ephesus, Corinth etc.)
- 3) Glory CHURCH - Future/Prospect (New Jeru-salem)

All three being local in their own usage. The Bible does not contradict itself in teaching two conflicting subjects. If it did, then Ephesians 4:4, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." would be unexplainable. But it is the Universal Churchite who is wrong, for he falsely assumes what the Bible does not teach. The Bible is simple and straight and can be understood by those who are willing to be in subjection to its authority. This is merely a case of the word, Ekklesia, being mentioned in a different sense and not a change of meaning. (Local, Abstract)

68) 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." Same as above. (Local, Abstract)

69) Ephesians 3:21, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Here again the word, 'church', is mentioned in the Generic/Abstract sense. God can receive glory in;

- 1) Any CHURCH - Generic/Abstract (Wherever it may be located)
- 2) Every CHURCH - Specific/Particular (Jeru-salem, Antioch, etc.)
- 3) Glory CHURCH - Futuristic/Prospective (Hea-venly Jerusalem)

Each of the above being LOCAL in their own usage. We use Generic/Abstract terms almost all of the time. For example, if we were to say; "The right pair of SHOES are the secret of an athlete's success!" By this, we do not mean an Invisible, Universal pair of SHOES. We are only using the word, Shoes, Generically /Ab-stractly. But when the ABSTRACT is SPECIFIED, then we would have to name the pair of SHOES. We would probably say; "Most athlete's attribute their success to SHOES made by Reebok, Adidas, Nike or whichever other brand."

The same is being done in this passage with the usage of the word church. Paul says; "unto him be glory in the church..." When the ABSTRACT

word, church, is SPECIFIED, then he would have to name the church. He would have to say; Unto him be glory in the Ephesian church, the Jerusalem, church, the Antioch church, etc.," or whichever other church that may have been in existence at that time. The meaning of the word, church, has not changed in the least. This will be further dealt with in our chapter entitled "Logically." (Local, Abstract)

70) 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." Same as above. (Local, Abstract)

71) Ephesians 5:24, "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." Same as above. (Local, Abstract)

72) Ephesians 5:25, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." Same as above. (Local, Abstract)

73) 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." Same as above. (Local, Abstract)

74) Ephesians 5:29, "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." Refer to note #79. (Local, Abstract)

75) Ephesians 5:32, "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." See note #67. (Local, Abstract)

76) Philippians 3:6, "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." Refer notes #8, #51 and #65. (Local, Particular)

77) Philippians 4:15, "Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only." Paul is praising the Philippian church for their generous giving toward his ministry. (Local, Particular)

78) Colossians 1:18, "And he is the head of the body, the church..." Refer to note #67. (Local, Abstract)

79) 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." Paul compares the church in this passage and in other passages, such as I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 5, to a human body. It would be insane and ludicrous to claim that a human body can be Universal and Invisible! Thus it is with the Lord's body, His church.

Another point is that, as seen in note #67, if Paul was writing to a Universal Church, then why would he address it to the city of Colosse? Was the Universal Church in Colosse? Also, in Colossians 4:16, Paul urges them to read this epistle even among the church of the Laodiceans. If the Universal Church was in Colosse, then why was it necessary to read this epistle in the church of the Laodiceans? (Local, Abstract)

80) Colossians 4:15 "Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house." This church gathered in the house of Nymphas. Refer to note #30 and #32. (Local, Particular)

81) Colossians 4:16, "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea." This church was LOCAL to the city of Laodicea. Refer to note #79. (Local, Particular)

82) I Thessalonians 1:1, "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalon-ians..." (Local, Particular)

83) I Thessalonians 2:14, "For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus..." Judean churches, (plural). (Local, Particular)

84) II Thessalonians 1:1, "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Local, Particular)

85) II Thessalonians 1:4, "So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God..." Refer to note #29 and #30. (Local, Particular)

86) I Timothy 3:5, "(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)" Paul's instructions are that a man has to take care of his own house, before he can undergird a church. If the church is Universal and Invisible then even this man's house would have to be Universal and Invisible. One is just as valid as the other. Such an argument is non-sensical. The church that Paul is speaking of, is just as local and visible as the man himself, who was to be its caretaker. (Local, Particular)

87) I Timothy 3:15, "But if I tarry long, 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." As above, Paul once again compares the church to a house. Let me insert here, that in the Bible, the church is compared to 1) A BODY, 2) A BUILDING and 3) A BRIDE. Note that not a one of these three comparisons is ever understood as being Universal and Invisible. Every BODY (human) in this world is local and visible, every BUILDING in this world is local and visible and also every BRIDE in this world is local and visible. Even the Universal Churchite understands these three comparisons to be local and visible, but when it comes to the CHURCH, itself, his thinking gets warped. Absurd are the thoughts of a Universalite. A deeper insight into this passage would reveal to us that this is a reference to the church in Ephesus, for this is where Timothy was. I Timothy 1:3, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus..." (Local, Particular)

88) I Timothy 5:16, "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." If all the widows had to depend on a Universal Invisible Church for their relief, they would starve to death. For its funds are as INVISIBLE as the Church itself. This again is the church at Ephesus, as seen above. (Local, Particular)

89) Philemon 2, "And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house." I doubt if Philemon could fit an entire Universal Church into his house. Refer to note #30 and #32. (Local, Particular)

90) Hebrews 2:12, "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." This passage is a reference to the fulfillment of the prophecy mentioned in Psalm 22:22, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." As discussed in our previous chapters, Jesus did establish His church, while He was on this earth, in Jerusalem, with the twelve Apostles. On the night of His betrayal, He sang along with these Apostles, with the exception of Judas. Matthew 26:30, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives." Mark 14:26 "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives." This passage clearly refers to this group, i.e. Christ and His Apostles, as a church." (Local, Particular)

91) Hebrews 12:23, "To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Here is our passage in which the FUTURE church is spoken of. It is still PROSPECTIVE and will gather in the City of God, the heavenly Jerusalem. Verse 22 "But ye are come unto mount Sion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels." Christ started His church in the earthly Jerusalem and it will end up in the heavenly Jerusalem. (Local, Prospective)

92) James 5:14, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." If as in note #88, the sick had to wait upon the elders of a Universal, Invisible Church to come and pray over them, they are sure to die in their sickness, for the elders of a Universal, Invisible Church would be as INVISIBLE as the Church itself. Visiting and praying for the sick is a ministry given to every local church as we see throughout the book of Acts. (Local, Particular)

93) III John 6, "Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring for-ward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well." Context reveals to us that this short epistle was written to Gaius in verse 1. As seen in Romans 16:23 and I Corinthians 1:14, Gaius hosted the church at Corinth in his house. He was a very hospitable and charitable person and this was witnessed before the entire church. (Local, Particular)

94) III John 9, "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not." Same as above. Refer #67 and #79. (Local, Particular)

95) III John 10, "Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church." Diotrephes was a person. Every person is local and visible. And if Diotrephes was local and visible, then definitely the

church in which he sought to have preeminence would have been of the same nature. (Local, Particular)

96) Revelation 1:4, "John to the seven churches which are in Asia..." Clearly, local and visible assemblies. (Local, Particular)

97) Revelation 1:11, "Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea." Same as above. (Local, Particular)

98) Revelation 1:20, "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches:..." Same as above. (Local, Particular)

99) Revelation 1:20, "...and the seven candle-sticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." Same as above. (Local, Particular)

100) Revelation 2:1, "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write..." Definitely NOT a Universal, Invisible Church. (Local, Particular)

101) Revelation 2:7, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;..." The entire book of Revelation was written specifically to the seven churches in Asia. (Local, Particular)

102) Revelation 2:8, "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write;..." (Local, Particular)

103) Revelation 2:11, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches..." Refer Note #101. (Local, Particular)

104) Revelation 2:12, "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write..." (Local, Particular)

105) Revelation 2:17, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches..." Refer note #101. (Local, Particular)

106) Revelation 2:18, "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write;..." (Local, Particular)

107) Revelation 2:23, "And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts;..." Refer note #101. (Local Particular)

108) Revelation 2:29, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Same as above. (Local, Particular)

109) Revelation 3:1, "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write;..." (Local, Particular)

110) Revelation 3:6, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Refer note #101. (Local, Particular)

111) Revelation 3:7, "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write;..." (Local, Particular)

112) Revelation 3:13, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Refer note #101. (Local, Particular)

113) Revelation 3:14, "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write;..." (Local, Particular)

114) Revelation 3:22, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Refer note #101. (Local, Particular)

115) Revelation 22:16, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." The word Ekklesia is mentioned twenty times in the book of Revelation, as seen in the preceding passages. ALL of these verses clearly and concretely speak of SPECIFIC churches. It should also be noticed that nineteen out of these twenty references, proceeded directly from the mouth of our Glorified Savior and Lord, and never once does He even make the slightest indication of any such a thing as the Universal, Invisible Church. He refers to each church according to their PARTICULAR LOCATION. (Local, Particular)

One hundred and fifteen passages or verses of Scripture have been placed before the reader. These are ALL of the passages in which the word Ekklesia, appears in the New Testament. We shall further categorize these passages according to their usage. If the reader would go back and check, it will be found that the word Ekklesia is mentioned in the Abstract/Generic sense, fourteen times. It is mentioned in the Futuristic/Prospective sense, one time and is mentioned one hundred times in the Specific /Particular sense. It is these fourteen Abstract/Generic passages that the Universal, Invisible Churchites vehemently advocate. They would rather "hold on to" and place more emphasis on these fourteen passages and leave alone the one hundred references in which the Bible specifically speaks about LOCAL and PARTICULAR churches. How foolish could one get?

But again, even these fourteen Abstract/Generic references speak of LOCAL churches. As it has been pointed out and will further be dealt with that, when the Abstract/Generic usage is defined, then it takes on a Specific/Particular meaning. Refer to our notes numbered 67 and 69. Thus, SCRIPTURALLY speaking, the church can be nothing but a LOCAL and VISIBLE body. Even the one incident where it is Futuristic/Prospective, it is still NOT a Universal, Invisible Church, for it will be LOCAL and VISIBLE in the Heavenly Jerusalem. Note #91. Let us continue our study into the next chapter from a different perspective, i.e. NUMERICALLY.

IV. NUMERICALLY

Someone has once said that, "There is no language without numerals." True it is that NUMBERS have become a very essential part of our day to day lives. Telephones, T.V. Channels, Computers, Petrol (Gas) Stations, Speedometers, Thermometers, etc., etc., all work on the principle of "Digits" or Numbers.

But I know that there will be those who will deny the way in which 'numbers' work and they are true to an extent, because numbers don't always

work the way in which we expect them to. But this is due to the fact that the world in which we now live, is totally marred by the sins of mankind and all that God has so perfectly created, is in a state of imbalance. Romans 8:18-23, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

E. W. Bullinger in his book, "Number in Scripture", discusses how man has so sullied the perfection that God had once placed in Numbers. He says that man, due to his fallen state, "...cannot tell you what year it really is! No subject is in more hopeless confusion, made worse by those who desire the dates to fit in with their theories of numbers..." (Pgs. 3&4)

Regardless of man's impotency, we see in the Bible that God DID create a perfect world, both Physically and Numerically. Thus we refer to it as "The Creation Week," labelling it with the perfect number, '7'.

I have, in my personal study, found it very edifying that the Bible can NOT only be read but can also be counted. Numbers do work in the Bible, especially in the A.V. 1611.

God, Himself, places high value on numerals, thus He appropriately named a book after them called, NUMBERS. The Bible and God refer to people who can COUNT as being wise. Psalm 90:12, "So teach us to number our days..." Revelation 13:18, "Here is wisdom, Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six." David, speaking of God's OMNISCIENCE and WISDOM, refers to Him as the One Who, Psalm 147:4,5, "...tellethe the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite." Numbers are God's "secret" code. Much can be said about this subject, but I urge the serious student to pursue this beautiful subject on his own. Many helpful books are available on this subject. Some of them are mentioned in our 'Bibliography.'

The numbers that we are dealing with are those mentioned in the Bible. In our study we shall see how numbers pertain to the 'church.' It is interesting, but the Bible begins with its first book describing '7' days and ends with its last book describing '7' churches. Our focus will be, not on the number '7', but '22'. The number '22' is mentioned 264 times in THE BOOK. 264, when divided by '12', which is the number of Divine Administration, leaves us again with '22'. Or $22 \times 12 = 264$. What then is so significant about this number. As we shall see, it is a number that refers to 'LIGHT'.

In John 8:12, "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world;...", and sure enough, John mentions this word, 'light', exactly 22 times in his entire gospel. Psalm 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." And again, David in keeping with his theme, divides this chapter, i.e. Psalm 119, into '22' sections according to the Hebrew alphabet. There are exactly '22' alphabet in the Hebrew language. Also the total number of books in a proper Bible are '66'. This number divided by '3' gives us '22'. Indeed God's Word, THE BOOK, is a LIGHT unto our path.

Our above mentioned examples show us that the number 22 applies to LIGHT and that this word, and its descriptive number, apply to Jesus Christ, God's Physical Word (John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.") and also to The Bible, God's Written Word. We will also note with other examples that any thing that has to do with 'LIGHT' in the Bible, is most definitely marked by the number 22.

Let us now turn to Exodus 25:31-37, "And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candle-stick out of the other side: Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, accord-ing to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it."

We have here the description of the Candlestick that was to be placed in the Tabernacle. If one would take note; There are '7' stems on the Candlestick. The middle stem is also its main shaft. This 'middle stem' or main shaft' bore '3' more stems or branches on either of its sides, giving us '6' stems on both sides. Each stem or branch held '3' bowls. That is, '6' stems holding '3' bowls each, making '18' bowls. Now, the 'main shaft', itself, held '4' bowls, giving us a total of '22' bowls. These '22' bowls held the oil and the wicks, which were lit by the priests, for the significance and purpose of giving LIGHT.

Let us go to the book which God called NUM-BERS, chapter 3, verses 38-39,. "But those that en-camp before the tabernacle toward the east, even before the tabernacle of the congregation eastward, shall be Moses, and Aaron and his sons, keeping the charge of the sanctuary for the charge of the children of Israel; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death. All that were numbered of the Levites, which Moses and Aaron numbered at the command-

ment of the LORD, throughout their families, all the males from a month old and upward, were twenty and two thousand."

We have here the numbering of the Levites who were encamped toward the eastern side of the Tab-ernacle. Since the Sun rises in the east, we will, again, see a number that is significant to LIGHT. The total number of Levites that were appointed to minister 'light' unto the people is mentioned here as '22,000'. '22' x '1,000' = '22,000'. '1,000' in the Bible is the number for the 'glory of God.' Daniel 7:10, "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thou-sands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him:..." Revelation 5:11, "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." God is being glorified in these passages, and the expression that is used to describe this act is mentioned in the multiples of thousands. Thus '1,000' is the glory of God. These '22,000' Levites took care of the ministrations of 'light' in the Tabernacle, to the Glory of God.

These and many other such examples show us the perfection in the Word of God and also go on to prove that God's Word is indeed, GOD'S WORD, given by divine inspiration and that there is no other book in the entire universe that can come anywhere even near to the BIBLE, i.e. the A.V. of 1611. The examples are too numerous and thus we cannot explain them away as mere coincidences. But let us not deviate from the sub-ject at hand. Our purpose is to show that the 'church' is LOCAL and VISIBLE even from a numerical standpoint.

'22' being the number of LIGHT applies to 1) the Candlestick, 2) God's written Word and also to 3) God's Physical Word, i.e. the Lord Jesus Christ. Besides these God has another LIGHT giving agency on earth. That is His true church.

In Matthew 5:14 Jesus told His church, "Ye are the light of the world." Note again that the church was already in existence at this time. The events that are mentioned in Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 6:12-49 are recorded by Matthew from a different perspective in Matthew chapters 5-7. Since Christ compares His 'Bride', the church, to a LIGHT, He keeps His usage of the word Ekklesia to exactly '22' times, throughout the Bible. Now we know that the entire Bible is God's own word, but there are some "red-lettered" editions of the Bible that distinguish between what other authors wrote and that which was spoken directly by the Lord Jesus Christ. If the reader has such an edition, it will be seen that all of the verses that we shall refer to, where the word Ekklesia was directly used by our Lord, will be found printed in the 'red' color.

Christ compares His church, not just to 'Light', but also to a 'candlestick.' This can be found, not only in the gospel of Matthew 5:14-15 "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." But more strikingly in Revelation 1:20, "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden

candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." After such a comparison, and probably to put a "double-emphasis" on this fact, our Lord Jesus keeps His usage of the word, Ekklesia or church, to exactly '22' times in the entire New Testament. The verses where Christ mentioned this word are as follows:

1) Matthew 16:18 "my church" 2) Matthew 18:17 "the church" 3) Matthew 18:17 "the church" 4) Revelation 1:11 "the seven churches" 5) Revelation 1:20 "the seven churches" 6) Revelation 1:20 "the seven churches" 7) Revelation 2:1 "the church of Ephesus" 8) Revelation 2:7 "the churches" 9) Revelation 2:8 "the church in Smyrna" 10) Revelation 2:11 "the churches" 11) Revelation 2:12 "the church in Pergamos" 12) Revelation 2:17 "the churches" 13) Revelation 2:18 "the church in Thyatira" 14) Revelation 2:23 "the churches" 15) Revelation 2:29 "the churches" 16) Revelation 3:1 "the church in Sardis" 17) Revelation 3:6 "the churches" 18) Revelation 3:7 "the church in Philadelphia" 19) Revelation 3:13 "the churches" 20) Revelation 3:14 "the church of the Laodiceans" 21) Revelation 3:22 "the churches" 22) Revelation 22:16 "the churches"

I request the reader to go to our preceding chapter, entitled "Scripturally", and check the notes for each one of these passages. These are the only '22' passages in the entire Bible, where we find that Christ, from His own lips uttered the word Ekklesia, and this in keeping with His comparison of the church, to a LIGHT.

Of these passages, we can concretely affirm that '21' of them are, beyond any doubt, references to LOCAL and VISIBLE churches. It is only Matthew 16:18 that most of the Ecumenical crowd would claim as referring to a Universal, Invisible Church. If that is the case, then the odds are 21 to 1. Why would Christ, so clearly, refer to local churches '21' times and cause confusion in just '1' verse? Oh, but it is NOT Christ, who is causing the confusion (I Corinthians 14:33 "For God is not the author of confusion...") it is the Universal, Invisible Churchite. This verse, i.e. Matthew 16:18, will be clearly expounded in our succeeding chapter entitled, "PRACTICALLY."

Jesus Christ, in saying that His LOCAL and VISIBLE church is the LIGHT of the world, kept true to His word, even NUMERICALLY. To split these '22' references in any way would ruin their numerical significance and cause great confusion. There are over '22' churches in our previous '115' passages that are mentioned by their location.

Also, of the 115 passages in our previous chapter, if we were to eliminate '5' passages, i.e. Acts 7:38, which speaks of Israel in the Old Testament, Acts 19:32,39 and 41 which pertain, not to the New Testament church, but to the Greek civil or legislative assembly and Hebrews 12:23, which speaks of the future glorified church, it would leave us with 110 references, which speak of local and visible churches, here upon this earth. '22' x '5' = '110'. There would be those, who would include Ephesians 5:27 as speaking of a "future church." But

the context reveals to us that it is an Abstract/Generic reference to the church and not a Futuristic/Prospective one. Refer to note #73. "That he might present it to himself a glorious church." (Emphasis mine). The word 'IT' could refer to the Ephesian church or any other church for that matter. It is an Abstract reference to the church, while here on earth.

V. PRACTICALLY

In this chapter, we shall study the purpose and practicality of a church. We shall see which kind of a church is more "ideal" or "practical", a local and visible church or a universal and invisible church. In order to do so, we must once again make clear the fact that, the New Testament church was established by our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, well before the day of Pentecost. The reason for such a clarification is that, if the period of the establishment of the church can be determined then the purpose of its establishment can also be defined.

I have heard many sermons on Matthew 16:18. Most of these preachers confuse the masses with a lot of linguistic jargon. They stress the words, "WILL BUILD", in this passage and insinuate to the listener that Christ is speaking of building His Church, yet in the future. After such a statement, they immediately add their conclusion that, since Christ spake "futuristically", what better time to start His Church than on the day of Pentecost? Such is the reasoning of the entire Ecumenical world today. They rigorously insist that "the Holy Spirit baptized all the believers on the day of Pentecost into a Mystical, Uni-versal, Invisible Body of Christ, or Church." This "theory" is a result of "ultra or hyper-dispensationalism" and lacks any Scriptural support. Of course, it sounds good and is palatable to every "Tom, Dick and Harry" in today's, so called "Christian" world. But it is the most dangerous and deceptive device of the devil. It is uniting all of the "denominations" in the "Christian" world under one banner, and preparing them as a "One World Church", which will meet its doom in the '7' year tribulation.

Many a statement can be manipulated, simply by restating it with the emphasis on the words that were not originally meant to be emphasized. Much of the same manipulation concerns the subject of the 'church.' Here in Matthew 16:18 if the reader would only examine the word 'BUILD', much confusion can be evaded.

The word used here in the Greek is "oikodomeo." This word literally means, "to build up," "to strengthen," or "To edify," as it has been translated elsewhere in the New Testament. Paul in Ephesians 4:12,16,29, uses this same word and there we see it translated as "edifying."

We use the term "body - building" to refer to a person who performs physical exercise. By this, we do not mean that that person is establishing a body that was previously non-existent, but that the person is "building - up" the body that he/she already has. Even so, Jesus Christ was not speaking of establishing His church, but rather edifying it "upon the Rock." Christ's Ekklesia was already

established and existing, it only needed edifying, i.e. building up or strengthening.

Thus, Christ established His church, during the early part of His ministry. Refer to Luke 6:12-49, and Mark 3:13-19. This church consisted of the twelve apostles. It was LOCAL, in that they gathered themselves around Christ (Mark 3:14, "...that they should be with him..." Mark 6:30, "And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus;...") within the regions of Jerusalem and VISIBLE, just as visible as Christ Himself was. In I John 1:1, John excitedly explains Christ's "tangibility." "That which was from the begin-ning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life."

Jesus Christ ordained them to be with Him so that He could later send them forth to preach. This was His purpose in establishing a local and visible church. Given below are a list of responsibilities that Christ gave to His church, which they possessed and performed before the day of Pentecost. Observe:

1) Christ was their Head and Founder. Matthew 23:6-9, "And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." Matthew 16:18, "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." II Timothy 2:19, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

2) They had pastors. At first it was Jesus, Himself, and then He charged Peter to take over. The word for 'pastor' in the Greek is 'poimen' and it literally means 'pastor' or 'shepherd.' John 10:11,14, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep...I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." Acts 1:15, "And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty.)" John 21:15-17, "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? he saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."

3) They were baptized and were baptizing. Matthew 3:6, "And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." John 4:1,2, "When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more

disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples.)" Acts 1:22, "Beginning from the baptism of John,..."

4) They had a membership roll. Acts 1:13-15, "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty.)" Matthew 10:1-5, "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples...Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them,..." Luke 6:12-16 (Chose his apostles.) I Corinthians 14:40, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

5) They had the Holy Spirit. John 20:22, "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

6) They had a treasurer. John 12:4-6, "Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein." John 13:29, "For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor."

7) They sang together. Matthew 26:30, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives." Hebrews 2:12, "...I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee."

8) They had prayer meetings. Acts 1:12-15 Verse 14, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication..." Luke 9:28, "...he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray."

9) They had the Lord's supper. Matthew 26:26-28, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

10) They had discipline in their church. Matthew 18:15-20, "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto

thee as an heathen man and a publican..." Luke 17:3, "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him."

11) They had the Gospel. Matthew 4:23, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom..." Mark 1:1, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;" Matthew 9:35, "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom,..." Matthew 11:4,5, "Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:...the poor have the gospel preached to them."

12) They were ordained. Mark 3:14, "And he ordained twelve..." John 15:16, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you,..."

13) They had a missions program. Matthew 10:1- 11:1, "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city. Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of

Israel, till the Son of man come. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelze-bub, how much more shall they call them of his household? Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's re-ward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities."

14) They were commissioned. Matthew 28:18-20, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

This list is by no means complete, but it is sequential. I re-emphasize that they possessed and performed all of these 'responsibilities' before the day of Pentecost. Let us take a few notes; A pastor can only be had by a local church, unless, of course, one believes in "Popery." Even then, the Pope CANNOT oversee and be caretaker of all of his sheep at the same time. how about a treasurer? How can a Universal, Invisible Church have a treasurer? Where would he be and how would he gather the money? Even if he did, it would only be invisible money!

Consider a membership roll. How would you go about enlisting the names of all the members of a Universal, Invisible Church? Too, without a membership list, how would they gather for prayer meetings? How would they determine if all of the members were present? For if all of the members cannot be gathered together, how can they be commissioned or even ordained? Just how could they go out and preach? These questions might seem far fetched and unnecessary, but if one is serious in considering church matters, then each one of these questions is valid. For they go to prove the utter impracticality of the Universal, Invisible Church. And if a church is impractical then Christ's purposes are defeated.

But, you say; "A person need not belong to a local church. Neither is it essential for anyone to be sent FROM a local church, in order to fulfil the Great Commis-sion. A person can work more freely and efficiently, without the involvement of a group of people in his/her life."

Those who support such reasoning are basically implying that they 'do not want to be under subjection of any higher authority.' That they 'do not wish to be accountable to any Christ made organization or institu-tion, here on earth.' This is the very reason why we have 'preachers' "coming out of our ears." Every one that comes along claims to be INDEPENDENT, meaning that they do not identify with or belong to any LOCAL church. "Freelance" preachers!

I recall a man, who claimed to be such a preacher. He received funding from a local church, somewhere in the United States. There was a time, when the church, that so lovingly sent contributions toward his "ministry", asked him to give a general report as to "how their money was being used!" To this, the preacher was outraged and wrote back to the pastor of that church, stating that they had no business in interfering with his affairs, and that they could stop the money, if they were going to further question him about it.

Such are the attitudes of these "independent" preachers. They claim that God called them, and in most cases, that He did so directly, i.e. through visions, dreams, strong feelings, and emotions, etc., due to which they are directly accountable to God and not to any church. These so-called "independent preachers," the ones who are unaffiliated with any church, have come in excess and they most often preach, 'what they like,' 'where they like,' and 'how they like.' No Christ ordained organization or institution upon this earth is to check their doctrine or even discipline. Thus, today in "Christendom," we have new denominations and even cults popping up more frequently than we have people genuinely being saved. The undiscipline of these "preachers" has caused many to turn away from the true Gospel. In most cases, those who have turned away even become ANTI - CHRISTIAN. Paul, with much sorrow warned the early churches concerning such preachers.

Philippians 3:17-19, "Brethren, be followers to-gether of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and

whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)" Romans 16:17-18, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." II Corinthians 11:13-15, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming them-selves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

The Lord Jesus Christ organized and ordained the twelve apostles into a church with the very purpose of sending them forth to preach the Gospel. Matthew 10:5-7, "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Mark 3:14, "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach." This, they were to do, beginning from Jerusalem even unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part, of the earth." Why Jerusalem? Because this church was LOCAL to that city.

When Jesus spoke His final words upon this earth and gave the Great Commission, He did NOT generally say that "every person who believes on Me should take the gospel out." But rather, He called His small church aside, into a mountain, and privately commanded them to fulfil the Commission of preaching and teaching the Gospel. Matthew 28:10, 16-20, "Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid; go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me...Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All Power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matthew 16:19 "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." He had already given "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" to His church. Thus the authority to take the Gospel forth remains with a LOCAL, NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH. Any one who wishes to carry the Gospel forth, MUST be authorized by and sent from such a church.

Paul explains this to the church in Rome, (NOT Catholic), Romans 10:14-15, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is

written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" And true to his words, Paul himself was authorized and sent from a local New Testament church. We see the events beautifully illustrated in the book of Acts 13:1-4, "Now there were in the church at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus." As a matter of fact, one cannot find any preacher in the book of Acts, who was unaffiliated and separate from a local church, except maybe Apollos, in Acts 18:24-28, "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ." But even he, at that time was not completely informed in Christ's doctrine and it took Aquila and Priscilla, who at that time were members in Ephesus, to "expound unto him the way of God more perfectly." A detailed study about 'Achaia', would reveal to the honest reader that there was a church in existence in Achaia. Later, Paul in his epistles, refers to the churches of Achaia and Macedonia as being prominent in sending forth preachers and in supporting the Gospel ministry. Acts 19:21, "After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem,..." Romans 15:25-27, "But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things." I Corinthians 16:15, "I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.)" II Corinthians 1:1, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia." II Corinthians 9:1-2, "For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago;..." II Corinthians 11:9-10, "And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was

chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burden-some unto you, and so will I keep myself. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia."

To restate it simply, our Lord Jesus Christ, authoritatively committed to His church three things:

1) Doctrine. Matthew 7:28-29, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Mark 1:19-22, "And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him. And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sab-bath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes." Luke 4:32, "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power." Acts 2:42, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

2) Discipline. Matthew 18:15-17 (quoted earlier) Luke 17:3-4, "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."

3) Declaration of His doings, i.e. the Gospel. Luke 24:44-48, "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remis-sion of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." Matthew 28:18-20 (quoted earlier).

If these divine duties are to be fulfilled, and they MUST be fulfilled, then in all PRACTICALITY, it can be accomplished only through a local, New Testament church. This is the only SCRIPTURAL way.

VI. LOGICALLY

It has been said that, "the problem with common sense is that it is not very common." The "logic" and reasoning of the Bible are so simple that anyone who possesses this precious quality called "common sense," will doubtless grasp its interpretations. More than any human, the best interpreter of the Bible is the BIBLE, itself.

We have seen throughout our preceding chapters that the Greek word for church is Ekklesia. And that this word applies to "a called out assembly or group of people, who gather in a specific place at specific periods and for specific purposes," only and always. Also Christ used this word in reference to HIS CHURCH. This church was unlike the Old Testament Israel and also the Greek civil or legislative assembly. The word Ekklesia was used in three different senses:

- 1) Abstractly/Generically
- 2) Specifically/Particularly
- 3) Futuristically/Prospectively

Christ's Ekklesia or church was compared to three different objects, in the New Testament:

- 1) A Body
- 2) A Building
- 3) A bride

Ekklesia, as detailed, appears '115' times in the New Testament. The Englishman's Greek Concordance shows that '79' of these '115' references appear in the singular and the other '36' in the plural. When context-ually examined, most of these '79' references apply directly to particular or specific LOCAL assemblies or congregations of churches.

At this point, there would be many who agree about the local church, but yet they go on to say that the Bible also speaks of a Universal, Invisible Church. What they are saying in reality is that, the Bible speaks of two different kinds of churches. one LOCAL and VISIBLE, the other UNIVERSAL and INVISIBLE. The latter, they also refer to as the TRUE CHURCH. This is Scofieldism at its best.

The kind of reasoning would imply that the Bible is contradicting itself. Passages such as Ephesians 4:4, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." would be very hard to explain. In such a case, we would be safer in saying that 'the human interpreter' is the one who is contra-dicting, and NOT the Bible. Contradictions are confusions brought about due to careless expositions. But the Bible is God's Holy Book, and it most definitely cannot contra-dict and confuse, for God, who is its author does NOT cause confusion. I Corinthians 14:33, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all chur-ches of the saints."

In the book of Ephesians, Paul mentions the word Ekklesia some '9' times in the singular. These '9' verses are the "strongholds" of the most rabid advocates of the Universal, Invisible Church theory. Rosco Brong, Dean of the Lexington Baptist College explains in his notes on "The Church in Ephesians":

"Actually, to speak of a 'local' church is like speak-ing of wet water, hot fire or cold inc. There is no other in a Biblical sense. The use of the word 'church' to mean a meeting house, a denomination, or a universal hierarchy or religious monstrosity, visible or invisible, is completely unscriptural.

In the Bible the word 'church' (Greek 'ekklesia') means assembly, only and always. It never refers to an unknown, not assembled, confused and scattered

multi-tude. Such a 'church' exists only in the imagination of heretics desperately trying to justify their schisms." (Pg. 17c)

The use of Abstract/Generic nouns is very com-mon in our 'day to day' conversations. But when the application of the noun is made, then it particularizes or becomes specific. For example, the words, School, Telephone, Automobile, Computer, Aeroplane, etc., etc. If we were to say, "Children in India start School at the age of '3'." We do NOT mean a Universal, Invisible School! When the Abstract/Generic noun, 'School', is applied to every child, it then becomes Particular /Specific.

Let us say, "The Telephone is one of the greatest inventions." By this we do NOT mean a Universal, Invis-ible Telephone! When the Abstract/Generic noun, 'Telephone', is made Particular/Specific, it then applies to every Telephone. The same is true with all the other nouns, that begin with the article, 'the'. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language declares; "'the' The definite article...: 1) Before singular or plural nouns and noun phrases that denote particular specified persons or things. 2) Before a noun, and generally generic" the human arm." (Pg. 1333 Emphasis mine)

Why is it then, that all of the other Generic /Abstract nouns make sense to us, but only when it comes to 'the church' we tend to lose our sense? When the Bible compares the church to a BRIDE, we definitely do NOT think of a Universal, Invisible BRIDE. Every 'Bride' we know is local, visible and tangible. How about a building? When the Bible compares the church to a building, how many would think of a Universal, Invisible Building? It is ridiculous to argue these points, yet that is exactly what an argument FOR the Universal, Invisible Church would be, ridiculous!

Let us take Ephesians 5:23, for another Scriptural example. "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." There are '4' Abstract/Generic nouns mentioned here. Husband, Wife, Christ and Church. Any intelligent person knows that Paul is NOT talking of a Universal, Invisible Husband or a Universal, Invisible Wife. All the 'husbands' and 'wives' we know are local, visible and tangible. Even Christ is LOCAL and VISIBLE, in that He is in Heaven, at the right hand of the Father, in His glorified body, which was seen by Stephen, the apostle John and by over 500 people. Revelation 1:9-17 and I Corinthians 15:5-6. We have no problem in understanding '3' of the '4' generic nouns which Paul used, but yet, when it comes to the church, our sense seems to be lost. This, as a result of our coming under Satan's influence. For he wants to make us discredit the ONLY Christ ordained organization upon this earth. But, you say, why should he do that? It is because of Christ's strong promise concerning His church in Matthew 16:18, "...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

When Christ, Himself, was upon this earth, He was Satan's prime target. Now that He is ascended, Satan's prime target has become Christ's representative upon this earth, i.e. Christ's Body and Bride, the true local, visible,

New Testament churches. All of Satan's forces are targeted in on destroying Christ's churches. If what the churches had accomplished during the days of the Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles, had continued, without Satan's interference, the world would have been completely evangelized and Satan would have lost much ground. Instead, Satan and his servants, the so-called "Christians", have come up with a Universal, Invisible Church and ever since ignorance has increased concerning the true Christ ordained church and apostasy has become rampant.

I have been hearing of scores of organizations, such as The World Vision, F.E.B.A. etc., who have been saying that they wish to completely evangelize the world by the year 2000A.D. Try as they might, with all their modern printing equipment, Radio Broadcasts, transportation facilities, computer networks, fax machines, etc., etc., they will still fall very short, for a 'man - made' organization can NEVER match the efficiency of that which Christ began, i.e. His local church. For when, one evangelizes in the Christ ordained manner, i.e., through a local church, the rewards and results are great and most of all Christ is honoured, in that it is done in a Scriptural manner.

Dr. Luke and Bro. Paul describe the wonderful results that they acquired by abiding true to the New Testament method of evangelizing through a local church. Acts 19:10, "And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." Romans 10:14-18, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." without any technological aids. So the ONLY logical and sensible church, in order to accomplish Christ's purposes upon this earth, is a LOCAL and VISIBLE church.

VII. CONCLUSION

Let's sum it up! Our chapter entitled, Etymo-logically, is our strongest and best infallible proof concerning the LOCAL CHURCH. In that chapter, we defined the root word behind the term 'church.' That being, in the Koine Greek language, the word "Ekklesia." Again, our present day Dictionaries and Greek Lexicons define any term according to their current usage. This is very misleading to say the least. The term, Ekklesia, was defined for us in our chapter, according to its usage in the days of our Lord and His apostles. Upon such an examination, we determined that Ekklesia applied to "an assembly or group of people, who met in a specific place, at specific periods and for specific purposes."

Secondly, the "Scripturally" chapter gave us another infallible proof. We had examined all of the Scriptures where the word Ekklesia was mentioned, contextually. '115' in all. Of these, it was seen that in '100' verses the term Ekklesia applied Particularly/Specifically to LOCAL churches. '1' verse shows the Future/Prospective church and the remaining '14' verses speak of the church in a Generic/Abstract sense.

It is these '14' verses which are most often misrepresented as speaking of a Universal, Invisible Church. This misrepresentation is done, not by the Bible, but by the person who teaches these verses as such. The problem with such a teacher is that, he/she lacks a proper understanding of grammar, for whenever the Generic/Abstract noun is applied, its application then becomes Particular/Specific.

In our third chapter entitled, Numerically, we had studied the number '22'. It was shown that '22' in the Bible applies to LIGHT. This LIGHT depicts: 1) The Physical Word of God, i.e. Jesus Christ - John 8:12, "...I am the light of the world;..." 2) The Written Word of God. A.V.1611 - Psalm 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." 3) The Candlestick in the tabernacle. Exodus 25:31-37, "...they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it." 4) The church. Matthew 5:14-15. "Ye are the light of the world...a candlestick: and it giveth light unto all that are in the house."

Jesus Christ compared His church to a candlestick and a LIGHT. In keeping with its numerical significance, the Lord Jesus Christ uttered the word Ekklesia, from His own lips, in exactly '22' verses. Each one of these verses, when examined contextually, reveal to us that Christ was speaking strictly of and directly to His local churches. It is interesting to note also, that, all of the objects/subjects, to which the number '22' or the word LIGHT applies, are LOCAL and VISIBLE.

Our fourth chapter, Practically, listed for us some of the divine duties that were given to the church by their founder and Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. These duties, in all practicality, could only be fulfilled by a LOCAL church. Much can be said about the practical aspects of a LOCAL and VISIBLE church. But suffice it to say that, if a church is impractical, such as the Universal, Invisible Church, then Christ's purposes upon this earth are defeated. And this would cause Satan to triumph, exceedingly, as he already is doing to the most part in the so-called "Christian" world.

Finally, we had Logically seen the simplicity of the term 'church' as used in the Bible. This term was used in the Bible in three different senses: 1) Abstractly /Generically, 2) Particularly/Specifically and 3) Future /Prospectively.

Of the '115' references that we had studied, '14' times the word 'church' is mentioned Abstractly /Generically. In '1' verse it is spoken of as being yet in the Future/Prospectively. But the remaining '100' verses, beyond the shadow of a doubt, apply Particularly /Specifically to LOCAL and VISIBLE churches.

Our Lord Jesus Christ had established a true, local, visible, New Testament church and had commissioned it to propagate. This has been God's

command and commission for His entire creation. Genesis 1:24,25,28. "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good...And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it..." His delight is in seeing "kind beget kind." Humans to beget more humans, cattle to produce more cattle and on into the New Testament, believers "begetting" believers and ultimately, churches "begetting" churches. This pattern of local churches begetting other local churches can be seen throughout the New Testament. It all began with the church in Jerusalem. As in the physical world, Adam and Eve have been the beginning of "human succession," thus also in the Spiritual world, the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ and His Bride, Eve, the first church in Jerusalem, have been the beginning of "church succession." I Cor-inthians 15:45-48, "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." II Corinthians 11:2,3, "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his sub-tilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." Ephesians 5:23-32, "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. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 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. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." Acts 16:5, "And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily."

These local and visible churches, beginning from the one in Jerusalem, that Christ established, have throughout history succeeded one another and have come to be known today as true, Baptist churches. True Baptists have always followed this pattern of succession and have held strongly, to the LOCAL and VISIBLE position of the church as seen in our Introduction. History holds many

records of their age long perpetuity or lineage. Both, Baptists and their enemies, stand witness to this fact.

William R. Byers states; "Baptists are the only body today that has existed through the centuries and of which none has been able to document a human founder. The Baptist people have existed since the days of Our Lord and His disciples." (Taken from Historical Statements concerning Baptists and their Origin" by William R. Byers of the Bearing Precious Seed Ministry.)

Cardinal Hosius, a Roman Catholic and President of the Council of Trent, December 13, 1545 to December 4, 1564, said; "Were it not for the fact that Baptists have been grievously tormented and cut off with the knife during the past 1200 years, they would swarm greater than all the reformers...If the truth of religion were to be judged by the readiness and boldness of which a man or any sect shows in suffering, then the opinions and persuasions of no sect can be truer and surer than those Anabaptists, since they have been more generally punished or that they have cheerfully and steadfastly undergone and have offered themselves to the most cruel sort of punishment than these people." (taken from Orchard, "History of Baptists," pg. 364)

John Clark Ridpath, a great Methodist historian states, "I should not readily admit that there was a Baptist Church as far back as 100A.D., although without doubt there were Baptist churches then, as ALL CHRISTIANS were then Baptists." (Taken from Jarrell, "Church Per-petuity," pg. 59)

A long list of statements made, both by Pro and Anti-Baptists could be called to the witness stand, but that would require another volume. As has been said in the beginning, that there are three basic definitions of the church.

The Roman Catholic Definition which states that; "All Catholics, throughout the world consist of a UNI-VERSAL or CATHOLIC CHURCH. This is the Universal and Visible definition."

The Protestant definition which states that; "All of the believers, since the day of Pentecost, comprise a UNIVERSAL and INVISIBLE CHURCH."

And lastly, the Bible or the Baptist definition which says that; "The church is a body of baptized believers gathering in a specific place at specific periods and for specific purposes."

Roman Catholics and Protestants have always held to the UNIVERSAL CHURCH theory (whether visi-ble or invisible). Due to this, their very definition of the 'church' betrays them of having any link with the true churches.

True Baptists have always held to the LOCAL and VISIBLE perspective of the church. This was due to the fact that they held on to the promise that was made to them by their Founder, regarding their perpetuity. Matt-hew 16:18, "...I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matthew 28:20, "...and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Ephesians 3:21, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Given below is a list of the various denominations, which have cropped up, during the past centuries. All of them have a human founder and their own

"concept" of the church. They do not and cannot qualify as being true churches. For a true New Testament church would have the following "qualifications". It would have been started:

- 1) In the Right place, i.e. Jerusalem
- 2) At the Right period, i.e. around 30 A.D.
- 3) By the Right person, i.e. Jesus Christ.

Denomination	Founder	Place	Date(A.D.)
1) Roman Catholic	Gregory VII	Rome	590
2) Greek Orthodox	Pontius	Greece	869
3) Lutheran	Martin Luther	Germany	1530
4) Episcopal (CSI)	Henry VIII	England	1534
5) Presbyterian	John Calvin	France	1536
6) Methodist	John Wesley	England	1740
7) Brethren	Alexander Mack	U.S.A.	1708
8) Evangelical	Jacob Albright	U.S.A.	1800
9) Church of Christ	A. Campbell	U.S.A.	1827
10) Nazarene	S.F. Breeze	U.S.A.	1835
11) Salvation Army	William Booth	U.S.A.	1865
12) Christadelphians	John Thomas	U.S.A.	1844
13) Watch Tower	C.T. Russell	U.S.A.	1879
14) Mormon (LDS)	Joseph Smith	U.S.A.	1830
15) 7th day Adventist	Ellen White	U.S.A.	1840
16) Church of God	Daniel Warner	U.S.A.	1880
17) Pentecostal	Charles Parham	U.S.A.	1901
18) Assemblies of God	K.H. Burruss	U.S.A.	1914
19) Hebron	Bakth Singh	India	1959
20) Jesus Calls	D.G.S. Dhinaker	India	1970

This list is by no means complete, for there are over 2,000 denominations, cults and sects in the so-called "Christian" world, today. True Baptists are the ONLY group who qualify in these ranks, for they began in the right place, Jerusalem, at the right period, around 30 A.D. and have the right person, as their founder, i.e., Jesus Christ.

After having gone through all of the Infallible Proofs, the reader must now, particularize that which was said in the abstract That is: "How important is the Lord's church to me?" "Am I a part of a true, local, New Testament Baptist church?" and "If the theories that I had learnt are conflicting with these Infallible Proofs, then which do I choose? May the reader put away all sentiments while contemplating these personal questions, and seek only that which is Scriptural. For WOE! be unto the person, who belittles and neglects the Lord's true church. I Corinthians 3:11-19, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver,

precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built there-upon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness."

We live today, in a world where "Laodicean" attitudes prevail. Many would merely shrug their shoulders at a vital subject, such as the one presented in this book. One thing that we must be cautioned about, is that, the majority CAN be WRONG. Although most of the "Christ-ian" world believes in a Universal, Invisible Church, that does not necessitate the Bible to support their view. The wisdom of the wisest man is foolishness before God. Thus also it is with the Universal, Invisible Church. Those who continue to advocate it, in spite of having gone through the Infallible Proofs, are basically declaring that their knowledge, regarding the true nature of the church, is as Universally Invisible as their Universal, Invisible Church.

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Printed by:

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3175 Briar Hill Road
Lexington, Kentucky 40516

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