

OUR CONCEPT OF THE CHURCH SHOULD BE FOUNDED ON BIBLE TRUTHS. FAR TOO OFTEN THE MODEL FOR THE CHURCH IS BASED ON AN EDUCATIONAL, MILITARY, OR CORPORATE MODE. THE BIBLICAL MODE EMPHASIZES A FAMILY, FELLOWSHIP, BODY, BUILDING, AND BRIDE.

SO WHAT WE CALL THE CHURCH IMPLIES HOW WE VIEW IT. THE NEW TESTAMENT GREEK WORD FOR CHURCH IS "ECCLESIA, MEANING AN ASSEMBLY OF CALLED OUT ONE'S. THE TERM IS APPLIED TO

1. THE WHOLE BODY OF CHRISTIANS IN ONE CITY (ACTS 13:1)
2. A CONGREGATION (1 COR 14:19)
3. THE WHOLE BODY OF BELIEVERS ON EARTH (EPH. 5:32)

OUR ENGLISH WORD CHURCH IS DERIVED FROM THE GREEK WORD "KURIAKE" MEANING, THAT WHICH BELONGS TO THE LORD. SO IN ESSENCE, THE CHURCH THEN IS A COMPANY OF PEOPLE CALLED OUT FROM THE WORLD, WHO PROFESS AN ALLEGIANCE TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

THE NEW TESTAMENT ALSO SHOWS US THE CHURCH IN OTHER FORMS.

1. THE BRIDE OF CHRIST
2. THE TEMPLE OF GOD
3. THE BODY OF CHRIST

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST: THIS IS A ILLUSTRATION USED IN BOTH THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS TO PICTURE THE UNION AND COMMUNION OF GOD AND HIS PEOPLE. Rev. 21:2 (NLT) And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a beautiful bride prepared for her husband.

THE TEMPLE OF GOD: A TEMPLE IS A PLACE IN WHICH GOD, WHO DWELLS EVERYWHERE, LOCALIZES HIMSELF IN ON PARTICULAR PLACE WHERE HIS PEOPLE MAY ALWAYS FIND HIM AT HOME.

Exodus 25:8-9 (NLT) "I want the people of Israel to build me a sacred residence where I can live among them. [9] You must make this Tabernacle and its furnishings exactly according to the plans I will show you.

SO AS GOD DWELT IN THE TABERNACLE AND TEMPLE, SO HE NOW LIVES, BY HIS SPIRIT, IN THE CHURCH. Ephes. 2:21 (NLT) We who believe are carefully joined together, becoming a holy temple for the Lord.

IN THIS SPRITUAL TEMPLE CHRISTIANS, AS PRIEST, OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES OF PRAYER, PRAISE AND GOOD WORKS.

THE BODY OF CHIST: Ephes. 2:20-22 (NLT) We are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. [21] We who believe are carefully joined together, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. [22] Through him you Gentiles are also joined together as part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

JESUS LEFT THIS EARTH MORE THAN 1900 YEARS AGO, BUT HIS PRESENCE IS STILL IN THE WORLD. HOW? THROUGH THE CHURCH. WHICH WE CALL HIS BODY. BEFORE HE LEFT THIS EARTH, CHRIST PROMISED TO ASSUME THIS NEW BODY. HOWEVER, HE USED ANOTHER ILLUSTRATION, "I AM THE VINE, YE ARE THE BRANCHES. FOR THE VINE IS IMCOMPLETE WITHOUT THE BRANCHES, AND THE BRANCHES ARE NOTHING APART FROM THE LIFE WHICH FLOWS FROM THE VINE.

SO IF CHRIST IS TO BE KNOW TO THE WORLD, IT MUST BE THROUGH THOSE WHO BEAR HIS NAME AND SHARE HIS LIFE.

AS THE CHURCH CONTINUES TO STAY CONNECTED TO HER HEAD (CHRIST), SHE WILL PRODUCE ONLY WHAT COMES THROUGH HIM.

SO WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THE CHURCH IS AN ORGANISM NOT AN ORGANIZATION. FOR AN ORGAINIZATION IS A GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS VOLUNTARILY ASSOCIATED TOGETHER FOR A CERTAIN PURPOSE. BUT AN ORGANISM IS ANY LIVING THING WHICH IS DEVELOPED BY AN INHERENT LIFE.

1 Peter 2:4-5 (NLT) Come to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God's temple. He was rejected by the people, but he is precious to God who chose him. [5] And now God is building you, as living stones, into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are God's holy priests, who offer the spiritual sacrifices that please him because of Jesus Christ.

JUST LIKE THE HUMAN BODY IS AN ORGANISM MADE UP OF MILLION LIVING CELLS, SO IS THE BODY OF CHRIST, WHICH IS COMPOSED OF BORN AGAIN SOULS. AS THE HUMAN BODY IS VITALIZED BECAUSE OF

BODY CAN ONLY FLOW ACCORDING TO HOW IT AS CHRIST WAS ANOITED AT THE JORDAN, SO THE BODY CHURCH WAS ANOITED AT PENTECOST. THE CHURCH

The picture of a body also helps us see how Jesus continues to perform His work in our world. In Ephesians Paul tells us that Jesus is the “Head of the body” (Ephes. 2:20-22). Jesus as living Head directs us—we who are His hands and feet and eyes and ears and mouth—to continue His own mission in our world. The compassion Jesus showed to the sick and weary and the sin-tormented, He still shows—through His body. When we as individuals and local groups of believers mature and become sensitive to the Lord’s guidance, Christ ministers to us and through us.