

“... let Facts be submitted to a candid world.”

What is the Ecclesia?



A Colonial Ecclesia
(a Christian Community)

What Is The Ecclesia?

Is It A Church? Is It A Cult? Is It Important?

by Ben Williams

I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you quickly: but in case I am delayed, you will know how you should conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the ecclesia of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

1 Timothy 3:14-15

The ecclesia of the living God IS the pillar and ground of the truth! That makes it important. If we can define “ecclesia,” we will have identified “the pillar and ground of the truth.” Few endeavors are as important and rewarding as this.

Word definition is a crucial factor. Some people purposely ignore it. Because of this, many people miss the true meaning of the “ecclesia.” And, because they have missed this meaning, they now find themselves unwittingly in support of an institution that the Bible warns us against.

WORD MEANINGS SHOULD NOT FLUCTUATE

Learning the origins and correct meanings of words provides answers for many things. Word studies force us to change our use of certain words after discovering we’ve been using them wrongly. Finding past errors, however, is nothing to be ashamed of – unless we refuse to correct those errors.

This quest, of course, never ends. There is more to learn than one lifetime allows, and word usage evolves. But, we can, and should, develop adequate vocabularies as well as ability to research original word meanings.

Knowing the popular usage of a word may mean very little. Contemporary dictionaries often bend to the popular (common) usage of a word as its definition. They simply parrot the fads of the masses whose popular (common) vocabulary changes ... often substantially. The masses, therefore, misuse many of

the words in their vocabularies ... and you too, most likely. To read and understand historical writings, like the Bible, you must learn the original meaning of its words. This requires that you have an etymological dictionary at your disposal along with a lexicon of the original tongue of the writing you are researching.

It can be embarrassing when you find you’ve been using a word wrongly. However, learning truth should be rewarding to everyone ... except the uncaring, or the insecure who cannot concede to having been wrong.

When I discover a word that I’ve been using wrongly, I always wonder how much I’ve contributed to today’s confusion by my misuse of the language. There have been some vital words which I’ve misused in the past. And, I’ve found that a word can cause quite a change in my life. How we use words has a great effect on us.

Words allow us to communicate. Words are tools. However, for two people to share these tools, both people must have a common understanding of word meanings. Communication requires a standard meaning of words. Otherwise, my words will mean something different to you than they do to me. For instance, a modern “day” is understood as a 24-hour period including one period of daylight and one period of darkness. However, in old Hebrew, and Greek, “day” was understood to be a period of daylight only.

Thus, words must be defined in order for the writers’ intentions to be understood. Otherwise, when I say “freedom, you may think I mean “license.” When I say “government (i.e. self-disciplined),” you may think “Washington D.C. (central rulers).” When I say “ecclesia,” you may think “church.”

If your definition of a word is different than mine, we probably will not communicate accurately. And, when a society uses words wrongly, it gets confused and debilitated. Progress stops.

The pursuit of correct word usage

is a noble endeavor – one which has a direct bearing on man’s intelligence and progress. Many people today suffer from mental disfunction – partly due to a crippled vocabulary.

Intelligence and vocabulary go hand-in-hand. Not only does intelligence produce better vocabularies, but an environment where words are used properly actually facilitates the development of intelligence in people. By the same token, an environment where word meanings are twisted or neglected produces ignorance – the kind we see in American schools today.

People have adapted by learning to read emotion, body language and vocal tone rather than depending upon word meanings. Words have become less meaningful, and gut feelings have become the mode of communication. This, of course, lowers intelligence.

The typical American continues to verbally demean himself to the level of the illiterate native who grunts in different tones to convey a message ... encouraged by public school, church, TV, low-class music, and lack of attention from parents. We have produced a generation with a withered vocabulary.

STANDARD MEANINGS

In a free and progressive society, words must be standardized. Standard definitions make it possible to use words efficiently. Just as currency (money) should be standardized to trade accurately, all things used in common need a standard description. There must be a common measure set upon things we use: by weight, by volume, by length, etc. This is especially true of words. They must be standard in their meanings. Otherwise, they don’t work.

Unfortunately, we’ve lost our standard measurements for most of the important things in our lives today – including money.

Words are building blocks for intelligent thought. Even our inner thoughts

are formed around words. They find expression in our brains by the use of words. Without words, we would have a completely different thought process – possibly like an animal, or an infant who knows no words.

We think in words. We speak in words. Since words form thought and communication, our words need standard meanings. Words should mean the same thing a month from today, and hopefully a hundred years from today, as they mean today. Historians recognize this. To understand a history record one must define the words of that record the same as the writer did hundreds of years earlier.

This is especially important when considering the Bible since it is a very old historical document. Its words have been subjected to all kinds of changes and evolution over the centuries. There have been mistranslations, re-interpretations, and changes of popular definitions. Thus, Bible words must be examined carefully. A Bible word may have meant something altogether different at the time it was written compared to what it means today. Therefore, to get the originally intended message from our Bibles, we must know what the words meant to the writers.

This brings us to the word “ecclesia” [ek-le-see-a] – one of the tragic victims of modern-day language confusion. This word is misused and mistranslated in nearly every English Bible version. This Greek word was carried over into Latin, and then English. But, during the last 500 years, in English-speaking societies, it has been popularly replaced with the English word “church.”

The word is, correctly, “ecclesia.” It should not have been replaced or changed. And, although it is hard to break old habits we should stop using the wrong word. The term “church” does not appear in the text of the New Testament. Not even once!

When people use this term, it is almost always in error. But, when we attempt to correct the problem we find that we are hampered by the popular Bible versions which consistently use “church” – the wrong word. That tends to set the error in concrete and stifle learning.

Of course, this could be corrected by teaching people to read the Scriptures in their original languages. Realistically, however, this is not a solution that can be hoped for in the near fu-

ture. This generation can hardly read English – much less Greek and Hebrew.

The word “church” was not only a bad choice for rendering “ecclesia,” it was a deliberate attempt to confuse and mislead. And, although English Bibles uniformly use “church,” it is wrong in every instance.

THE CORRECT MEANING OF “CHURCH”

Let’s start by defining the word. “Church” comes from the Old English and German word pronounced “kirché.” In Scotland, it was “kirk.”

The following entries are from the Oxford Universal English Dictionary:

Church: [Old English *cirice*, *circe*; Middle English *chereche*, *chiriche*, *chirche*; whence *churche*, *cherche*, etc.: – Greek *kuriakón* ...]

Kirk: The Northern English and Scottish form of CHURCH, in all its senses.

In the earlier Greek it was pronounced “ku-ri-á-kos” or “ku-ri-á-kon.” As you can see, this word doesn’t even resemble the Greek word “ecclesia” whose place it has usurped.

The meaning of “ku-ri-á-kos” is understood by its root: “kú-ri-os,” which means “lord.” Thus, “kuriakos” (i.e., “church”) means “pertaining to the lord.” It refers to something that pertains to, or belongs to, a lord.

The Greek “kuriakos” eventually came to be used in Old English form as “cirice” (*kee-ree-ké*), then “churche” (*kerké*), and eventually “church” in its traditional pronunciation. A church, then, is correctly something that “pertains to, or belongs to, a lord.”

Now, as you can see, there is a major problem here. The translators broke the rules in a big way. When they inserted the word “church” in the English versions, they were not translating the Greek word “kuriakos,” as one might expect. Rather, they were substituting an entirely different Greek word. This was not honest!

The word “church” would have been an acceptable translation for the Greek word “kuriakos.” However, not by the wildest imagination of the most liberal translator is it an acceptable translation for the Greek word “ecclesia.”

Are you following this? Consider it

carefully. This truth will answer many questions you’ve had about “churches,” “the kingdom,” and government.

“Ecclesia” is an entirely different word with an entirely different meaning than “kuriakos.” In fact, the Greek word “kuriakos” appears in the New Testament only twice. It is found once in I Corinthians 11:20 where it refers to “the Lord’s supper,” and once again in Revelation 1:10 where it refers to “the Lord’s day.” In both of those cases, it is translated “the Lord’s” – not “church.” This word does not appear again in the New Testament. Nonetheless, this is the unlikely and strange history of the word “church” as it came to the English language. Eventually, through the manipulation of organized religion, “church” came to replace “ecclesia” by popular acceptance. Again, I must emphasize the importance of knowing word meanings in order to know the intent of those who wrote the Scriptures.

THE CORRECT MEANING OF “ECCLESIA”

Now, let’s look at the word, “ecclesia.” This Greek word appears in the New Testament approximately 115 times. That’s just in this one grammatical form. It appears also in other forms. And in every instance, except three, it is wrongly translated “church” in the King James Version. Those three exceptions are found in Acts 19:32, 39, 41. Here, the translators rendered it “assembly” instead of “church.” But, the Greek word is exactly the same as the other 112 entries where it was changed to “church” – wrongly.

In Acts 19, “ecclesia” is a town council: a civil body in Ephesus. Thus, the translators were forced to abandon their false translation in these three instances. Nonetheless, 112 times they changed it to “church.” This fact has been covered-up under centuries of misuse and ignorance.

The Greek word “ecclesia” is correctly defined: “the called-out (ones)” [ECC = out; KALEO = call]. Thus, you can see this word was used to indicate a civil body of select (called) people.

The Encyclopedia Britannica:

In the New Testament, “ecclesia” (signifying convocation) is the only single word used for church. It

(ecclesia) was the name given to the governmental assembly of the city of Athens, duly convoked (called out) by proper officers and possessing all political power including even juridical functions.

Obviously, in Greece this had no resemblance to a church. An “ecclesia” was a civil assembly in Athens even before the writing of the New Testament.

In the Oxford Universal English Dictionary (considered the standard for the English language) the word “ecclesia” is listed in its English form ... as used by our English forefathers. (Modern forms of the word are still used – like, “ecclesiastical”).

The Oxford English Dictionary:

Ecclesia: [medæval Latin, and Greek εκκλησια – from εκκλητος; SUMMONED] – A regularly convoked assembly, especially the general assembly of Athenians. Later, the regular word for church.

Two of the most prestigious word resources in the English language confirm the fact that an “ecclesia” was originally a select civil body.

What, then, did the writers of the New Testament mean when they used the word “ecclesia” to describe a Christian body of people? Obviously, they meant the same thing: a body of Christians called out of the Roman and Judean system to come together into a separate civil community. It meant a politically autonomous body of Christians under no king but Jesus. No man ruled them! Only Christ. And, that was the reason these same Christians ran into trouble with kings and rulers; got in trouble with Caesar; were arrested, crucified and martyred. They dropped Caesar and took up Christ.

The ecclesias were diametrically opposed to the Caesars of the world. This is the well-hidden secret about the ecclesia! And, this is why we read in Acts 17, starting in verse one:

1. *Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Appolonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Judeans:*
2. *And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,*

3. *Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.*

4. *And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.*

5. *But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.*

Paul and Silas were spreading the gospel of the kingdom. What effect did it have? It caused an immediate, violent reaction from the synagogues (i.e., the churches). They set a riot afoot and sought to arrest Paul and Silas and take them out into the street.

6. *And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren to the rulers of the city crying, These that have turned the world (system) upside down are come here also;*

Paul and Silas had a reputation that preceded them. They were “turning the world (system) upside down.”

What was their inflaming message? Were they telling the people to find a minister and support him; go to church every weekend; be nice to their neighbors? Could this have been the message that set the city fathers against them? Or maybe they were asking people to send their tithes to them so they could build a nice church building and develop a “united missions board” so they could save souls all over in Africa.

No?

What then? What were these men doing to “turn the world upside down?”

7. *Whom Jason hath received (into his house): and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.*

Now is that clear? Do you see what they were doing? They were declaring ANOTHER KING! Not Caesar! Their

king was bigger than Caesar. They were forming civil bodies that no longer looked to Caesar as their king. They were forming civil outposts for Christ’s Reign! They were at war!

3. *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:*

4. *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.*

5. *Casting down concepts, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*

6. *And having in readiness to revenge all disobedience, then your obedience is fulfilled.*

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

12. *For we fight, not against flesh and blood, but against the governments, against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against spiritual wickedness in high (offices).*

Ephesians 6:12

Paul and Silas weren’t “church builders” and “soul winners” like preachers today claim. They weren’t proselytizing people from one church or synagogue to another. They were kingdom builders! They were dethroning rulers in the minds of the people and alienating them from the mental hold Caesar had upon them through heathenistic (central) government. They were teaching the principles of Christian government.

The Oxford Universal Dictionary defines the word “church”:

As used as a translation of the Latin and Greek ‘ecclesia,’ in its pre-Christian sense, it means congregations and, later, of retrospective application of the Christian sense, to the Israelites and the Old Testament saints.

In other words, the word “church” had to be perceived from a different angle – twisted – in order to become a replacement for “ecclesia.” Now, that’s interesting. What were they pulling? Why did they replace the original word? When referring to the Old Testament saints, they began using “church.” But

why didn't they use the right word? What was it about "ecclesia" they didn't like?

CHURCH AND STATE DESTROY LIBERTY

The Oxford Dictionary also has an interesting entry for "congregation":

...used by Tyndale* as a translation of "ecclesia" in the New Testament, and by the sixteenth-century reformers instead of "church." (*William Tyndale was a fifteenth-century reformer and translator – murdered by the church)

Tyndale was willing to die for God's word and truth. He didn't like the word "church." Instead, he used "congregation." Now, that tells us something!

I have a Geneva Bible (Calvin's Bible) in my office. It, too, comes from the sixteenth century. But, unfortunately, Calvin wanted the word "church" in his Geneva version. Nonetheless, godly Tyndale, and other sixteenth-century reformers who were more reputable than Calvin, did not like the word "church." They used other words like "congregation," "governmental assembly," etc.

Following that thought, we remember that in early America, the so-called "churches" were divided, politically, into two types. There was the central hierarchy type (like the Presbyterians & Episcopalians), and the independent autonomous type (like the Congregationalists). One was corporate in form with branches united under one governing body. The other was independent with each unit having its own independent governing body in each location.

By name, the independent Congregationalist type brings us back again to an obvious tie-in to the word "congregation" – the same word Tyndale chose to translate "ecclesia": an autonomous community of Christians.

It is interesting how the word "congregation" ties back in. Again, it gets us back to a concept that is so important to American history. That concept is "independence."

When you consider the fact that "ecclesia" was "a civil body politic," this is strong proof that the Christian ecclesia we read about in the New Testament was an independent civil body of Chris-

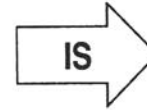
WHO CHANGED THE WORDS?

ORIGINAL MEANING

①

GREEK

"KURIAKOS"



ENGLISH

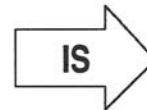
"CHURCH"



②

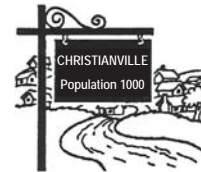
GREEK

"ECCLESIA"



ENGLISH

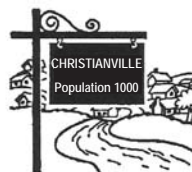
"COMMUNITY"



MODERN HOAX

GREEK

"ECCLESIA"



ENGLISH

"CHURCH"



tians – independent from human kings and governors. They wanted freedom to serve King Jesus. They weren't building and attending churches! Please understand. These weren't churches – these were ecclesias!

It's important that you stop using the wrong word – and the wrong meaning. Quit saying "church" when you mean "ecclesia"! It's an important step in retrieving your brain from the trap of religious confusion.

THE CORRECT MEANING OF "SYNAGOGUE"

"Synagogue" appears often in the Greek New Testament. It is not a Hebrew word; not a Yiddish, nor a Jewish word. It is a Greek word. It is #4864 in Strong's Greek Concordance – pronounced *syn-a-go-gay*. It simply means "an assembly" or "a place of assembly."

Now, please notice that the modern use of this word has evolved into a Jewish religious term. It has become a

Jewish assembly – exclusively. However, during the writing of the Greek New Testament, it was just an assembly – any assembly. At that time, “synagogue” could have referred to a Jewish assembly, or any other kind of assembly – religious or otherwise.

Synagogues, today, have turned religious. They are the Jewish prototypes of the churches. The modern churches are spin-offs of the Jewish synagogues.

The point is this: the first-century “kuriakos” were called “synagogues.” The disciples of Christ abandoned the synagogues (i.e., the Jewish churches) ... leaving them to the Jews.

But, by the 4th century, apostate religionists were starting to form a new organization patterned after the old synagogue. However, they could not call it “synagogue” because that name had been retained by the Jewish religious establishments. And the word “ecclesia” wouldn’t work for them because that referred to Christ’s kingdom and is opposed to religious houses and organizations. So, instead, they called them “kuriakos” (churches). These were designed to usurp the place of the ecclesias (Christian civil bodies) which had been growing since Christ’s ascension to the throne.

With the help of the synagogues and the churches (sister organizations), the state (i.e., the beast) began waging battle against the ecclesias (outposts of Christ’s kingdom on earth).

13. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman (New Jerusalem) which brought forth the man child (ecclesia).

17. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 12: 13 & 17

Now, you can understand, the tie-in between the “synagogue” and the “church.” Organizationally, they are based on the same serpent principles of ignorance, superstition and slavery.

Christians left the synagogues (later also called churches). The disciples of Christ found that the synagogues/churches were not Christian in nature. It was not their mission to build churches

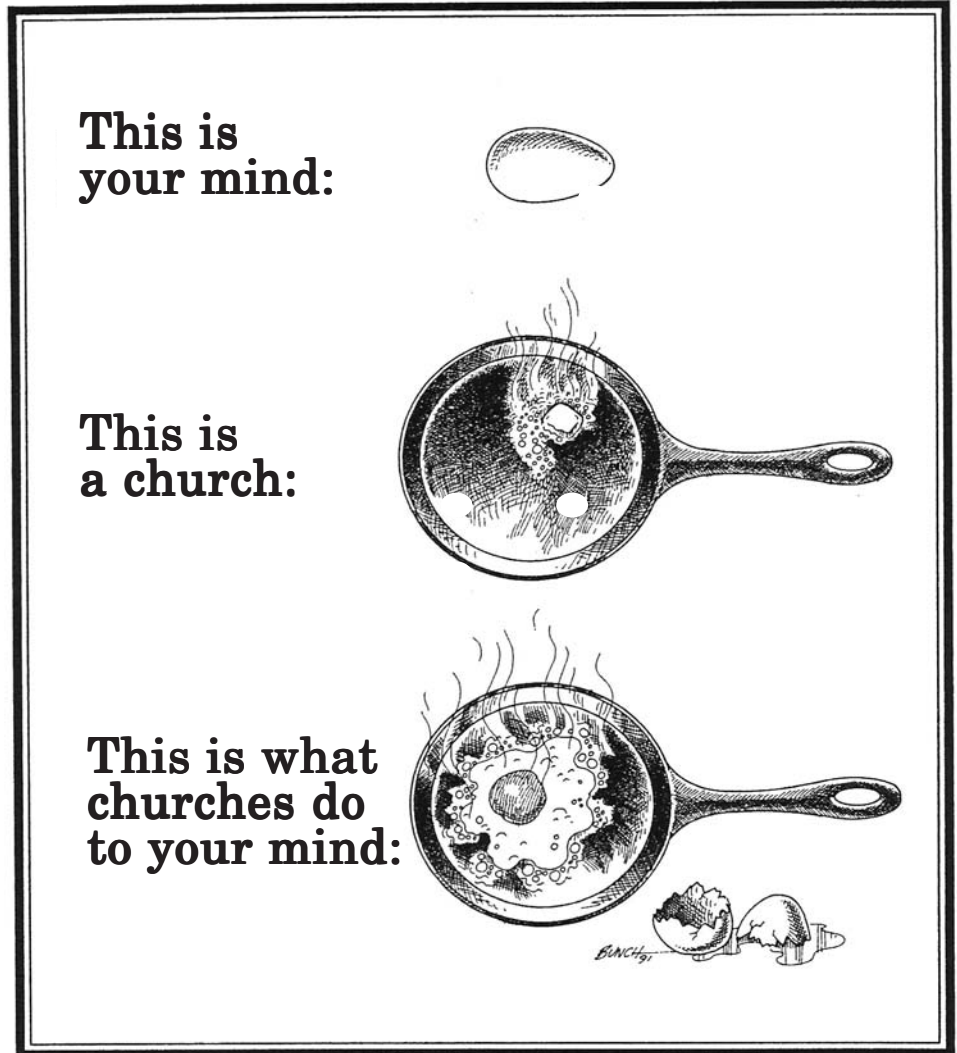
and synagogues. The New Testament Christians escaped from the heathen religion concept of church organization. They went out into the world and they established “ecclesias” (Christian communities of Christ’s reign).

The churches (synagogues) never were on the right track. They still aren’t today. They have the same bureaucratic structure as central government. Central government structure promotes conformity and blind obedience to the rulers, whether they be priests or bureau-

crats. For this reason, the first-century Christians left the synagogues/churches.

CHRISTIAN CIVIL BODY

Independent self-government under Christ! That is what the ecclesia represents – not a religious organization for meeting on weekends. The Bible does not authorize churches to take the place of ecclesias. The change of words was not sanctioned by God or the Scripture.



JESUS CHRIST WANTS YOU OUT OF THE MIND-SCRAMBLING CHURCHES.

**READ THE BIBLE YOURSELF!
THINK FOR YOURSELF!**

HELP BREAK MIND CONTROL IN AMERICA!

There is NO Scriptural authority for Christians to build churches, attend churches, or support churches! Churches are ungodly organizations designed for and by Christ's enemies.

We should be forming and defending ecclesias instead of the disgusting churches with their pro-state agendas, entertainment, cultic mystery, childishness, and heathenistic nonsense. They are Pagan and Jewish!

We (ACM) once used the word "church" in our title, but no more – thank God. We've broken away from that image. It's a slow process, and old habits die slowly, but we've put the old church ways behind us.

So, we must do the same thing the apostles did. We must form self-governing, independent, family-oriented, patriarchal-type communities. In other words, ecclesias.

DON'T GET ME WRONG

Those who give only a cursory glance at this study of "the ecclesia" might wrongly conclude that I am advocating that people live in communes – like the cults and the hippies back in the sixties. But, Christian ecclesias are NOT communes!

Inhabitants of communes usually follow their own lusts rather than Bible law. They also usually develop the old familiar central government structure when they come under the control of a charismatic leader. But, that is not the way of the Christian ecclesia!

An ecclesia, constructed on a Christian foundation, would be based upon the principle of independence through law (God's law). It would preclude central government or monopolies by any entity. It would have free trade, private possession of land, and patriarchal eldership. It would use God's law as its constitution, and abstain from creating its own laws. Man would not rule man, but every man would be responsible for any crimes he might commit – and answerable to his victim(s) according to God's law. The law would be enforced by every free male that is of age.

Concerning each man's part in the community, Peter wrote:

8. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord

Jesus Christ.

9. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the eonian kingdom (the reign) of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

II Peter 1:8-11

Remember, "ecclesia" means "the called out (elected ones)," meaning those who are called out from the Babylonian religious/political system. The word

"election" has the same root as the word "ecclesia." "The election," "the ecclesia," "the called-out ones" – all come from the same root. The Bible says that we, as members of our ecclesia communities, are to make our "calling" and our "election" sure.

But, this is just the tip of the iceberg. I have more to share with you on this subject. The scriptures are clear on this subject. It is the key that opens up the New Testament.

It is time that we begin to live as ecclesias and rise above our past entanglements with churches and their Jewish doctrines and polity. Christianity is designed to be a way of life – not a religious ritual. Christ's Body is manifest in the community with all its civil members – NOT a church organization! We need open light and liberty – not hierarchical mystery and darkness!

Shallow ideas can be assimilated. Ideas that require people to reorganize their view of the world provoke hostility.

"I know that most men, including those at ease with problems of the greatest complexity, can seldom accept even the simplest and most obvious truth if it be such as would oblige them to admit the falsity of conclusions which they have delighted in explaining to colleagues, which they proudly taught to others, and which they have woven, thread by thread, into the fabric of their lives."

–Tolstoy