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The *Ekklesia*

by Dr. Carole Sielaff, April 2025

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Read the accompanying "[April 2025 Newsletter](#)"

The Ekklesia

WE ARE PART OF THE *EKKLESIA!*

In Chapter 23, "[Chaos in the Churches](#)," of his book, *Essentials of New Testament Doctrine*, Dr. Ernest Martin informs us that the Greek word *ekklesia* refers to a congregation or an assembly of people. The *ekklesia* is sufficient for the study of the essential teachings of the Holy Scriptures. God does select individuals to serve, and to serve the flock. Dr. Martin points out:

"... no man ever lived on earth — or ever will live — who could set himself up as the prime example to follow. Only one has performed that role and achieved it perfectly. That was Jesus Christ!"

• "[Chaos in the Churches](#)"

First Timothy 2:5 Stipulates There Is One God, And One Mediator Between God And Men, The Man Christ Jesus.

Fellowship with others can absolutely be of value. Hebrews 10:25 (KJV) informs us to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

How wonderful it is that we can learn the essential truths of the Holy Scriptures, regardless of place, time, or company; yet still have a direct relationship with our Father; and serve God and His people.

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Gifts of Man, and Shortcomings of Man

God does select individuals to serve, and to serve the flock.

"Christ ... gave gifts unto men" (Ephesians 4:6–8 KJV). "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11 KJV).

Further, the apostle Paul informed, **“Now I Paul, myself, beseech and appeal to you, by the meekness, humility, and gentleness of Christ”** (2 Corinthians 10:1 KJV, NIV).

Moreover, in 1 Corinthians 1:1, 11:1 (KJV), Paul stated, **“Be you followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”**

Although, in 1 John 1:8 (KJV), it is informed **“if we say that we (all) have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”**

James 1:1 and 3:1–2 (KJV) indicates,

“My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. ... For in many things, we offend all. If any man offends not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.”

Dr. Martin continues to point out,

“... no man ever lived on earth — or ever will live — who could set himself up as the prime example to follow. Only one has performed that role and achieved it perfectly. That was Jesus Christ! That is why you and I must look to the Head (and to the Headquarters in heaven) for the proper example for teaching and truth.”

• Martin [*“Chaos in the Churches”*](#)

Functioning of an Ekklesia

It does not appear to be of significance if the *ekklesia* occurs in a small or large setting as Matthew 18:19–20, KJV indicates:

“If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father, which is in heaven. Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I, in the midst of them.”

One can become educated in the Holy Scriptures. There can be leaders that one respects, although one can understand the teachings of the Bible without leaders.

In 2 Peter 2:1, KJV, the apostle Peter informed there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you.

In the chapter, Dr. Martin goes on to specify that human beings (or a single person) do not “rule” in the place of Christ, or rule on Christ’s behalf. The laity are free, as well to congregate via an *ekklesia*.

The Permanent Priesthood of Jesus Christ

In Matthew 16:18–19, KJV, Jesus said,

“And I say also unto you, That you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church [*ekklesia*, CLV]; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.”

“Christ said He would build His *ekklesia* and that the gates of hell [hades] would not prevail against it. Once that *ekklesia* was established, Christ said it would never see destruction” (Martin, [*“Chaos in the Churches”*](#)).

Christ was not speaking of a material church building. If an ordinary or ornate building were meant, where did He construct it? Was it built in Jerusalem, or even Antioch, by Himself and the early Christians?

Acts 11:25–27, KJV tells us,

“Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: 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 [Greek, *ekklesia*],¹ and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.”

Where is it today? If Christ built a material structure, and it is nowhere to be found today, this may mean Christ’s promise failed, if that is what He meant, which would not be accurate.

“It is impossible for God to lie” (Hebrews 6:18, KJV).

“With His *ekklesia*, Christ insisted that “the gates of hell [hades] shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

... But look at a well-known fact. All persons who ever lived in Christ over the centuries (whether they were early apostles, or later ministers and laymen) have had hades prevail over them!

All have gone to their graves! True, hades will not triumph over them in the end, but hades is certainly in exultation over them now. They must all await the resurrection to occur at Christ’s second advent for their victory over hades to be complete. Hades does presently prevail over them and will continue to triumph until the resurrection. This is a plain and simple fact of history.”

• Martin, “[Chaos in the Churches](#)”

In Hebrews 7:22–28, KJV and NIV, Paul specifies (quoting the NIV):

“... Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant. There have been many of priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office. However, Jesus lives forever, and thus, has a permanent priesthood.

Therefore, He is able to save completely, those who come to God, through Him, because He always lives to make intercession for them.

For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.

He needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people's: for this He did once, when he offered up himself.

For the law makes men high priests in all their weakness, which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh and appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever, who is consecrated for evermore.”

• Hebrews 7:22–28 NIV

Authority of the Ekklesia

Dr. Martin continues further in his “[Chaos in the Churches](#)” article: “The *ekklesia* of Christ has only one authority and that jurisdiction rests solely in Christ!” The *ekklesia* is regarded as His body and He is the head. In Ephesians 5:30 (KJV), it advises we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

Timothy 2:5 (KJV) stipulates “there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

Dr. Martin mentions the intimacy established between God our Father and each of His individual children. Placing a human mediator between them and God the Father (other than the only Mediator), they have too many persons in the hierarchy.

Paul writes in Colossians chapter 1:

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have [at this moment] redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

¹ See “<http://www.scripture4all.org>” for a **FREE** download of the Concordant Literal Version (CLV); King James Version (KJV); Young’s Literal Version (YLT); the Greek-English Interlinear Bible, and the Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible.

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

For by Him were all things created,

- that are in heaven, and that are in earth,
- visible and invisible,

whether they be

- thrones, or
- dominions, or
- principalities, or
- powers:

ALL THINGS were created

- BY HIM, and
- FOR HIM:

And HE is

- BEFORE ALL THINGS, and
- BY HIM ALL THINGS consist.

And HE IS

- the HEAD of the body, the church [*ekklesia*]:
- WHO IS the beginning,
- the FIRSTBORN from the dead;
- that in all things HE might have the PREEMINENCE.

For it pleased the Father that IN HIM [in Christ] should all fulness dwell.”

• *Colossians 1:12–19 KJV*

Dr. Martin continues, “it is the head that governs all parts of the body, and there is a direct line of authority from the head to every part.”

In John 15:1–2, 4–5 (CLV), Jesus says:

“I am the true Grapevine, and My Father is the Farmer. Every branch in Me bringing forth no fruit, He is taking it away, and every one bringing forth fruit, He is cleansing it, that it may be bringing forth more fruit.

Remain in Me. I also am in you. According as the branch can not be bringing forth fruit from itself, if it should not be remaining in the grapevine, thus neither you, if you should not be remaining in Me. I am the Grapevine. You are the branches. He who is remaining in Me, and I in him, this one is bringing forth much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

God the Father has placed us, as individuals, in a powerful position.

“God has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which WAS GIVEN US in Christ Jesus BEFORE the world began.”

• *2 Timothy 1:9 KJV*

Fellowship, and the Family of God

Fellowship can absolutely, be of value. Hebrews 10:25 (KJV) informs to

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

James 5:14–18 (KJV, NIV) indicates ...

“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:

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Elias [Elijah] was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”

Dr. Martin communicates, **“When we meet together, it is part of the Family of God meeting in unison.”**

The optimal fellowship is direct association with the Father through Christ alone. This is the supreme relationship for each individual. There is an *ekklesia* of association, beyond that. If one meets with another, who holds the same prime fellowship, then each could (and should), have a horizontal fellowship with one another. The primary spiritual relationship each would have, would be first, upward, in a vertical sense, to God, through Christ, and then back down from God, through Christ, to the person standing a foot away. One’s association is first vertical — to Christ.

In 1 John 4:1–6, it is informed, we can know the truth from error:

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try [test] the spirits whether they are of God: [Why?] because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Hereby know you the Spirit of God:

Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ [Messiah] is come in the flesh, is of God:

And every spirit that confesses NOT that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God:

and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

YOU are OF God, little children, and have overcome them: [Why?] because greater is He that is in you, than He that is in the world.

They are OF the world: therefore speak they OF the world, and the world hears them.

WE are of God:

he that knows God, hears us; he that is not of God, hears NOT us.

Hereby KNOW WE the spirit of truth, and [KNOW WE] the spirit of error.”

How wonderful it is that we can learn the essential truths of the Holy Scriptures, regardless of place, time, or company; have a direct relationship with our Father; and serve God and His people.

Additional Information

[“Synagogues and Ekklesias”](#)

[“Traditions of Synagogues and Ekklesias”](#)

[“The Anatomy of a Church **Part 1**”](#)

[“The Anatomy of a Church **Part 2**”](#)

[“The Decline of the Churches”](#)

[“**Further** Decline of the Churches”](#)

[“Why Churches Fall Apart”](#)

[“The Curse of Church Authority”](#)

[“Recommended Church Groups”](#)