

IS “CHURCH” REALLY THE SAME AS “EKKLESIA”?

An ancient Chinese proverb says the beginning of wisdom is to call things by their proper names. A name represents identity. An identity crisis is inevitable when names are tampered with; and this is what the Body of Christ has suffered for so long in history. However, in this season of light, the Lord is bringing startling revelations to limelight which should concern every sincere Christian. It has to do with the word, “Church”; the excerpt below explains more. After reading, you should please ask yourself if you will like to continue with the error simply because it has become entrenched; or you will choose to align with truth. God bless you as you read:

Defining Church and Assembly

*An Excerpt from ONE: Unfolding God's Eternal Purpose from
House to House, by Henry Hon, 2016, pg 10-11*

Since the matter of “church” is probably the biggest item of Christianity after faith in Jesus Christ, it is impossible to be reset back to the beginning without receiving fresh eyes on this matter of church. To begin with, the word “church” in the Bible is a mistranslation from the Greek word *ekklesia*. The accurate translation is “assembly” or “congregation.” Literally, *ekklesia* means the “called out ones.” The common usage of this

word during the apostles' time was for a called out assembly of people, such as a town square meeting, whose citizens were "called out" to attend. Therefore, the correct translation of *ekklesia* is assembly, or congregation (Thayer's Greek Lexicon).

The word "church" actually comes from a very different Greek word. The etymology (etymology.com) of the word "church" is said to be from *kyriake (oikia)*, or *kyriakon doma* meaning, "the lord's house." It refers to an actual place of worship, which included a place to worship idols. This word started being used to identify a Christian place of worship around the fourth century AD, when Constantine established Christianity as the Roman state religion. It was during this time that Christians began meeting in dedicated worship buildings, rather than in homes or in public places.

In 1525, William Tyndale translated the first printed Bible into English. He translated the word *ekklesia* as "congregation" or assembly. This was in direct contradiction to the Roman Church. At that time, the Roman Church feared that removing the word "church" from the Bible would threaten their authority and hierarchy. This was one of the major reasons Tyndale was killed and burned at the stake by the Roman Church in 1536. When King James authorized his translation of the Bible in 1611, eighty-four percent of the New Testament was translated directly from Tyndale's Bible. But King James made one translation rule clear: *ekklesia* was to be translated "church" and not "congregation" or "assembly."

King James was the head of the Church of England (the Anglican church) and all forty-seven translators were members. Once again, for political and control reasons, the King James Version of the Bible mistranslated the Greek word *ekklesia* to "church." Since then, just about every English version of the Bible has kept to this translation of "church."

It is much simpler and honest when words are used exactly for what they mean. Even today the primary dictionary meaning of church is “a building that is used for Christian religious services” (Merriam-Webster). Christians who are more advanced in seeing the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22–23) have to constantly clarify and redefine “church” as the believers, not the building.

Considering this, for the sake of accuracy and in support of Tyndale who gave his life for the translation of the Bible, for this book, the word for ekklesia will be translated “assembly.” When the word “church” is used, it will refer to either a physical place for Christian worship or an organized group of Christians associated with one or more dedicated physical buildings for worship.