

WHAT'S IN A NAME (OR WORD)...?

PLENTY, not your personal name, but... rather the names by which we call our congregations. Having studied a bit of Greek years ago, and having Greek reference sources around, I have been conditioned to believe what they told me. For instance, the sources are consistent to tell me that "church" is the proper translation of *ekklesia* in the Brit Chaddasha or NT.

What a surprise to look up "church" in an ordinary English language dictionary only to find that "church" does not come from *ekklesia*! Rather it comes from *kyriakon*. What does *kyriakon* mean? Webster's says "church" comes from "Middle English *chirche*, from Old English *cirice*, ultimately from Greek *kyriakon*, from Greek neuter of *kyriakos* of the lord, from *kyrios* lord, master." Another dictionary puts it "the lord's (house.)" In NT times, that meant a pagan temple. Pagan deities were addressed as *kyrios* (lord), as well as human dignitaries and masters. So a "church" is a pagan temple, a building! Messianic Jews and non-Jews did not have buildings, but met in homes, synagogues, and the Temple in Jerusalem, but soon had to go underground because of persecution. Everyone in those days knew the difference between *ekklesia*, an assembly of people, and *kyriakon*, a building, as Greek was their common language.

Kyriakon/kuriakon, the noun form, meaning a building, is not used anywhere in the Greek NT. (Do not be confused with *kuriakos*, the adjective form, and the accusative neuter adjective form *kuriakon* used in 1 Cor 11:20 and Rev 1:10, both of which are incorrectly translated "Lord's," which is a possessive noun, not an adjective. One reference suggests "imperial," which is an adjective.)

Curious, I went to the library of old books at the U. of Florida and asked to see a copy of the oldest English language NT. I found that *ekklesia* was consistently translated as "congregation." Later versions made the change to "church." Why? And does it matter? My research says, Yes! It matters very much! It is key to the cover-up to establish theologies that throw Israel out of the Plan of YHVH for the world, replacing Israel either permanently or "for this age" by the "church," showing the

danger of theologies based on any English translation.

It is taught by nearly all of Christianity that the Church began as a brand new entity on the day of Pentecost, based on Acts 2. After all, did not Jesus say to Peter in Matt 16:18, "you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church..." so that obviously Jesus had something new in mind? The word church is used only two other times in the Gospels, both in Matthew 18:17, dealing with the same topic. Otherwise, the gatherings of congregations in the Gospels are "synagogues." Beginning with Acts 2, "church" comes in dozens of times, giving the subtle effect of something new developing here, a new word, therefore a new entity.

However, there is a "fly in the ointment" of this slippery deception! That "fly" is in the KJV of Acts 7:38, "This is he (Yeshua/Jesus) that was in the church in the wilderness..." part of Stephen's powerful message before he was stoned to death. Now if the church existed in the wilderness with Moses, and Yeshua was in the burning bush, Mt. Sinai, and the Rock that followed along with them in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10:4), then surely Jesus did not say He was going to start something brand new! So how can Matthew 16:18 be handled?

Dana & Mantey's A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament says on p.178, "For continuous action in future time the regular future is ordinarily used..." So, Jesus actually said, "I will continue to build My church." This has to be the translation because the context of Acts 7:38 demands it. The "church" began at least by the time of Moses, if not at the time of Adam. No new entity began in Acts 2. The significant newness began in Acts 10, with Cornelius and subsequent non-Jews brought into the church directly without Jewish conversion.

Now let's clean up this study by getting rid of "church," since it is not a legitimate translation of the Greek *ekklesia*. *Ekklesia* means "called-out-ones," those YHVH has called out of the world to be His Holy Ones, His Saints. It can be transliterated as *ekklesia*, or translated as assembly, congregation, or even called-out-ones. Matthew 16:18 then becomes, "I will continue to build My *ekklesia*," and Acts 7:38 as, "This is he that was in the *ekklesia* in the wilderness."

What is the Hebrew word in the Tanakh (Hebrew Scriptures) for this "*ekklesia* in the wilderness"? There are basically two words, *edah* and *kahal*, both being translated as as-

sembly or congregation, or more fully as "an appointed meeting (*edah*)" or "a called or invited gathering (*kahal*)." Both words are used numerous times. One other word, *kehillah*, is used only two times. In Deuteronomy 33:4 *kehillah* is translated "congregation," and in Nehemiah 5:7 it is "assembly," so take your pick.

Now the question arises, is *ekklesia* equal to *edah*, and/or *kahal*, and/or *kehillah*? The only way to find out is to compare with the LXX or Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Tanakh done about 250 BCE. Interestingly, *kehillah* becomes *sunagoge* in Deuteronomy 33:4 and *ekklesia* in Nehemiah 5:7 in the LXX! Both *edah* and *kahal* become *sunagoge* sometimes, and *ekklesia* other times in the LXX. However, my research seemed to indicate that *qahal* became *ekklesia* more often than *sunagoge*. In my Hebrew NT, *ekklesia* becomes *kahal* in both Matt 16:18 and Acts 7:38.

Answer to the question: Yes, *ekklesia* includes *edah*, *kahal*, and *kehillah*. Yes, there was the *ekklesia* in the Tanakh, especially in the Torah, and therefore "in the wilderness." The *Ekklesia* represents YHVH's "called-out-ones," His Holy Ones, His Saints, from the be-

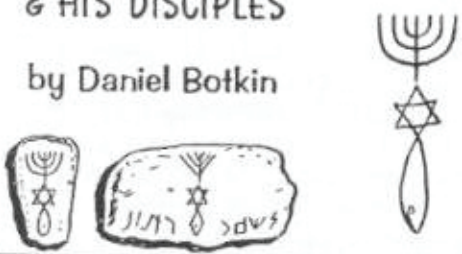
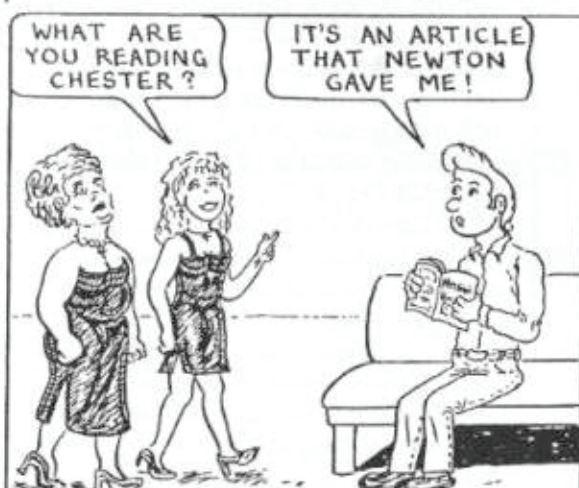
ginning of time and forever. The teaching that some new entity, a "church," began in Acts 2 is a slippery attempt to dump Israel in favor of this "church." Having studied Church History, a valid conclusion might be made that, yes, The Church (Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) was something relatively new. It officially began in AD 325, at the Council of Nicea, when Messianic Jews and non-Jews were branded criminal if they did not buckle under to the new system based on a foundation other than the Tanakh. As time went on, this "Church" became more and more "white-washed paganism," a "pagan temple," a *kyriakon*. YHVH describes it quite well in Revelation 2:12 - 29.

Messianic Jews must understand all of this very well, because as yet I have never come across any Messianic congregation calling itself a "church," or using "church" in its name. *Mazel Tov*, Congratulations, and Blessings on you all! Now you have the facts to go along with your stand.

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