

GOD'S MAGNIFICENT IDEA

Part I

Matthew 16:13-19

Introduction: Our magnificent God had the most ingenious revelation when He birthed the idea of the church. The church is the most unique and magnificent organism on the face of the earth. I purposely say organism instead of organization because an organization has been conceived by a person or group of persons on earth. The church was conceived by Christ, and her roots originate from Heaven. Those of us who have accepted Christ are amalgamated into this holy building much like each brick is mortared into a commercial building. The church is the conduit which God has chosen to work through. This is why it is imperative that we not be derelict in our duty and that we not fail to carry out the Great Commission of *Mark 16:15-18*. Also, *Matthew 24:14*.

I. God's magnificent idea

A. The nature of the church

1. The word church comes from the Greek word "*ekklesia*." The simplest definition means "*called out ones*." In secular Greek society, the word was used for free citizens coming together who assembled for the purpose of considering matters of public interest. *Acts 19:29*.
2. When Jesus refers to the church, He is not introducing a totally new concept. God had his "*called out ones*" in the Old Testament as well. *Acts 7:38*. Israel was the called out company and is often referred to as the "*Kahal Jehovah*" (the called and assembled people of God.) When the ancient copy of the Bible, called the Septuagint, translated the Hebrew term "*kahal*" into the Greek, they used the word "*ekklesia*." In English, the word is translated church. When Israel's twelve tribes encamped around the tabernacle's four sides, they waited for the trumpet or shofar to blow. When they heard the sound, they assembled before the door of the tabernacle as "*the called out ones*" to receive God's instructions, commands, and blessings.
3. The term "*ekklesia*" was introduced by Jesus Christ Himself when He referred to "*His church*" in *Matthew 16:18*. This differentiates it from all other groups of people. These called out ones have separated themselves unto God and to the door of "*the new testament tabernacle*," Jesus Christ Himself. They are the free citizens of the heavenly community summoned by the trumpet (shofar) of the Gospel to assemble themselves together for worship and fellowship.
4. The word church is not intended to mean buildings. The church is the people of God that are built together into a spiritual building for God's habitation. *Ephesians 2:19-22*. The church meets in a house or building, but it is not a material building. The people of God are a spiritual house where God makes His abode. We meet in an auditorium, or "*sheep shed*," the real house of God is not a building but a people.
5. The word church in the New Testament is never used to refer to a sect, a denomination, or an organization. The church is "*His*" church. He is the central authority to whom all New Testament churches must relate. The church on earth is bigger than any one denomination, sect, or organization.
6. God has placed a great deal of trust in His people. He has mandated us to carry out the Great Commission. *Mark 16:15*. A commission is not a suggestion. A commission is an "...*authorization to perform certain duties ... authority to act on behalf of another ... supported by a documentation*" (Webster). The Bible is the documentation containing our orders. We have a right to stand up for righteousness. *Psalms 11:3, 33:12; 2nd Chronicles 7:14*.

Conclusion: The church of the living God is on the move. The people of God are awakening from their deep spiritual sleep and are being aroused for duty. While the task of taking our generation for God may seem formidable, together with God we can do it. *Luke 1:37*. Some of us can only pray, others can give, and yet others can be mobilized into active duty. Jesus is coming soon! What we do for God, we must do now!