The Church in Three Senses

1 Cor. 1:2

Introduction:

A. Little interest in seriously studying about the church – even among members.
   1. Ignorance and indifference of basic Bible teaching about the church abounds.
   2. Children growing up and adults growing old not knowing or caring what the church is.
      a. Have been told “ought to go to church” – little more.
      b. Have not made the connection be the church and their eternal well-being.
      c. Many leave it because they have no appreciation for its nature and importance.
      d. Few understand difference New Testament usage of “church” and modern usage.

   1. Same basic meaning – “ekklesia” meaning “called out (assembly)”
   2. Different connotations governed by the context.
   3. Each has reference to God’s people – saved people – Christians.

Discussion:

I. God’s People Everywhere
   A. Paul had persecuted “the church of God” (1 Cor. 15:9) – not any particular location (cf. Acts 9:1-3)
   B. Includes all who are “written in heaven” – possibly including dead Christians (Heb. 12:23)
   C. Made up of all who are saved -- baptized believers (Acts 2:38, 47; Acts 5:14; 1 Cor 12:13)
   D. Other obvious references to “universal” church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22,23)
   E. No organization, no function, no meetings – just each Christian ruled by Christ.

II. God’s People Locally
   A. Paul wrote to “the church of God at Corinth” (1 Cor. 1:2)
   B. Paul wrote of churches other localities (1 Cor. 16:1, 19).
   C. Local churches were disciples joined together by mutual consent (cf, Acts 9:26).
      2. With oversight when men are qualified and appointed. (Cf. Phil. 1:1; Acts 20:17, 28).
      3. No organizational ties to each other – only a common doctrine and practice (1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 16:1).
   D. Local church given work to do.
      1. Preach the gospel (Phil. 4:15-16; 2 Cor. 11:8)
      2. Relieve poor saints (1 Cor. 16:1, 2)
      3. Edify itself (Eph. 4:16).
      4. To assemble for worship.

III. God’s People Assembled.
   A. Paul spoke of the “whole church” coming together in one place (1 Cor. 14:23).
      1. Could not be speaking universal – obvious the church at that place - Corinth.
      2. This assembly is called “the church” (vv. 28, 34, 35; cf. ch 11:20-22)
      3. Christians are assemble together for worship and edification (cf. Heb. 10:25).
   B. One is “in the church” universally and locally even when “at home” (11:33-34; 14:35)

Conclusion:

A. Each called “church” – each of God, of Christ, etc.
B. No denominational names – not denominational structure.
C. Simply God’s people in different capacities.