Speaking of the “Church”  
Rom. 16:16

Introduction:
A. It is hard to speak of the “church” or the “church of Christ” without being misunderstood.
   1. Misuse of the term has prompted some to shy away from it.
   2. Avoiding the term is not the answer — term is scriptural and Christ-honoring.
   3. Any other scriptural term runs same risk of understanding. cf. “Christians meet here”.
B. We need to know ways “church” and “church of” are used in Bible - be able to explain to others.

Discussion:
I. When “Church Of” Is Used for Identification.
   A. To identify possession.
      2. “Church(es) of God (the Son)” — “purchased it with His blood”.(Acts 20:28).
      3. Ill. Is “Johnson’s Store” a proper name or descriptive term?” - What about both?
   B. To identify location and/or composition.
      1. Location: “Of Ephesus” (Rev. 2:1); “Of Galatia” (1 Cor. 16:1); “Of Judea” (Gal. 1:22)
      2. Location and composition: “Of Thessalonians” (1 & 2 Thess. 1:1);“Of Laodiceans” (Rev. 3:14)
      3. Composition: “Of the firstborn” (Heb. 12:23);“Of Gentiles (Rom. 16:4);“Of Saints”(1 Cor. 14:33)
   
II. When “Church” Is Used Of One Universal Body (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4; 1:22,23)
   A. All the saved everywhere. (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23-27; Heb. 12:23).
   B. Added as saved, not saved then later joined.
   C. Membership controlled only by the Lord.
   D. Some say this is only way it is used. (Examiner people)
   
III. When “Church(es) Is Used of Many Local Bodies (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 1:1).
   A. As an organized group of Christians (even when not physically assembled).
      1. Received and rejected members (Acts 9:26-28; Rom. 14:1; Tit. 3:10) — sometimes mistakenly
         (cf. 1 Cor. 5; III John 9).
      2. Had local elders and deacons. (Acts 14:26; 20:17; Phil. 1:1; Tit. 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:2; cf. Acts 6:3).
      3. Were to be doctrinally uniform. (1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 16:1; Col. 4:16).
   B. As a physical assembly of the organized group (1 Cor. 11:18-21; 1 Cor. 14:34,35).
      1. Some say this is all that is meant by “church”.
         a. If so, how could Ephesians elders be elders “of the church” with no church being assembled?
         b. If so, no church at this place at least 5 days a week.
      2. Bible class not the church in this sense.
   C. Not all “together” activity of Christians is church action (Matt. 18:15-18).
      1. Else Christians in business together would church action.
      2. Else a home Bible study would be church action.

Conclusion:
A. There is no need to abandon scriptural terms become someone perverts them.
B. There is a need to properly understand and teach the meaning of terms.
C. Bible terms may not be official names, but are scriptural ways to describe the church.