A Semantic Study of Ecclesia before 100 A.D.

Harold Edwin Cline

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Name of candidate:

Harold Edwin Cline

Oral examination:

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Committee:

Dr. David C. Pellett, Chairman
Professor Frank L. Albert
Professor S. M. Smith

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Major Professor

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A SEMANTIC STUDY OF ECCLESIA BEFORE 100 A.D.

by

HAROLD EDWIN CLINE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements in the Graduate Division for the M.A. degree

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The terminology of ecclesiology is complex both from the viewpoint of New Testament studies and from the viewpoint of theology. Ethelbert Stauffer in *New Testament Theology* mentions seven basic ways in which the church described itself, namely: *ecclesia*, people of God, flock of Christ, God's planting, God's building, *ecclesia femina*, and *corpus Christi*. 1 Paul Minear in a study for the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches indicates more than eighty terms in the New Testament speaking of "church" and which he groups into twenty categories. These are as follows:

1. God's *laos*: Kingdom of God, of Christ...kings...sons of, heirs of the Kingdom...holy nation...chosen race
2. Israel...the 12 tribes...the circumcision...sons of Abraham
3. The Dispersion...exiles...strangers...pilgrims...colony of heaven...ambassadors
4. The New Jerusalem...heavenly, free Jerusalem...the Holy City...Mt. Zion
5. God's *naos*: temple of the Holy Spirit, of Christ...spiritual house...royal priesthood...living sacrifice...aroma...first-fruits
6. The Name of God, Christ, Holy Spirit...names in the Book of Life...Nazarenes...Christians
7. God's household, family...sons of, heirs of God...brothers, sisters, mother of Christ...the woman clothed with the sun
8. God's flock...sheep and shepherds...lambs...pasture...fold...Passover
9. Slaves of God, of Christ...servants...stewards...ministers...friends...freedmen

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10. Christ's disciples...followers...witnesses...confessors... those sent by him
11. The Way, access to God...sect...way of salvation, etc... coming from and going to God
12. The Saints...the sanctified...Holy Ones...the Justified... the Righteous Ones
13. The Believers and the believing... Faithful Ones...those born of faith
14. The Elect...the Called...the Chosen
15. Fellowship in God, in Christ, in the Spirit...in work...in warfare...in victory...in inheritance
16. God's planting...field, plantation...olive tree...Tree of life...Branches of the Vine
17. Christ's Bride...Friends of the Bridegroom...Wedding Feast
18. Miscellaneous Analogies: salt...leaven...building...light... lampstands...pillar of the truth...sons of the Day
19. The Church and churches: (to designate congregations located in particular towns and provinces, to describe the whole people of God)
20. The One new humanity...the New Creation...In Christ...the Body of Christ²

Furthermore, an issue of the Ecumenical Review was centered on different images for the church, namely, "The Church which is His Body," "The Body of Christ," "The Family of God," "The Good Shepherd of His Flock," and "The People of God."²

These indications concerning the nature of the terminology involved in ecclesiology underscore the need for limitation. A proper study of all of these words is beyond the limits of that which is being undertaken here. Before defining the limitation to be followed, may these pertinent notations of Dr. Minear concerning these images be indicated:

¹Paul S. Minear, The Conception of the Church as the Body of Christ within the context of the different ways in which the New Testament speaks of Christ, the Spirit, and the Church, Outline of a study prepared for the American Section of the Theological Commission on Christ and the Church, meeting August 8-12, 1955 (World Council of Churches, FOC/TCCC, April, 1956), p. 1.

²Articles of said titles in Ecumenical Review, IX (January, 1957), 105-161.
Note 1. It is quite impossible in such a listing to indicate the fluidity of thought, the exuberance of imagination, and the profuse mixing of metaphors, to be found everywhere in the New Testament.

Note 2. There would be a far more extensive list if we paid attention to the verbs and prepositions as well as to the nouns and adjectives. Biblical syntax was far more verbal and prepositional than ours, partly because of the dramatic and relational character of thought.

Note 3. There is no image in the New Testament which does not, in context, bespeak a deep abiding oneness, wholeness, singleness in that reality which we call the Church.

Note 4. In the use of every image, the person and work of Christ is assumed to be central and determinative for the life of the Church.

Note 5. Each major image offers, in context, an example of the paradox of the sinlessness (or better, holiness) and the sin of the company of saints.

Note 6. Each major image reflects a way of thinking which spontaneously combines metaphorical language with a clear ontological-eschatological reference.

Note 7. The profusion of vocabulary indicates the dangers implicit in selecting any one term (e.g. the Church, the Body of Christ) as a fixed starting point or as the pivot of all thought. Perhaps the point most adequate for bearing the weight as a fulcrum would be the ubiquitous activity of Christ, so long as this fulcrum does not exclude the simultaneous activity of the Father and the Spirit.

The wide listing and this penetrating analysis must be heeded. Nevertheless from among the many images having to do with the church, it seems pertinent to understand the basic Greek word, ἐκκλησία. It will be admitted from the preceding analysis that this word cannot have all of the full and varied connotations necessary for a full understanding of church. Yet it seems to be the most singular and most comprehensive word involved. If one

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1Minear, op. cit., pp. 1,2.
would attempt to study all the many figures of speech concerning
the church, it would become difficult to find a line of demarcation
so as to have a stopping point.

Another factor which enters into the choosing of this
singular word and its close counterparts is that of background.
Only this word can be studied carefully in the light of the Old
Testament and Jewish background. The other words are generally
used in a completely new and different light, and thus their
background is not very significant for their understanding. They
are more "dramatic" and "relational" in their usage.

This study, therefore, will limit itself to a study of

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are more "dramatic" and "relational" in their usage.

This study, therefore, will limit itself to a study of
Jewish Greek term, with its LXX associations of dignity and of intimate relation with God rather than the usages of secular Greek, or any memory of etymology, that gave the term its appropriateness.

It was the Septuagint which really gave the word Ἰκκλησίωα to the N.T., after it had acquired its specific value. As soon as converted Jews saw the connection between the O.T. Ἰκκλησίωα and that of the N.T., it became regulative.

These two definite statements are corroborated by other scholars. George Johnston indicates in connection with this very word that many ideas of the term, Ἰκκλησίωα, were conceived from the Septuagint and that knowledge of the Septuagint is "vital for understanding its N.T. meaning." Edwyn Hoskins and Noel Davey also tie in the ideas inherent in Ἰκκλησίωα with the Septuagint. They conclude in their analysis that the books of the New Testament indicate that the authors of the New Testament not only tended to quote the Jewish Scriptures and to make use of the Old Testament phrases, but that they unconsciously fell into the turn of the language. Both Septuagint and New Testament workers faced the same problem of giving expression in Greek to ideas which had taken form in Semitic idiom. Any understanding of the Ἰκκλησίωα of God must include a knowledge of the usage of this term in the Septuagint.


These scholars underscore the general statement made a considerable time ago, as follows:

But Christian modes of thinking were a thorough advance on those of the Hebrews. Often, therefore, entirely new words had to come into use to express new ideas, or else old words had to undergo a large extension of meaning. Still, the early Christian writers, being almost all Jews, retained a Hebrew coloring throughout their thought. There was a basis of Hebrew ideas beneath the new superstructure. Accordingly, even in the case of purely Christian conceptions, it was thoroughly natural for the New Testament writers to frame their language on the analogy of the existing theological vocabulary which they found in the Greek version of the Old Testament. . . . Facts clearly show how prominent a part the LXX plays in moulding the religious vocabulary of the New Testament.

The evidence clearly shows a validity in a strong reliance upon the Septuagint in order to gain a proper understanding of the connotations held concerning ἡκλημα in the period previous to 100 A.D. within the Christian community. Hence, it is without apology that the bulk of this study will involve Septuagintal study.

This important role given to the Septuagint finds a part of its justification in the previous comment by Hoskins and Davey to the effect that it involves the giving of expression to ideas in Greek out of the Semitic idiom. This raises the problem of transmission of ideas from one language to another. A brief discussion of this matter will be given in order to have a clear and sure foundation for this study.

The Septuagint assumes its greatest importance as a piece of transitional literature. It is a translation which involves the meeting of the Jewish milieu with the Greek milieu. Because it was

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the commonly used Scriptures of the early church, it links the
Hebrew Scriptures with the Greek New Testament Scriptures. In
the field of Biblical theology the Septuagint is the connecting
link between Jewish and Gentile theological vocabulary.

This statement stressing the importance of the Septuagint
is derived from the fact that it is basically a translation and it
is important to understand the nature of translation.

Every translation is a compromise between two civilizations.
Neither spoken nor written language is a series of one-to-one
correspondences between word and idea. The various words of a
language have a delicate contextual relation to other words, and
this relation cannot be exactly reproduced in another language.
This inadequacy of contextual reproduction is especially marked
in the confrontation of two such distinct and historically
unrelated languages as Hebrew and Greek. Beyond or beneath
the linguistic incongruities there are all kinds of cultural
incongruities.

Translation is an impossible art, for the words of one language
seldom or never convey precisely the same ideas as the corre-
sponding words of another language. Besides philological
differences in the words themselves, there are differences in
the associations which the words have acquired in different
contexts of thought and experience. Thus the words of the
Hebrew Scriptures, in passing into Greek, partly lost one set
of associations, and partly gained a new set, while at the same
time the Greek words used in translation may have acquired
something of the value of the Hebrew words they represent. If
we can recover in some measure the association of the Greek
words, and compare them with the associations of the Hebrew words,
we may do something towards finding the meaning which words
henceforth bear in Hellenistic Judaism, and wherever the influ-
ence of Hellenistic Judaism extended.

A very real problem is underscored by these two references
which deal with translation of the Old Testament Scriptures from

1 Ralph Marcus, "Jewish and Greek Elements in the Septuagint"
Louis Ginzberg Jubilee Volume (New York: American Academy for Jewish

2 C. H. Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks (London: Hodder and
Stoughton, 1934), pp. xi, xii.
Hebrew into Greek. These two men are not alone in making such assertions for their position seems to be commonly held. Hence, the fact that there is necessarily a change involved in translation from one language to another is a basic assumption of this particular study.

In applying this insight about translation to the theological interpretation of the Bible, a definite consensus is found indicating the need of basic study at this point of juncture held by the Septuagint. The terminology of the New Testament and that of theological formulation have definitely been affected by this meeting of the Jewish and Greek languages and cultures in the Septuagint. Several recent scholars will help to indicate this position.

Norman Snaith indicates that the study of the New Testament Greek in respect to its syntax and grammar through comparative studies with Hellenistic inscriptions and papyri has been beneficial.

But the neglect of the Septuagint from the point of view of the meaning of the words has been serious. It is becoming more and more clear, thanks to such studies as Dr. C.H. Dodd's *The Bible and the Greeks*, that considerable attention must be paid to the way in which the Septuagint translators rendered the Hebrew words. The Greek word in the Septuagint tends to carry the meaning of the original Hebrew word and not its own meaning as a normal Greek word.

F.C. Grant indicates that the Septuagint and the Greco-Jewish writers at Alexandria provided much of the religious voca-

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bulary for Gentile Christianity and definitely gave the major terms about which the whole pattern of Christian thought was built. He suggests that this is conspicuously true regarding Ἰησοῦς and Κυρίος.¹

C.K. Barrett, while giving some importance to the Septuagint because of the use of prophecies in the New Testament, stresses the interaction of the Greek and Hebrew thought. He says that one of the most significant uses of the Septuagint is "the fact that the characteristic theological terminology of the New Testament can again and again be shown to rest, in great part, upon the usage of the Septuagint."²

Floyd Filson says that the New Testament writers are so much in debt to the Septuagint that their vocabulary cannot be understood apart from a careful study of that version. The background of the words in the Septuagint is considered imperative before seeking the Greek sense to comprehend New Testament usage.³

These recent opinions and conclusions are not without some backing by the scholarship of another generation. Edwin Hatch in a summary of the use and value of the Septuagint makes the following statement:

The great majority of New Testament words are words which, though for the most part common to Biblical and to contemporary secular Greek, express in the Biblical use the conceptions of a Semitic race, and which must consequently be examined by cognate


documents which form the LXX.

These words are so numerous, and a student is so frequently misled by his familiarity with their classical use, that it is a safe rule to let no word, even the simplest, in the N.T. pass unchallenged. The process of enquiry is (1) to ascertain the Classical use of a word, (2) to ascertain whether there are any facts in relation to its Biblical use which raise presumption that its Classical use had been altered. Such facts are afforded partly by the context in which the word is found, but mainly by its relation to the Hebrew words which it is used to translate.¹

Another recognition of the fact that the Septuagint played an important role in molding the religious vocabulary of the New Testament is here presented:

There was a basis of Hebrew ideas beneath the new superstructure. Accordingly, even in the case of purely Christian conceptions, it was thoroughly natural for the New Testament writers to frame their language on the analogy of the existing theological vocabulary, which they found in the Greek version of the Old Testament.²

This recognition of the influence of the Septuagint upon the Biblical and theological vocabulary of Christianity is widely held and has been demonstrated by certain important examples in C.H. Dodd's notable work, The Bible and the Greeks. Yet in all fairness, a few cautions which are raised against this position will be mentioned. H.B. Swete in An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek seeks to keep from going overboard by his comment that while the New Testament scholar will start with the Septuagint to find basic meanings, he must recognize the further development of the word under the influence of the Gospel or by other uses.³

ard Ottley seems to hold a similar position in his treatment of
the subject by emphasizing both the influence of the Septuagint
and general Greek usage. In spite of these cautions by scholars
of over a generation ago, the involvement of the Septuagint in the
understanding of the terminology of New Testament theology is a
definite reality.

The limitation of the subject to ἐκκλησία and the important
influence of the Septuagint upon the subject have been dis-
cussed. Upon this foundation, this research will attempt to find
as full and as accurate as possible an understanding of this basic
term for "church." The effort will seek to develop the concept
inherent in the word as it was used in the latter part of the first
century A.D. by the Christians. This will eliminate from con-
sideration the historical growth and life of the church and also
the development of doctrine in these subsequent centuries.

In studying the background and origin of meaning for
this word, this paper will seek to investigate the pagan, the
Jewish, and the Christian literature in this order. Of course, as
the preliminary discussion has so far indicated, the primary weight
and burden of study will be upon the Septuagintal influence. The
three stages to be developed are reminiscent of the comment of
R.C. Trench in his opening comments concerning ἐκκλησία. He
named them as heathen, Jewish, and Christian. The development of
these stages will be united and brought together to make some per-

1Ottley, op. cit., p. 205.
2R.C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (London: Kegan,
tinent conclusions in the final chapter of this thesis. At all points, this study will seek to limit itself to this one Greek word, Ἐκκλησία, and words which have a direct relationship with it, rather than dealing with the many images used by the New Testament and theology to understand and to explain the church.
CHAPTER II

PAGAN SOURCES

The pagan usage of ἐκκλησία cannot be said to be that of a very limited and definite scope. Basic understanding of what is commonly expressed can be learned. For the purpose of this study, a brief survey of some pagan Greek literature will be used as a backdrop for an analytical lexical meaning.

Herodotus seems to use the word in a rather general sense. In discussing the rule of Maeandrius in Samos, he makes this statement: "For when he had news of Polycrates' death, first he set up an altar to Zeus the Liberator and marked out round it that sacred enclosure which is still to be seen in the suburb of the city; when this was done, he called an assembly (ἐκκλησίαν συναγείρας) of all the townsfolk, and thus addressed them:'. In the accusative case is of a kindred meaning to the verb. ἕνεκερπω means to "assemble" or "gather together." In this context, therefore, ἐκκλησία means a mass congregation of the community.

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3 Ibid., I, 7.
Aristophanes uses this word in several relationships which will be observed. In Acharnenses, Dilaiopolis says, ἀλλ' ἐπαγαρεῖν μὴ ποιεῖν ἐκκλησίαιν. In the following speech the Karux says, ό γὰρ πρωτάνεις λύουσι τὴν ἐκκλησίαιν. These usages point to the idea of making and breaking an assembly of the people. It is a group gathered together, but capable of the influence of one for its assembling or dismissal. Similarly in Equites, Aristophanes uses the accusative form of ἐκκλησία following a form of μνίζω. An assembly concerning Pharnakes is mentioned in Aves. This could indicate a purpose or reason for meeting.

Thucydides uses ποιήσαντες ἐκκλησίαιν in the sense of the Athenians calling an assembly. Again in reference to Pericles' action in not convoking an assembly, the use of this same phrase comes up again. In Book ii.60.1 Thucydides uses ἐκκλησία as a cognative accusative with εὐνύχαγον. In the preceding section concerning the convoking of the assembly by Pericles, ἐς ἀλλογον ποιήσας is used. From the context here there is no real difference between ἐκκλησία and ἐς ἀλλογος.

The non-peculiar nature of ἐκκλησία seems very evident in a section concerning Alcibiades and his relationship to the assembly. In Book v.45, the assembly is referred to as the

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1 Aristophanes Acharnenses 169,170. 2 Ibid., 173.
3 Aristophanes Equites 746. 4 Aristophanes Aves 1030.
5 Thucydides i.139.3. 6 Ibid., ii.22.1.
7 Ibid., ii.59.3.
three times, and then is referred to in the last case as
the ἕκκλησια. In mentioning the reconvoking of the assembly on
the next day, it is referred to as the ἕκκλησια and this group
makes an alliance with the Argives and allies.¹ Thucydides in
Book vi uses two methods to indicate the calling of an assembly
which have been indicated previously. In vi.8.2, ἕκκλησια is
used with a form of ποιεῖν; and in vi.9.1, ἕκκλησια is used as
a cognate accusative with ἔστησεν. ἕκκλησια with γίνομαι is
used in order to indicate the holding of an assembly.² This does
not add much to the meaning but does introduce another common way
of its use.

| TABLE 1 |
| COMPARATIVE USE OF TERMS FOR "ASSEMBLY" IN THUCYDIDES VIII 67-97³ |

| viii.67.1 | τὸν δῆμον ἔστησεν "called the popular assembly" |
| viii.67.1 | ἔστησε τὸν δῆμον "bring before the assembly" |
| viii.67.2 | ἔστησεν τὴν ἕκκλησια "convened the assembly" |
| viii.68.1 | ἔστησεν δῆμον ὡς παρισίν "did not come before the assembly" |

This preceding table is worthy of several comments concerning the usage of Εκκλησία. The usages in sections 67 and 68
point to the interchange with the Greek word, ἔκκλησις. The use of
ποιέω with ἔκκλησις either to express the calling or holding of
an assembly is apparent. Γίνεται with ἔκκλησις is another way
of expressing the holding of an assembly. ἔκκλησις as an accusa-
tive cognate with a similar meaning to its verb is seen as a com-
mon way of indicating the calling or convoking of an assembly.

It seems appropriate to mention that most of these usages
involved a regularly considered assembly in Athens. The trans-
lator of the text makes this notation, which indicates the offi-
cial nature of the assembly.

This was the first recognition of the Pnyx as once more
the true seat of the assembly. The last assembly which had
formally met had been held at Colonus (ch. lxvii.2); one
appointed, but not held, was to have met at the theatre of
Dionysus (ch. xci.3).

The context suggests that this assembly of the people was intended
to be a regularly called affair for the discussion and decisions
of the people.

Unlike the majority of the examples cited in Thucydides,
Plato seems to make a distinction in the use of ἔκκλησις with
some of its synonyms. In Gorgias during a discussion concerning
the excellence of the power of rhetoric, there is mention made of
speaking before the ἔκκλησις or some other σύλλογος. This usage
seems to make something of a distinction between the two words.

The presence of ἔκκλησις for an assemblage is also used
by Aeschines concerning the assembly of the Amphictyons at Delphi.

1Ibid., p. 372 in footnote. 2Plato Gorgias 456.
It is called by this term when it included the pylagori and hier-
ommemos along with those sacrificing and consulting the god.1
He not only uses the word in this light but also in reference to
the several city assemblies which are called to determine actions.2

Aristotle's Athenian Constitution gives insight as to the
understanding and legal nature of the Εκκλησία up to his time.
During the time of the constitution of Draco there was a council
(βουλή) chosen of 401 members. There was a fine for a Councillor
if he was absent from either a council or assembly (Εκκλησία)
meeting.3 During the tyranny of Peisistratus, he gathered the
people in an Εκκλησία and by trickery got them to leave their arms
which were then confiscated; and then he dismissed the group with
the comment that he would attend to all public business.4 While
introducing the constitution which held sway to his day, Aristotle
makes the comment that there was a proposal for payment in lieu
of attendance at the Assembly. This was to increase attendance.
This proposal finally was achieved through the determination of
the presidents.5 Under this most lasting constitution of the
Athenians, the youth accepted as citizens at 18 were organized
into cadet groups. At the end of the first year they appeared
before an Εκκλησία of the people where they displayed drills and
received shields and spears from the state.6

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1Aeschines Against Ctesiphon 124.
2Ibid., 125f.
3Aristotle Athenian Constitution 4.3.
4Ibid., 15.4.
5Ibid., xli.3.
6Ibid., 42.4.
In order to understand the ἐκκλησία in the constitution, this full explanation of Aristotle will be given.

The Council (βουλή) is elected by lot, and has five hundred members, fifty from each tribe. The Presidency is filled by each tribe in turn, in an order settled by lot, each of the first four selected holding office for thirty-six days and each of the latter four for thirty-five days; for their year is divided into lunar months. Those of them serving as Presidents first dine together then convene meetings of the Council and the People (δήμος), the Council indeed meeting on every day excepting holidays, but the People four times in each presidency. And the Presidents put up written notice of the business to be dealt with by the Council, and of each day's agenda, and of the place of the meeting. They also put up written notice of the meetings of the Assembly (ἐκκλησία): one sovereign meeting (one in each presidential term of office), at which the business is to vote the confirmation of the magistrates in office if they are thought to govern well, and to deal with matters of food supply and the defence of the country; and on this day of estates being confiscated read, and the lists of suits about inheritance and heiresses, so that all may have cognizance of any vacancy in an estate that occurs. In the sixth presidency in addition to the business specified they take a vote on the desirability of holding an ostracism, and on preliminary informations against persons charged as malicious informers, citizens and resident aliens, up to the number of not more than three cases of either class, and charges of failure to perform a service promised to the People. Another meeting is given to petitions, at which anyone who wishes, after placing a suppliant-branch, may speak to the People about any matter he may wish whether public or private. The two other meetings deal with all other business, at which the laws enact that three cases of sacred matters are to be dealt with, three audiences for heralds and embassies, and three cases of secular matters. And sometimes they do business without a preliminary vote being taken. Also the Presidents give a first audience to heralds and to ambassadors, and to the Presidents dispatches are delivered by their bearers.

Mention is made of the payment which the people (δήμος) received for both the ordinary and sovereign meetings of the Assembly (ἐκκλησία). From the early references to the ἐκκλησία,

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it is apparent that it included the basic public. Of course, it must be assumed that this involved the male citizens only. In the final constitutional pattern as indicated in the long quotation given, the Assembly met only once during each presidency for the one sovereign meeting. The discussion of pay in another place includes both this solemn meeting and also those referred to previously as the δημος, which met four times during each presidency. In spite of certain ambiguities, it is clear that the ἐκκλησία was a called affair and with definite responsibilities of government in the Athenian society.

In Aristotle's *Politics* reference is made to the Homeric ἐκκλησία which was not a βουλή of the chiefs, but rather a counterpart of the assembly of the citizens in the time of peace. ¹

Finally, Polybius makes mention of an ἐκκλησία in a use following a form of ἔστωμι. It is used in the sense of giving him the ἐκκλησία in order to address it or to speak to the assembly.²

From the several references which have been given from pagan sources, it looks evident that one cannot put very narrow limitations on the basic thought being conveyed by ἐκκλησία. Liddell and Scott indicate simply the meaning, "assembly duly summoned."³ Their additional note that it is less general than σύλλογος can be questioned by the use in certain contexts. Thu-


²Polybius *The Histories* iv.34.6.

³Liddell and Scott, *op. cit.*, I, 509.
cydides seems to use the words interchangeably, while Plato seems to have a distinction. ἘΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ, however, seems to be more appropriate when the group has some kind of official summons for meeting. The second meaning indicated by Liddell and Scott is that it equals the Latin, comitia, which means "assembly for voting." This seems to be correct according to many of the examples of pagan sources studied in this paper.

Moulton and Milligan indicate that the basic classical use of the word means "any public assembly of citizens summoned by a herald." Cremer goes even further. It is "the common term for a congregation of the ἘΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ assembled in the public affairs of a free state; the body of free citizens summoned together by a herald (κυριεύς)." George Johnston adds one more thought to the classical meaning in saying that it was an assembly summoned by a herald for specific business in an appointed place.

From the sources listed earlier, it seems doubtful if too much weight should be given to the comment that there was always specific business involved. Most of the other comments seem to be in line with the examples given. Hoskyns and Davey indicate for classical usage that ἘΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ expressed a "group

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1 Ibid.


of citizens gathered on summons" and later was for "assemblies convoked for political purposes." It might justifiably be said that this political purpose became a part of the meaning in the late classical usage.

Schmidt shows an understanding of the pagan usage.

The N.T. itself shows that ἐκκλησίας is used in secular Greek for a gathering of people (Acts xix,32,39f.). From the time of Thucydides, Plato, and Xenophon onwards, and then specially in inscriptions, ἐκκλησίας is the gathering of the ἴδιος in Athens and most Greek cities. The derivation is simple and significant: the assembled citizens are the ἐκκλησία (called out), i.e. those who have been summoned by the herald.

It is questionable whether ἐκκλησία ever meant a religious society in ordinary Greek. This view is not affected by the fact that the political assembly—at least in classical times—was not without a religious undertone, being regarded as one of the most important duties required by the gods when they founded the city. That this was so may be seen from the prayers which were customarily offered by the herald before the ἐκκλησία and then by each speaker before he made his speech.

This same author quotes in a footnote a reference of E. Peterson in Die Kirche:

"The secular ἐκκλησία of antiquity is a recognized institution of the ἴδιος. It is the assembly of those who have full citizenship, met together for the performance of legal acts. The public and legal character of Divine Service in the Christian Church shows that the Church owes much more to political models, like the kingdom, and the city, than to voluntary fellowships and societies."

From the use of the word thus far indicated, a few working conclusions can be drawn. ἐκκλησία commonly referred to more than a mere assembly or meeting in its secular Greek usage. Generally, there was someone calling or summoning the

1 Hoskyns and Davey, op. cit., p. 26.
people into this group meeting. This mass assembly was usually called for the discussion and voting of political concerns especially in later times. As a political body, pay became customary for these male citizens in session. Political purpose was not always true as has been indicated in some of the evidence given. There was no definite idea of religious assembly other than that which permeated the general Greek city life. It had no connotation of a religious body or group, nor was it ever used of an assembly place apart from the assembling of people. With this background of understanding of meaning in pagan sources, the attention will now be focused upon the development of meaning evident in the Jewish sources.
CHAPTER III

JEWISH SOURCES

The introduction of this thesis indicated the heavy dependence which was going to be placed upon the Septuagint and sought to substantiate this dependence for the subject under consideration. This chapter will deal with the Septuagint, Philo, and Josephus as the Jewish sources. The Septuagint will be predominate in this discussion, however, and will be approached by a study of the use of the Hebrew and Greek words closely associated with ἐκκλησία, then lexical and other secondary material will be used to further the investigation, and finally, there will be a contextual study of the passages in which ἐκκλησία is used.

ἐκκλησία in the Septuagint is a common translation of the Hebrew word, הַנְּחָלָה, however, is also translated by συναγωγή. ἰτ is regularly translated by συναγωγή, but never by ἐκκλησία. A recognition of this involvement of these Hebrew and Greek words in the Hebrew Old Testament and in the Greek Septuagint complicates the understanding of the Greek word, ἐκκλησία. In order to come to some understanding of this involvement in the primary material, three definite phases of study will be discussed. The first four books of the Pentateuch will be noted to see the interchange in use of ἦ and ἰτ and the usual translation into Greek of these words in the
form of דרניא. Secondly, מִזְבַּח and מִזְבָּח will be checked according to J, E, D, and P as suggested through Brown, Driver, and Briggs lexicon. This will relate the study to a common critical view of a part of the Old Testament. Finally, מִזְבַּח and all of its variants as listed in the Mandelkern Hebrew concordance will be checked for their contribution to the study.

A quick check reveals that מִזְבַּח and מִזְבָּח are used interchangeably in the Pentateuch with the exception of Deuteronomy. A form of the noun of מִזְבַּח is used in Genesis 28:3, 35:11, 48:4; Exodus 16:3; Leviticus 4:13, 14, 21, 16:17; Numbers 10:7, 15:15, 16:3, 33, 47. All of these passages are translated in the Septuagint by a form of δραν. Similarly, in Exodus 16:2; Leviticus 4:13, 15; and Numbers 16:3, 45, a form of the noun, מִזְבָּח, is used and is likewise translated in the Septuagint by δραν. In all of these passages there does not seem to be any real difference in the meaning and use of the two Hebrew words.

One passage will illustrate this interchangeability. The Revised Standard Version translation of Exodus 16:2,3 is as follows:

and the whole congregation of the people of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, and said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

The context does not hint that there is any difference between that which is translated "congregation" in the opening of this

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section and that which is translated "assembly" towards the close. The former is \( \text{נְעַנְּבָה} \), while the latter is \( \text{נְעַנְּבָּה} \). Context or reason does not seem to necessitate this change in Hebrew or English. The Septuagint uses \( \text{συναγωγὴ} \) for both words.

This brief investigation into the first four books of the Pentateuch corroborates the position that the two basic Hebrew words mentioned are interchangeable in this section and are normally translated by the same Greek word, \( \text{συναγωγὴ} \).

The second phase of this primary study is within the framework of critical studies of the Old Testament, namely, the theory of the origin of the early books of law and history. The basic elements in the theory include the compilation of the J document about 850 B.C., the E document about 750 B.C., the D document about 621 B.C. and the P document about 450 B.C. Within this framework Brown, Driver, and Briggs have indicated sources for several passages using the Hebrew words under consideration in this study.

The noun, \( \text{נְעַנְּבָה} \), is used by the following sources: E in Numbers 22:4 in which it is translated by \( \text{συναγωγὴ} \); D in Joshua 8:35 in which it is translated by \( \text{ἐκκλησία} \); and P in Genesis 35:11, 48:4; Numbers 20:4 and seven other times in Numbers in which it is translated in the Septuagint by \( \text{συναγωγὴ} \).¹

The noun, \( \text{נְעַנְּבָּה} \), is the only one referred to in connection with P. It appears in Numbers 26:9 and 27:3 with the translation

¹Documentary Sources according to Brown, Driver, and Briggs, ibid., p. 874.
in the Septuagint of οὐναγωγή. In Numbers 17:5 it appears, but is translated into Greek by ἔπιτούρας. It appears one hundred fifteen times elsewhere in P in the technical sense of Israel of the Exodus, the congregation, especially in phrases, namely: (1) ηληκία Numbers 27:17, 31:16; Joshua 22:16, 17; (2) ηληκία Exodus 12:3, 6, 19, 47; Leviticus 4:13; Numbers 16:9, 32:4 Joshua 22:18, 20; (3) ηληκία Exodus 16:1, 2, 9, 10, 17:1, 35:1, 4, 20; Leviticus 16:5, 19:2; Numbers 1:2, 53, 8:9, 20, 13:26, 14:5, 7, 15:25, 26, 17:6, 19:9, 25:6, 27:20, 31:12; Joshua 18:1, 22:12; (4) ηληκία Leviticus 8:4 and 29 other times; (5) ηληκία Leviticus 8:3 and 22 other times; (6) ηληκία Exodus 16:22; Numbers 4:34, 16:2, 31:13, 32:2; Joshua 9:15, 18, 22:30; (7) ηληκία Leviticus 34:31; (8) ηληκία Leviticus 4:15; and (9) ηληκία Numbers 31:26. 1 The Septuagint consistently uses a form of οὐναγωγή to translate these passages.

From these few references some conclusions can be drawn. ηληκία seems to hold sway throughout P which is considered the latest of these documents. The usual translation in the Septuagint of χήρωμα and ηληκία into οὐναγωγή is observed in all documents except D. The assumption that the Pentateuch uses χήρωμα and ηληκία interchangeably is borne out, as well as the realization that in all except Deuteronomy or D they are usually translated by οὐναγωγή.

In order to present the findings of a check on all the

1Documentary sources according to ibid, p. 417.
passages using any form of $\pi \nu \rho \tau$ as listed in Mandelkern's Hebrew concordance, the passages will be grouped according to the translations used in the Septuagint. In the following outline, A. will include all passages translated with a form of $\pi \nu \rho \tau$ in the Septuagint; B. will include all passages translated with a form of $\sigma \nu \alpha \nu \gamma \eta$ in the Septuagint; and C. will include all passages translated by various other words in the Septuagint.

I. $\pi \nu \rho \tau$.
   A. I Kings 8:65; Joel 2:16; Psalms 22:23; Ezra 10:1; Proverbs 5:14; II Chronicles 7:8, 30:13.
   B. Jeremiah 44:15; Ezekiel 38:4, 15.
   C. Jeremiah 31:8; Ezekiel 16:40, 23:46, 23:47; II Chronicles 31:18 (All are $\pi \nu \rho \tau$ except Chronicles $\pi \nu \rho \tau \theta \omega$).

II. $\nu \rho \tau \pi$.
   B. Ezra 26:7.

III. $\pi \nu \rho \tau$.
   B. Exodus 16:3; Leviticus 4:13, 14, 21, 16:33; Numbers

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1 Solomon Mandelkern, Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae - Hebraeae atque Chaldaicae (Berlin: F. Margolin, 1925), pp. 1016, 1017.

2 This passage uses both $\pi \nu \rho \tau$ and $\nu \rho \tau \pi$ and translates them with $\pi \nu \rho \tau \theta \omega$ and $\sigma \nu \alpha \nu \gamma \eta$, respectively.

3 A translation for $\pi \nu \rho \tau \pi$ is omitted in the Septuagint for Deuteronomy 10:4.
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IV. ἡγησία*
   A. II Chronicles 1:15, 24:6, 29:23.

V. ἢγησιά

VI. ἀγησία
   A. Judges 21:5; Job 30:28; Lamentations 1:10; II Chronicles 30:17.

VII. ἢγησία
   C. Ezekiel 17:17 (ἐλασός).

VIII. ἢγησία
   B. Psalms 40:11.

IX. ἢγησία
   A. II Chronicles 30:24.
   C. II Chronicles 30:24 (λαδής).

X. ἢγησία
   A. Deuteronomy 31:30; Joshua 8:35; I Kings 8:14, 8:22, 12:3; Psalms 26:5; I Chronicles 28:8; II Chronicles 6:3, 12, 13, 30:25.
   B. Exodus 12:6 (Hebrew: נָגַה; Greek: πανθομός; συνεισαχθής; English: assembly of congregation); Leviticus 16:17; Numbers 14:5, 16:3, 20:4; Jeremiah 26:17 50:9.
   C. I Kings 8:14 (πανθομός).

1 The Septuagint has no text for Proverbs 26:26 in which ἢγησία is used.
XI. 30

B. Genesis 35:11.

XII. עַלְתָּן.

A. Deuteronomy 23:2, 3, 4, 9; Judges 20:2; Ezekiel 32:3; Micah 2:5; Psalms 89:6, 107:32, 149:1; Nehemiah 13:1; II Chronicles 20:5; Ezra 10:8.


C. Ezekiel 23:24 (Ωχλος); Genesis 49:6 (ωυαταλος).

An analysis of the above outline indicates the following about the translation of the Hebrew by the Septuagint for the forms of עַלְתָּן: (1) It was translated by a form of ἐκκλησία twenty-two times in II Chronicles, seven times in Psalms and Deuteronomy, five times in Ezra, Nehemiah, and I Chronicles, four times in I Kings, three times in Judges, twice in Job and Lamentations, and once in Joel, Proverbs, I Samuel, Joshua, Ezekiel, and Micah. (2) It was translated by a form of ὑφωνατωγονίαν ten times in Numbers, eight times in Ezekiel, five times in Leviticus, three times in Jeremiah and Genesis, twice in Exodus, and once in Ezra, Psalms, and Proverbs. (3) It was translated by various other forms five times in Ezekiel, twice in II Chronicles, and once in Jeremiah, I Kings, and Genesis.

This summary indicates several noteworthy factors. It definitely substantiates a trend toward increasing use of עַלְתָּן in the later writings; and, in turn, the Septuagint translators increasingly translated עַלְתָּן by ἐκκλησία in these same books of the Old Testament. It also points toward the interchangeability
of מִדְרֶשֶׁת and מְצַלֶּחַ in the first four books of the Pentateuch and the practically unanimous translation of both Hebrew terms by συναγωγή in this particular section. The fluidity of language in its use to express ideas is evident from the definite indications of overlapping and the finding of trends, rather than absolute answers.

Before leaving this primary research into word usages and relationships in the Septuagint, it is proper to reconcile two conclusions which apparently are in conflict. The study concerning documentary sources indicated that מִדְרֶשֶׁת was gaining a late ascendency. Then in the study of the use of all the derived forms of מִדְרֶשֶׁת, this word was found to appear more in the later books and also to be translated by ἔκκλησία more often. The fact that the P source used מְצַלֶּחַ quite often in the literature of the Pentateuch could be explained by the realization that P, coming out of the Post Exilic period, was influenced by a developed sense of מִדְרֶשֶׁת. It would be natural, therefore, to use מְצַלֶּחַ to express the people of Israel during the Exodus period in their history. If this explanation is valid, then a growing and developing meaning for מִדְרֶשֶׁת and its more peculiar Greek counterpart, ἔκκλησία, is substantiated.

This relation of ἔκκλησία to the two Hebrew words and the word, συναγωγή, makes it imperative to consider these words lexically in order that any indirect meanings from them might be found to better understand ἔκκλησία.

מִדְרֶשֶׁת regularly means "assembly," "congregation," or "con-
vocation." Koehler suggests in amplification "assembly," "convocation of the people," "Jewish congregation," and "special congregation."¹ Brown, Driver, and Briggs analyze the word as follows:

I. "assembly" specially convoked:
   A. for evil counsel, for civil affairs;
   B. for war or invasion;
   C. "company" of returning exiles;
   D. for religious purposes - to hear words or for feasts, fasts, and worship.

II. "congregation," as organized body:
   A. of Israel;
   B. restored community in Jerusalem;
   C. of angels;
   D. more general: "company," assembled multitude.²

Brown, Driver, and Briggs list גַּחֲלָל as the root for this word. In the paragraph listing this root, the following list of related words and languages is given: Sabean גַּחֲלָל meaning "assembly" or "congregation"; Saho כָּהָל meaning "come together" or "assemble"; Christian-Palestinian Aramaic word for כָּהָל; and Syriac word for "assemble."³

Gesenius indicates that גַּחֲלָל though not used in the Kal stem probably means "to call" or "to call together." It is regul-

²Brown, Driver, and Briggs, op. cit., p. 874. ³Ibid.
larly used in Hiphel and Niphal stems. This older scholar relates $\text{יִדְהָה}$ as being kindred in root to $\text{יִדְהָה}$, which is an unused root with the signification of "calling." This root is related to the following languages and words: Sanskrit - Kal meaning to "sound"; Greek - καλέω, κέλωμαι, κελεύω; Latin - "calo, calore, calendar"; and English "call."¹ These lexical comments all point to the idea of a group called together as the basic meaning of $\text{יִדְהָה}$.

The other Hebrew word which has become involved in this study is $\text{רְאָשָׁה}$ from the root $\text{רְאָשָׁה}$ meaning "to appoint." The Niphal stem of this root means to "meet at an appointed place," "meet by appointment," or "gather, assemble by appointment." In turning to the noun form of the word, the regular meaning listed is "congregation," which properly refers to a "company assembled together by appointment" or "acting concertedly." In the breakdown of the Old Testament usages of this word, the following meanings are listed: (1) "congregation" of God, of peoples, of the righteous, of evil doers, of Korah; (2) "pack" of animals, "swarm" of bees; (3) elsewhere of Israel, that is, the whole assemblage of them, and "elsewhere in P, except possibly Nu 20:11(R), in technical sense, of the 'company' of Israel of the Exodus, the 'congregation'."²


From the lexical descriptions of these words, it is evident that both of them have a similar meaning of "assembly" or "congregation." χρήσκευται has the sense of being called together, while παρεκκλήσιον has the sense of being together from appointment. These differences are brought to light through the root studies of these words.

Both of these Hebrew words are translated in the Septuagint by συναγωγή. Συναγωγή comes from very common root words. Σύνω in composition means "together with" and ἔκκλησία means commonly to "bring" or to "lead." Hence, the basic meaning of the noun, συναγωγή, is "a bringing together." In discussing this word more thoroughly, Liddell and Scott give the following possible meanings: (1) "a bringing together" of persons, "collecting" δικλησία or ἀνεκκλήσια, and "assembling," "meeting," τίθέναι λόγος, τίθενται; (2) "assembly," "place of assembly" especially of the Jewish "synagogue," and "meeting house"; (3) "gathering in" of harvest, "levying" of war; (4) "drawing together" or "contracting" of ranks and "bringing together" or "closing up" a wound; (5) "collection" of laws or writings; (6) "combination"; and (7) "conclusion," "inference," "cogent reasoning," or "demonstration."¹

In bringing together the previous discussion of the relationship of these Hebrew and Greek words as they meet in the translation of the Old Testament Scriptures into Greek and the present brief survey of lexical meanings, certain things can be

¹Liddell and Scott, op. cit., II, 1692.
stated. The fact that, of the two Hebrew words, \( T \) is the closer to \( T \) can be partially explained by a look at etymology. \( T \) definitely seems to involve the idea of calling together into a group. Since \( T \) is derived from \( T \), which is composed of the preposition, \( T \), with the basic meaning of "out" or "from" and the verb, \( T \), with the meaning of "call" or "summon", there is a definite similarity present. \( T \) is very general in content and is expressive of any group together, hence, it often translates both of the Hebrew words. The usage of \( T \) and \( T \) in relation to each other strengthen their peculiar emphases in contrast to the other words. Nevertheless, the overlapping of usage breaks down too strong a point here.

Upon this foundation of the understanding of the use of \( T \) in the Septuagint and also the words that are involved in finding its significance, there will be added the analyses of several scholars. This should help point up certain features of the relevance and meaning of the Septuagint to comprehend the word, \( T \), prior to its use by the Christian community.

Trench points to the breaking down of the distinction, which naturally was in the mind of the Greek reader, between \( T \) and \( T \) because both were used to translate \( T \). He further attributes to \( T \) the idea of an assemblage located in a specific place and also a generalized meaning with a spaceless, spiritual connotation. \( T \), however, is only applicable where there is a definite group of
people involved.\textsuperscript{1} If this assumption of meaning in the Septuagint is correct, a definite change in meaning has been given to \\textsuperscript{2}\textit{kklh\sigma\iota} as regarding an assemblage without the concrete reality of meeting together.

Hort in \textit{The Christian Ecclesia}, which is commonly referred to as an authority, gives definite attention to the Septuagint usage. He opens with the evaluation that neither \textit{\textpi\texttau\gamma} nor \textit{\textnu\texttau\gamma} was used in a strictly technical sense in the Old Testament. To \textit{\textnu\texttau\gamma} is attributed the idea of an assembly whether assembled or not, but \textit{\textpi\texttau\gamma} is considered as applicable only where there is the actual meeting. In analysing the word, \textit{\textk\kappa\kappa\lambda\lambda\nu\sigma\iota\alpha}, he claims on etymological grounds that there is no sense giving rise to the idea of "men called out of the world or mankind." Rather the word simply is filled with the idea of calling out of Greek houses to an assembly at the herald's summons. The increased use of \textit{\textpi\texttau\gamma} after the Exile points to the fact that it was then accorded the shades of meaning from both Hebrew words which had been used interchangeably previously. Hence, \textit{\textk\kappa\kappa\lambda\lambda\nu\sigma\iota\alpha}, as the primary Greek word for \textit{\textpi\texttau\gamma} came to take on all the associated ideas from both words for the Greek speaking Jews. The \textit{\textpi\texttau\gamma} after the exile came to mean both the actual assembling together of the Jews and also a more idealistic and spiritual thought of the people of God as a whole. There are also indications that \textit{\sigma\upsilon\nu\nu\nu\nu\upsilon\nu\gamma} came to be used only in the sense of a local group such as in the

Wisdom of Sirach xxiv. 23 and the Psalm of Solomon x. 7, 8. 1

Headlam makes a generalized statement that later Judaism came to separate the idea of συνσυναγωγή as an actual body of people gathered in one place and the idea of εἰκόνα as a sacred assembly in a more ideal sense. 2

Hoskyns and Davey seem to have accepted Hort’s study and have summarized the matter very well.

Two Hebrew words, which may be transliterated edhah and qahal, were used in the Old Testament to describe popular gatherings. Although by derivation far from synonymous, they were used fairly indiscriminately, and were both applied, in particular, to gatherings of all Israel. In this connexion, properly speaking, edhah referred to ‘the society itself, formed by the children of Israel or their representative heads, whether assembled or not assembled’, while qahal denoted ‘their actual meeting together’. But, after the Exile, qahal came to be used almost to the exclusion of edhah, and combined in itself the two shades of meaning which had formerly kept the words distinct. Meanwhile, Israel was becoming more and more conscious of being a peculiar nation, a chosen race, the elect people of God. And so qahal of Jehovah was used to signify, not an assembly of Israel upon some particular occasion, but the people of Israel as God’s people distinct from everybody else, whether assembled or unassembled, the chosen of Jehovah for his service. 3

Johnston corroborates the position that the word, ἐκκλησία, in the Septuagint came to have both a concrete and an abstract connotation. It signified a group of people met for religious ends, especially worship; and also a certain people. This double aspect seems to come from Ἰουδαίοι, which achieved predominance over

3 Hoskyns and Davey, op. cit., pp. 28, 29.
and identification of meaning with \( \text{πώλησίς} \) during the Post Exilic period. In turn, \( \text{ἐκκλησία} \) was broadened in meaning to include the emphases of both Hebrew words. This fact stands out as a definite change wrought by the use of this Greek word in translating the Old Testament Scriptures from the Hebrew. \( \text{Συναγωγή} \) was tending to refer more to a single place according to usage in Philo and Greek Judaism.\\footnote{Stauffer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 153.}

Stauffer, a contemporary scholar, indicates a high evaluation upon \( \text{ἐκκλησία} \) in the Septuagint. He says, "\( \text{ἐκκλησία} \) in the LXX is the \textit{terminus technicus} for Qahal which is the covenant community united in the worship of the Lord, and assembled together to worship him." He also claims that the preference of \( \text{ἐκκλησία} \) to represent the Hebrew word, \( \text{קֻבָלָה} \), stems from the fact that the verbal roots have the same meaning and that there is also a similarity of consonant sound.\\footnote{Stauffer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 153.} The first of these two final comments has been indicated previously in the lexical study.

A final and important probe of the use of \( \text{ἐκκλησία} \) in the Septuagint needs to be made. This is to analyze and understand the contexts in which this word is used in the Greek text. This usage is important in trying to understand fully many of the comments already made and conclusions to be reached. This will probably indicate most accurately the meaning attached to this word by Septuagintal translators. All the references in \textit{A Con-}

\\footnote{Johnston, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 37, 39-41.}
cording to the Septuagint by Hatch and Redpath will be utilized or mentioned. These passages will be discussed in the order of historical writings, general and prophetic writings, and finally apocryphal writings. Throughout the following section where ἐκκλησία is not mentioned as such, it should be assumed as the Greek word used wherever "assembly" or "congregation" appear.

Deuteronomy 4:10, 9:10 and 18:16 use ἐκκλησία in the sense of the assembly of the people who were at Mount Sinai or Mount Horeb at the time of the giving of the law. Presumably, it is the total group of people who had left Egypt and who were in the process of entering a covenant relationship with God.

The phrase, ἐπὶ ἐκκλησίας ἐκκλησίαν ὑπῆρξεν, is used four times in the opening verses of Deuteronomy 23. These verses are giving the law that no castrated male, no bastard, and no Ammonite or Moabite shall enter into the assembly of the Lord. This usage suggests the idea of a worshiping group of people before God, and that this is a regularly accepted thing. The ἐκκλησία of the Lord is this group of people. A reference back to this same passage and usage is made in Nehemiah 13:1.

Moses is said in Deuteronomy 31:30 to have spoken the words of his song "into the ears of all the assembly of Israel." This appears to be an overstatement. It is likely to mean that he spoke this as a part of his farewell to the massed children of Israel who were about to receive the "land flowing with milk and honey." Surely, it is the assembled group of people.
Joshua 9:2 (Revised Standard Version - 8:35) records an account of Joshua reading to the entire assembly and women, children, and sojourners among them. This passage suggests the idea that only the men were regarded as a part of the הָעָם. This passage might also point in the direction of the men as an official group of Israel. Is this a technical usage for הָעָם in relation to Israel?

The opening verses of Judges 20 tell of a war parley called to retaliate for the murder of a Levite's concubine. In a record which sounds late and exaggerated,¹ the leaders of the people presented themselves "in the assembly of the people of God." It seems quite likely that the group assembled was from a limited section, such as is customary in the book of Judges. Action was taken by this group to go against the Benjaminites for the previous wrong which had been done. The following chapter in verses 5 and 8 makes reference again to the assembly which was just mentioned previously. These references clearly indicate that all of Israel had not been included in this gathering.

The account of David and Goliath in I Kings 17 (English version - I Samuel) uses הָעָם to express the armies of the Israelites and Philistines which were gathered in the general area. There is no religious connotation nor limitation to just the Israelites. It refers to those who are present to witness the personal battle between David and Goliath. Another general usage of the word is in I Kings 19:20, where a group of prophets

in association with Samuel is referred to as an ἐκκλησία of prophets. These two usages indicate a common meaning for any group gathered together in an assembly.

At the time of the bringing of the Ark of the Covenant to the temple at its dedication, the group of Israelites assembled for the event and feast is referred to as the ἐκκλησία. In III Kings 8:14 the king blesses the assembly which was before him; in 8:22 Solomon, the king, stands before the altar in the presence of the assembly; in 8:55 he blesses the people again; and in 8:65 the assembly gathered is considered large and from a wide area. This usage is expressive of the group of Hebrews assembled for the temple dedication and worship. A parallel usage in describing these same events is found in II Chronicles 6:3,12 and 7:8.

The two books of Chronicles show the greater usage of ἐκκλησία since they come out of the Post Exile period. The Septuagint translators regularly translate Ἰαρ into ἐκκλησία in these books. An editorial play on "all Israel" in the introduction of chapter 13 in I Chronicles makes it difficult to understand the use of ἐκκλησία. David is recorded as speaking to all the assembly of Israel and the whole assembly agreed to his request. This consulting of David could be considered in a political sense as well as religious one. The unspecified group might include just those present or perhaps some of those not present. The word in verses 2 and 4, however, is in the sense of a gathered group and not in an ideal sense.

The last two chapters of I Chronicles give David's fare-
well to the people. He opens with a message to the leaders in the midst of the assembly, according to I Chronicles 28:2. In Chronicles 28:8 is an appeal for the law in the sight of the whole assembly of Israel. This usage could mean the whole of Israel in more of an ideal sense, rather than just any specially assembled group for worship or in one place. This Greek word under consideration is used four times in I Chronicles 29:1, 10, and 20. David addresses the assembly, blesses God in the presence of the assembly, urges the group to bless God, and the assembly accedes to his request by blessing God. In this chapter it appears to refer to those assembled about David. The scene is described as basically a religious one of a people devoted to God receiving final instructions from a beloved king. This is God's people with whom God works through various leaders.

Early in the reign of Solomon, he took with him the assembly to a high place at Gibeon to seek the Lord, according to II Chronicles 1:3, 5. This is a group of people physically present with the king for common worship.

The mention of all the congregation of Israel coming to Rehoboam in II Chronicles 10:3 seems to be an overstatement. It is likely to mean a large group and possibly a representative one, but neither inclusive of the whole population nor officially constituted.

II Chronicles 20:5 and 14 refer to the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem in the house of the Lord for worship. This is a concrete group of people in common worship in a common place.
The assembly in the house of the Lord made a covenant with the king during a time of trouble regarding the kingship as recorded in II Chronicles 23:3. A definite and concrete group is indicated and dealt with by Jehoiada, the high priest.

In addition to references to an אַּעַרֹבֶּן at Jerusalem, mention is made of the assembly at Samaria following a victory of Israel over Judah in II Chronicles 28:10. This reference would indicate that the assembly consisted of the real leaders of Israel and was something of an official group.

II Chronicles 29:20-36 tells the account of the sanctifying of the house of the Lord by Hezekiah, the king of Judah and his people. In verses 23, 28, 31, and 32, the אַעַרֹבֶּן is mentioned and seems to refer to the main mass of worshippers gathered for the ceremony in the temple. Only the king, priests, Levites, singers, and trumpeters are mentioned in any way separate from the main congregation for this service.

Hezekiah held an unprecedented passover celebration as recorded in II Chronicles 30. Verses 2 and 4 of this chapter tell that the assembly in Jerusalem planned along with the king for this observance. This assembly could mean an official group about the temple and with some special authority vested in them. It is difficult to understand just what is meant here by the use of אַעַרֹבֶּן. The other uses of the word in this chapter appear quite evident in meaning. Verse 13 indicates that a very large assembly was present for the passover, verse 17 recognizes many unsanctified people in this great throng, verse 23 recognizes a
group decision to continue the feast for another seven days, verse 24 relates the receiving of many animals of sacrifice by the people from the king for use, and verse 25 relates the common rejoicing of all present. Ἑκκλησία in these verses is expressive of the total group assembled for worship.

This contextual study now turns from the time of the Divided Kingdom to the Post Exilic period. These references reflect not only the usage of some Post Exilic writers but also the description of the events and people of this later era. In II Esdras 4:64 (English Version - Ezra), the whole assembly is numbered at 42,360. This is the number of exiles who returned from their captivity. Whether or not this number includes women is a matter of conjecture. The use, however, suggests the idea of belonging to a special group even though there is no actual assemblage of persons in one place for worship or for some event. This same number and use of Ἑκκλησία is used again in Nehemiah 7:66.

In the tenth chapter of II Esdras some interesting new connotations are evident. Attracted to Ezra, who was praying, confessing, weeping, and casting himself down before the house of the Lord, was a vast throng of the people of Israel including men, women, and children. This mass of people in II Esdras 10:1 is called by the term, Ἑκκλησία, which is used in a general sense, that is, Israelites assembled by a common attraction. In verse 8 of this chapter, those with foreign wives were both to forfeit their property and be banned from the congregation of the exiles
if they did not assemble at Jerusalem in three days. This verse indicates something of a technical meaning for the word in the sense of an official religious and national group. The fully assembled group of men from Judah and Benjamin is considered an ζκκληοια in verse 12 and as a full group makes a common decision. Then this group decided to have certain selected officials act in behalf of the assembly in examining and carrying through the accepted program. This action of the assembly empowering representatives to act in its behalf is mentioned in verse 14. This one chapter uses the word to represent a group of Israelites attracted to a particular spot, the official group of those who had come out of Exile, though unassembled, and this fully assembled group making decisions and empowering action to be taken by a select few in its behalf.

Nehemiah called a mass assembly to decide the practical issues of governing the people, according to Nehemiah and gave its consent. This ζκκληοια expresses a group acting on its own power as a mass of people and with no apparent concern for the representation of those absent.

Nehemiah 8:2 and 17 mentions the ζκκληοια as the group of men and women of Israel who had returned from captivity and who were now assembled about Ezra listening to the reading of the Law. This example is another assembly in study and worship of God. These are the children of Israel who had returned from captivity and who are meeting as a religious group recognized as the ζκκληοια.

The other references to this word in the Greek Old Testa-
ment are found in the writings and latter prophets. These seem more difficult to assess because some of them are involved in poetry and other types of references from which the meaning gained from contextual study is limited.

Job 30:28 gives a lament for wretchedness which was made in the assembly. This, probably, refers to an assembly of Hebrew men in some sense before God and among God's people.

Psalms 21:22 (Most Psalm references in the English versions are one chapter number higher,) and Psalms 21:25 refer to praise given to God in the congregation. The most natural place for praise to God was in the common assembly of the Hebrews before God.

Psalms 25:5 refers to an ἐκκλησία of evildoers. Here is a usage which has been found at other points, but which is not too common. It is merely an indication of a group of humans assembled together. Most references in the Septuagint have had something of a connotation of being met before God or, at least, in a relationship favorable towards him.

The ἐκκλησία is a place to express thanks, to tell the glad news of deliverance, and to bless God, according to Psalms 34:18, 39:9, and 67:26. In 89:5, the holy ones assembled recognize the heavens as giving praise to God and as an expression of God's faithfulness. A request for extolling God and praising him is sounded in Psalms 106:32 and 149:1. The congregation or assembly of God's people is a proper place for these feelings and expressions of religious worship.
The Septuagint uses both ἐκκλησία and συναγωγή in Proverbs 5:14. The verse only suggests, however, the sense of God's people meeting together and how unchastity can bring a sense of ruin to one while thus assembled.

Joel makes a plea for national repentance in the section surrounding his comment to call the people together and to sanctify the ἐκκλησία which is found in Joel 2:16. Assuming that this is from the Post Exilic era, this verse can mean a religious group for worship and praise to God.

Micah 2:5 is set in a section containing rebukes against some wealthy people of Jerusalem. The use of ἐκκλησία of the Lord in this verse is to suggest that these oppressors could lose their spiritual inheritance in Israel. They could lose their place in the religious community, as well as their political and economic standing as suggested by the following verses.¹

Lamentations 1:10 uses ἐκκλησία to express a religious group before God in Jerusalem, which was forbidden to foreigners. Lament is made over the entering of the sanctuary by those forbidden to be a part of the congregation which normally worshiped in the temple.

Ezekiel 32:3 and 23 are listed by Hatch and Redpath, but are not used in the Septuagintal text edited by Rahlfs. They do appear in the footnote and apparently are used by some texts in a general sense of a group or company of people. These

are not examples of the worshiping group of Hebrews.

In turning to the books of the Septuagint which use Ἐκκλησία but which are considered apocryphal, this study points to a later usage. Swete leans to the opinion that these books had Hebrew or Aramaic originals, and his dating of these originals will be the one used in the following paragraphs.¹

Judith, which is dated in the vicinity of 158 B.C., uses Ἐκκλησία four times. All the references indicate an assembly of the people including women and children. It was not just for religious ends since it deals with conditions while fighting with outsiders, but there is a definite religious overtone to all the actions. It is God's community of people and this assembly does express itself in common to God through prayer. It is a visible assemblage of Hebrew people, who considered themselves children of God in an ideal sense.

The Wisdom of Sirach uses Ἐκκλησία in several ways. This book is dated in the vicinity of 132 B.C. In 26:5 the word is used in a very general way to mean a group which is here described as an unruly multitude. This is a very loose usage to indicate a group assembled. Wisdom, which is highly extolled, is often related to the Ἐκκλησία. Wisdom in a man will open his mouth in the congregation - 15:5 24:2; the wise mouth is sought in the congregation - 21:17; the wise man will sit in the congregation - 38:33; and the wise are praised by the congregation - 39:10. This congregation could refer to the Jewish group in strictly a

¹Swete, op. cit., pp. 269-277.
religious sense or partly in a religious sense. The dating of
the book would point more to the religious. Similar to this usage
is the comment in 23:24 that the adulteress will have her child-
ren taken from her in the congregation and in 44:10 that the
congregation praises the holy men. Finally, in a very distinctly
religious sense the word is used in connection with a worshiping
group before the Lord, in which the priest gives blessing to the
congregation of Israel. This is referring to a definite religious
group assembled in worship before God. These last references
are in 50:13 and 20.

The uses of ἔκκλησία in I Maccabees seem very much in
common with the previously discussed ones. In 2:56 mention is
made of Caleb as one who bore witness before the congregation of
his people. This usage suggests the conception of the children
of the Exile as an assembly which met to decide issues. Similar
usages in commenting on incidents near to the Maccabees are
found in 5:16 and 14:19. The former passage mentions that the
assembly was consulted on a military matter and the latter con-
cerns the reading of an agreement before the congregation at
Jerusalem for approval. These are all actual meetings of the
people for discussion and action concerning issues. In 3:13
reference is made to Judas Maccabees collecting an ἔκκλησία of
the faithful men for battle. This is not so much in the sense of
a group meeting as a group chosen for a task at hand. It is a
general group, but its modifiers make it one of faithful religious
men. Finally, in 4:59 the congregation of Israel is referred to
as ordaining the Festival of Lights to be kept annually. Here \\
\( \varepsilon \kappa \kappa \lambda \nu \omicron \omega \alpha \) takes on the connotation of an official group, but \\
still an actual meeting to make a decision concerning a religious \\
festival.

This contextual study of \( \varepsilon \kappa \kappa \lambda \nu \omicron \omega \alpha \) in the Septuagint aids \\
in trying to understand the developing meaning of the word in \\
its usage. Immediately, however, it must be said that the \\
Septuagint does not use it with only one connotation, but rather \\
generalizes the meaning and gives it flexibility.

There are a few times in which it is used for a general \\
group or company composed of human beings. This group may or may \\
not have been called together, but still is in assembly together. \\
In these cases, the word does not refer to more than the fact that \\
a plural number are together in one place. This is the simplest \\
of meanings.

The Septuagint commonly uses \( \varepsilon \kappa \kappa \lambda \nu \omicron \omega \alpha \) to express a group \\
of the Israelites gathered together for political or religious \\
reasons. Often, it is the people gathered together in worship or \\
praise of God as his people and his children. It is an actual group \\
assembled in concrete reality. At times, in this sense of a defin- \\

itely assembled group it seems to indicate some official body of \\
Israel and as such hearkens back to the pagan usage. It is used \\
of men only sometimes, and at other times includes women and youth. \\
This frequent usage as an \( \varepsilon \kappa \kappa \lambda \nu \omicron \omega \alpha \) of God or of the Lord gives a \\
religious connotation and limitation to the word.

Several examples have pointed to the use of this word in
the sense of Israel in an ideal expression. Though not assembled, the entire people of God was assumed. This is especially true in the usage after the Exile. Those who returned and were Hebrew people often referred to the total group even though there was no actual thought of meeting together. This seems in harmony with the emphasis of this period upon separatism both as a religious and a national group. This more idealistic usage probably is the most peculiar contribution of the Septuagint to the connotations of this word.

The Septuagint is by far the most important Jewish source for a semantic study of ἐκκλησία. In order to recognize and utilize two late Jewish sources, brief comments will be made concerning this word in Philo and Josephus.

Philo is a combination of Hebraism and Hellenism and reflects the intellectual life of Jewry in Hellenistic Egypt during his life from 30 B.C. to 50 A.D. He shows that the Hellenistic wisdom originated from the teachings of Moses. 1 The majority of the passages checked in which Philo uses ἐκκλησία are in reference to Deuteronomy 23:1f., in which Moses gives the law that no eunuch or bastard shall enter the congregation of the Lord. In order to express this term in the Old Testament, Philo uses the following phrases: ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἑρας, 2 εἰς ἐκκλησίαν . . .


2 Philo On the Unchangeableness of God 111.
These phrases are used to express **ἐκκλησίαν κυρίου** found in Deuteronomy 23:1f. There is no reason to ascribe a meaning here in the use of Philo different than was found in the Septuagint. He accepts the idea of Israel as a worshiping community before God to which assembly many were unacceptable according to the laws of God. Schmidt contends that his Hellenism is clearly indicated through the use of ἕιναι and ἔρα, to modify ἐκκλησία. Another issue which links Philo back to classical usage is raised. In the reference in *On Dreams, That They Are God-Sent*, ὁ σύλλογος seems to be used synonymously with ἐκκλησία. This similarity was noted previously in the discussion of Thucydides and a dissimilarity was observed in the discussion of Plato. It is interesting to note that at this time Philo would use these words together with apparently the same meaning.

In another instance Philo uses this word within a common Greek framework of thought. He discusses the confirmation of freedom and its importance in the Greek world. To do this he uses ἐκκλησία in very much the traditional sense of an assembly of Greek men summoned for political considerations and for discussion.

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1. Philo *On Drunkenness* 213.
He also uses the word in the sense of an assembly of the Greek gods in which the younger gods are addressed by the older ones.  

One usage seems to indicate a mere gathering of some sort without serious purpose or reason. This type of chance assembly, as well as the market place, was to be avoided by a man of wisdom.

He not only used the word, ἄγγλια, in a sense similar to the Septuagint in dealing with Deuteronomy 23 but also in several other cases. His comment that the high priest or ἀδελφός was no ordinary part of the holy assembly sounds similar to many of the later usages of ἄγγλια in the Septuagint. This is a definite religious grouping and could refer to this religious assembly even though it did not meet together at one time and place. The congregation is also recognized as belonging to the "Ruler of all." This is a spiritual fellowship which cannot be known apart from Moses.

Hort seems perfectly justified in saying that "Josephus' ostentatious classicalism deprives us of the information which a better Jew in his position might have afforded us" on this subject.

Josephus dissociates ἄγγλια from religion and applies it only to secular gatherings such as political assemblies. This is true in the following passages which were checked out, namely,

2 Philo On the Special Laws ii. 44.
3 Philo On Dreams, That They Are God-Sent 187.
4 Philo On the Change of Names 204.
5 Hort, op. cit., p. 7.
Jewish Antiquities xiv.150; and The Jewish War iv.255 and vii.412.

Schmidt concurs in this evaluation.¹

It may be true that these last two Jewish sources lack value because their work was done strictly from a Greek viewpoint. The Septuagint, however, involves the meeting of the Hebrew terminology with the Greek. Philo only corroborates other usages previously noted and Josephus is very much of a flash back to classical usage.

¹Schmidt, op. cit., p. 54.
"As employed by Christianity the word *eclesia* embodied a new conception for which the world was ready, which was the spiritual fulfilment of principles innate in Judaism, and awaiting development; which only came into being in the new life and revelation through Jesus Christ."  

This chapter is going to make a study of the word, Εἴκλημα, according to its use by Christianity during the first century A.D. This study should show something of the development indicated by Headlam. The usage of the word in the New Testament will be studied in four categories of use and also in light of certain basic issues stemming from a study of this word. Brief attention will be given to Clement and a statement of Latin usage by Deissmann.

G.H.C. Macgregor analyzes the usage of Εἴκλημα both in Acts and in the Pauline writings. Even though his listing is not complete for the purposes of this study, it will be given and used with one additional category. He writes:

As in the Pauline epistles, the use of the word "church" in Acts is threefold: (a) The whole church as a religious community; 20:28 comes nearest to this "catholic" use; cf. also 5:11; 9:31; I Cor. 10:32. (b) The local Christian body: e.g. 13:1, "the church at Antioch," or 11:26, where the local community at the same place is called "the church"; so both in Paul and Acts we have "the churches" with reference to

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1 Headlam, op. cit., p. 16.
local bodies; this is much the most common usage. (c) The original use with reference to people in actual assembly. So throughout I Cor. 14 ἐκκλησία almost means, as we would say, "in church," and in 14:23 κατ᾽ ἐκκλησίαν may mean "at church," just as 2:46 οἶκον means "at home." An extension of this usage would be the application of the word to the church building, as with the word "synagogue." A possible, but unlikely, example might be I Cor. 11:22, where οἶκιάς (homes) and Εἴκησία (church building?) may be in antithesis.

This outline of uses is complete if one looks at the issue from the English word, "church." It is inadequate whenever one is going to include all of the uses of ἐκκλησία in either Acts or the whole of the New Testament. The word, ἐκκλησία, is used in the New Testament in several non-Christian usages. The use is similar to that indicated in his third category, but sufficiently different in meaning to warrant separate study in this thesis.

Scrutiny will be focused upon this non-Christian usage before further elaboration of the other three uses.

Several of these non-Christian uses are in reference to material in the Old Testament and consequently are similar to ideas present in the Septuagint. Acts 7:38 uses ἐκκλησία similarly to its use in Deuteronomy 4:10, 9:10, and 18:16. It refers to the congregation of Israel which was led out of Egypt by Moses and which entered into a covenant relationship with God. The word implies a definite group present and assembled together as God's children. Hebrews 2:12 uses ἐκκλησία to represent the Hebrew ἵπτα in quoting Psalms 22:22. This refers to a congregation of the

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This setting is familiar from the use of ἐκκλησία in the previous discussion of its use in the Psalms.

Acts 19:39 uses ἐκκλησία in the sense that it had been used by classical Greek and in other secular writings. It represents the regular meeting of the Ἑσυχὸς and was that which met three times each month. In discussing the riot at Ephesus, ἐκκλησία is used also in verses 32 and 41 of this same chapter. In these two verses the meaning seems to be that of a mob which assembled together. This is not a technical or common use of the word, but rather a simple application to a mob group. This use does not seem out of harmony with an observation made that public meetings commonly were assembled in the Ἱερατον. ¹

Finally, Hebrews 12:23 uses ἐκκλησία in a manner which is difficult to understand fully. It is used to denote those of the heavenly Jerusalem. Schmidt questions seriously whether or not this is used in any technical New Testament sense. ² It is in reference to a group about which little is known or can be surmised.

All of these usages and passages discussed in the last three paragraphs indicate that ἐκκλησία is used in the New Testament Scriptures similarly to both the Septuagint and pagan


² Schmidt, op. cit., p. 23.
Greek literature. The word is found in these passages as one which is in no way affected by Christianity. While these examples are not common in the New Testament, they do form one definite grouping.

A second and more common usage of ἐκκλησία in the New Testament is in reference to "the whole church as a religious community." The ἐκκλησία is considered a corporate body even when it is not assembled into a congregation and even when geographical locations would make it practically impossible to gather in one place. There is a certain abstract quality noted in the church. In modern terminology, the church is considered as "catholic" or "ecumenical."

Acts 5:11 mentions ἀγάπη τῆς ἐκκλησίας as developing fear after the deaths of Ananias and his wife, Sapphira. A typical summary statement in Acts 9:31 refers to the church in all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria in the sense of a corporate group. Acts 20:28 relates Paul's advice to the Ephesian elders "to feed the church of the Lord, which he obtained for himself with his own blood."

The use of ἐκκλησία in Ephesians is always in this context and as such is used to build the doctrine of the church. The church is the body of Christ; through the church the Gospel is known; Christ is the head of the church; Christ loved and died for the church; and the church is purified by Christ (Ephesians 1:22, 3:10, 5:23, 25, 27, 29, 32). Colossians 1:18 and 24 also builds the doctrine of the corporate, catholic ἐκκλησία in its relation
with Christ and the world.

While recognizing that many problems and questions can be raised concerning the use of ἐκκλησία in Matthew 16:18, our best texts still include it. Without answering the question about Jesus' use of the word, the use by the writer still fits into this general category as referring to the whole church.

Other passages and something of their meaning include:

- I Corinthians 10:32 - in actions give no offense to the of God;
- I Corinthians 12:28 - God has set various responsibilities according to the spiritual gifts in the church;
- I Corinthians 15:9 - Paul claims unfitness to be called an apostle because of his persecution of the church;
- Galatians 1:13 - Paul claims inferiority in knowledge of Christ apart from direct revelation as was indicated by his persecution of the church;
- I Timothy 3:5 - a bishop should be qualified to manage the church;
- and I Timothy 3:15 - the church of God is the household of God.

The church in this corporate wholeness regardless of geographical location is definitely a developed meaning which is far distant from classical or secular usage. There is a oneness to the ἐκκλησία of God and Christ. Christians form a fellowship with Christ and with each other to the point that assembling all together is unnecessary to be called an ἐκκλησία. Furthermore, the necessity of a concrete assembly becomes an absurdity for this universalistic faith.

The most common New Testament usage of ἐκκλησία is in relation to the church as a local body, that is, of a town, village,
home, or other geographical area. This usage in the same way as the last one discussed does not demand an actual assembling. This eliminates the use of "congregation" as an absolute translation for ἐκκλησιά as was suggested by Tyndale and Cranmer. Somehow it is "a corporate body even when not assembled." Schmidt elaborates upon this special nature of the Christian ἐκκλησιά as it is manifest whether the corporate group be a universal one or a local one.

The contrast with the other (worldly) ἐκκλησιά is not a matter of quantity but of quality. Size is an object in the case of a national gathering, but not for the gathering of the people of God. The essential is that God gathers his own. Numbers depend upon him who calls, and only secondarily upon those who respond to the call. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii, 20.)

As was mentioned previously, the majority of the New Testament references to an ἐκκλησιά are to that of a corporate group in a local community or place without regard to their assembling.

The evidence for this usage seems overwhelming - Matthew 18:17, 18; Acts 8:1, 3, 11:22, 29, 12:5, 13:1, 14:23, 27, 15:3, 4, 22, 41, 16:5, 18:22, 20:17; Romans 16:1, 4, 5, 16, 23; I Corinthians 4:7, 7:17; 16:1, 19; II Corinthians 1:1, 8:1, 18, 19, 23, 24, 11:8, 28, 12:13; Philippians 4:15; Colossians 4:15, 16; I Thessalonians 1:1, 2:14; II Thessalonians 1:1, 4; and twenty references in Revelation.

Several passages which especially represent this group will be mentioned briefly. The success of conversions in Antioch

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1 Hoskyns and Davey, op. cit., p. 26.
2 Ibid.
3 Schmidt, op. cit., p. 8.
became known to the ἐκκλησία at Jerusalem and they sent Barnabas to Antioch to meet with the church. This reference, which includes Acts 11:22 and 29, shows a far different use of the word than many of the passages in the Septuagint which referred to an actual assemblage of people. Here it is a general statement concerning a corporate body in a location which did on occasion meet in a single congregation or more likely as congregations. The references did not specify the actual meeting together, as most Septuagint references and all classical references would have done. Most all plural uses of ἐκκλησία in the New Testament are in this sense of the word.

The fourth general category in which ἐκκλησία is used in the New Testament is in the sense of a local body of believers in actual session. I Corinthians 14 gives this usage. This use hearkens back more strongly to the pagan use of the word. There is an actual and concrete assemblage. Paul is dealing with the problem of the spiritual gift of tongues in I Corinthians 14. The references to ἐκκλησία in the chapter deal with a problem of the church in session, or the church as a local body meeting together. The fifth verse, for example, says that to prophesy is better than to speak in tongues unless there is an interpreter of the tongues who can edify the church. This use of the word would fit the modern phrase, "in church."

A question that is raised concerning the use of ἐκκλησία in the New Testament includes the reasons why this word was chosen and the matter of its relationship with οὐναγωγή. This all seems
to be tied together.

Johnston summarizes the following reasons for the choosing of \( \varepsilon \kappa \kappa \lambda \nu \nu \alpha \) for use in the New Testament:

1. The disciples of the risen Christ believed themselves to be the true people of God; they were the Messianic community. This could be expressed in \( \kappa \nu \nu \alpha \) the Congregation of God. But in Greek, apart from \( \alpha \mu \alpha \gamma \nu \gamma \gamma \) which had definite limitations, as we have seen, \( \varepsilon \kappa \kappa \lambda \nu \nu \alpha \) was the only word capable of receiving the content of the Christian claim. (2) It was not so distinctively Jewish as to be unsuitable for a society which quickly accepted Gentiles for membership on the profession of faith in Christ as Lord. (3) In particular, \( \varepsilon \kappa \kappa \lambda \nu \nu \alpha \) had scriptural authority and was familiar to all.

Of course there was nothing like a conciliar decision to adopt as the title of the Christian society the word \( \varepsilon \kappa \kappa \lambda \nu \nu \alpha \). Other names, usually more concrete, were used, but gradually this one ousted all others and became the exclusive possession of Christians. This result owed much to the frequency of Paul's use of \( \varepsilon \kappa \kappa \lambda \nu \nu \alpha \) and to his prominent conception of what the Ecclesia is.

Hoskyns and Davey indicate that the Christians from an early date considered themselves to be the Israel of God and the true race of God in opposition to the Jews. Hence they used the Old Testament word, \( \varepsilon \kappa \kappa \lambda \nu \nu \alpha \), in the sense of a particular people with a service to perform. Others regard the transition from Judaism as a more unconscious move. E.F. Scott feels that Christianity took over the Judaistic conception of Israel with only the one difference, namely, that faith replaced race as the bond of union. He indicates that "in the speech of Stephen, perhaps the earliest Christian document which has come down to us, the whole argument turns on the idea that Israel as a nation has been rejected and has surrendered its privileges to the true Israel, the

1 Johnston, op. cit., pp. 44, 45.

2 Hoskyns and Davey, op. cit., p. 30.
church.¹

Jackson and Lake consider the early followers of Jesus as still regarding themselves a part of the Jewish Church. Only when the synagogue opposition grew, did the Christians abandon the Jewish practice and allow the possession of the Spirit to be the "trade mark" of the Christian. "They called themselves the ἐκκλησία; probably this was at first merely the translation of keneseth, but the fact that it had been used in the LXX. to translate qahal—the Congregation of Israel—furthered the conviction that the Christian Church, not the Jewish, was the Congregation of Israel, the true people of God—the λαὸς as contrasted to ἡ ἡλικια.²

Burton makes a brief study of ἐκκλησία and makes some interesting conclusions. After noting its use in the Old Testament, classical Greek, the Pentateuch, and the Apocrypha, he indicates that the Dispersion era marked a revival of the term, οὐκαι ως, for the local Jewish congregations. Hence, when Christians needed a term for their own assemblies, they reverted to ἐκκλησία which had been used in pagan Greek and later Old Testament terminology. He comments that the ecumenical meaning was derived from the Septuagint's use of this word to express ἡ ἡλικια, the covenant community of God.³


All of these secondary comments indicate a common feeling that the early Christians regarded the ἐκκλησία as a fulfillment and a renewal of the Jewish community as the people of God. Two reasons seem to stand out as to why ἐκκλησία predominated over συναγωγή to express the Christian body. (1) ἐκκλησία was considered more in an abstract and ideal sense than συναγωγή, primarily because of its use in the Septuagint. This background made it more applicable for use as a name for the Christian group. (2) There have been hints this study that συναγωγή had developed a more regular usage as the local Jewish assembly or meeting place. This definitely local connotation would make it unacceptable for Christian usage and this common usage by Jews would also give reason for the Christians to avoid its use.

In the New Testament, συναγωγή is commonly used of the Jewish place of worship or its congregation in actual meeting, and ἐκκλησία is used of the Christian assembly or community or corporate body. James 2:2 raises a bit of a question by its use of συναγωγή to describe a Christian meeting. Weizsacker's claim that there was always a definite line between these two words without exception is wrong.1 Ropes not only accepts this usage in James, but gives evidence of a similar usage in other sources.2

Another problem of New Testament usage of ἐκκλησία centers around the promiscuous use of the singular and plural of ἐκκλησία.


in the New Testament. A significant corollary is introduced by this issue. Craig notes that in the twenty-two uses of ἐκκλησία in I Corinthians, that "he goes back and forth from the singular to the plural with surprising freedom. The one church was located in many places and he could refer to these congregations either as churches or 'the church.'"¹ Schmidt, likewise, comments that the singular and plural are used without real difference.

This does not mean that the ἐκκλησία is divided into ἐκκλησίαι, or that, vice versa, it is formed by the coming together of the latter. It means that the ἐκκλησία is present in a certain place, and this is not affected by the mention of ἐκκλησίαι elsewhere.²

This last use (Use of plural of ἐκκλησία in Romans 16:16) adds to the difficulty of interpreting the word ἐκκλησία solely in the light of the Old Testament. Hitherto it might have been supposed that the Old Testament idea of the people of God had simply been christianized by a reinterpretation of the relation to God in the light of the gospel. In that case ἐκκλησία would still mean all the people of God assembled or unassembled, the new Israel, the whole Christian body. But here the plural appears, ἐκκλησίαι, and not only here, but many times in the Pauline epistles. And these ἐκκλησίαι may equally well be groups meeting in a house, or all the Christians of a great city. "The ἐκκλησίαι of Asia salute you. Aquila and Prisca salute you much in the Lord, with the ἐκκλησία that is in their house." Thus the name 'ἐκκλησία' can be given indiscriminately to the whole body of Christians, to local bodies of Christians, and even to smaller bodies of Christians within local bodies. The corporate sense of ἐκκλησία has not been lost in the emphasizing of the idea of calling. The word has been transformed to denote a body of men and women in which unity of every part corresponds to, repeats, represents, and in fact is the unity of the whole. So ἐκκλησία has one more association, which cannot be explained by its Old Testament history. The part is equal to

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¹ Clarence Tucker Craig, "Exegesis" of The First Epistle to the Corinthians, The Interpreter's Bible (Nashville: The Abingdon Press, 1953), X,16.

² Schmidt, op. cit., p. 7.
the whole, because each part possesses, not a fragment of
the Christ, but the whole Christ, and consequently, in
accordance with the mathematical definition, the ekklesia
is of the order of infinity.

This reference to the New Testament usage of ἐκκλησία
shows a new dimension which must be faced. The ἐκκλησία "is a
microcosm of the whole Church."² Whereas, the primary meaning of
the word inherently points to an assembly of the faithful in wor-
ship before God, yet there is a universal sense to the word, and
finally a sense in which the whole universal is expressed in
the local.

In addition to this idea which became a part of the
Christian use of ἐκκλησία, there is a recognition that New
Testament ecclesiology is inseparably linked with Christology. In
order to make this point, three analyses will be quoted.

This "commonwealth of God," as it has been called, is an
organized community of people who share a common experience
of Jesus Christ, and who are united in love, faith, and
loyalty to him and to one another in the bonds of fellowship
and service. For Paul the church is the living embodiment
of the spirit of the Master. It is his continued incarnation
in the world, and its function is to propagate his gospel and
to perpetuate and spread his spirit among men until they lea-
ven the life of the whole world.³

The Church that calls itself ecclesia means to be neither
Synagogue nor anti-Synagogue nor yet para-Synagogue, but
the covenant community of the Messiah, seeing its roots back
beyond the age of the formation of the Synagogue in the very

¹ Hoskyns and Davey, op. cit., pp. 31, 32.
² R. Newton Flew, Jesus and His Church (New York: The Abing-
don Press, 1938), p. 18 and W. K. Lowther Clarke, Divine Humanity
³ John Short, "Exposition" of The First Epistle to the
Corinthians, The Interpreter's Bible (Nashville: The Abingdon Press,
1953), X, 16.
beginnings of Israel. She intends to revive the inheritance of the Mosaic covenant community and now at last bring its original purpose to its fulfillment: the hallowing of God's name.1

At any rate the point is pretty clearly made that the ἐκκλησία as the body of Christ is not a mere fellowship of men. The true meaning of the gathering of God in Christ can never be understood from the standpoint of social science. The one essential is communion with Christ. To put the matter in a nutshell—a single individual could be—would have to be—the ἐκκλησία if he has communion with Christ. This is the basic of true human brotherhood. Over against all sociological attempts to comprehend the Church, it must be noted that for Paul, for those who followed him, and for the Fourth Evangelist, ecclesiology and Christology are identical.2

These three points of emphasis—the relationship of ἐκκλησία with συναγωγή and why the former was chosen, the use of the plural of ἐκκλησία and the finding of the universal in the local, and the close tie with Christ and Christology—have been dealt with sufficiently to move to several considerations of lesser significance.

Whether or not ἐκκλησία contains the idea of "called out" etymologically is an issue with divergent opinions. Hort followed by Burton and Johnston say, no; but Deissmann and Schmidt say, yes.

Hort recognizes the Scriptural idea of the church as possibly suggesting calling men out of the world. But he claims the idea is foreign to ἐκκλησία and that ἐκκλησία never is used in such a context. He goes on to point out that in the Old Testament both ἡγεμόν and ἐκκλησία are not used with any emphasis of summons, but rather of assembly.3 Burton states categorically that

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3 Hort, op. cit., pp. 5, 6.
on the basis of its etymology does not hold the thought of "called out" of the world or separated from it. Even though this might be congenial to New Testament thought, he claims Paul did not make such a substitution of meaning. Johnston makes his claim on the basis that the is composed of selected citizens and that the purposiveness of the gathering is the idea stressed.

On the other side of the question, Deissmann considers the most literal translation of to be "the (convened) assembly." This self-bestowed name rested on the certain conviction that God had separated from the world His 'saints' in Christ, and had 'called' or 'convened' them to an assembly, which was 'God's assembly,' 'God's muster,' because God was the convener. Schmidt without too much reasoning for this point states, " is in fact that group of human beings which is called out of the world by God, even without any conscious emphasis on the preposition, like the original , in which no preposition is expressed.

The over-all usage of the word in this study would lean toward the argument held by Hort and those who have maintained his position. The idea of being "called out of the world" seems to include more than is involved in the word and its major usage.

4Schmidt, op. cit., p. 58.
It has more the sense of a convened group. Much of the preceding quotation of Deissmann would be acceptable, except the idea of "separated from the world."

Before leaving this discussion of the Christian usage, there are two bits of evidence which date from the close of the First Century A.D. and which are outside of the canon. The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians uses ἔκκλησια in three familiar ways. In the introduction is a reference addressing the letter from the "church of God" in Rome to the "church of God" in Corinth. In a reference in xliv.3 mention is made concerning the approval of the whole church to the appointment of men as bishops. This usage probably refers to the church in one community. The third reference in xlvii.6 is that the church in Corinth was being disloyal to its elders. This of course is a reference to the local group. These references coincide and show a similar meaning with the common New Testament usage.

A second note to be added concerning Christian usage in non-canonical sources comes from an observation of Deissmann. He has found that in references dating from the turn of the First Century A.D. that both pagan and Christian literature made a Latin form of ἔκκλησια rather than to translate it. This observation does not add fresh meaning to the word, but it does indicate its prominence, respect, and important significance. The word was taken as it was used in the East and used similarly in the West.

1 Deissmann, op. cit., pp. 112, 113.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The word, κκληνοια, was developed greatly through its use in Judaism and Christianity to the point that by the end of the First Century A.D., it could mean much more than it did originally in pagan Greek. A study to understand its precise meaning can be of great value to Biblical theology.¹ This word came to possess a "peculiar stamp of a Christian content."²

In pagan Greek usage, κκληνοια often had a definite technical sense of an official meeting of the male ημος, which was officially called for political business and purposes. Other times found it used to indicate actual assemblies of the ημος but not always in an official way. This word always referred to a concrete assembly of persons and was never used with an abstract meaning.

The Septuagint not only gave identification of this word with the people of God or Israel, but also used it in an abstract as well as concrete sense. This latter development makes the Septuagint essential in trying to understand the word as it was adopted by the Christians for the name of their group, whether assembled or not. The presence of κκληνοια in the Septuagint comes regularly as a translation for the Hebrew term, ותא, which

¹Schmidt, op. cit., p. 8. ²Johnston, op. cit., p. 35.
is found more frequently in the later writings than \( \Pi \), with which \( \Pi \) is used interchangeably in the first four books of the Pentateuch. The later writings increasingly translate \( \Pi \) by \( \varepsilon \kappa \kappa \lambda \gamma \omicron \alpha \omicron \). This Greek word seems to have a stronger identification than \( \sigma \nu \alpha \gamma \omega \nu \gamma \nu \) and came to overshadow the latter, especially in reference to the Hebrews as a distinct people in the later parts of the Old Testament. The usage of the word, \( \varepsilon \kappa \kappa \lambda \gamma \omicron \alpha \omicron \), went far beyond the pagan meanings in its references to an abstract group. This was particularly true in and about the Post Exilic era. The word was used of the Hebrews who were the people of God and who met with and before Him as an assembly. Women and even children came to be included sometimes in the group identified as the \( \varepsilon \kappa \kappa \lambda \gamma \omicron \alpha \omicron \).

This Septuagintal usage opened the way for the word to be taken up by Christianity, especially since \( \sigma \nu \alpha \gamma \omega \nu \gamma \nu \) was being used pretty commonly as the local assembly place or assembly of Jewish worship. The concrete and abstract idea of assembly as developed by use in the Septuagint was important. The abstract connotation was applied in Christianity both in a local and in a universal sense. Its previous identification with the people of God also fit the Christian conception of themselves as "the new Israel."

The New Testament also used the word in the sense that the local church, whether assembled or not, represented or was, in a real sense, equal to the whole church. "The part is equal to the whole, because each part possesses, not a fragment of the
Christ, but the whole Christ, and consequently, in accordance with the mathematical definition, the **ekklesia** is of the order of infinity!¹ This also suggests the close tie in all of its contexts with Christ in order to understand its meaning. Ecclesiology and Christology become intertwined.

The development of meaning as recorded in the usage of the Septuagint and the New Testament brings the matter to the close of the First Century A.D. Even though the Christian writings at this time still referred to **εἰκόνα** occasionally according to its original pagan meaning, the development of meaning is still most important. The Septuagint referred to the people of God as the **ἐκκλησία** in both a concrete and abstract sense. The New Testament writers added the idea that the **ἐκκλησία** in a local place represents fully the whole **ἐκκλησία**. This idea of an abstract meaning seems to destroy Barth's support of Luther in seeking to replace "church" entirely by the term, "congregation."² The development of the New Testament in which the part equals the whole raises serious question to the idea of "the invisible church" as Schmidt strongly asserts.³

¹Hoskyns and Davey, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
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