



Day One

Matthew 16:16-18; Acts 1-2

About *Enormous Church: How Church is Supposed to Be*

Two thousand years ago, a gathering of people in a Middle Eastern city began a movement that would circle the globe and leave its mark on individuals and cultures on every continent. This movement eventually became known as The Church. The church isn't a place; it's a movement. And ... it's still moving. Whether you consider yourself a church person or not, *Enormous Church*, seeks to reveal the story and meaning of the earliest gatherings of Christians.

Bottom Line

The church was born as a movement, not a building, and it's still moving!

Introduction

I love the church. I love South Bay Bible Church. I don't know what comes to mind or what you feel when you hear the word church, but chances are it is a far cry from what the first church people thought or experienced. Nobody was bored in the first century. They didn't think building, rows, pews, robes, hymnals, band, liturgy, Bibles, banners, or postcards. There wasn't any of that.

The church was simply a gathering of people who came together around one belief: Jesus is the risen Christ, the son of the living God. That was **all** they had. That was enough. The church was a movement. And it got big starting day one.

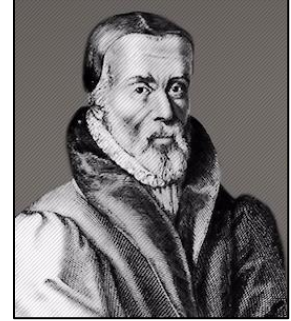
Struggle

The Greek term translated church in the New Testament is *ekklesia*. Ekklesia means assembly or gathering.

But the English term, **church**, comes from an entirely Greek term meaning "of the Lord" picked up and adapted around 300 A.D. The German word was Kirche or "Lord's house."

This really bad translation created really bad theology. The church became a place rather than a movement or gathering. It was tamed. It was localized. It was controlled by the people who controlled the building.

Meet William Tyndale. He is the father of the English Bible, and he did something bold. In 1524, he translated and published the Bible in English. This was scandalous because it gave away the power of the church.



One of the things that drove church leaders crazy was his translation of *ekklesia* as congregation rather than church, moving the focus from a building to a people. Because of this declared heresy by church leaders, William Tyndale was hanged and burned at the stake in 1536. But, Tyndale was right.

Truth

In Matthew 16, we find the first reference to church in the New Testament.

In verse 15, Jesus asked, “Who do you say I am?”. Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church [*ekklesia*], and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

Two months after the resurrection the church officially launched.

Read: Acts 1

Just as Jesus predicted, the church was a gathering that rallied around one idea – **Jesus is the resurrected Christ, the son of the living God.**

You couldn't go to church. You were the church.

The church wasn't for church people...there weren't any.

The church wasn't about a location...there wasn't one.

The church wasn't about style, liturgy, or ritual...there wasn't any.

The mission of the church was to do one thing: **Create followers of Jesus Christ.**

Conclusion

I don't know what comes to mind or what you feel when you hear the word “church.”

From now on, I hope you will think a multiplying, multicultural gathering of people, but most importantly, I hope you will begin to think of people who believe Jesus is the Savior and whose lives reflect his teaching.

The church began as a movement. It is still moving.

We are going to pick up the story here next week. Thanks to William Tyndale, you can read ahead.

Next Steps

- Memorize Matthew 16:18
- Read and Study Matthew 16 and Acts 1-2 this Week
- Meditate on the Start of the Church
- Consider Your Part in the Movement