

# AMANA TRUST BIBLE STUDIES

## Lesson 21

### The Practice of the Local Churches

#### Bible reading

*Please pray over these verses.*

#### Romans 16:1, 3-5, 23

**1** I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a deaconess of the church which is in Cenchrea,  
**3** Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,  
**4** Who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;  
**5** And greet the church, which is in their house. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the firstfruits of Asia unto Christ.  
**23** Gaius, my host and host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, greets you, and Quartus the brother.

#### Introduction

The full, complete gospel in Romans begins with the designation of Christ to be the Son of God and passes through the stages of justification, sanctification in life, and transformation for the Body of Christ, before ultimately consummating with God's masterpiece—the practice of local churches as the expressions of the Body of Christ.

#### Bible study reading

*Please prayerfully read through the following portions of ministry related to this lesson.*

In Romans 1 we find the word "creation"; in Romans 16 we find the word "churches." It is quite easy to say how God created: He spoke the word and creation came into being. However, it is difficult to say how He produced the churches. God had to perform a work in various stages as part of a lengthy process which included redemption, justification, reconciliation, regeneration, sanctification, transformation, conformation, and glorification. As a result of this lengthy process, God has made the churches. The churches are the peak, the consummation, of God's work and building. He cannot go any higher...With the establishing of the churches in Romans 16, the eternal God has attained the peak of His work and is satisfied.

If you study all the books in the New Testament, you will find that, other than Romans, not one of them ends with such a melody as we find in the last three verses of chapter sixteen. Although some people have called these verses a doxology and a benediction, I prefer to call them a melody. When Paul wrote these words, he was excited, happy, and satisfied. Not even the book of Revelation concludes with such a melody. In Romans 16 we have the local churches, and when we have the local churches, it is sufficient for us to be excited, happy and satisfied. (*Life-study of Romans*, msg. 31, section 2)

Many Christians have stopped at the station of justification in Romans 4. Some have gone further to the station of sanctification in Romans 8. Other seeking Christians have gone as far as chapter twelve and talk about the Body, although they lack the genuine experience of the Body...If you are content to remain in Romans 12, you will not have the Body actually and practically, because the Body is fully realized in the local churches...Hence, our station is in chapter sixteen, the last station in the book of Romans. Where are you? We have passed through the station of justification, sanctification, and the stage of talking about the Body. Praise the Lord that we are abiding in the last station, in the local churches, where we realize the genuine Body life. When you are resting in this station, you can join Paul in his concluding melody of praise. (*Life-study of Romans*, msg. 31, section 4)

## Going deeper

*Please read or listen to these materials for an in-depth study of this lesson.*

### Further reading:

[\*Life-study of Romans\*, msg. 30](#)

[\*Life-study of Romans\*, msg. 31](#)

### Radio broadcast link:

Broadcast 32, [\*A Closing Word\*](#)

Broadcast 60, [\*The Practice of the Body Life\*](#) (Start from beginning and end at the 5:12-minute mark; re-start at the 19:03-minute mark and continue until end of broadcast)

### Footnotes from Recovery Version of the New Testament:

Romans 16:1, footnote 2

Romans 16:4, footnote 3

Romans 16:20, footnote 1

Revelation 1:11, footnote 1

### Questions for personal or corporate study:

*References in brackets indicate readings or broadcasts that may be helpful in answering the questions.*

- Explain why the practice of the local churches in Romans 16 can be considered the consummation, even the peak of God's gospel presented in Romans. (*Life-study of Romans*, msg. 30; Romans 16:1, footnote 2, Recovery Version)
- How can we apply the practice of the church life at the time of the apostles to our church life today? (Broadcast 60; Revelation 1:11, footnote 1, Recovery Version)

## Works Cited

Lee, Witness. *Life-study of Romans*. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1989. [www.ministrybooks.org](http://www.ministrybooks.org)

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