

# **THE INFLUENCE OF THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH IN AFRICA**

**The Africa's Future Leading Christian Church**

## **HAND BOOK FOR ALL LEADERS IN THE CHURCH**

### **BOOK 2**

**SABIITI MBIIRE FENEKANSI**

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# **APOSTLES NETWORK DEVELOPMENT MISSION (AND-MISSION)**

## **STRENGTHENING CHURCH LEADERSHIP AND CHURCH BUILDING FOR THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH IN AFRICA**

***CAPACITY BUILDING FOR ALL CHURCH LEADERS OF ALL PENTECOSTAL FAITHS  
"I PRAY THAT THEY MAY BE ONE...." (JOHN 17:21-23):***

### ***AND-Mission, a Ministry Program of Vision 2040 Resource Centre***

*We are the people of Apostles Network Development Mission (AND- Mission). AND-Mission is a Ministry program of Vision 2040 Resource Centre. Vision 2040 Resource Centre is a Christian founded non-denominational Organization, founded by a team of Christians in 2012 in Uganda. AND-Mission is aimed at strengthening capacities of Christian leadership and Christian-led Interventions in the fight against injustices, Poverty and Disaster, and so, saving people's lives through strengthening the gospel teaching and ministry enhancement.*

*Apostles Network Development Mission has the role to meet the Christian Leadership needs (spiritual and social- economic) so that people may in totality understand God's plan for an eternal life and may come to salvation.*

***Our Vision:*** *"A Christ-centred Church equipped for transforming mission among people"*

***Our Goal:*** *A Church that is an effective facilitator of spiritual and socio- economic development processes for God's People*

***Our Mission:*** *"Developing church leaders who love God, love people and are competently equipped to take the Gospel to the world."*

***Our Purpose:*** *The purpose of the AND-Mission work for pastors is to provide focused training and support, opportunity for growth in service, and cultivation of godly character-all within the context and care of our local church.*

# UNDERSTANDING JESUS, HEAD OF THE CHURCH

Christianity is built on solid biblical and historical fact. You must understand that Christianity is not a blind leap of faith. The truths of the Christian faith are documented by centuries of historical facts, study and research. Many scholars have dedicated their lives to investigating the birth, life, teaching, miracles, death, resurrection and influence of Jesus of Nazareth. As a result, we have overwhelming historical evidence proving all of the above.

The evidence includes writings of the contemporaries of Jesus whose lives were forever changed as a result of their intimate friendship with Him. Even Christ's enemies verified His resurrection through their conspiracy to pay witnesses to fabricate a story to explain why Jesus' tomb was empty.

Through these and many more convincing proofs, we know Jesus truly lived on earth; Jesus truly died; and Jesus truly rose again.

In the last years of his life, the German dramatist Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote, "If ever the Divine appeared on earth, it was in the person of Christ."

The Russian novelist and philosopher Fyodor Dostoevsky said, "Even those who have renounced Christianity and attack it, in their inmost being still follow the Christian ideal, for hitherto neither their subtlety nor the ardor of their hearts has been able to create a higher ideal of man and of virtue than the ideal given by Christ of old. When it has been attempted, the result has been only grotesque."

Dr. Charles Malik of Lebanon, former president of the United Nations General Assembly, said, "I really do not know what will remain of civilization and history if the accumulated influence of Christ, both direct and indirect, is eradicated from literature, art, practical dealings, moral standards and creativeness in the different activities of mind and spirit."

Napoleon Bonaparte, the famous French general, said during his exile, "I know men; and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between him and every other person in the world, there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force; Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for him."

Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States of America and principal author of the Declaration of Independence, said, "Of all the systems of morality, ancient and modern, which have come under my observation, none appear to me so pure as that of Jesus."

More important than what others say about Jesus Christ is what the Scripture says about Him.

Jesus Christ was God in flesh and blood. He came to earth to die in our place. He willingly took upon Himself the death each of us deserves. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus enables each one of us to receive eternal life and free access to almighty God.

When we read a few portions of the first chapter of the Gospel of John we find that;

*Before anything existed, there was Christ, with God. He has always been alive and is himself God...Eternal life is in him, and this life gives light to all mankind. His life is the light that shines through the darkness - and the darkness can never extinguish it.*

*To all who received him, he gave the right to become. All they needed to do was to trust him to save them. All those who believe this are reborn! - Not a physical rebirth resulting from human passion or plan - but from the will of God.*

*And Christ became a human being and lived here on earth among us and was full of loving forgiveness and truth. And some of us have seen his glory - the glory of the only Son of the heavenly Father*

When we turn to Colossians 1, beginning with the 13th verse, and read we find that;

*For he (God) has rescued us out of the darkness and gloom of Satan's kingdom and brought us into the kingdom of his dear Son, who bought our freedom with his blood and forgave us all our sins.*

*Christ is the exact likeness of the unseen God. He existed before God made anything at all, and, in fact, Christ himself is the Creator who made everything in heaven and earth, the things we can see and the things we can't...all were made by Christ for his own use and glory. He was before all else began and it is his power that holds everything together.*

*It was through what his Son did that God cleared a path for everything to come to him - all things in heaven and on earth for Christ's death on the cross has made peace with God for all by his blood.*

*Long ago God spoke in many different ways to our fathers through the prophets telling them little by little about his plans.*

*But now in these days he has spoken to us through his Son, to whom he has given everything, and through whom he made the world and everything there is.*

*God's Son shines out with God's glory and all that God's Son is and does mark him as God. He regulates the universe by the mighty power of his command. He is the one who died to cleanse us and clear our record of all sin, and then sat down in highest honor beside the great God of heaven.*

*Who is the greatest liar? The one who says that Jesus is not Christ; Such a person is antichrist, for he does not believe in God the Father and in his Son. For a person who doesn't believe in Christ, God's Son, can't have God the Father either. But he who has Christ, God's Son, has God the Father also.*

# **TRUE CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP: A CHALLENGE TO ALL CHURCH LEADERS**

## **Introduction**

Leadership has always been very important in the Church. Beginning from the New Testament, leaders emerged in various communities, who organized and supervised different ministries in their communities. Ordinarily, the exercise of leadership by Church leaders depends on their understanding of leadership. The Church's understanding of leadership at any given period will determine the way it exercises leadership. And the concept of leadership in the various societies in the Church will determine how their leaders exercise leadership.

In this book, I wish to present the shepherd and servant models of Christian leadership. I will argue that these two models of leadership must be the way Church leaders lead their people. Anything short of these two models of leadership is contrary to the gospel. I will then focus on the different styles of leadership. I will conclude by emphasizing that the shepherd and servant models of Christian leadership are absolutely necessary for all Church leaders.

## ***A. The Church Leader as a Shepherd***

The word pastoral is derived from the Latin word ***pastor***, which means A shepherd." Therefore, the Church leader can be correctly referred to as a shepherd.

## **1. Understanding of a Shepherd in OT**



The model of a shepherd runs through the Old Testament. The Old Testament understood God as Shepherd. Thus kings and leaders must be shepherds in the same way as God shepherds his people (see Gen 48:15; Deut 26:5-8; Psalm 23). The duty of the shepherd is to care for his flock, to provide enough food and water for them and to lead them to greener pasture. The shepherd guards and protects his sheep from wild animals (1 Sam 17:34-5; Amos 3:12).

The model of a shepherd is used to describe kings and lay leaders in OT. Because of constant bad leadership from the Kings of Israel and lay leaders, God promised the people of Israel to send them good shepherds: I shall give you shepherds after my own heart, who will pasture you wisely and discreetly (Jer 3:15). The prophet Ezekiel goes further to state that God will eventually shepherd His people by Himself. Ezekiel rebukes bad leaders as evil shepherds who had no interest of the sheep at heart. This rebuke of the evil shepherds is followed by a promise that God will shepherd His people by Himself because of the failure of the leaders to truly shepherd the people entrusted to their care: “For the Lord Yahweh says this: Look, I myself shall take care of my flock and look after it. As a shepherd looks after his flock when he is with his scattered sheep, so shall I look after my sheep” (Ezek 34: 11-12). The OT prophets called God the shepherd of Israel (Isaiah 40:11; Jer 23:1-6; Psalm 23).

## **2. Understanding of a Shepherd in NT**

The model of shepherd in the OT reached its climax in the person of Jesus, the *good shepherd*. Jesus is the *good shepherd par excellence* because he laid down his life for his sheep on the cross (Jn 10:11, 15, 18). The sacrifice of Jesus clearly and radically distinguished him as the *good shepherd* from those who were not good shepherds, and from those who are only “the hired man” (John 10:12). The New Testament saw Jesus as the guardian and shepherd of souls and all leaders must follow in his footsteps: “You had gone astray like sheep but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls” (1 Peter 2:25). The early Church used the symbol of a shepherd to describe the work of its leaders, who were expected to pattern their life and work after that of their chief shepherd: Jesus Christ. Similarly, all Church leaders must pattern their leadership after that of Jesus Christ, the good shepherd.

## **3. Called to be Shepherds to One Another**

The model of a shepherd and his flock describes leadership in the Church. We are called to be shepherds to one another after Christ the *good shepherd*. All Christians are called to embrace *pastoral charity*, which is, the total giving of self to Christ and His Church and the service of others. *Pastoral charity* means that we give ourselves completely in service of others. In the parish community, all should be available to serve others because all of us have experienced the love of Christ, the *good shepherd*.

The shepherd image of leadership and Christ’s model of service, is extended to all offices and leadership positions in the Church, whether as Chairman of Church Council, President of Legion of Mary, President of St. Vincent De Paul, Choir Mistress, CWO President, Youth President, etc., in virtue of our common baptism and our participation in the priesthood of Christ. Consequently, Christian leadership skills must be sought and acquired since it does not automatically come with marriage, beautiful looks, wealth, appointment or election into an office in the Church. *To become a good Christian leader requires a complete disposition to service and the acquisition of leadership skills. It takes tremendous effort to be a good leader hence one has to be thoroughly open and motivated to learn leadership skills.* Good and fruitful pastoral leadership requires a lot of hard work, dedication, patience, sacrifice, fidelity, honesty, humility, and endurance. The more one desires to be a good and spiritual leader and continuously subjects himself or herself through the means of achieving good leadership, the more such a person will enjoy being a good and humble leader.

## **B. The Christian Leader as a Servant (Mk 10:35-45)**

At the heart of Christian leadership is service. Our Lord strongly teaches that service constitutes greatness and leadership. In the above text, Jesus makes it clear that leadership, authority and greatness come from the desire to serve. James and John, the sons of Zebedee want to be great; they want the best positions; they want to be first; they want to be recognized. But their concept of greatness is the same as the world’s.

Our Lord makes it clear that it must not be so with his disciples. The Greek word *diakoneo* which means to serve appears 36 times in the New Testament; the word *diakonia* which means service, ministry, office, appears 33 times in the New Testament; the word *diakonos* which means servant appears 29 times in the New Testament. By

and large, the concept of service and servant appears 98 times in the New Testament. This clearly underscores the centrality of service as the basis for pastoral leadership and for being a discipleship of Christ.

### 1. Called to be Servant Leaders

James and John (and the other ten disciples), certainly desired to be masters and not servants; But our Lord purified their concept of leadership and greatness by giving them a new definition of greatness. They must embrace the servant model of authority and greatness. They needed a new orientation, a radical shift in order to truly become Christ's disciples. Similarly, all Church leaders also need a radical shift so that they can lead others as servants and those being led will then testify that they are true servants. Remember that the pope is referred to as "servant of the servants of God." The concept of authority as Christ teaches and which alone builds the kingdom, is a real paradigm shift. It demands total annihilation of self; it will bring joy which words cannot describe".

The ministry of Jesus is interpreted in the context of servant-hood and summed up in total and unparalleled service. Jesus entire work and death are described in service (Mk 10:45; Lk 22:20f; Mt 20:28). Mk 10:43 emphasizes the greatness of servant hood which culminates in the life of Jesus. Jesus is the model of humble service in contrast to the hunger for power and domination in the world and unfortunately in the Church as we oftentimes see. **For the followers of Jesus, the overriding desire to serve must be the basis for leadership in the community.** The servant leadership style in the community must imitate Jesus who came "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45). In Mk 10:44, Mark uses the word for a slave *doulos* which is a much humbler word than *diakonos*. In other words, those who desire to be first must strive to be the slave of all. They must empty themselves in the form of a slave and be absolutely available to serve the needs of others.

### 2. A Quest for Servant Leadership

The exercise of servant leadership must be influenced by a solid concept of leadership with a focus on the life, work and death of Jesus which manifests service *par excellence*. Church leaders must adopt Jesus pattern of leadership. The Church undoubtedly needs leaders, however, they must be leaders after the leadership pattern of Jesus, not leaders who are self-serving but self-emptying and self-giving. To strive for leadership position in the Church is not intrinsically bad. In fact, to want to be a presiding elder [leader] is to desire a noble task (1Tim 3:1). But such desire must be motivated by the need to serve and not to be served or to seek comfort.

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, "wanted the glory, but not the cup of shame; the crown, but not the cross; the role of master, but not servant". In response to their request, our Lord subjected James and John through a thorough training programme in servant leadership and discipleship. Our Lord did not rebuke them for desiring greatness but he reordered their priorities; they did not have to give up their desire to be first, to be recognized, and to be significant; instead, they must seek the greatness of gospel discipleship. They must realize that "greatness comes through servant-hood and leadership through becoming a slave of all".

For Christ's disciples, greatness comes not through prestige and acquiring places of honour and recognition but through a life of total service which involves suffering and sacrifice. James and John (and indeed the other ten disciples) remind us of the innate desire and the basic instinct in each of us to be first, to be served, to be recognized, to be a master. There is in each of us what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., calls: "The Drum Major Instinct." A drum major is a leader of a marching band in a parade. The drum major is the anchor person, the centre-piece of a marching band in their magnificent parade and ostentatious display. The natural ambition of a marching band member is to be a drum major.

Servant leadership demands that the pastoral council, the Church Council, pastors, lay ministers, leaders of associations, parents and guardians must seek the greatness of gospel discipleship. They must continually ask themselves if they manifest the pattern of Christ's leadership and greatness in discharging their responsibilities. In his homily on Mk 10:35-45, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., reflects on our Lord's response to James and John:

"Oh, I see, you want to be first. You want to be great. You want to be important. You want to be significant. Well you ought to be. If you're to be my disciple, you must be.... And he said, "Yes, don't give up this instinct. It's a good instinct if you use it right. It's a good instinct if you don't pervert it. Don't give it up. Keep feeling the need for being important. Keep feeling the need for being first. But I want you to be first in love. I want you to be first in moral excellence. I want you to be first in generosity. That is what I want you to do".

A good and effective servant leadership is a monumental but an attainable task. It is a call to a gospel witness. Anything short of servant leadership will be a counter witness to the gospel. We must do all that we can to be good and quality leaders in the Church in whatever capacity we serve. The Church has been blessed with great leaders, but the Church has equally suffered greatly because of bad leadership. Those with visible leadership positions in the Church especially leaders of the various societies must imbibe the call to gospel leadership and embrace the new norm of greatness.

However, the call to servant leadership is the vocation of all Christians since all Christians exercise leadership in varied ways both in the Church and in the world. Servant leadership is not the exclusive domain of pastors and religious but of all Christians: in their families, careers, business, and in various ministries and societies in the Church. All Christians are called to ministry and leadership in the Church in virtue of their baptism and confirmation. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., has beautifully pointed out in his homily:

Jesus gave us a new norm of greatness. If you want to be important be wonderful. If you want to be recognized be wonderful. If you want to be great be wonderful. But recognize that he who is greatest among you must be your servant. That's your new definition of greatness. And this morning, the thing that I like about it ... by giving that definition of greatness, it means that everybody can be great, because everybody can serve. You only need a heart full of love. A soul generated by love. And you can be that servant.

### **C. Forms of Christian Leadership**

Norman Cooper identifies three forms of pastoral leadership. First is the *classic form* of pastoral leadership which is hierarchically oriented and dependent on the delegation of authority whereby the pastor, Church leader, and even a parent is seen as having all the answers in leadership. There is not much room for consultation and dialogue. Leadership is dictated from top to bottom.

Second is the *semi-mutual form* of pastoral leadership which embraces planning and team work and people are able to facilitate communion, co-responsibility, cooperation, and yet confident and competent in one's area of leadership.

Third is the *mutual form* of pastoral leadership which perceives collaboration as indispensable whereby authority, accountability, labour, is shared and there is interdependency. According to Cooper, training for mutual style of pastoral leadership requires: 1) a sophisticated understanding of personal development, 2) a firm grasp of interpersonal dynamics such as trust, cooperation, and justice, 3) the ability to discern the different roles of colleagues. This style of leadership enables the subordinate in any relationship to feel a sense of importance and self-worth, and this for the Christian cannot be over emphasized because even the subordinate too is created in God's image and likeness. In other words, the subordinate participates and not just dictated to.

It is pertinent to ask: what is my preferred pastoral leadership style? Inevitably, we must strive towards mutual leadership style and must be ready to learn the relevant leadership skills of reflective listening, talking, dialogue, delegation, negotiation, empathy, conflict resolution, interpersonal relationship, and other invaluable skills, that will enable us to attain mutual leadership style in the Church, in our families, places of work, and in varied Church and social groups.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has emphasized the concept of Christian leadership using the shepherd and servant models as the foundation for leadership in the Church. Thus all Church leaders must exercise leadership after the leadership pattern of Christ who came "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mk 10:45), and who "laid down his life for his sheep" (Jn 10:11). Church leaders, therefore, must be prepared to undergo our Lord's leadership training programme like James and John in order to experience conversion and a change of heart.

*This includes conversion from being the master to being the servant, from being first to being last, from being proud to being humble, from self-serving to self-emptying and self-giving, from always giving instructions to listening to subordinates views and welcoming their suggestions, from always giving feedback to receiving feedback, and from being resistant to correction to being open to correction and constructive criticism.*

The call to a fruitful and effective Christian leadership is a huge challenge to all Church leaders in the Church. All Pastors, lay ministers, parents, and all categories of Church leaders must courageously rise to this challenge by embracing the shepherd and servant models of Christian leadership. Hence it is absolutely necessary for us to avail ourselves of all the opportunities, training, seminar, workshop, retreat, and on-going formation that will enable us to integrate the shepherd and servant models of Christian leadership in our ministries, in order for us to become good, effective, fruitful, and better Church leaders and disciples of Christ.

## **LEADERSHIP HAS A COST**

An old enemy is bombarding the Church. He is using an old tactic - the same temptation that He used on Christ. And this is temptation;

**Jesus was destined to rule all nations: *Revelation 19:11-16 KJ*** *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and true, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.<sup>12</sup> His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but him himself.<sup>13</sup> And he was clothed with vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.<sup>14</sup> And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.<sup>15</sup> And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.<sup>16</sup> And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of Kings, And Lord of Lords.*

**But His destiny came at a cost: *Hebrews 12:2 KJV*** *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Jesus suffered and died on the cross, which afforded Him the highest honour. He would sit on "*the right hand of the throne of God.*" "*That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10-11).*"

**Satan, however, saw an advantage. Why not offer Jesus the same thing, but at no cost? *Matthew 4:8-10 KJV*** *Again, the devil took him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;<sup>9</sup> And said to him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.<sup>10</sup> Then said Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

Satan found it too incredible to believe that power and authority did not motivate Jesus. These things did not tempt him. Jesus described His true motivation when He said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve." Can we say this today? What I want to demonstrate is that, just like with Jesus, there is a cost to Christian leadership.

## **THE COST COMPARED TO THE BENEFIT**

**Consider the proof Paul gave as to the legitimacy of his ministry: *2 Corinthians 11:23-28 KJV***<sup>23</sup> *Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.<sup>24</sup> Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.<sup>25</sup> Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;<sup>26</sup> In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;<sup>27</sup> In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.<sup>28</sup> Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.*

When it came to the proof of his ministry, Paul didn't point to the assets of His ministry. For instance, he did not point to the size of his church or the offering amounts he brought in. He did not point to the number of churches he started or to the number of conventions, seminars, or revivals he held. He did not point to the number of

students he had or how many books and articles he published. Instead, it is interesting that he pointed to the cost and price he paid personally, not to benefits he reaped.

I have been to prophetic and apostolic conferences in the past. For the most part, these have been a disappointment. I went expecting to find people who desired to pray and seek the Lord together for direction. Instead I found mostly (not all) people who were eager to impress others with their style and ability to articulate. These conferences seem to draw out the worst. Instead of an atmosphere of service, they seemed to quickly degenerate into a competitive environment for, dare I say, a shameless display of ego. Anyone who has ever been to one of these seminars knows what I am talking about.

Now, to be fair, let me balance this by saying that not everyone was like this. There were many precious brothers and sisters who were authentic in every sense of the word. But let's just be honest: there are tares among the wheat in the house of God. And it is the phony ones that I am addressing. These contemporary Christian leaders have cheapened ministry to the point where it has become a joke to the principalities and (spiritual) powers that they claim to battle. Be not mistaken, "*...all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12).*" True Christian leadership does not come cheaply.

Here is an example of how ministry has been cheapened. When Christian leaders continue to promise (generation after generation) that a mighty revival is coming, but it is always just down the road, it can become a form of cheap ministry. How so? These same promises that today's ministry will transform today's church into a mighty army have been echoed for over fifty years. They claim that today's ministry is vital because without it such revival will never come. But then that ministry fades into obscurity and another comes with the same message, generation after generation, as the church slips deeper and deeper into apathy. If their ministry was vital, what did they deliver? Just empty promises; incidentally, they never seem to put a date to these promises. This is a good example of cheap ministry. By saying revival is always down the road, they let themselves off the hook. It allows them to claim power, authority, and prestige while delivering nothing.

I can respect the work of most pastors. They have to live with the here and now. They must face the day-to-day issues that arise within their congregations. And at the end of the day, you can see what they have done. They are not making empty promises that never come to pass. What they promise you can be sure their congregation holds them to.

To be fair, I realize some people who have become caught up in these movements are good people. They are merely following the lead of others whom they respect. Consider the following that came in a recent newsletter:

"God does have His Chosen Generals and Leaders! Keep your eyes on the leaders that God places you with and learn from them. I admire and thank God for our Apostolic/Prophetic Elder Statesmen/women! People that have taken the hits when we were not even old enough to pronounce the word "prophet" are the ones to say, "Thank You for being there to pioneer the calling in which we walk!" Bishop Bill Hamon, a father of the Prophetic Movement, C. Peter Wagner, Bob Jones, etc. are just but a few of examples of those who have taken the torch before us! Thank you all for doing so!"

This is where much of the problem lies. People are a result of what they have learned. Like this brother, young impressionable Christians are taught to follow men. This is all right as long as they can, like Paul, say, "be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1)."

Imagine making a copy of a copy. Take that copy and make a copy from it, then another copy from it. Eventually your copy does not look at all like the original. So when you are making copies - telling young Christians to keep their eyes on and follow "people," you better be sure that what they are following looks like the original.

Just because you love or respect someone does not make them a good copy to be followed. If they were following someone they loved and respected but this person was wrong, they will also be wrong - becoming just another false copy. If the Lord shows you that something you have long believed is wrong, this is not cause for discouragement. Was Apollos discouraged when Aquila and Priscilla showed him the way of God "more perfectly?" Did he disdain their teaching because he was higher class and had greater education than they? No, he went on encouraged in his new knowledge, knowing that truth is truth, no matter who brings it to your attention.

I have many people who write me asking if there are any books that describe what the first generation Church looked like. I say yes, it's called the Bible. "But why, then," they ask, "Does today's Church look so different?" Ah! Now you are asking the right question.

Pick any movement, and you will find Christian leaders who consistently patterned their lives and ministries after their mentors, with each generation getting a little further off. Eventually, you get to today's Christian leaders who have little semblance of the true leadership described in the Bible. The word "semblance," is actually found in the New Testament. The scripture "*having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away (2 Timothy 3:5)*" uses this word. The words "form of" comes from the Greek word *morphosis* and means "semblance, similitude, likeness, structure, and merely the shape of something."

When young men are taught to follow other men, it carries with it the idea of "imitating." And that is what we find: poor imitations. At some point, people begin to question things. Why is Christian leadership different today from how it is described in the Bible? And why is the Church lacking virtue? When this happens, watch the dancing begin. Occasionally I receive a note from some distraught minister asking, "Why ask these questions or say these things? Do you want people to quit trusting us?"

This type of thinking exposes a deeper issue: many ministers believe that they are so important that God will overlook and hide their sin from exposure. I receive notes from a few offended ministers but they won't point to a single scripture. Their replies are always full of excuses and rationalization. Water down Christian leadership enough, and you have what we find today: almost everyone can be one even if there is no substance to their claim.

This issue with imitations has watered down true and effective leadership. Why not teach young people that intellectual knowledge of the scripture does not make them prophets? Or that merely acting out what they see in a truly anointed individual is not God's approval? Why not have them wait? After all, Paul wrote: concerning our "*ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teaches, on teaching (Romans 12:7)*." Being forced into ministry at an early age is never a good thing. Remember, Jesus waited until he was thirty. So let's not rush things. Don't be afraid to tell people that they aren't ready, that they lack an anointing, that they need more time, that their imitation is wrong. Let's end this cycle now, and stop turning out more ministers who are just cheap imitations.

Let's come back to the Greek word *morphosis*. In its simplest form, we find the idea of "structure." In fact "structure" is how this word is used in science. Now put it back in the scripture: "having a structure of godliness."

Consider the hermit crab. An unlearned person might think that the shell actually belongs to the crab that it grows with along with the crab. It doesn't. As the crab grows, it moves from one shell to another. The shell doesn't cost the crab anything. It simply finds a suitable empty shell and moves into it. It may look like it belongs to the crab, but it only looks that way. This is applicable to today's Christian leadership circles. There are masses of people everywhere who are taking for themselves a "form (or structure)" of godly leadership that does not belong to them. Rather than earn their own, they assume someone else's! Let's end the cycle of allowing un-prepared young people in the Lord to "assume" leadership. Let's require them to earn it.

**Chosen, Not Choosing Luke 6:12-13.** <sup>12</sup> *And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.* <sup>13</sup> *And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles*

Becoming an apostle comes at Christ's choosing, not any man's. Here we find that there were many disciples and "*of them*" Christ "*chose twelve, whom also he named apostles*." What if the others decided that they wanted to be apostles? In today's rationalization of what it means to be an apostle, they could become apostles as well, regardless of what God decides.

Christian leaders point to the fact that Paul was a "church planter," and they go on to give a loose definition of the word "apostle" to legitimize this weak definition of what it means to be one. To use "church planting" as the sole requirement to define an apostle is like saying that "flat tire changing" qualifies someone as a mechanic. Changing tires is only one characteristic of a mechanic. Yes, apostles are church planters, and they are messengers, too, but these are only their most basic characteristics.

Starting a church does not make someone an apostle any more than changing oil can make him a mechanic. Once again, there is a cost. There is a cost associated with becoming a mechanic as well as an apostle, and you don't become one simply because you choose to become one. We find in the above scripture that they came about by the choosing of the Lord. Any true apostle today knows that all around us are cheap imitations.

Jesus chose the original twelve apostles, and He named them apostles. It was not a title they took for themselves. One Christian leader recently wrote me that he is currently just a pastor but "soon to be an apostle." All he has to do is to start a few churches (of any size). Let's see, where have I heard this before? Oh, yes, the game of monopoly! After you get four houses, you simply trade up for a hotel!

## **Conclusion**

Once again we find Satan at work tempting men. He offers them elaborate church ministries at little or no cost. They all know intuitively that there is something wrong with it. Inwardly they question their lack of God's power in their lives. They question why there is a lack of spiritual gifts in their assemblies, why their prayers go unanswered, but they go on because it is how they were taught, how it has "always been done." So they simply rationalize the scripture away and make no effort to change.

Some Christian leaders have succumbed to the temptation of power and prestige. There is a hidden motivation to rule and reign at the center of their hearts. I am shocked by how rapidly the numbers of people who claim to be apostles are growing on my list. More and more people who a year ago counted themselves brothers, sisters, or pastors are now writing that they are apostles. If there are genuine apostles around, then I plead with you to take steps to expose the counterfeits, the imitators. Impostors are springing up everywhere.

I beseech you, Christian leaders, to allow Christ to do the choosing. Assume nothing. By this I mean don't assume you have a certain office just because others who are like you are claiming it. If you are really an apostle, prophet, evangelist, etc., then people will know it. You won't need to advertise it like a marquis in front of your church building. Allow God to demonstrate His approval in you. If you are really the genuine article, He will. And instead of being imitators of men, be an imitator of Christ. Remember, Jesus died never having received the honour that was due Him. Both He and John the Baptist died never having claimed a title for themselves.

**Philippians 2:5-8** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Why, as ambassadors and followers of one who laboured so hard to have "no reputation," is reputation so important? We must not be like the Pharisees who "love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets (Luke 11:43)." Consider the example Jesus set. Remember, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up (James 4:10)."

Finally, remember that the true cost of Christian leadership cannot be measured in your assets but in its cost to you in the Lord. If you are chosen for His purpose, then it will cost you dearly.

## **How Christian leaders are made**

The church should be rising up the greatest leaders for every area of society. There is a desperate need for positive, constructive, dynamic and creative leadership. Leadership in the church is different from leadership in the world – Luke 22:24-27.

What is Leadership? Leadership is influence. Here is a leadership proverb for you: *"He that thinketh he leadeth and no one followeth simply taketh a walk."*

There are 5 levels of leadership:

- Visionary – People follow because you keep things on the cutting edge
- Reproduction – People follow because of the growth you have facilitated in them
- Competence – People follow because of what you can do
- Relationship – People follow because they want to
- Position – People follow because they have to

### **Leadership in the Old Testament**

I believe that every basic, honorable principle in leadership and management has its root and foundation in the Word of God.

- Joseph – He was a tremendous example of leadership skill and organization, but he had to grow in his leadership abilities.
- Moses – Hebrews 11:24-29 gives a commentary on the outstanding leadership qualities that Moses possessed, enabling him to succeed.
- David – In 2 Samuel 5:1-3 David was approached by the elders of Israel. They recognized his strong leadership traits.
- The happiness and prosperity of Judah under David motivated the rest of the tribes to desire the administration of David's kingship.
- The relationship of the tribes to David was warm and tender. He was no foreigner to them.
- They referred to his former valuable service to the nation.
- The strongest reason of all was that he was God's choice. Christian leaders serve better when they know they are in the will of God for then they know they will be equipped for their task by God's power.
- David took a loyalty oath with the people to protect them as their judge in peace and their captain in war.
- They in turn obliged themselves to loyalty and obedience to David as their sovereign under God. Such a sacred pact inspired much confidence in the people.

### **What made David a Successful Leader**

- Wise Diplomacy – he knew how to treat people and people liked him (2 Samuel 5:11)
- David's recognition of the Lord in all his blessings. He didn't take credit for his success and prosperity (2 Samuel 5:12)
- He constantly sought the Lord's guidance (2 Samuel 5:17-19)
- He constantly sought the Lord's blessing (2 Samuel 6:12-15)
- He was not ashamed to praise the Lord openly and led his people in praising the Lord (2 Samuel 6:13-15)

God will always bless those who highly regard Him no matter what the endeavor.

### **A Leader of Leaders- Nehemiah**

Nehemiah had 3 outstanding qualities:

- He was a great administrator. This included leadership and managerial skills. He knew *what* he wanted to do, *how* it had to be done and *who* was to do it. To do all of this you need a clear objective of what needs to be done; a sound technique of how it needs to be done; and a good enlistment program of who is going to do it.
- He was a great mobilizer which included:

A. Decision Making

B. Delegation of work

C. Motivating the workers



- He was a great supervisor. To be a great supervisor you need to have communication, coordination and accountability

The book of Nehemiah is the textbook on leadership.

Leadership qualities evident in the life of Nehemiah are:

- His concern for the people and God's work (Nehemiah 1:1-3)
- His complete dependence on God. Prayer, fasting and waiting on God (Nehemiah 1:4-11)
- He waited and looked for, then took an opportunity when it arose (Nehemiah 2:1-5)
- He was willing to sacrifice a good position as the King's cupbearer to see God's kingdom built and people helped (Nehemiah 2:6-10)
- He viewed the condition of the city and of the people to get the facts for himself before giving constructive advice (Nehemiah 2:11-16)
- He had an aggressive, progressive attitude, a victory spirit. His advice was to "rise up and build." He was a great encourager (Nehemiah 2:17,18)
- He knew how to handle opposition

#### 8 Kinds of Opposition Nehemiah Experienced & How He Overcame

- Ridicule and intimidation – Nehemiah 2:19, 20. He overcame through confidence in God and perseverance
- Anger and contempt – Nehemiah 4:1-3. He overcame by (Nehemiah 4:4-6):
  - Prayer
  - Hard work
  - Self-control
- Conspiracy to stir people up to war against him – Nehemiah 4:7, 8. He overcame by (Nehemiah 4:9):
  - Prayer and watchfulness
  - Putting watchmen in place
  - Discouragement of the people because of all the rubbish, the opposition of the enemy and the negativity of their own people – Nehemiah 4:10-12. He overcame by (Nehemiah 4:13-18):
    - He made them watchmen and armed them
    - He encouraged them not to be afraid – don't let fear grip you
    - Remember the Lord. It is His work and He is great and powerful
    - Fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your houses. Fight for your freedom. You are building for the future
  - Selfish greed – oppression of one for another – taking advantage of the less fortunate – Nehemiah 5:1-5. He overcame by (Nehemiah 5:6-19):
    - Holy anger and a strong rebuke
    - His example of self-sacrifice
  - Craft and deception – Nehemiah 6:1-2. He overcame by (Nehemiah 6:3,4):
    - Spiritual perception
    - Wisdom
  - Continuing in the work realizing the importance of objectives
  - False accusation and slander to put fear in the leader – Nehemiah 6:5-7,19. He overcame by (Nehemiah 6:8-9):
    - Confrontation
    - Prayer for strength
    - Self-control
  - Treachery: one of your own turns against you – Nehemiah 6:10. He overcame by (Nehemiah 6:11-14):
    - Courage (vs. 11)
    - Spiritual perception (vs.12)
    - Prayer (vs. 14)

#### The Task Completed

The walls were rebuilt in just 52 days through vision, hard work, courage, determination, prayer and great leadership – Nehemiah 6:15-19. The completion of the walls caused the enemy to be much cast down in their own eyes and also increased the confidence of God's people (Nehemiah 2:17 & Psalm 86:17). When the task was completed, Nehemiah placed the city of Jerusalem under the leadership of a faithful man who feared God – Nehemiah 7:1-3.

### **What we learn from the Gospels- Christ & Leadership**

Christ's method of leadership sets the example: "The Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve" – Mark 10:45.

### **Leadership Is Not**

- New Testament leadership is not a political power play (Matthew 20:20-28)
- New Testament leadership is not authoritarian attitude
- New Testament leadership is not cultic control
- New Testament leadership is not flashy public relations and platform personality, but humble service

### **The Positive Side of it**

- The leadership of the Lord focused on individuals
- The leadership of the Lord focused on the Scriptures
- The leadership of the Lord focused on Himself (John 14:9)
- The leadership of the Lord focused on purpose. Christ had clear cut goals for His earthly ministry and a limited time in which to achieve them

### **The Epistles & Leadership – I Thessalonians 2:7-11**

- New Testament leadership is Motherhood
- New Testament leadership is Fatherhood
- New Testament leadership is example

### **I Peter 5:1-7**

- Leaders are to care for the flock. They are to accept their responsibility not merely out of duty, but with real compassion for others
- A man must be interested in more than making a profit so that he will not be affected in his task or decisions by any personal gain that is unbecoming his office
- A leader is not dictatorial. His major consideration is to be a worthy example for his flock
- The true Christian leader will not resist or rebel against the experiences of life but will accept God's hand upon his life
- Humility should be shown in his relations with others.

### **How to Identify True Christian Leaders**

It saddens me to see what we, modern Christians think of as a leader. It's as if someone disconnected our spiritual gifts and we're unable to distinguish the leaders God chose from the ones man chooses. We tend to see their physical appearance, the political positions they take, the letters before or after their names, the titles on their resumes, and their ability to please everyone as the chief qualifications of a Christian leader. We're surprised and upset when these people lead us over a cliff, even though we led ourselves there by using worldly standards to choose a Spiritual leader. This chapter is all about who God says we're to follow and who's responsibility it is to make sure we're following the right leader.

### **The Title is Meaningless:**

We've all heard it! He's a "this" or she's a "that!" Title, education, political position, even looks are all meaningless. Oh, but what if he's got a Doctor of Divinity degree? Meaningless! It isn't that we should disrespect someone's worldly accomplishments. It's just that these have nothing to do with Spiritual leadership. One of the reasons Jesus, and later, Peter were ignored by the Jewish leaders was because of their lowly status as carpenter and fisherman. Here, we see a great example of worldly and Spiritual leadership. The chief priests wore flowing robes, had the best Scriptural training, were born in the best families. Everyone honored them, obeyed them and gave them preferential treatment. They made their living from the offerings given to God. In fact, many regarded them as gods. Yet, Jesus, truly God, was scorned, ridiculed and executed by the very people He came to save. The same is true of leadership today. We've all seen dedicated people of God who have little formal training, but decades of studying and living God's Word. Yet they go totally ignored or worse, by Christians, simply because of their looks or speech or humble employment. If we're to be followers of the one true God, we must be willing to hear Him when it comes to who He chooses as leaders. We must be discerning enough to use God's Spirit in us to rule out the pretenders.

### **Change the Trend "Do as I say not as I do":**

Pretenders are people who are perfectly willing to use position and manipulation to tell you exactly how to live, but don't live that way, themselves. I once knew a pastor of a large Christian church who felt justified in accepting sexual favors from the wives of several church members, while ignoring his own wife. You never got a more compelling sermon than when he preached on sexual sin. This is an extreme example of what goes on in countless churches all over the world. More common is the pastor who preaches on loving Christian relationship but keeps a "professional" distance from the congregation. Yes, I knew a few of these...one left the church as fast as he could and lived as far as he could from the church, to avoid the people. Yes, listen to their words, but watch their hands and feet. Many of these people are in their positions because of their skill at spinning entertaining tales about the truths of life, but have no interest in those truths. They are the pretenders Jesus and Paul cautioned us about, false leaders who will say anything our itching ears want to hear, to lead us away from Christ.

### **Fresh Fruit Followers Flow From Fruitful Fellers:**

Jesus told us how to discover pretenders...by the nature of their fruit. He said good apple trees won't have thorns and thorn bushes can't produce apples. Jesus told us to examine the fruits of someone's ministry before we join it, yet how many of us do that? What is the character of the minister's chief followers? How are the people maturing? Are there a lot of bad apples hanging around? Do you see evidence that the Holy Spirit is working in the lives of people? Jesus put the responsibility squarely on our shoulders as to who we followed. If you're being led over a cliff it isn't the leader's fault...it's the follower.

### **Listen To Learn If The Leader Is Listening:**

Faithful followers listen to God, and check to see if the leader is hearing God, as well. Acts describes the Bereans as faithful because they checked the Scripture to see if the Apostles were telling them the truth. Paul gave an assignment to everyone who is not the speaker in church...to listen to what the speaker says. Why? Not so you will always do what the speaker says, but so you will always know if what he says is from God. The Bible says you need no one to teach you except the anointing of Holy Spirit which is within you. If any minister thinks you should take whatever he says as if it's from God, he isn't a minister assigned by God...he's a pretender.

True leaders are those who live the love of God. You can see the matured fruits of the Spirit in their words and actions. If they find a conflict between the Word of God and what they see happening, they will try, out of love, to correct it, rather than find a political solution that leaves people in sin. True Christian leaders have fruitful followers who display maturity in Christ. If you got to this part of the chapter without being angry at me, you may see a true Christian leader when you look in the mirror.

## **KEYS TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership is a subject that has piqued the interest of scholars and laypeople for a long time. The term conjures images of powerful, dynamic individuals who command victorious armies, direct corporate empires from atop gleaming skyscrapers, or shape the course of nations. But leadership isn't mystical or mysterious. It does not require having charisma or other exotic personality traits. It is not the province of a chosen few. Indeed, leadership is exercised by people from the top to bottom of most organizations.

Leadership may be defined as the process of giving meaningful direction to collective effort and causing willing effort to be expended to achieve collective goals.

Leadership and management are two distinct and complementary systems of action. They are both necessary, but have different purposes. Management is concerned with coping with complex modern organizations. Good management brings a degree of order and consistency to key dimensions like the quality and profitability of products. Leadership, by contrast, is about coping with change.

Companies manage complexity by planning and budgeting -- setting targets or goals for the future, establishing detailed steps to get there, and then allocating resources. By contrast, leading an organization to constructive change begins by setting a direction -- developing a vision of the future along with strategies for producing changes needed to achieve that vision.

Management achieves its plans by organizing and staffing -- creating an organizational structure and set of jobs for accomplishing plan requirements, staffing the jobs with qualified individuals, communicating the plan, delegating responsibility, and devising systems to monitor implementation. Leaders align people by communicating the new direction to those who can create coalitions that understand the vision and are committed to its achievement.

Management ensures plan accomplishment by controlling and solving problems -- monitoring results versus the plan in some detail, by means of reports, meetings, etc.; identifying deviations and then planning and organizing to solve the problems. But for leadership, achieving a vision requires motivating and inspiring -- keeping people moving in the right direction, despite major obstacles to change, by appealing to basic but often untapped human needs, values, and emotions.

### THE THREE LEADERSHIP E'S

Envisioning involves the creation of a picture of the future, or of a desired future state that people can identify with and can generate excitement. By creating vision, the leader provides a vehicle for people to develop commitment, a common goal around which people can rally, and a way for people to feel successful.

Envisioning is accomplished through a range of different actions. Clearly, the simplest form is through articulation of a compelling vision in clear and dramatic terms. The vision needs to be challenging, meaningful, and worthy of pursuit, but it also needs to be credible. People must believe that it is possible, even if difficult, to succeed in the pursuit of the vision. Vision is also communicated in other ways, such as through expectations that the leader expresses and through the leader personally demonstrating behaviors and activities that symbolize and further that vision.

Energizing: Here the role of the leader is the direct generation of energy -- motivation to act -- among members of the organization.

Different leaders engage in energizing in different ways, but some of the most common include demonstration of their own personal excitement and energy, combined with leveraging that excitement through direct personal contact with large numbers of people in the organization. They express confidence in their own ability to succeed. They find, and use, successes to celebrate progress toward the vision.

Enabling involves the leader psychologically helping people to act or perform in the face of challenging goals and/or obstacles. Assuming that people are directed through a vision and motivated by the creation of energy, they may need emotional assistance in accomplishing their tasks.

Enabling is achieved in several ways. Very successful leaders demonstrate empathy -- the ability to listen, understand, and share the feelings of those in the organization. They express support of individuals. Perhaps most importantly, the effective leader tends to express his/her confidence in people's ability to perform effectively and to meet challenges.

### **Honestly, I Doubt It**

One of the duties of a pastor, as I see it, is to prepare God's people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up (Eph. 4:12). This message is designed to do just that by showing how Christ handled the problem of a crisis of faith and by giving some Biblical principles that should prove helpful in similar situations.

Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.

A week later his disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name* [emphasis mine] (John 20:24-31).

One of the first conversations I remember having after becoming a born-again was to help a person who had doubts about his faith by reassuring him that *there is nothing wrong with doubt*. As a matter of fact, I said, to doubt is the sign of a healthy mind. In addition, I would not want to live in a world that had no doubt--at least, the kind of world I know.

It is actually comforting to know that I can doubt whether I can fly or not, particularly when I am looking over the ledge of a tall building and I suddenly get the urge to soar like an eagle. To be without doubt in such a situation just might get me into serious trouble.

One of our family's funny stories, something that my grandmother used to enjoy telling, involved my father in that kind of situation. When he was a young boy, he decided to make a pair of wings out of a bed sheet and some bailing wire and test them out by jumping off the barn into the cow pen below. Needless to say, the wings did not work, and Dad ended up in a mud puddle, with farm animals scattering every which way. He could have used a little honest doubt in that case.

The Scriptures actually encourage a measure of honest doubt. Paul told believers to test everything that people claim is from God and to hold on to what is good (1 Thess. 5: 21). In addition, we are told that we should also be prepared to give an answer to those who have honest questions about our faith. The Bible commands that in our hearts we "set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" (1 Pet. 3:15).

Let's examine these two verses in the context of this story about "Doubting Thomas," as he has so unfairly been labeled. First, the men and women who are ready to give an answer of the hope that is within them must sanctify the Lord in their hearts. That is, Christ has a sacred place in their hearts--the seat of their emotions. Anger and argument for the sake of argument have no place in the defense of the faith. It has been my observation that the first one to get angry in an argument is usually the one in the wrong.

Second, Christians are to be prepared, "ready," to give an answer to every man--Hindu, Muslim, Jehovah's Witness, Mormon--every man. Third, they must give a reasonable answer. And fourth, their answer is to be given with gentleness and respect, "meekness and fear" in the King James language.

You and I as apologists (not people who "apologize" for Christianity but ones who prove it logically) must have a right attitude--a Christ-like spirit, with our emotions clearly in check. We must "set apart Christ as Lord" in our hearts. How can we expect to talk about the Prince of Peace unless He reigns supremely in our souls? Christ did not scold Thomas or brush his doubts aside. Rather, He said, in essence, "Look and see, even touch, if you wish. This is not a figment of your imagination. No, I am alive."

God should be front and center. We must have pure hearts. Don't you like the attitude of Christ? Immediately, His first concern was for His disciples. He did not want to frighten them. He said, "Peace be with you!" We must be ready. A slothful and careless approach is not good enough. We must be prepared! Being prepared, however, is not enough. We must be ready, that is willing, even anxious to give an answer.

Our answer must be reasonable. The moon is not made of green cheese. Neither is our faith an unreasonable concept. God gave each of us a brain and expects us to use it. Jesus was reasonable in His reply. He said, in a word, you need *empirical* evidence, something you can experience, and something that is convincing and logical. "Well, take a look, touch, and feel. I am alive!"

Gentleness and meekness are the hallmarks of true Christian apologists. After all, a changed life is the best proof of the power of Christ to change human behavior. When you stop and think about it, Jesus won all of His disciples by just being Jesus. In light of Romans 8:28--which tells us that we not only *should* be like Him, but also that it is our destiny--it is helpful to take a closer look at Jesus' methods of persuasion.

He never condemned. "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:17). He demonstrated that same quality in dealing with the woman caught in adultery. "Jesus straightened up and asked her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir,' she said. 'Then neither do I condemn you,' Jesus declared. 'Go now and leave your life of sin'" (John 8:10-11).

He never enticed people through flattery. After the feeding of the multitude, "Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill'" (John: 6:26). Neither did He make discipleship easy. To the rich young ruler, He said, "Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me" (Luke 18:22). Beware of those that promise you the moon, the stars, and a brand-new Mercedes Benz when you accept their brand of Christianity.

Jesus never coerced those He spoke to. Once, when He and His disciples were journeying through Samaria, the native inhabitants refused to show them hospitality. Although James and John were eager to call fire down from heaven on the offenders, Jesus refused. He told them that He had come to save men, not destroy them (Luke 9:52-56). Bombs and rockets may make converts, but not good ones--that's for sure.

Honest doubt is not the enemy that most Christians have thought it to be. Jesus commended faith in individuals, but He built up those who had sincere, reasonable doubts, as Thomas did. Jesus was never averse to giving credible evidence of His power and authority to back up His words, and doing it in a gentle manner. When we deal with people who have doubts about the Savior or His ways, we must follow His loving and moderate example if we expect to reap the bountiful results that He did.

## **COMPETENT "NUMBER TWO"**

We find Aaron's name mentioned more than 300 times in scripture. On 137 of those occasions, it is coupled with the name of Moses. Aaron was clearly subordinate to Moses. He was Number Two. Some commentators would lessen the value of Aaron's role by limiting it to his ability to speak and the fact that he was Moses' brother. That seems to be a harsh evaluation of the one God chose to carry the role of High Priest until He sent His son Jesus to fulfill that role on a divine level. Whatever your Biblical estimation of Aaron and the relationship he shared with Moses, one thing is sure - they were partners. More importantly, God put them together.

**Calling:** Are you called to be an Aaron? That's a tough question, especially if you have the ability and opportunity to be a Moses as senior pastor. (It is far easier to ascend than descend to Number Two.) I believe there are a number of senior pastors who are doing a good job as the senior leader, who would do a great job as a Number Two.

Personally, I have determined my role based on three thoughts. First, make this choice based on the principle of stewardship. I ask and answer the question: "How can I make the greatest impact on the Kingdom?" For example, would my impact be greater as senior pastor of a church of 2,000 or as Number Two in a church of 10,000? I realize that we cannot evaluate God's will so narrowly with numbers. You may be called to be the senior pastor in a smaller church. However, the principle has served me well.

Secondly, think through the issue of gifts and abilities. Although God gives me great ideas and creativity, I am not an entrepreneur by nature. It is unlikely that God will use me to start a movement, plant a church or lead in an apostolic or prophetic way. However, if you drop me in the middle of a work in progress, I can be quite effective. God has given me strong gifts as a builder/developer. How about you, what are your gifts?

Thirdly, always seek God's calling. As I shared in an earlier edition of *The Pastor's Coach*, I prayed for more than a year asking God for clear direction for my next ministry post. He finally made it clear, (or, I should say, I came to the point of readiness to hear and obey). As a result, I now serve as Executive Pastor at Crossroads Community Church in Lawrenceville, Georgia and I'm having the time of my life.

**Ego-management:** The potential for ego to be a problem is resident in all of us. I find that especially in the local church, due largely to the love and adulation of the congregation, senior leadership must keep constant check on the desire to be popular. Few can resist the lure of praise, even false praise. At times it may be difficult for you as Number Two because you believe that you do all the work while someone else gets all the attention. He who gets the most attention also gets the most flack! I can promise you that if you learn to find your joy in service and productivity for the Kingdom, God will fulfill all your needs to be loved and known in healthy ways.

God keeps me humble on a regular basis. Just when I begin to sit up and think, "Hey, I really am good," He graciously allows me to see that it was never me in the first place. I am merely an ordinary leader who occasionally does extraordinary things because God uses me. When I operate on my own, it's back to ordinary. When I submit, God does great things.

The truth is that all of us are just a little less than we think. Aaron discovered that truth in a painful way. In Exodus chapter 32, in the story of the golden calf, we see how weak Aaron could be. His leadership collapsed, he took no stand, and blamed the people. We will never know all that Aaron went through, but we know this - he gave in. Whether you call it people-pleasing, fear, or wimping out, Aaron was exposed. I've been there, have you? It is in the remembrance of those painful moments that humility is cultivated. We learn, become stronger, and remain more tightly attached to The Vine.

**Expectations:** Let's be practical. As simple as knowing what is expected of you may sound, I've seen more train wrecks in this area as in any other of being an effective Number Two. There are old jokes that light heartedly say, "Well, I do whatever the Senior Pastor doesn't want to do." The truth is that it doesn't work that way; certainly not with a senior pastor who has wisdom and experience and a Number Two who knows what he or she is doing. The expectations of Number Two must be carefully considered and agreed upon by both players in alignment with the overall church mission. I also recommend that these expectations are put in writing for clarity.

One of my favourite stories from my consulting practice was a tension-filled situation between the senior pastor and the Number Two in that church who happened to be the worship leader/ administrator. I asked the worship/admin pastor what was bugging him and he responded, "The Senior Pastor is always late to the worship service!" In a separate meeting I asked the Senior Pastor the same question, his response was, "My worship leader never starts the service on time." When I got them both in the same room the worship pastor said, "I don't start on time because you aren't there." The Senior Pastor said, "I'm not there because you haven't started yet!" We all had a good laugh, and the solution was easy. The Senior Pastor clarified by saying, "I want you to start the service at 9:00 a.m. no matter what. By the way, I'll be there!" The worship leader said, "Cool, I can do that." They had never discussed the issue. Note the integral connection between expectations and communication.

**Distribution of Power:** Ex-Secretary of the Navy John Lehman said, "Power corrupts, but absolute power is really cool." I still laugh every time I read that. Now, let me give you my quote, "Be aware of any person who clamours for power, subtly or otherwise." My quote may not be as eloquent as Aaron's might have been, but pay it heed anyway.

The Number Two must be very comfortable with authority, but not seek it, need it, or claim that without more authority, they can't get their work done. Real authority does not come from a title. Authority for leaders is all about influence - something earned, not granted.

It is understood that the senior pastor must empower his staff and give them the authority they need without micromanaging them. I admit I have been blessed in this respect. John Maxwell is the king of empowerment, and Kevin Myers is equally as great. They both truly handed over the keys and said, "OK, she's yours to drive, just please don't drive over a cliff!" Well, not exactly in those words. The truth is that they have exhibited amazing trust and faith. Some of you Number Twos are going nuts right now, asking, "But what if I'm not empowered?" I don't want to get sidetracked; this article needs to stay focused on the role of Number Two. I will say this to you: If you believe that you are not being empowered, there is a trust issue in the relationship and the two of you must deal with that before anything else is accomplished.

So what about decision-making? How does that work? First, it is the responsibility of the second in command to learn how the senior pastor aligns his values and priorities with the mission of the church. If in doubt, ask questions. Don't ask the senior pastor to make the decision. Don't ask, "What would you do?" Ask value and alignment questions. You want to know how he thinks. Then you must execute decisions on your own two feet, accepting full responsibility for those decisions. It is worth noting that it is perfectly acceptable for the senior pastor to ask the Number Two what he or she would do in any given situation. A good second in command should be a trusted confidant and wise advisor.

**Leading Up:** This point could easily be an article by itself; For now I'm only going to touch on it. Leading up is the process of influencing your boss, according to the best interests of the church, as well as to help him/her be a better leader. Leading up is not about you. Leading up is not about making yourself look good, but helping those above you lead well.

There is a big difference between leading up, and "fixing" the pastor. It's not your job to fix the pastor. We covered that in the previous article. Leading up is not about your preferences, but does include your passion. Remember that the greater good of the church comes first.

Leading up is about your ability to use your gifts, talents and focused attention to specific areas in such a way that both of you lead better and the church makes measurable progress. For example, my senior pastor, conducts monthly leadership training time for the entire staff. Because I am with the staff more, I will lead up by giving him suggestions for topics and insights to enable the lesson to be of maximum relevance and impact. He then combines what I share with him with his thoughts and God's leadings to write a lesson.

Leading up involves being honest, direct, and demands that you take the initiative. Leading up requires that you deliver several solutions with every problem you encounter. Those who are truly great at leading up anticipate a problem and cut it off at the pass before their boss ever had to be aware of it, let alone deal with it.

What if you believe that the senior pastor is making a mistake? It's your job to speak up clearly and with conviction in private. You may need to address this issue several times, but ultimately trust him or her with the decision if they differ from you.

The role of Number Two is a challenge, but a high calling and privilege. If this is what God has called you to, then pour your whole heart into it. Never lose your own perspective and personality, but serve well.

### **A Fresh Look at the Role of "Number Two"**

The senior pastor carries a heavy load of responsibility for the church, but in most healthy churches, he or she doesn't carry it alone. In nearly all successful churches, there is a "Number Two" helping to make things happen.



In a small church, it may be an administrative assistant or the Chairman of the Elders Board. In a mid-sized church, it might be the Associate Pastor. In a large church, it may be an Executive Pastor. Whatever the configuration, the focus of this article (and the next) is the role of second in command.

If you serve as a Number Two, don't underestimate your value.

Many stories from the Civil War paint a clear picture for you. Go back in history to the early 1860's and study the leadership of the Civil War. If we can set North and South issues aside for a moment and get to the point, Lincoln couldn't have won the war without Grant. Lincoln was "Number one" as Commander and Chief and General Grant was Number Two, but Lincoln was quick to acknowledge Grant's impact on the outcome of the war.

The Union Army was poised for victory early on, but they failed to defeat the Confederate Army quickly. They had far greater resources, such as ammunitions, manpower, money, and the railroad. The Confederate leadership, however, was strong, tough and committed. Historians even consider General Lee to be a better leader than Grant (obviously, Lee was Number Two for President Jefferson Davis). Some experts speculate that the war would have been over in as little as six months if Lee had been with Lincoln. It wasn't until Grant was added to the mix that Lincoln and the Union Army found victory. (Please, no email on these and other Civil war comments, they are illustrative only. Don't miss the point of the article!)

If you serve as a Number Two, don't overestimate your value.

Being a Number Two isn't the only thing that matters; it's being a good one! The generals that served before Grant didn't get the job done, even with the greater resources. If you are a Number Two serving under a good senior pastor, don't miss the value he or she carries. No matter how much you may do or how much of the load you may carry, remember that the senior pastor's load and level of responsibility are enormous. If you understand that, great; If you don't, just trust me for now. Especially if you don't think he's doing a good job. It is not your job to criticize him or save the church from him. It is your job to serve. If you think your situation is that bad, leave. You are either a supportive partner or not. Neutrality is not the purpose of the role. If you are not supportive, the church will suffer. As long as you are on the team, serve with your whole heart and mind.

This is the first chapter on the role of the second in command in a church, whether the position is formal or not. This is not autobiographical in nature, but it is my desire to combine my years of experience in this role, as well as my relationships with many others called to serve as Number Twos to coach you and add value to your church.

Focus your time, effort and energy on becoming the best Number Two you can be with the aim of serving the senior pastor and building the local church. Grant had at least four leadership qualities that are indispensable. Here they are:

### **1. Strategic.**

Grant was a strategic leader. He created complex battle strategies that were effective. Lincoln had the vision, Grant took the hill. As Number Two, you must possess or develop the same quality. There are many visionary leaders who describe themselves as able to dream the dreams but struggle with designing the road map to navigate from the dream to the results. This is not an option for the second in command. Whether you are the pastor's administrative assistant or Executive Pastor doesn't matter. You must be able to design and deliver plans that make dreams come true and implement those plans according to your level of responsibility.

The quality needed runs deeper than just strategy. Some leaders are myopically strategic. They get lost in their personal biases and lose sight of the big picture. When this happens, they lose their effectiveness. We all have our preferences and passions, but must be able to subjugate them to the larger good. This is tough when dealing with good, altruistic, even noble issues, but nonetheless necessary to be strategic with the big picture in mind.

### **2. Aggressive.**

Grant was an aggressive leader. He was criticized for his personal shortcomings, but when it counted, you could count on Grant. Among Christians, aggressive leadership is often suspect; If the word "aggressive" is inappropriate for you, substitute the word "assertive," but please don't miss the concept: If you are a Number Two you must be able to be tough and strong when necessary. The staff at AND-Mission will playfully mimic me at times because I'm a maniac for progress. I do use that word often! I'm even pushy at times because of my passion to move the ball down the field, so to speak. But consider the options. Do you want a leader anywhere near the top of an organization who isn't focused on results? I don't!

Being aggressive is different than being mean. Never be mean. Aggressiveness describes your style, meanness describes your spirit. People will forgive a show of force or a decision they don't like if you help the team win. But treating people harshly or being rude and disrespectful is never justified. I consulted with a pastor who struggled with this and when I confronted him, he replied, "I can't help it. I have a problem with my temper, but it's about the good of the church." Wrong. When you are mean, it's about you and your lack of self-control.

Aggressive leaders take risks. A good second in command will take risks and accept responsibility if they fail. For example, when I hire senior staff at AND-Mission, I have John (Programs director) meet with them briefly before I hire them. However, if they turn out to be a bad hire on my part, I would own up to it personally, rather than say something like, "Well you met him, why didn't you say something?"

### **3. Creative.**

Historians say that Grant was a creative leader and write interesting stories about his resourcefulness. This is a non-negotiable trait for an effective second in command. I personally tire quickly of leaders (or anybody, for that matter) who tell me why something can't be done or why it's so difficult to accomplish. First, it can be done, and secondly, of course it's difficult. If it weren't, it isn't a goal worthy of achieving. The senior pastor needs someone who is able to find creative ways to get things done. This doesn't mean he or she must have all the answers, but it does mean they know where to find them.

If your church is like most, you don't have enough resources to accomplish your goals. Typically, we tend to be just a little short of what we need. Personally, I think this is how God wants it in order to foster dependence, faith and trust. So far, I've never found a church that had enough money, enough good leaders, or enough time to make all of their dreams come true. We have to be creative with what we have, and of course trust God for what we don't have.

### **4. Takes Initiative.**

No battle, including those of the Civil War, was ever won when the leaders sat around and waited for someone else to make the first move. Can you imagine Grant or Lee sitting in their tents, just hanging out, waiting to see if the other did something?

Initiative is an extremely important quality for any leader and indispensable for the second in command. If you must wait for the senior pastor to prompt your major moves and decisions, you will not be effective. (We'll deal with the issue of the Senior Pastor and Second in Command being in alignment in the next publication, but for now let's assume alignment. A church can have several good staff members who simply execute well what they are asked to do. But senior leadership must know what to do without being told. That quality is at the core of the senior leadership.

Similar to the quality of being strategic, having initiative is not fulfilled merely by the ability to design and deliver things without being prompted, but the ability to design and deliver the right things. Your ability to intuitively "sniff out" issues and decide what needs to be done next is critical.

Now that we've given a general overview, we'll tackle some of the more sensitive issues of serving well as Number Two, such as the calling, ego-management, distribution of power, decision-making, alignment, mutual submission and empowerment in the next publication.

# GOD'S GUIDANCE FOR CHRISTIANS IN CONFLICT

## OVERVIEW

What does the Bible say about disagreements and conflict resolution? Often times the root of the problem is pride and miscommunication. The Bible clearly warns us against pride and anger. As believers we must avoid provocation and personal attacks. We are called to treat everyone equally with dignity and respect. We must learn to forgive and communicate the truth in love. Communication must be clear, effective and constructive at all times.

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." (1 Corinthians 1:10-12)

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each; I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labour of each. For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building. (1 Corinthians 3:5-9)

*So, if you're in a fight with other believers that relates to a particular church, one of the first things you need to remember is that the church is not yours. It doesn't belong to you. It doesn't belong to the people who are on your side. It doesn't belong to the majority of the members. It doesn't belong to the founding members or their descendents. It doesn't belong to the big givers. It doesn't belong to the pastor, or the elders, or even the denomination (if there is one). Your individual church belongs to the triune God. Period; every other "ownership" is really just a loan. This basic truth makes a huge difference in the way we think and act with respect to the church, especially in times of conflict.*

## INTRODUCTION

I wish conflict among Christians were a relatively insignificant problem. I wish we who believe in Jesus could experience the unity he commended to us (John 17:20-24). I wish there wasn't animosity within churches and denominations.

But all of this is, I admit, wishful thinking. The fact is that Christians often have a hard time getting along with each other. This has been true from the earliest days of the church. The Apostle Paul, who planted the church in Corinth, wrote what we call 1 Corinthians to the believers there principally because of internal conflict in the church. By the time Paul wrote 2 Corinthians, the tension was largely between Paul and his church.

Even in a healthy church, such as the one in Philippi, conflict was a problem. Thus Paul wrote in his letter to the Philippians: "I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life" (Phil 4:2-3). Two prominent women in the Philippians congregation, people who had been Paul's co-workers in ministry, were stuck in some sort of conflict such that they needed help from Paul and others to try and get along.

When I was a young Christian, I used to think that the solution to the ills of the contemporary church was to “get back to the early church.” If we could only believe and do as the first believers believed and did, we’d be on the right track. But the more I have studied the early church, the more I have come to recognize the manifold problems that plagued the first Christians. Among these, conflict played a central role.

Perhaps one of the most discouraging things about studying church history, from the first century onward, is to see just how often Christians have been mired in disputes and strife. Sometimes, in our worst moments, we have actually put to death fellow Christians whose theological convictions didn’t measure up to our personal standards. Not a happy story, not at all.

This was not what Jesus intended, to be sure. In his “High Priestly Prayer” recorded in John 17, Jesus prayed: “I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” (John 17:20-23)

A little earlier, Jesus had said to his disciples: “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). To be sure, there are times when followers of Jesus do love each other in an exemplary way. But, far too often, such love is marred by conflict, tension, and outright meanness. And, far too often, we have not dealt with these problems in a loving way.

So, today I give this message that seeks God’s guidance for Christians in conflict. This series will be relevant, I believe, to ministry disagreements. I will seek to discover and apply God’s revealed wisdom to conflict among Christians. My hope is that when we experience conflict in the church, we will be prepared to deal with it in a way that honours God and strengthens Christian community.

### **The Starting Point for Dealing with Conflict among Christians:**

Where should we start if we’re seeking God’s guidance for conflict among Christians? Here’s where my convictions come strongly into play. We should start with Scripture, with God’s inspired Word. Now this is always a good starting point, the best there is, in fact. But in times of conflict it’s even more essential that we begin with and cling to biblical teaching. There are several reasons why.

First, in times of conflict our natural human emotions often try to dictate our behaviour. We feel anger and want to lash out. We feel fear and want to defend or attack. We feel wronged and want to get revenge. Yet if we allow our emotions to guide our behaviour, inevitably we’ll simply make matters worse. Conversely, if we tenaciously hang onto biblical teaching, we’ll find the power to act rightly even when our feelings try to drag us in the wrong direction. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve found myself wanting to get even with people who have wronged me. Yet by holding on for dear life to God’s Word I’ve managed to avoid behaviours that would have been sinful and self-defeating, even if they seemed to be temporarily satisfying.

Second, in times of conflict we must stand solidly upon Scripture because God’s ways of dealing with conflict are generally very different from the world’s ways. When we’re in the midst of some church battle, we’re tempted to adopt the ways of the world. Chief among these ways is the desire to win. We can also be tempted to use human schemes to defeat our opponents. We spin like we’re in the middle of a dirty political campaign. We rally the troops. We get out the vote. We defend ourselves. We play the victim. We undermine our opponents. We conveniently ignore facts that don’t support our side. We hold grudges, and so forth and so on. It will feel natural to us to use the world’s ways to win church battles, and, as we do, the world around us will cheer. But rarely are

these the ways of a God who says to us, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways” (Isaiah 55:8). The world doesn’t have much room for one who tells us to turn the other cheek, who calls us to forgive seventy times seven, and who urges us to imitate his humble, self-sacrificial servant-hood. So we need the Bible to show us different ways to operate in times of conflict: the ways of peace, the ways of the gospel, and the ways of Jesus Christ.

Third, in times of conflict among Christians, we need the Bible as the source both of practical guidance (here’s how to act) and of theological insight (here’s how to think about God and the church). The biblical combination of ethics and theology helps to shape our thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Ironically, I hope this series isn’t directly relevant to every one’s life, at least not right now. But even if your church is in a blessed season of harmony, you may be able to direct others to the biblical guidance I will convey. Moreover, if you take seriously what I will share with you, you may very well help your church stay out of serious conflict. And, if this doesn’t happen and conflict comes, you will be able to be a peacemaker in your own community.

### **Listen to God Speaking to You through His Word**

As I suggested that Scripture should be a primary starting point for seeking God’s will when we’re in conflict with other Christians (or anyone, for that matter). Now, I want to draw your attention to one of the most important passages for discerning God’s guidance for Christians in conflict, Philippians 2:1-11. Later I’ll offer some exegetical observations about this text. First, however, I want to bring the entire passage and then offer some guidance for how to let it impact your heart and your actions. I’m writing specifically for people who find themselves in conflict right now, though I hope you’ll find this to be worthwhile even if you’re not facing such a challenge today. Here’s the passage from Philippians:

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.

Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:1-11)

In light of this passage, if you’re in the midst of conflict with other Christians, let me urge you to do the following. And, frankly, you might well want to do this even if you’re not in a conflicted place right now.

1. Ask the Lord to speak to you through this section of his Word and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
2. Prayerfully, slowly read this passage. Read it at least three times. If possible, read it aloud. Let each word sink in. Be attentive to what God is saying to you personally. (Note: Don’t start applying this text to others and focus on what they need to do. Let the Lord speak to you about you.)
3. As God convicts you, go with it. Talk to him about it. Confess if you need to. Ask for his help to obey if you need to. Take time to talk with the Lord about how this passage should impact your life.

4. If you are able to do so, share with at least one other believer what God has been saying to you through Philippians 2. Be open to encouragement and or correction from this believer (or these believers). Ask them to pray for you as you move to the next step.
5. Act upon what God has said to you through this passage. Be a doer of the Word, not a hearer only (James 1:22). You may find it very hard to do what God wants you to do. Be assured: He will provide the strength you need if you depend on him.

What you need most of all is the Word of God, brought to life by the Spirit of God. My reflections will come in due time. But I truly believe that if you're experiencing conflict with other Christians, and if you take time to prayerfully meditate upon this section of Scripture, and if your heart is open to God, then He will guide you to do what is right and honouring to him. You will begin to see the conflict you're in from God's perspective. And you'll begin to see how you can be an agent of God's peace at this time. May the peace of Christ be with you . . . really!

### **Having the Mind of Christ: Part 1**

Previously I encouraged you to read Philippians 2:1-11 slowly and prayerfully. Here I'd like to highlight a few features of this astounding text.

If you're in the middle of a conflict with other Christians, however, you might not like this passage very much. Your gut instinct is to win the battle, to be vindicated, to prevail over your opponents. But this text speaks of being agreeable, humble, and considering others as better than yourself. You'd probably prefer that I had sent you to Psalm 58:8, in which David prayed about his enemies: "Let them be like the snail that dissolves into slime." But, like it or not, if you're a follower of Christ, you've got to deal with Philippians 2:1-11. More to the point, you're stuck with the compelling and challenging example of Jesus himself.

Philippians 2 begins with a series of ethical injunctions that could be paraphrased: agree with each other; love each other; be humble; care more for the concerns others than for your own concerns. These imperatives are summarized in verse five: "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus." In a nutshell, we are to think as Jesus thought.

Paul doesn't leave it up to us to decide what it means to think like Jesus. We don't get to pick and choose from the gospel stories or to make up our own version of what constitutes the mind of Christ. Rather, Paul shows us quite clearly in verses 6-8 what it means to think like Jesus:

[Christ Jesus], though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.

This is a tricky text for a variety of reasons. For one thing, the language is rather unusual for Paul and therefore difficult to interpret. This fact, combined with the poetic structure of the passage, has led many scholars to propose that Paul is quoting an early Christian hymn, something he did not write. This explains the uniqueness of the language. But it's also possible that Paul composed this poetic text when writing to the Philippians. In either case, it's not easy to determine the precise nuance of every word here, even though the big picture is fairly clear.

What is this big picture? It's an image of Christ's active humility. It's a portrait of one who was fully equal to God the Father, but who, nevertheless, chose to take on the form of a slave by becoming human. Moreover, this passage paints a shocking picture of a divine being who not only became human, but also chose to die a most

humiliating and painful death by crucifixion. One cannot imagine a more startling and unsettling image of humility and self-sacrifice.

How might our conflict with others be different if we took seriously the humility of Jesus? How might we react to those who wrong us if we were to reflect upon the self-giving love of Christ? The beginning of Philippians 2 suggests that our relationships with others – including and especially when we experience differences and disagreements with them – would be radically different.

### **Having the Mind of Christ: Part 2**

Throughout the ages, commentators and preachers have seen Philippians 2:1-11 as a theological reflection on Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet in John 13. In this gospel text, Jesus literally humbled himself, doing that which an actual slave would ordinarily have done. He did this to teach his disciples how they were to love each other, in anticipation of his ultimate act of love on the cross. In Philippians 2, Paul uses the image of the humble, self-sacrificing, serving, crucified Christ to teach the Philippians believers how they ought to treat each other.

Philippians 2 raises all sorts of tantalizing theological questions about the nature of Christ. In what way was he equal to God? In what sense did he empty himself? And so on. Yet Paul doesn't deal with such questions in this text. Rather he uses the image of the humble Christ to show the Philippians – and by extension, to show us – how we ought to relate to each other. We're called to imitate Christ, not in any way we please, but specifically with respect to his humbling, self-giving, sacrificial action.

This isn't easy to do! It's hard to do what this text requires in the best of times. Even when I'm getting along well with others I still find it natural to put my self-interest first. But, when you're in the midst of conflict with other believers, doing what Philippians 2 requires is more than hard. It's impossible . . . without God, that is. It challenges the very fiber of our being. It calls us to counter-intuitive and counter-cultural humility. And we're just not wired to do this sort of thing apart from divine help.

But God's help is available to us in several ways. These are highlighted in verse 1 of our text, which I'd paraphrase in the following way: "If there is any encouragement in Christ – which, of course, there is – any empowering comfort in Christ's love – which, of course, there is – any partnership with the Holy Spirit – which, of course, there is – [agree together, love each other, etc.]." Here's what God provides to help us do the impossible:

1. Encouragement in Christ – The teaching and example of Jesus himself empower us to do what otherwise we could not do.
2. Empowering Comfort in Christ's love – The more we experience Christ's love for us, the more we will be enabled to love with this same sort of love. The more we are secure in Christ's love, the more we will be able to take the risk of loving, not only our neighbours, but also our enemies.
3. Partnership with the Holy Spirit – When we put our faith in Christ, the very Spirit of God comes to dwell in us, empowering us with the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. The Spirit is in the process of making us more and more like Christ.

Years ago, I was in charge of a group of leaders in the church. This group was in the midst of a nasty conflict. One of the leaders was especially vicious in the way she was treating another leader. I challenged her to think about what Jesus would do. Her response, shouted passionately, was: "I don't care what Jesus would do! I'm not Jesus!" I was tempted to say, "Well, that's fairly obvious," but, by God's grace, I didn't. Instead I reminded her of the good news that God, through the Spirit, helps us to be like Christ even when our natural capabilities are inadequate. The confession "I'm not Jesus!" is actually a great place for every Christian to start, including me! But

it's not a place to end. Once we realize our own inadequacies, we're ready to trust God more completely, and to discover that we can do all things through Christ who makes us strong (Philippians 4:13).

So, when you're in the middle of conflict, ask yourself: "What would it be for me to have the mind of Christ here?" And don't just ask yourself, ask Christ himself through prayer: "Lord, how would you think in this circumstance? How can I imitate your example of selflessness and humility now?" The more you look to Jesus, the more you'll discover how you're to act in controversial and divisive circumstances. The more you depend upon Jesus, the more you'll find unexpected strength to be agreeable, loving, humble, other-directed, and Christ-like.

**Corinth: The Paradigm of Christian Conflict** If you consider the issue of Christians in conflict from a New Testament perspective, you will quickly focus on Corinth. No church in Scripture is more ridden with disagreement and controversy than the Corinthian church, which explains, in part why so much of the New Testament focuses on Corinth. It took the Apostle Paul multiple visits and letters, two of which we have in the New Testament, to sort out the problems in this church.

The letter we know as 1 Corinthians (which is actually Paul's second letter, see 1 Cor 5:9) was written primarily because the Christians in Corinth weren't getting along with each other. After greeting the letter recipients at the beginning of the first chapter, Paul explains what he has learned about this church:

For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." (1 Cor 1:11-12)

The Greek word translated here as "quarrel" can also mean "argument" or "strife." Paul uses this same word again in the third chapter of his letter: "For as long as there is jealous and quarrelling among you, are you not of the flesh . . . ?" (3:3). The Corinthian church is being torn apart, not by one single controversy, but by multiple conflicts and tensions.

As we read through 1 Corinthians we can compile a list of these divisive issues. They include:

- Over-identification with one or another Christian leader.
- Too much pride in one's own spirituality.
- Sexual immorality.
- Suing fellow Christians in court.
- Prostitution.
- Marriage and divorce.
- Participating in the worship of idols.
- Dressing immodestly in the church gatherings.
- Selfishness in church gatherings.
- Interrupting the gatherings with ecstatic utterances.



Beneath this plethora of issues lay the challenge of working out the Christian life in a non-Christian culture. When some of the people in Corinth put their faith in Jesus, naturally enough they brought along their cultural baggage, including prior experiences in paganism. For example, since it was commonplace for wealthier members of Corinthian society to eat in pagan temples, the privileged few in the Christian community continued to do what came naturally. Yet this scandalized other Christians, especially those who did not have the financial means to eat in temples and who, therefore, considered all temple visitations to be the worship of idols.

In the next part, and in several to follow, I will summarize Paul's response to the conflicts in Corinth. As promised, I will draw practical conclusions as well as make some historical and theological observations.

For now, however, I simply want to note once again that conflict is a normal part of Christian experience. I'm not happy about this, of course. And Scripture makes it clear that God isn't happy about this either. But conflict is a fact in Christian fellowship. As I've said before, I once thought: "Oh, if I could only be back in time of the apostles it would be great. Then the church wouldn't be in such a mess as it is today." Yet, if you go back and read the New Testament carefully, especially the letters of Paul or the letters in Revelation 2-3 to the seven churches in Asia Minor, you realize that the church has experienced conflict from the get go. This fact encourages us not to be surprised when we face conflict today. We should be ready to see it in God's terms and to follow God's guidance for how to resolve it.

### **Who Owns the Church?**

In the last paragraphs I set up the first-century Corinthian church as a paradigm of a church in conflict. The letter we know as 1 Corinthians is the effort of the Apostle Paul to resolve the controversies that were plaguing this early Christian community.

Before we get into some of the specifics of this effort, however, we should look at how Paul addresses the Corinthians at the beginning of his letter. He writes to: "the church of God that is in Corinth." "Church" translates the Greek word *ekklesia*, which meant "gathering" or "assembly," and referred in particular to the gathering of voting citizens in Corinth. Paul wasn't writing to the "*ekklesia* of Corinth," a phrase that would easily have been misunderstood. Instead, he addressed his letter to the "*ekklesia* of God that is in Corinth."

By referring to the Corinthian church as the church "of God," Paul is doing more than distinguishing it from the civic voting assembly, however. He is also letting the Corinthians know who "owns" the gathering of Christians in Corinth. In a phrase: God does. The Christians are not simply one more religious club formed and guided by its members, of which there were many in first-century Corinth. Rather, the Corinthian assembly belongs to God in a strong, ultimate sense. (Later in the letter Paul will add that even the bodies of the individual Corinthians also belong to the Lord.)

Paul reiterates this point at the conclusion of his opening address: "God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1:9). Notice, first of all, that the Corinthian believers aren't in the fellowship because they chose to join. From a theological point of view, they "were called" by God into the fellowship. They are members of the Corinthian church by God's choice and invitation. Moreover, they belong not merely to a human institution, but to a fellowship that has been founded by and is the property of the very Son of God.

Twice in his opening address to the Corinthians, Paul emphasizes the fact that their gathering is not their own. It belongs to God the Father and to the Son of God. Later Paul will explain that the church comes into existence through the work of the Spirit of God (see 12:12-13). This is a fundamental truth about the church, and one Paul emphasizes intentionally because it relates to the problem of conflict among Christians.

To relate Paul's point to the situation of conflict among Christians today, let me say this: when you're caught up in a disagreement with other believers, you need to remember whose you are. You belong to God through Jesus Christ. This is true of you personally and also of the church. Whatever else it may be, the church is the church of God: the church that comes from God, is governed by God, and belongs to God.

So, if you're in a fight with other believers that relates to a particular church, one of the first things you need to remember is that the church is not yours. It doesn't belong to you. It doesn't belong to the people who are on your side. It doesn't belong to the majority of the members. It doesn't belong to the founding members or their descendents. It doesn't belong to the big givers. It doesn't belong to the pastor, or the elders, or even the denomination (if there is one). Your individual church belongs to the triune God. Period. Every other "ownership" is really just a loan. This basic truth makes a huge difference in the way we think and act with respect to the church, especially in times of conflict. For example:

- If we truly believe that the church belongs to God, then we'll be more committed to finding God's solution to our conflicts than making sure that our side wins.
- If we truly believe that the church belongs to God, then we'll be quick to admit that our personal ideas about what should happen in the church may very well be wrong. Only one opinion really matters, the opinion that belongs to God.
- If we truly believe that the church belongs to God, then we'll realize that the church is not to be trifled with. The church is not first of all a vehicle for my self-expression, or professional security, or enjoyment, or whatever. It is, first and foremost, a vehicle for God's glory. The church exists to do God's bidding, to represent God's kingdom, and to bring praise to God.

I can't emphasize enough how important it is for us to remember to whom the church belongs and, for that matter, to whom we belong. When I was in the middle of a passionate argument with my elders at my first Church, for example, one of the best things we did is to stop and pray. As we came before God, we remembered that we were on holy ground. We relinquished our desire to control God's church and submitted ourselves to his will. Before the majesty of God, we humbled ourselves and shared together in common humility. Such an experience of God's sovereignty didn't magically take away our disagreements, but it did put them in a completely different light. Antagonists vying for ownership of the church became fellow seekers for the will of the One who truly owns the church. Winning no longer mattered, except for the victory of God.

This process that I've just described happened several times throughout my ministry at AND-Mission, though it usually didn't flow as quickly or smoothly as the last paragraph would imply. Nevertheless, I've seen the recognition that the church is God's church transform hearts, including my own. So, one of the most important things we can do if we're in the middle of church conflict is to step back and remember – really remember – that the church belongs to the triune God.

### **What is the Church Anyway?**

In the last paragraphs I worked with the question: "Who owns the church?" The answer from 1 Corinthians is clear. The church is God's church. The church is the creation and "property" of the triune God. Acknowledging this means that when we're in the midst of church conflict, we must seek God's will for God's church above all. Here I want to ask a related "big question": What is the church? What is this entity that belongs to God?

On the simplest level, a church is a gathering of people who belong to God through faith in Jesus Christ. Wherever Christians come together in Christ, there is a church. But this is just the beginning. In 1 Corinthians 3 Paul speaks of the church in striking and surprising language:

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple; (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

For years I read this passage as speaking about me as an individual Christian. A parallel text in 1 Corinthians 6 does indeed speak of the body of the Christian person as a temple for God's Spirit (6:19). But the emphasis in chapter 3 is different. Here the temple of God is the church, the gathered fellowship of believers.

The context in 1 Corinthians 3 makes it clear that Paul is not focusing on individual believers when he says "you are God's temple." In verse 9, the Corinthian church is "God's building" (3:9). Those who labor as church-planters are in the construction business, so to speak (3:10-15). So when we come to verse 16, we know that the temple of which Paul speaks is not the individual believer but the assembly of believers. The verse might be paraphrased: "Do you not know that you folks [plural in Greek] are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells among you?" Or, to use the Ugandan English, "Don't all of you know that you are God's temple?"

This interpretation is confirmed in verse 17, which warns the Corinthians not to destroy God's temple. The first three chapters of 1 Corinthians have to do, not with threats to individual believers, but with the threat of division in the church at Corinth. So when Paul says, "If anyone destroys God's temple," he's referring to the church of God in Corinth, which is at risk because of the conflicts in the church.

Part of what makes the church so special is the presence of God's Spirit. When believers gather together, God is with them through his Spirit. The power of God is available so the church can be strengthened. Paul will have much more to say about this in chapters 12-14. From the mere fact that the church is God's temple, you'd naturally conclude that it ought to be treated with reverence and supreme care. But in case you missed that implication, Paul adds: "If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person" (3:17). Now that's a threat to take notice of, don't you think? Before you start trifling with the church of God, you'd better realize what you're doing.

Sometimes, especially in the heat of church conflict, people can forget what they're dealing with. They easily think of the church in human terms. I know pastors who have seemed almost willing to destroy a particular church in order to defend their reputation or career. How sad this is! And, given the threat of 1 Corinthians 3:17, how ill advised.

On the contrary, I have seen church leaders sacrifice their advantage for the sake of God's church. A friend of mine was pastoring a solid and growing church when a faction that didn't like his leadership tried to force him out. As he prayed about what was best for God's temple, my friend decided that it would be best if he resigned. Though he felt sure that he could defeat his foes, he also believed that this fight would seriously damage the church. His career, his income, his reputation . . . none of these mattered as much as the church he loved so much. So he resigned.

I'm not suggesting that every embattled pastor should quit. But I am suggesting that every one of us, especially if we're in the midst of church conflict, should realize, not only that the church belongs to God, but also that it is his temple, the dwelling place of his Spirit. With this in mind, we will do everything in our power both to honor and to protect the church, even if it involves self-sacrifice.

So, if you're in the midst of church conflict, step back from the issues long enough to remember what it is you're dealing with. Are you thinking of your church as the temple of God? Are you doing everything you can to protect and care for God's temple?

## **How to Think About Christian Leaders: Part 1**

During my years as social work at the Church, every once in a while I'll hear somebody refer to the church as "a particular leader's church." Though I understood the shorthand, nevertheless it grated on my soul like fingernails on a spiritual blackboard. During my years as a Christian, I've seen cases where churches are so identified with the pastor that things are way out of balance. A church that belongs to God ends up being spoken of, and sometimes even thought of, as the personal property of some individual. The identity of pastor and church are so intertwined that it's almost impossible to think of them as distinct. That which exists for the sake and glory of Christ ends up as a personality cult with the pastor as the dominant star.

The tendency of Christians to over-identify with their leaders is an old one. In fact, it goes back to the earliest years of the church. In the letter we know as 1 Corinthians, Paul gets right to the point after his opening address:

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." (1:10-12)

Fundamental to the divisions and disagreements in the Corinthian church was the tendency for the different "parties" to identify with some Christian leader over and against the others. It's easy to understand how this could happen, especially when you consider that in some of the pagan mystery religions the person who guided you into the mysteries held a special place in your heart.

Of course love and appreciation for Christian leaders is a fine thing. But when this love and appreciation becomes divisive or idolatrous, then we have a real problem. In Corinth, the different "leader parties" were splitting the church, with people claiming allegiance to their particular hero rather than embracing the whole church of Jesus Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 3 Paul seeks to set the Corinthians right by helping them to have a right understanding of Christian leadership:

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each; I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labour of each. For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building. (3:5-9)

It seems that the Corinthian were divided especially into the group that supported Paul and the group that identified with Apollos, a more articulate preacher and one who might have had greater appeal among the more educated and wealthier Corinthians. Yet in their devotion to a human leader, the Corinthian were missing the point. Both Paul and Apollos were equally servants of God though they may have different functions. Moreover, they shared in the common purpose of building a church for God's purposes. Yet the major point Paul makes is that the servants aren't the main thing at all. God is the main thing. God is the Master of the servants. God is the only one who can cause the church to grow. God is the owner of the church, whether seen as a field or a building.

Paul wraps up his argument in verse 21 with a simple imperative: “So let no one boast about human leaders.” Though appreciation of leaders is fine, this must not run over into bragging or anything that would divide the church.

Here is a measure for determining the health of leadership in a church: How do the members talk about the leaders? Are they drawing up sides for and or against their leaders? Do they pit some leaders against others? Or do they see all leaders as servants of the One who really matters?

Pastor Mark of Irvine Presbyterian Church comments like this. *I confess that, during my years as pastor of Irvine Presbyterian Church, I found it easy to get too entangled with the church I served. I could even begin to think of Irvine Presbyterian Church as “my church” in a way that wasn’t healthy. For me, this wasn’t so much about my glory as about an overactive sense of responsibility. Though God had called me to the Irvine church and though he blessed my ministry there, I was not nearly as essential to the church as I might have thought. God could take care of this church just fine without me. Though God used me at Irvine, I was not necessary to the life and health of the church. This has been demonstrated in the three years since I’ve been away from Irvine Pres, which is now being led by a fine new pastor, Scott Bullock.*

### **How to Think About Christian Leaders: Part 2**

In the last few paragraphs, I examined 1 Corinthians 3:5-9, considering its implications for how we think about church leaders. I closed by admitting that sometimes it is not easy for a pastor or other leader to seek God’s glory, especially when we are in the midst of conflict. Here I bring you an experience shared by Pastor Mark;

Pastor Mark shares his personal experience of how difficult this can be. *“About fifteen years ago I was in the midst of one the hardest times in my ministry at Irvine Presbyterian Church. I had a staff member I’ll call Shirley with whom I was having many conflicts. From my point of view, she was not fulfilling her job description in many, many ways. From her point of view, I was being imperious and unsupportive. Though I tried everything I could think of to make things work out, they were going south faster than a goose in November.*

*During this time, Shirley began to lobby the troops on her side. She complained about how I was mistreating her. She would visit shut-ins and tell them I was getting ready to fire her (which wasn’t true). She was clearly trying to divide the church and was doing a fine job of it. I must confess that I was sorely tempted to join the game and beat her at it. I wanted to get people on my side. I wanted people to know the truth and defend me. The church started to become all about me . . . me, me, and me. We were going the way of the splintered Corinthian church.*

*Everything came to a head at a meeting of our congregation. This was by far the toughest meeting I’d ever been a part of. The elders of the church were recommending that we dismiss Shirley from our staff. In the congregational debate, many people chewed me out for what they perceived to be my management flaws. These were people who believed they knew the truth because they had heard it from Shirley. The temptation to divide and conquer the church was huge for me. But, by God’s grace and following the counsel of my fellow leaders, I didn’t do it. I took my licks, even ones I didn’t deserve. I owned my failures and tried to listen to what people were saying to me. Frankly, it was excruciating. But I sensed that my job as pastor was to help the church be unified in Christ, not divided in order to defend me. Many of my supporters sensed the same. Though they could have risen to my defence, they realized that it was not the time to do so. Wisely, they remained quiet, and so avoided a fight that could have deeply wounded our church.*

*The congregation did, in the end, vote to dismiss Shirley. I left feeling, not vindicated, but ashamed and exhausted. Several friends gathered around to encourage me. But I still felt as if I had been taken to the congregational woodshed for a beating.*

*In the aftermath of that meeting, only a couple of people left our church, much to my surprise. In time, many of those who had scolded me actually came to apologize. One man said, “It was only later that I learned some of what had really happened with Shirley. I’m sorry for the things I said to you.”*

*But the greatest result of that whole debacle was not that I was somehow more highly regarded or more beloved or whatever. It was that our people ended up, truly, more united in Christ. I can’t explain how this happened, exactly, except that it was a work of grace. But I do know that my effort and the efforts of those who supported me, to focus on Christ and not on me helped move us toward such a positive result. Nevertheless, I still look back on this whole experience, and the congregational meeting in particular, as one of the hardest times of my ministry. It required that I subordinate myself to a degree I had never done before. It required that I trust in God rather than my abilities to persuade and organize. That was Pastor Mark. Then, what’s your story?*

If you’re caught in a church conflict, watch out for the role of leaders in that conflict. If battle lines and being drawn up around certain personalities, don’t participate. And if you’re a pastor, I’d urge you to remember – as hard as it may be – that you are merely a servant of the Master. Devote yourself to seeking what’s best for whole church. Seek to unify rather than divide. Don’t let your people choose up sides, even if this game seems to be to your favour. Rather, do all you can do to further the peace and unity of Christ’s church. Let the focus be upon him, with yourself as his servant.

### **How Not to Solve Conflicts among Christians: Part 1**

My friend “Jeff” was the pastor of a church in Southern California. He and I became friends because we shared many of the same basic faith in Jesus Christ. I always liked Jeff because he was humble, earnest, and a deeply caring servant of God.

Jeff’s church was on the conservative side, both theologically and liturgically. They had hymns and an organ, proudly so. Nevertheless, Jeff wanted to add a few more contemporary touches to the worship services, like praise songs and a more informal time of prayer. So, one Sunday, he made these slight changes. His elders were not happy with Jeff, however. At the next board meeting there was a big fight, with two or three of the elders denouncing Jeff in demeaning ways. In the end, however, the board voted to sustain what Jeff had done, much to the dismay of the minority that had opposed him.

Two days later, while Jeff was sitting in his office at church, he received an ominous looking letter from a law firm in town. Reading the letter, he was distressed to learn that one of his elders was suing him in civil court because of the changes he had made in worship. I can’t remember the specific charges, but I do well remember Jeff’s great distress over what was happening to him and his church. He just couldn’t believe that one of his elders would actually sue him over a church matter.

Since Jeff shared his plight with me eight years ago, I’ve heard other things like this. Another pastor friend of mine was sued by a former church leader for failing to lead the church in the right direction. I’ve heard of pastors who have threatened to sue members of their church when they felt they were being mistreated. And I’ve watched with concern as individual churches and denominations rush to secular courts to solve church related property issues. Sometimes this happened in my former denomination as particular churches decide to Part Company with us.

The problem of Christians using the legal system to deal with conflicts with other believers isn’t new. In fact this was one of the problems facing the church in Corinth in the middle of the first century A.D. We learn from 1 Corinthians 6 that one member of the church had some sort of dispute with another member. But rather than work

it out within the church, one of the believers sued the other in secular court. This sort of behaviour was common among the wealthy members of Corinthian society. Winning in court was usually more a matter of preserving honour than getting a financial settlement. And being held in honour was the highest value among the Corinthian elites.

But the Apostle Paul was not pleased with what was happening in his church. Here's what he wrote to the Corinthians:

When you have something against another Christian, why do you file a lawsuit and ask a secular court to decide the matter, instead of taking it to other Christians to decide who is right? Don't you know that someday we Christians are going to judge the world? And since you are going to judge the world, can't you decide these little things among yourselves? Don't you realize that we Christians will judge angels? So you should surely be able to resolve ordinary disagreements here on earth. If you have legal disputes about such matters, why do you go to outside judges who are not respected by the church? I am saying this to shame you. Isn't there anyone in all the church who is wise enough to decide these arguments? But instead, one Christian sues another—right in front of unbelievers! To have such lawsuits at all is a real defeat for you. Why not just accept the injustice and leave it at that? Why not let yourselves be cheated? But instead, you yourselves are the ones who do wrong and cheat even your own Christian brothers and sisters. (1 Cor 6:1-8)

What is wrong with Christians suing other Christians in court? First, there should be sufficient wisdom in the church to solve conflicts. Notice that Paul assumes that disputes among Christians are the business of the church. If a Christian brother has a conflict with another brother, that's not a private matter. It's something that impacts the church and is part of the church's rightful concern.

Moreover, for Christians to sue each other in secular court looks terrible to observing unbelievers. It certainly doesn't commend the gospel of Jesus Christ if Christians sue each other. For that matter, the desire to win and get even doesn't reflect the cross of Christ at all. Thus Paul can end his denunciation of Corinthian lawsuits with a rather shocking statement: "To have such lawsuits at all is a real defeat for you. Why not just accept the injustice and leave it at that? Why not let yourselves be cheated?" (6:7).

### **How Not to Solve Conflicts among Christians: Part 2**

In the last paragraphs I examined a passage from 1 Corinthians 6, which instructed Christians to avoid solving their problems in secular court. Let me quote that text again before suggesting some practical implications.

When you have something against another Christian, why do you file a lawsuit and ask a secular court to decide the matter, instead of taking it to other Christians to decide who is right? Don't you know that someday we Christians are going to judge the world? And since you are going to judge the world, can't you decide these little things among yourselves? Don't you realize that we Christians will judge angels? So you should surely be able to resolve ordinary disagreements here on earth. If you have legal disputes about such matters, why do you go to outside judges who are not respected by the church? I am saying this to shame you. Isn't there anyone in all the church who is wise enough to decide these arguments? But instead, one Christian sues another—right in front of unbelievers! To have such lawsuits at all is a real defeat for you. Why not just accept the injustice and leave it at that? Why not let yourselves be cheated? But instead, you yourselves are the ones who do wrong and cheat even your own Christian brothers and sisters. (1 Cor 6:1-8)

In our time of history, this may be one of the most counter-cultural passages in all of Scripture. It's not news that we live in a highly litigious culture. People sue each other right and left for the most trivial things. It's given in our

society that you should never “accept the injustice and leave it at that.” Rather, we are taught to press every possible advantage for the sake of gain, even if that means suing a fellow believer in court.

I realize that some Christians will be offended by the suggestion that we should let 1 Corinthians 6 guide our behaviour when it comes to suing each other. Some of my readers might find what I’m saying downright offensive. Let me clarify that I’m not saying Christians should never turn to secular courts under any circumstances. There may be times when a church system is so dysfunctional and the damage done to people so significant that justice can only be found in the secular courts. Moreover, when the behaviour of church officials is illegal, then justice requires legal action in criminal court. But Christian use of the courts to solve personal conflicts is nothing we should be proud of or seek to perpetuate. Whatever else, secular lawsuits should be the last resort among Christians.

Moreover, there are times when a person should simply choose to lose rather than to sue. I think of another pastor friend of mine who was meanly and unjustly fired by his church board. I expect he could have sued and received a significant settlement. But he chose not to press legal charges because he took 1 Corinthians 6 seriously. Moreover, he didn’t want to hurt the church he loved, even though the board of this church had badly injured him.

This was a truly Christ-like sacrifice on the part of my friend. His case illustrates the deeper point. We are to imitate the sacrificial example of Jesus Christ. As Jesus taught, we are to turn the other cheek, to walk the second mile (Matthew 5:39-41). Jesus modelled self-giving sacrifice through his death on the cross. Yes, indeed, this sort of thing grates against our own desire for vindication as well as our culture’s preoccupation with winning no matter what. But our Lord teaches us, both by word and by deed, how to give up our lives so that we might gain true life, eternal life, and life in all of its fullness.

If you’re in a conflict with other Christians, whether it is personal, professional, or ecclesiastical, the way NOT to solve the problem is through suing each other in secular court. (I’m not, by the way, implying that lawyers can’t be helpful here. Christians with legal expertise can often assist us in finding just solutions that will keep us from lawsuits. I have seen this very thing happen in ministry, where lawyers were extraordinarily helpful in terribly conflicted situations. Competent Christian attorney can help us avoid lawsuits.) Secular lawsuits must not be your first choice, or second, or third. The church, when functioning properly, is the place where true wrongs can and should be adjudicated. Only if the church fails miserably in this duty might it be necessary in some cases for you to get secular legal help.

But before you turn to the civil courts as a last resort, you need to ask the Lord whether he wants you simply to lose. I know this sounds strange. But I think, in light of 1 Corinthians 6 and the example of Jesus Christ, we need to ask the Lord whether he’s calling us to lose the fight. Yes, we may sacrifice our pride for a while. Yes, we may lose certain advantages, financial and otherwise. But what we gain, and what the church of Jesus Christ gains, may well be worth the cost.

In the few last paragraphs I was telling the story of my friend Jeff, a pastor who was sued by a disgruntled elder. When Jeff found out that he was being sued, he did not call a lawyer. Instead he did the counter-cultural thing. He called up the elder and said, “I’m not going to fight back because I’m your brother in Christ. We need to work this out in the Lord.” When the elder resisted, Jeff got some other elders to talk with the one who had filed suit. Among other things, they reminded him of Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 6. They called him to act as a follower of Jesus Christ. They offered to help work out reconciliation. The unhappy elder was finally willing to drop his suit. Though he and Jeff never fully agreed on what worship should be in their church, they were able to live together in Christian fellowship without recourse to lawsuits.



Yes, I know it doesn't always end like this. Often people are not as spiritually mature as Jeff. They get caught up in a worldly effort to win. Sometimes church leaders aren't willing or able to step up, as were the elders of Jeff's church. But the fact that we Christians fail to do what Scripture calls us to do is no argument for not trying to obey in the first place. We should make every effort to settle our disputes within the context of Christian community. And when this fails, there will be times when God will call us simply to lose rather than to fight on in the courts. Yet in this losing, as counter-intuitive as it might seem, there will be a great gain for God's kingdom, and even for our own souls.

### **What Love is All about: Realism beyond Romance**

I'll confess to being a softy when it comes to romantic things. I'm not necessarily good at thinking them up and doing them, mind you, but I'm an appreciative observer. I'm a sucker for a romantic film, even a corny and predictable one. I like violins crooning the background and happy endings.

But, I must confess that I get nervous about too much romance in weddings, of all places. And since I go to lots of weddings, usually with the best seat in the house, I get nervous a lot. Why? Because I've seen too many wonderfully romantic weddings end in heartache. A couple of years ago, I participated in one of the most beautiful and elegant weddings I'd ever seen. It was absolutely wonderful, except for the tiny little problem that the couple I saw marry divorced in less than a year. That's a big oops, and a very sad one.

One of the most romantic moments from arguably the most romantic wedding of the last fifty years, between Prince Charles and Lady Di. Such romance didn't guarantee a happy marriage, did it?

I also get nervous over too much romance, maybe it's better to say idealism, when it comes to the church. I often hear people talk about some new church they've found – including a church where I go now in utterly glowing terms: loving fellowship, inspired worship, fantastic preaching, etc. etc. Though I'm glad they've found such a congregation, I worry that too much idealism can lead to all sorts of disappointment and hurt. No matter how wonderful a church may be, it's still full of real people who, though forgiven, aren't perfect. And in such a fellowship conflict is inevitable.

Years ago when I was a social worker at my previous church, I was coaching a team of leaders that was experiencing lots of disagreement. One of the women on the team became exasperated and blurted out: "What's wrong with this group? I thought we were supposed to be a family!" My response was: "Yes. That's exactly the problem. How many families do you know that don't sometimes have major conflicts?" This woman was confronting the reality of the church and the unreality of her idealistic expectations. Soon she was going to have to make a choice about whether or not to stay involved in a genuine but messy and sometimes conflicted fellowship, or to leave and look for greener pastures where her idealistic dreams would be nurtured, at least until she really got involved with those people.

One of the things I love about the Bible is its realism about all sorts of things. Read the Bible and you get a clear picture of what life is really like. When people talk about experiencing church just like in New Testament times, I laugh to myself and wonder if they've ever read the New Testament. Make your way through this text and you'll find that almost every book bears witness to the reality of conflict in the church.

But the New Testament is also realistic about what it takes to overcome conflict. There are lots of specific instructions, some of which I've already surveyed in this series. But there are also the overarching principles that will help us find our way through the confusing maze of church conflict. The most important of these principles is love.

As you may know, there is one chapter in the Bible known as “The Love Chapter,” and for good reason. 1 Corinthians 13 uses *agape*, one of several Greek words for “love,” nine times. That’s as much as in all four gospels combined. Only one other chapter in the whole Bible, 1 John 4, uses the word “love” more frequently. So if you want to know something about love, you’d do well to consult 1 Corinthians 13.

I have often heard pastors read this chapter in weddings. In terms of frequency, I think it comes in second for all biblical texts (next to Colossians 3:12-17). For a while it was out of style to use this text. But now 1 Corinthians 13 has made a comeback. That’s just fine with me, though I often wonder if couples getting married have really paid much attention to what the text actually says. Sure, it talks a lot about love. But the picture of love in 1 Corinthians 13 is decidedly non-romantic. In fact, you could almost say it’s anti-romantic. It talks about love in realistic, down-to-earth terms. 1 Corinthians 13 says nothing about love being wonderful, happy, or heavenly. There are no inspiring violins playing in the background of 1 Corinthians 13. If you pay attention to what this chapter reveals, you’ll realize that love is hard work, and much of it doesn’t sound like much fun. Maybe that’s why I like pastors reading 1 Corinthians 13 in weddings. It cuts through the overly-romanticized, feeling-cantered notions of love with the double-edged sword of God’s realistic Word. It talks about what love is really all about, warts and all.

Of course Paul did not write 1 Corinthians 13 for weddings. It was written because the Corinthian church was in the middle of a big brouhaha over many things. It was written specifically for Christians in conflict, the overarching theme of this series. So, in the next parts in this series, I’ll begin to examine how 1 Corinthians 13 helps us to deal with conflict among believers in Jesus.

#### **What Love is all about: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.**

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged. It is never glad about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. (NLT)

Before I get into the details, a couple of preliminary comments are in order. First, this passage has obviously been shaped to fit the crisis in Corinth. It has a corrective tone. I rather doubt that if Paul had been given the assignment to write a chapter on love without reference to a given church, he would have come up with eight “love is not” statements among the fifteen qualities of love. It’s pretty clear that Paul wants to point out to the Corinthians where their own behaviour is not loving. One might capture Paul’s intent with this paraphrase:

Love is patient and kind, unlike you Corinthians in the way you treat each other. Love is not jealous, as you folks are. Love is not boastful, like you are. And so forth and so on.

Second, in a broader perspective, this description of love is, as I have mentioned before, extraordinarily realistic about human nature. Consider the subtext of these affirmations:

**Love is patient.** Patience is necessary in human relationships because people will be slow, agonizingly slow. They’ll get on your nerves. They’ll keep making the same mistakes over and over. Therefore love has to be patient.

**Love is not jealous.** Ah, but fallen human nature is so very jealous. We see somebody else get affirmation and we feel slighted. If someone else is blessed, we wish we were too. Sometimes we can even hate people who have what we want to have ourselves. Therefore love must not be jealous.

***Love does not demand its own way.*** But we do, all the time, especially when we're in a fight with other Christians. We want to win; we want them to lose. We plot and plan to guarantee our success. Often we get so caught up in winning that we lose perspective. Sometimes we even lose sight of the truth. Love, true love, is a corrective to all of this because it seeks what is best for the other, not for ourselves.

***Love keeps no record of when it has been wronged.*** What, no record? Forgive and forget? You've got to be kidding. The record of offenses helps us to win the battle. And it keeps us from being hurt again by others.

I could keep on going, but I think you get the point. Paul's discussion of love doesn't whitewash human nature. On the contrary, it assumes that people will be irksome, self-interested, and vengeful. True love cuts across the grain of human nature, calling us to what often seems both unnatural and even silly.

Third, this passage, by reflecting the character of Christ, calls us to genuine and costly Christ-likeness. Throughout my life I've heard preachers say that the description of love in 1 Corinthians 13 is really a description of Christ himself. Take away "love" and plug in "Christ" and you'll see what they mean: "Christ is patient and kind. Christ is not jealous. . . ." Some have proposed that Paul composed this passage by thinking about Jesus himself, and that may well be true, though we can't prove it. But the point of this passage is not primarily to praise the character of Christ. Rather, it's calling us to be like Christ by imitating his love.

Thus this text is similar in form to Philippians 2, which calls us to imitate the mind of Christ as it is revealed in his humble incarnation and sacrificial death on the cross. Of course it's one thing to talk about loving like Jesus and quite another thing to actually love like Jesus.

### **Loving Like Jesus: Easier Said Than Done**

1 Corinthians 13 calls us to love like Jesus. Though he is not specifically mentioned in verses 4-7, Jesus is surely the model behind Paul's exhortation. The love of Jesus is epitomized, most of all, in the cross, in his sacrificial death for our sake. We're to love based on this model. Of course that's much easier said than done. If we're honest, we who try to follow Jesus' example of love often come up short. In fact, sometimes we don't even want to try and love like Jesus. Have you ever wished you didn't have to be like Jesus? I have, many times over. I don't like turning the other cheek and, frankly, I'm not very good at it. I don't like having to forgive people over and over again. And that's just the beginning. We can all talk about imitating Jesus, but really doing it, especially in the midst of conflict, is just plain tough.

Like earlier said, I remember so well an instance in my ministry when I was working with a group in conflict. The arguments were fierce and tempers flared. People were showing selfish attitudes that seemed so unlike what we're called to in Scripture. Finally I said to the group, "Friends, I'm hearing what you want to do in this situation, but my question is: What do you think Jesus would do here?" One woman blurted out in anger, "I don't care what Jesus would do. I AM NOT JESUS!"

Part of me wanted to respond: "Well, *that's* obvious." But, by God's grace, I did not pour even more fuel on the fire of her selfish anger. In fact, I did admire her ironic honesty, I've got to say. But it almost seemed to me as if she was saying that since she wasn't Jesus she didn't have to act as he would act. That's just not adequate for a Christian. A better statement would be: "It's really hard to be like Jesus because I am not Jesus. But I know I'm called to be like him, as tough as it can be. So, Lord, help me! HELP ME BE LIKE JESUS!"

I'll bet I've prayed this prayer at least 200 times in my life, in situations where my patience has run out, where I haven't wanted to be kind, where I have had a long record of wrongs, and where I've cared most of all about my

own way. Sometimes, I'm sad to admit, I've done what comes naturally and acted in selfishness. But there have been times when I've sensed the Lord helping me to be like him. He's given me patience I just don't have. He's helped me to subordinate my agenda to his. He's allowed me to hear my opponent, not just as someone to be defeated in debate, but as a human being with needs, fears, hurts, and tender desires.

If you're in the middle of conflict with other Christians right now, I can almost guarantee that you don't want to be like Jesus. Admittedly, his way isn't easy. But it's the way of love, the way of peace, and the way of God.

If you have the courage to try it, take 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and use it to measure your own attitudes and behaviors, especially in reference to those with whom you are in conflict. Have you been patient, really? Have you been kind, truly? How has your kindness been expressed to those with whom you differ? Have you been demanding your own way? Are you keeping a record of wrongs? Are you willing to endure no matter what may come your way? Think about it. Pray about it.

### **Love for the Long Haul**

I mentioned earlier in this series that I get nervous sometimes over the hyper-romanticism of weddings. All too often that which begins in dreamy splendour ends in the all-too-real sadness of disappointment or divorce. Romantic love is just fine, but it won't last for the long haul. 1 Corinthians 13 envisions another kind of love, a love that lasts, well, forever. Here's what we read in the latter part of the chapter:

Love will last forever, but prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will all disappear. Now we know only a little, and even the gift of prophecy reveals little! But when the end comes, these special gifts will all disappear. It's like this: When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child does. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. Now we see things imperfectly as in a poor mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God knows me now. There are three things that will endure—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor 13:8-13, NLT)

As we've seen before, Paul writes with the Corinthian conflicts in mind. Their prized possessions – speaking in tongues and special knowledge – don't hold a candle to love, which alone lasts forever. But, once again, Paul also includes the spiritual gift he values most, prophecy, among those things that will pass away. So, though nailing the Corinthians for their unloving priorities, Paul makes sure to keep his own preferences in mind.

To understand this passage correctly, we must note Paul's eschatological perspective. Eschatology, the understanding of the end of history, called the *eschaton* in Greek, shapes Paul's theology throughout his writings. It's particularly obvious in 1 Corinthians 13. Here Paul envisions life in this world as a rather childlike reality. Though we see spiritual things, we do so imperfectly. But the time will come when we will know everything completely, just as God knows us now. (The NLT renders the thought accurately here, but misses the marvellous imagery of seeing God face to face. What an extraordinary hope we have of knowing the Lord so intimately and fully!)

In light of the *eschaton*, love gains value while the worth of other good gifts diminishes. Prophecy won't be needed then because it will be completely fulfilled. Special knowledge won't count for much when we know God perfectly. Speaking in tongues will pass away as well. Even faith and hope pale in comparison with love when seen in eschatological perspective. After all, faith will be rather easy when we see God face to face. And hope, well, that won't even be necessary because our hopes will have been realized. But love will last forever.

I would suggest that you and I need to learn to see life in terms of eternity. We need to equip ourselves for the long haul. When this happens, we'll see just how much love is really worth. It's worth more than prophecy, tongues, knowledge, faith, and hope. Remember that the love Paul speaks of isn't the touchy-feely kind. It isn't about having warm fuzzies. Rather, love is costly, sacrificial care for others. It's being patient, kind, etc. etc. When we're in the middle of conflict with other Christians, it's terribly easy to value many things more than love, things such as: vindication, winning the argument, putting others in their place, proving how right we are, and so forth. Love gets lost in the flurry of argument and anger. We can actually think that temporal things have eternal value, while devaluing that which truly lasts forever, namely love.

### **The Long View of Love**

Many years ago I found myself in a conflict with a fellow leader in the church. Though I tried everything I could think of to bring reconciliation, I failed. As he was leaving our church, he made sure that many people knew of my shortcomings, or what he perceived to be my shortcomings, at any rate. Some of what he said was probably correct; much of it was unfair. In response to his attacks on me and my character, I wanted desperately to bring this man down, to tell the congregation – no, the whole world – what a nasty person he had been to me. In those days the biblical call to love didn't seem like a guide for better living. It felt instead like a huge anchor hung around my neck to keep me from sailing where I wanted to head. More out of a sense of duty to God than anything else, I resolved to love this man to the limits of my ability, and beyond, I prayed, by God's own strength. So I made sure that my public communications about this man were always positive. I said things about him that were true and kept the negative to myself (and a couple of trusted friends). It was really hard to do this!

I wish I could tell you that my efforts brought reconciliation with this brother. They did not. And I wish I could tell you that everybody in the church realized what a godly saint I was being in contrast to the other man. They didn't, and some questioned the church over this incident. If I look at this event only from a short-term perspective, love seemed to lose the day. It seemed negative and self-defeating to love, perhaps even injurious to the church I was seeking to organise. But if I look at what happened in light of eternity, I believe that the choice to love was the right one. If nothing else, God was honoured by my modest efforts to follow Jesus. Moreover, the painful choice to love helped me grow in my own faith and discipleship. I became more like Christ in some small way, not only in that moment, but also in my eternal soul. Moreover, those in my church who knew the truth, and that included many of my key leaders, saw in my example something that encouraged and instructed them.

Lest I appear to be bragging, let me say that I have often failed to follow Jesus in the way of love. I could collect a line up of people who would bear witness to my ample failures. And I surely failed in many ways during the season of testing I'm describing now. But God's grace is able to touch even a person like me. If he can help me to love when I really don't want to, when my fallen nature says "Get even," when my pride says, "Bring him down," then God can help you as well.

So often we Christians have narrow, short-term vision. We look at today as if it's everything. Yet if we step back and get some perspective, if we look at our lives from God's point of view, if we think about the fact that God holds all of history in his capable hands, then we'll be able to live according to eternal priorities. And from this angle, the greatest thing of all is love.

One of my favourite things to do as a Christian is to see couples celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversaries. There's something tender about recognizing love that has lasted over the long haul. Often these events are quite romantic as well, and romance of this sort doesn't worry me in the least. In fact I think it's great, well, most of the time, anyway. A few years ago I was talking to the wife of the couple whose anniversary we were celebrating. "I'll bet 'Alex' loves you more now than he did fifty years ago," I said. The woman's answer just about knocked me over, "Well, he certainly seemed to feel that way last night in bed!" Yew, I thought, that's just great, and I'm

really happy for you. But that was too much information! Nevertheless, I know that this marriage was sustained by much more than moments of passionate fervour. It lasted because of the sacrificial commitment of both the husband and the wife. Their love, a 1 Corinthians 13 kind of love, had been good for the long haul.

May God help us to give real love its rightful place in our lives? May we learn now to love now in a way that will last forever?

### **Love is Fine, but What About?**

I've received lots of comments and emails in response to this writing on Christians in conflict. Many have left me with mixed feelings. I've heard from people who have found my discussion to be very helpful to them, a fact that would ordinarily make me glad. But the reason that my ideas have been germane is that so many Christians are caught up in conflict with other believers. This is very sad. One man put it well. He said, "Thanks for your series on conflict. It's right on target . . . unfortunately." I've also received many questions, great questions, about how what I've been writing about can be worked out in practice. One of these questions has focused on a particular problem: "What do I do when someone has truly wronged me? 1 Corinthians 13 calls for patience, not keeping a record of wrongs, and so forth; So am I supposed to forget about what someone has done and pretend like it hasn't happened? This seems wrong. What should I do in this situation?" This is a crucial concern, and one I plan to take up shortly.

It's easy for me to envision many misuses of 1 Corinthians 13. Suppose, for example, a person has treated another person unjustly. When the victim presents the offense, I can imagine the perpetrator saying, "Ah, there you go again, keeping a record of wrongs." The NIV translation of 1 Corinthians 13:5 reads, "[Love] is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs." So, one who confronts another with his or her sin might be accused of "keeping a record of wrongs," that is, being unloving.

Although I haven't had this exact experience, I have heard a similar accusation from an employee whom I was supervising. This employee was not fulfilling his job description in a number of crucial areas. When I brought these to his attention, he accused me of being unforgiving and not offering grace. In his view, since I was a Christian, I should have been willing to forgive all of his failures, which seemed to imply that I should accept his job performance no matter how poor it might have been. Yet, for many reasons, I disagreed with him. As his supervisor, in a situation where he was not performing his job adequately, I was expected to do something that seemed a lot like keeping a record of wrongs. How could I justify this in light of 1 Corinthians 13? Was I being unloving in fulfilling my duties as a supervisor?

This is just one of thousands of challenges to the ethic of love. There's no way I can begin to address even a tiny percentage of these real-life situations. But, I will consider the case I have just brought forward and the issue of keeping a record of wrongs. This example might help us as we try to live out the call to love in the complicated situations of our lives.

### **Love and Keeping a Record of Wrongs**

In the last chapters I began to consider what it means that love "keeps no record of wrongs" (1 Corinthians 13:5). In particular, I raised the question of whether or not it's ever appropriate for a loving Christian to keep track of wrongs done by another person. One could, and I expect some already have, interpret "keeping no record of wrongs" as meaning "never even noting that a wrong has been done" or "not ever remembering past wrongs for any reason." So if somebody in the church speaks unkindly to you, under this reading it would be loving simply to pretend as if it had never happened. Is this the right interpretation of 1 Corinthians 13:5? When I used to attend some biblical exegesis in college, I helped students pay close attention to the actual words being used and to the context, both immediate and larger, of those words. In responsible biblical interpretation we aren't free to guess

what the words mean or to interject what we wish they meant. Rather, we try to discover the original meaning through careful investigation. This is what I'll try to do here with the phrase "keeps no record of wrongs."

The Greek words literally mean: "[Love] does not reckon the wrong/evil/bad thing." Commentators aren't exactly sure what this phrase meant in first-century Greek, however. The phrase "to reckon evil(s)" does appear several times in the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament. There it means "devise evil against," as in Zechariah 8:17 (LXX): "And each one of you should not devise the evil thing in your hearts against your neighbour [*ten kakian . . . me logizesthe*]." If Paul is using language in the sense of the Greek Old Testament, as he often does, then 1 Corinthians 13:5 really means, "[Love] does not devise evil [against another person],"

But Paul often uses the verb *logizomai* in the sense of "adding to someone's account," as in 2 Corinthians 5:19: "[I]n Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting [*logizomenos*] their trespasses against them." So his ordinary usage of this verb suggests that 1 Corinthians 13:5 means: "[Love] does not charge wrongdoing to the account of the perpetrator," or "keeps no record of wrongs." Yet I wouldn't want to build a whole theology on such an ambiguous phrase when we can't be precisely sure of what it means.

As we try to weigh the meaning of 1 Corinthians 13:5 in its historical context, we don't know exactly what situation Paul was addressing. It may well be that some members of the Corinthian community were "adding up the wrongs" of others, largely to show that they themselves were better Christians than those with long lists of sins. It may be that Paul's concern was a lack of genuine forgiveness on the part of some Corinthians, and "keeping a record of wrongs" means "not forgiving." But we can't be exactly sure of the Corinthian context for Paul's counsel either. Our search for the right interpretation of "keeping a record of wrongs" must move to the larger biblical context.

As we consider this greater context, we realize that "not keeping a record of wrongs" cannot mean that there is never accountability for wrongdoers, that sinners simply get a pass when they do wrong. Many of Paul's own letters contain specific charges against his churches concerning things they have done wrong. Moreover, remember God's response to human sin. In a sense, God certainly keeps a record of wrongs. Through the prophets he chastises Israel time and again for her faithlessness and disobedience, often listing in detail the sins of the people (see, for example, Isaiah 1). We might also recall Jesus' "woes" upon the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23, where he chronicles their multiple sins. Since God is love, and Jesus is the love of God incarnate, this sort of logging of sins must not be the unloving "keeping a record of wrongs."

Where does this leave us? God certainly doesn't ignore wrongdoing. He not only records it, if you will, but he takes it so seriously that he sent his only son to die for our sins. It would have been much less costly if God simply pretended as if our sins didn't exist. But this would contradict his holiness and righteousness.

Yet God doesn't record our sins so that there might be a permanent breach in his relationship with us. He pays close attention to our sin; he confronts us with the truth of our sin; he holds us accountable for our actions so that we might receive his forgiveness in Christ, so that we might be cleansed and set free, so that we might sin no more. In the end, God chooses even to forget our sins (Jeremiah 31:34). But this isn't the same as ignoring them or pretending as if they hadn't happened in the first place. The divine "forgetting" happens only after God has dealt with sin through the new covenant in the blood of Christ. We experience the benefits of that new covenant only when we acknowledge our sin and put our trust in Christ as our Saviour.

Therefore, God does not keep a record of our wrongs in that, after he deals with them through the cross, and after we confess and are forgiven, God chooses to look upon us as if we had not sinned. At first he does keep a record

of wrongs, however, calling us to account for what we have done that is contrary to his will. But in the end his mercy triumphs as the record of wrongs is nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:13-15).

Where does this leave us in our effort to imitate God's love by not keeping a record of wrongs? Well, it does not mean that we should simply pretend as if a wrongdoing hasn't happened. (Sure, we should ignore trivial, unintended offenses at times, but this isn't the main point of our text.) When someone has wronged us, there needs to be an accounting for this wrong. The offender needs to acknowledge the offense so that there can be reconciliation. Ignoring or rationalizing or minimizing sin is yet another form of sin, and must be avoided.

But, at the same time, if you have been hurt by someone, you cannot let that hurt erect an impenetrable barrier between you and the person who wronged you. You can't let your record of the wrongs of another become the basis for fractured relationship or broken Christian community. Like God, you need to be instrumental in a process that leads to genuine repentance, forgiveness, and restoration. If, after the one who has offended you has apologized, you are still hanging on to your record of wrongs, then you have missed the point of God's love and grace. This, I believe, is what 1 Corinthians 13:5 would regard as unloving behaviour.

Now I realize that the kind of process I've been describing isn't an easy one. Believe me, I know this! I've been involved in some of the messiest and most confusing efforts to bring reconciliation. Often what makes them so messy and confusing is the failure (or even unwillingness) of involved parties to do what Jesus tells us to do in such a circumstance.

#### **More insights on resolving Conflicts God's Way (James 4:7-10)**

A dour Englishman was seated on a train between two ladies arguing about the window. One claimed that she would die of heatstroke if it stayed closed. The other said she would expire of pneumonia if it was opened. The ladies called the conductor, who didn't know how to resolve the conflict. Finally, the gentleman spoke up. "First, open the window. That will kill the one. Then close it. That will kill the other. Then we will have peace." This was going the worldly way of resolving conflicts, and as Christians we can't go that way.

The world has many ways to resolve conflict, but invariably, they leave God out. God tells us that His ways are not our ways (Isa. 55:8). His ways are much higher than our ways, and often run counter to our ways. If we want true and lasting peace in our relationships, then we need to resolve conflicts God's way. His way for resolving conflicts is not to give us surface techniques that achieve outward peace. Rather, God goes for the heart—primarily our heart relationship with Him. When our ways please Him, then we have a foundation for resolving conflicts with others (Prov. 16:7).

In James 4:1, he asks, "What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you?" He goes on to show that the source is selfishness. In a section running through verse 12, he shows,

#### **To resolve conflicts, repent of your sinful selfishness and humble yourself before God. (James 4:7-10)**

1. To resolve conflicts, judge your selfish motives (4:1-3).
2. To resolve conflicts, turn from all spiritual adultery and humbly entreat God's grace (4:4-6).
3. To resolve conflicts, submit to God, resist the devil, and repent of all sin (4:7-10).
4. To resolve conflicts, stop judging others and submit to God's Word (4:11-12).

Let us look at another side, where James says...

#### ***To resolve conflicts, submit to God, resist the devil, and repent of all sin.***

Our text is sandwiched between the quote from Proverbs 3:34, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (in 4:6) and the concluding command, "Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will



exalt you” (4:10). Keep in mind that the overall context is about resolving conflicts in the church (or home). Here James zeroes in on God’s way of conflict resolution, which deals with our hearts before Him. Conflict with God is often behind conflicts with others. First and foremost in any conflict, we must get right with God.

### **1. To resolve conflicts, submit to God (4:7, 8, 10).**

We can sum up three of James’ commands under this one head: Submit to God unconditionally (4:7); draw near to God (4:8); and, humble yourself before God (4:10).

#### **A. SUBMIT TO GOD UNCONDITIONALLY (4:7).**

You can go to seminars on how to be more assertive, but I’ve yet to see a seminar on how to learn to submit! It’s not a popular concept, but it is a biblical one. The word means “to put yourself in rank under” someone, implying a hierarchy of authority. It is used of the obligation to submit to government authorities (Rom. 13:1, 5; 1 Pet. 2:13); to elders in the church (1 Pet. 5:5); of mutual submission of husbands and wives to one another, and of wives to husbands, in marriage (Eph. 5:21, 22; 1 Pet. 3:1, 5); and of slaves to masters (1 Pet. 2:18).

Of course, God is the ultimate and only sovereign authority in the universe, and it should be obvious to everyone that it is most unwise to rebel against His authority. Since He is “opposed to the proud” (James 4:6), verse 7 infers, “Submit *therefore* to God.” It is the only sensible thing to do!

But because of the fall, as Paul explains (Rom. 8:7), the mind set on the flesh “is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so.” (*Subject* is the same Greek word as *submit* in James 4:7.) Unbelievers are unable to submit to God’s law, because they are unwilling to do so. Using the same word in Romans 10:3, Paul asserts, “For not knowing about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.” In pride, fallen man wants to set up his own righteousness as good enough, but it falls far short of God’s absolute righteousness. So the essence of human rebellion against God is that we do not submit to His holy law or to His perfect righteousness. You cannot separate submitting to God from trusting Him for salvation. While much more could be said, here are four ways that we tend to resist God and thus need to focus on submitting to Him:

#### **(1). SUBMIT UNCONDITIONALLY TO GOD’S WAY OF SALVATION.**

All of the world’s religions, except for biblical Christianity, teach that salvation is a matter of human endeavor and goodness. The world’s way is, “Work hard, be the best person you can be, and you’ll go to heaven.” Such teaching feeds human pride. It gives the good person reason to boast.

God’s way of salvation is totally opposed to man’s way. God’s way allows no one to boast before Him. He declares that we all have sinned and deserve His judgment. Further, because of our sin and pride, we aren’t willing to come to Him for salvation. All of our good works would never qualify us for heaven, because they cannot pay the debt of sin that we owe.

But what we could never do, God in His mercy did. He sent His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He satisfied God’s justice by dying in the place of sinners. God offers His salvation as a free gift, received by faith alone, apart from any human works or goodness (see Eph. 2:1-9). To be saved, we must submit unconditionally to God’s way of salvation.

#### **(2). SUBMIT UNCONDITIONALLY TO GOD’S PERSON.**

We all tend to submit to the part of God’s person that we naturally like, but we either ignore or deliberately dodge the part of His person that we don’t care for. Nobody has a problem with God’s great love, but many have a

problem with His hatred of all sin and His absolute justice that demands that all unrepentant sinners be punished for eternity in hell. But if God's Word reveals that sinners will be punished eternally in hell, and if Jesus Himself taught it (and, He did, Matt. 25:46), then we dare not fight it or reject it, even if it is not to our liking! We must submit to all of who God is as revealed in His Word.

### ***(3). SUBMIT UNCONDITIONALLY TO GOD'S WORD.***

Let's be honest: There are some difficult things in the Bible that, if we had the choice, we would cut out of it. In fact, Thomas Jefferson, who was not a believer, literally took scissors and cut out the parts of the Bible that he did not like! While none of us would be so brazen, in effect we often do just as Jefferson did. We don't literally cut out the difficult parts, but we just ignore them or don't work at understanding and submitting to those parts!

I know Christians who don't like the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty in choosing some, but not all, for salvation. So they just skip passages like Romans 9, which God inspired Paul to write for our spiritual edification. Of course, they must also skip many other texts, since the doctrine of God's sovereign election is all through the Bible. Or, they explain it away by saying that God foreknew who would choose Him, so He chose them. They never pause to reflect that such a view turns the Bible on its head and makes sinful men sovereign, rather than God!

I once talked with a Jehovah's Witness woman who came to my door. I found out that she formerly had been a Lutheran. When I asked her why she left the Lutheran faith, she said that she couldn't understand the trinity. But the issue with the trinity is not whether you understand it, but rather, is it clearly taught in Scripture? If it is, you must submit to it.

In Spurgeon's day, there were many liberal critics attacking the truthfulness and authority of the Bible. He saw that behind such attacks was the hostility of the unregenerate mind. He said, "The only real argument against the Bible is an unholy life. When a man argues against the Word of God, follow him home and see if you can discover the reason of his enmity to the Word of the Lord. It lies in some form of sin".

### ***(4). SUBMIT UNCONDITIONALLY TO GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL DEALINGS WITH YOU.***

God does many things in our lives that are not especially pleasant or to our liking. There are many such trials that we will never in this life fully understand God's reason for them. It may be the untimely death of a loved one. It could be unfair treatment at work or at school. Perhaps you had abusive parents or were the object of racial discrimination. You may suffer from some terrible disease or deformity. In the context of James 4, it may be a difficult person in your life who is always trying to stir up conflict. The potential list is endless, but you can't read the daily news without realizing that life is terribly unfair, from the human point of view.

Yet the Bible is clear that nothing happens to us apart from God's providential permission or care. If Satan attacks the godly Job, killing all of his children and taking away his possessions and health, it is only because God permitted Satan to do it. God has all of our days pre-numbered (Ps. 139:16) and He even has all the hairs on our heads numbered (Matt. 10:30). If He allows James to be beheaded, but Peter to escape, that's God's prerogative (Acts 12). If Peter later dies a martyr's death, but John lives to a ripe old age, that's God's business (John 21:21-23).

You can fight against God for the difficult things that happen, or you can humble yourself under His mighty hand, casting all your anxiety upon Him (1 Pet. 5:6-7). "Submit therefore to God" in His way of salvation, in His person, in His Word, and in His providential dealings with you; There's a second aspect of submission:

## **B. DRAW NEAR TO GOD (4:8).**

James gives a command and a promise: “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” Before I comment on what this means, let me clarify what it does *not* mean. It does *not* mean that God is waiting for sinners to make the first move toward Him, and then He will respond. Not only does that run counter to all of Scripture, it also runs counter to this verse, which is *God commanding us* to draw near to Him!

Jesus said, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him” (John 6:44). In case we missed it, He repeated, “For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father” (John 6:65). God *always* makes the first move toward us. If He did not, we all would perish in our sins (see also, John 8:34, 43-44; Rom. 3:10-12). So if you have drawn near to God for salvation, it was because God chose you and drew you to Himself. As Jesus said, “All that the Father gives me will come to me” (John 6:37).

But these words in James are written primarily to believers. It is easy even for believers to drift away from the Lord. James’ point is, “Guess who moved?” It wasn’t God! If you’re engaging in continuing quarrels and conflicts, you are *not* close to God. You’ve drifted. He is calling you to draw near to Him, with the promise that He is ready and waiting to draw near to you. The thought of not enjoying sweet fellowship with our loving Lord should move you to clear up whatever stands between you and Him.

You cannot be close to God at the same time that you’re angry or bitter toward someone else. That’s why immediately after teaching how serious the sin of anger is, Jesus said (Matt. 5:23-24), “Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.” You can’t draw near to God until you first clear up, as much as it is in your power, any relational difficulties. If you think that you’re close to God, but you’re angry and bitter, you’re deceiving yourself! Submit to God; draw near to God.

## **C. HUMBLE YOURSELF BEFORE GOD (4:10).**

Pride is at the heart of all disobedience to God and of almost all relational conflicts. If God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6), then you want to make sure you’re not making yourself God’s opponent! The theme of God humbling the proud, but exalting the humble, runs throughout Scripture (1 Sam. 2:4-8; Job 42:6, 10-17; Ps. 34:18; 51:17; Prov. 3:34; 29:25; Isa. 57:15; 66:2; Ezek. 17:24; Matt. 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14; 1 Pet. 5:6). In the context of dealing with relational conflicts, the apostle Paul tells us to imitate the Lord Jesus, the supreme example of one who humbled Himself and was exalted by God (Phil. 2:8-9).

The key to developing biblical humility is in the phrase, “in the presence of the Lord” (James 4:10). Only those with hardened hearts could be proud in the presence of the Lord! The holy angels in His presence cover their faces (Isa. 6:2). When Isaiah had his vision of the Lord, he was undone—personally shattered—and immediately aware of his own sinfulness (Isa. 6:5). When God portrayed the wonders of creation before Job, he had no further arguments against God. Instead, he said (Job 42:6), “I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes.” When the apostle John, who formerly had rested his head on Jesus’ chest, saw Him in His glory on the Isle of Patmos, he fell at His feet as a dead man (Rev. 1:17).

“The soul becomes humble by the true knowledge of God and ourselves” (*Exposition of the Epistle of James* “The stars vanish when the sun arises; and our poor candle is slighted into a disappearance, when the glory of God arises in our thoughts.... And we see our vileness in God’s majesty.... Get as large and comprehensive thoughts of him as you can; see his glory, if you would know your own baseness.” The first step in resolving relational conflicts is to submit to God, which includes drawing near to Him and humbling yourself before Him.

## **2. To resolve conflicts, resist the devil (4:7).**

The liberal German scholar, Rudolph Bultmann, wrote, “It is impossible to use electric light and the wireless, and to avail ourselves of modern medical and surgical discoveries, and at the same time believe in the New Testament world of demons and spirits”. Take your pick: either Bultmann is right, or Jesus or the New Testament writers are right!

While often Satan does not need to involve himself or his demonic forces in our conflicts (our flesh incites them without any extra help!), there are times when demons are directly involved in disrupting our relationships. While it would be out of line to see a demon behind every quarrel, it is also out of line and naïve to think that demons are never involved.

The Greek word for devil is *diabolos*, which means, literally, to throw against. It is the word for slanderer. It translates the Hebrew word for Satan, which means “adversary.” The devil is an evil fallen angel who stands against God and His people, always ready to accuse or slander them (Zech. 3:1, 2; Rev. 12:10). While we are no match for him in our own strength, in the name of the Lord and protected by the armor He provides, we may simply stand against Satan and he will flee. To resolve conflicts, first submit to God. Then, stop and pray in Jesus’ name against the prince of darkness.

## **3. To resolve conflicts, repent of all sin (4:8, 9).**

James sounds like an Old Testament prophet as he proclaims, “Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.” He is talking about thorough, heartfelt repentance.

Those whom James confronted had laughter and at least superficial joy. If you had seen them, they would have seemed quite happy. But, as we have seen, they had become friends with the world. At the heart of worldliness is finding joy and pleasure in things other than God, or while disregarding and disobeying God.

There are people in churches who are outwardly happy in their positions of power in the church; happy with their abundant material possessions, and happy with their self-centered lifestyles. Yet at the same time, they hate others in the church, ignore the needy, and never give sacrificially to the Lord’s work. It is to these types that James shouts, “Be miserable and mourn and weep!”

James’ words show that there is an emotional element to genuine repentance. It is not just a glib, “I’m sorry that I offended you.” Or, “I’m sorry that you’re upset” (implying, “it’s your fault!”). When you are truly repentant, you accept full responsibility for your sin. You don’t excuse it as a shortcoming or oversight. You mourn over how you have offended God, disgraced His name, and hurt your brother or sister in Christ (2 Cor. 2:1-7; 7:7-11).

Psalms 34:18 promises, “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” In Psalm 51:17, where David laments his sin with Bathsheba, he writes, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.” John Bunyan wrote a beautiful short book on that verse, *The Acceptable Sacrifice* [Banner of Truth], in which he explains how to know if your heart is broken before God, and how to keep it tender.

The mourning of biblical repentance is not opposed to the biblical joy that we are commanded to have at all times (Phil. 4:4; 1 Thess. 5:16). In fact, true joy comes only through true repentance, because it is then that we experience God’s forgiveness and mercy. The woman who wet Jesus’ feet with her tears knew the joy of sins

forgiven. The proud Pharisee, who did not see his own need for forgiveness, had neither her tears nor her joy (Luke 7:36-50).

## **Conclusion**

Don't sit passively and wait for resolution in a conflict to happen spontaneously. James gives ten active commands in machine-gun fashion in these four verses: Submit to God! Resist the devil! Draw near to God! Cleanse your hands! Purify your heart! Be miserable! Mourn! Weep! Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into gloom! Humble yourself! God's way to resolve conflicts is to submit to Him, resist the devil, and repent of all sin.

## **Application Questions**

1. Agree/disagree: Almost all relational conflicts are rooted in one or both parties not being fully in submission to God.
2. Why is an angry or bitter person necessarily distant from God? Consider Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 4:31; 1 John 4:20.
3. How can we know if the devil is actively involved in a relational conflict that we are experiencing? Are there signs?
4. How do we know if our repentance is sincere enough or deep enough? What if we do not have feelings of grief or mourning?

## **Finally**

Where conflicts fail to be addressed in an adequate way they tend to create violence and to diminish people's lives or prevent the development of the potentials that humankind has. This is true for conflicts in close relationships, between different groups in society as well as in the larger political sphere. But when it comes to the church and Christians, the story is more interesting. However, very often the suffering arising from unresolved conflicts can be transformed into chances and opportunities for growth and development for the institution and all those parties involved.

For this purpose, conflicts have to be recognized, addressed adequately and strategies and instruments have to be provided to deal with the issues underlying. In addition to institutional ways of conflict resolution (e.g. social norms, laws and courts), alternative methods of conflict transformation have successfully demonstrated all over the world that conflicting parties can well be empowered to take their future into their hands and cooperate at resolving complicated disputes. One of those practical ways proved working is to go the Christian way as demonstrated time and again in the bible.

However, for this to happen, persons are needed who understand the dynamics of conflict, who are able to develop visions and perspectives in intricate situations and who are willing to play a constructive role as a supporter of one, several or all conflicting parties. They will need to consider their own motivation, capacities and possibilities in relation to a given conflict scenario.

The 1990ies saw a rise in public and political awareness that legal procedures, forceful control and social work as responses to conflict do not always provide sustainable solutions. Alternative methods of conflict transformation became a topic of general interest, but at the same time these approaches were also disconnected from their justice-oriented aims and content.

Therefore, as Christians we resort to follow the biblically proven ways and following God's sovereign counsel and trusting our faith in Christ we see these conflicting situations come to pass in the most honest and non violent manner.

# PURPOSE DRIVEN CHURCH

## Characteristics of a PDC church

Over the last decade and a half I've seen Purpose Driven Church (PDC) principles transform the congregations who apply them. Here are some of the characteristics you can expect to see within your congregation as you introduce PDC concepts:

1. They have a Purpose Statement that describes (in their own words) their commitment to building the church around the five New Testament purposes: worship, evangelism, fellowship, discipleship, and ministry.
2. They use a Purpose-Driven Strategy to fulfill their purpose statement. While using a variety of terms, a purpose-driven strategy brings people to Christ and into membership in His family, then builds them up to maturity, then equips them for ministry in the church, and then sends them out on a life mission in the world in order to bring glory to God. The PDC strategy is based on two vital assumptions: 1) People grow best when you allow them to make gradual commitments. 2) You must ask for commitment in specific ways, such as using covenants.
3. They organize around a Purpose-Driven Structure, which insures balance and gives equal emphasis to all five New Testament purposes. PDC's are team-based, rather than hierarchical in structure. They organize around purpose-based teams (at least 5 - one for each purpose) composed of lay leaders and staff, with each team responsible for a specific purpose and target group (such as the community, the crowd, the congregation, the committed, and the core).
4. They program by purpose. They have at least one program for fulfilling each of the five purposes and each of the corresponding constituencies. They evangelize the Community, gather the Crowd for worship, fellowship in the Congregation, disciple the Committed, and equip the Core for ministry and mission.
5. They staff by purpose. Every purpose has its own champion. PDCs begin by finding volunteers to lead and serve on each purpose-based team, and they develop full-time, paid positions as needed.
6. The pastor preaches by purpose. Messages and series are planned to insure that the congregation receives a balanced emphasis on each of the purposes.
7. They form small groups on purpose. The PDC DNA is implanted in every cell of the Body of Christ. Each small group helps the members fulfill each of the five purposes in their lives. The goal is to help every believer live a purpose-driven life.
8. They calendar by purpose. The purposes are the determining factor in deciding what events are scheduled. Every event must fulfill at least one of the five purposes or it isn't approved.
9. They budget by purpose. Every expenditure is categorized by the purpose to which it relates.
10. They build by purpose. Buildings are seen as ministry tools, not monuments. They must serve the purposes and never become more important than the purposes.
11. They evaluate by purpose. They regularly ask: Are we balancing all five purposes? Is there a better way to fulfill each purpose?

Most PDC churches are built from the outside-in, rather than in the traditional way from the inside-out. It's far easier to turn a crowd into a core, than it is to turn a core group into a crowd. You build a healthy multi-dimensional ministry by focusing on one level of commitment at a time.

# CHURCH HEALTH LEADS TO CHURCH GROWTH

When I read *The Purpose Driven Church*, I predicted - church health, not church growth – would be the primary concern of the 21st Century church. I believe that prediction is proving itself true.

The New Testament says a lot about the health of the church. Consider just a few verses:

"As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing..." Eph. 4:16b

"The focus of my letter wasn't on punishing the offender but on getting you to take responsibility for the health of the church." 2 Cor. 2:9

"You can develop a healthy, robust community that lives right with God and enjoy its results only if you do the hard work of getting along with each other..." James 3:18

Church health is the key to church growth. All living things grow if they're healthy. You don't have to make them grow – it's just natural for living organisms. As a parent, I didn't have to force my three children to grow. They naturally grew up. As long as I removed the hindrances, such as poor nutrition or an unsafe environment, their growth was automatic.

If my children had not grown up, something would have been terribly wrong. I would have done whatever it took to discover the disease and correct it. I wouldn't have remained passive.

## PREACHING LIKE JESUS

There has never been a more appealing and interesting preacher than Jesus. Why not model him?

Jesus' preaching attracted enormous crowds, and the Bible often records the positive reactions of those crowds to his teaching.

Matthew 7:28 – "... the crowds were amazed at his teaching."

Matthew 22:33 (TLB) – "... the crowds were profoundly impressed."

Mark 11:18 (TLB) - "... people were so enthusiastic about Jesus' teaching."

Mark 12:37 (NASB) - "The great crowd enjoyed listening to Him."

These crowds had never heard anyone speak to them the way Jesus did. They were spellbound by his delivery.

To capture the attention of unbelievers like Jesus did, we must communicate spiritual truth the way he did. I believe that Jesus - not anyone else - must be our model for preaching. Unfortunately, some homiletics classes pay more attention to Aristotle and Greek rhetoric than to how Jesus taught.

In John 12: Jesus admitted, "The Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it." Notice that both the content AND the delivery style were directed by the Father. This is extremely important to note. We often overlook the manner in which Jesus preached.

There's so much we can learn from Jesus' style of communication, not just his content. But for now I want to briefly identify three attributes of Jesus' preaching.

### 1. Jesus began with people's needs, hurts, and interests

Jesus usually taught in response to a question or a pressing problem from someone in the Crowd. He scratched where people itched. His preaching had immediacy about it. He was always relevant and always on target for that moment.

When Jesus preached his first sermon at Nazareth, he read from Isaiah to announce what the preaching agenda of his ministry would be: "The Lord has put his Spirit in me, because he appointed me to tell the Good News to the poor. He has sent me to tell the captives they are free and to tell the blind that they can see again. God sent me to free those who have been treated unfairly and to announce the time when the Lord will show his kindness." (Luke 4:18-19 NCV)

Notice his entire emphasis on meeting needs and healing hurts. Jesus had Good News to share, and people wanted to hear it. He had a message that offered practical benefits for their lives. His truth would "set people free" and bring all sorts of blessings to their lives.

Our basic message to the lost must be good news. If it isn't good news, it isn't the gospel. We must learn to share the gospel in ways that show it is both "good" and "news." The gospel is about what God has done for us and what we can become in Christ. A personal relationship to Christ is the answer to all of man's deepest needs. The good news offers lost people what they are frantically searching for: forgiveness, freedom, security, purpose, love, acceptance, and strength. It settles our past, assures our future, and gives meaning to today. We have the best news in the world.

Crowds always flock to Good News. These days, there is plenty of bad news in the world. The last thing people need to hear is more bad news in church. They're looking for hope and help and encouragement. Jesus understood this. That's why he felt so compassionate toward them. He knew that the crowds were "harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

By beginning with people's needs when you preach, you immediately gain the attention of your audience. Practically every communicator understands and uses this principle except pastors!

Wise teachers know to start with the student's interests and move them toward the lesson. Effective salesmen know you always start with the customer, not the product. Smart managers know to begin with the employee's complaint, not their own agenda. You start where people are and move them to where you want them to be.

Pick up any textbook on the brain and you'll learn that at the base of your brain stem is a filter called the Reticular Activating System. God graciously put this filter in our minds so we don't have to consciously respond to the millions of stimuli that we're bombarded with on a daily basis. It continuously sifts and sorts the things you see, hear, and smell--forwarding only a few of those stimuli on to your consciousness. This way you're not overloaded and overwhelmed. If you had to consciously respond to every stimuli your senses pick up, you'd go crazy! Your Reticular Activating System determines what gets your attention.

Now, what does get people's attention? Three things always make it past your reticular activating system: things you value; things that are unique; and things that threaten you. This has profound implications for the way pastors preach and teach. If you want to capture the attention of an uninterested group of people you must tie your message to one of these three attention-getters.

While sharing the Good News in a unique or threatening way can get attention of unbelievers, I believe showing it's value to people is most consistent with how Christ taught. Jesus taught in a way that people understood the value and benefit of what he was saying. He didn't try to threaten unbelievers into the kingdom of God. In fact, his only threats were to religious people!

## **LEADING PRODUCTIVE CHURCH STAFF MEETINGS**

There are two major kinds of work in modern organizations: one is taking phone messages for people who are in meetings; the other is going to meetings. Most of us aspire to the second category until we have attended two or three meetings, then we beg to get back on phone duty.



The modern church staff meeting has been compared to an off-the-wall combination of a merry-go-round and a funeral; people attending something they don't want to attend, going in circles, and focusing on something that is quite lifeless. Some miss what was once alive, others pray for those who look to be in pain, and the rest are content to be there for a free ride on a colored pony.

Some church staffs meet simply because it's Monday. The primary goal is that everyone gets to say something - even those who have nothing to say. Other church staff meetings look like they have some good potential. But the relationships are in such poor condition that politics, fear, and a general mistrust remove any chance of productivity, let alone an enjoyable experience. Then, thankfully, there are staff meetings that the people want to attend, creative ideas are exchanged, good decisions are made, and measurable productivity is the result. These staff meetings don't happen by accident. They are the result of intentional effort and design. This chapter is dedicated to help you make your meetings be productive, meaningful and enjoyable.

### **1. Preparation for an effective meeting.**

Prepare for it as if it were a Sunday morning sermon. What takes place before the meeting is as important as what happens in the meeting. I will confess that of the hundreds of meetings I've led, there have been more than I care to admit that I was not well prepared. The people who attend the meeting will never prepare more than the one who leads the meeting. So, how prepared do you want the team to be?

As a general rule of thumb, it is wise to invest at least as much time preparing for the meeting as you spend in the meeting.

#### **Clearly define your purpose and stick to it.**

Don't try to make it a one size fits all meeting - a combination of a prayer meeting, training meeting, emergency meeting, business meeting, and regular all purpose no-purpose meeting.

In the last chapters, I outlined four different meetings in some detail that are held each month.

In outline review:

All Staff Meeting - the primary purpose is to shape the staff culture and build team morale.

Pastoral Staff Meeting - the primary purpose is communication and strategic thinking.

Staff Training Meeting - the primary purpose is leadership development.

War Room Meeting - the primary purpose is master planning, with a detailed focus on the calendar.

Your meetings need not be so rigid that there is never a blending of purpose; creativity and God moments don't always fit into an agenda. But in general, your team will be better served by a well-planned meeting.

#### **Explore alternatives to the meeting.**

If you don't need a meeting, don't have one. Some items, although important, are too detailed or don't involve enough of the people who attend the meeting to justify being included on the agenda. You may be able to cover an item by assigning a small task force to handle it, or perhaps a brief conference call could cover the issue.

On occasion, this idea may relate to the entire meeting. The simple thought here is "don't meet when it's not necessary." (If you adopt the four different kinds of meetings, each once a month, as described in the last article, you will rarely cancel a meeting.)

#### **Determine who is to attend the meeting.**

Generally speaking, the fewer the better, but exclusivity is not the goal. The goal is to be productive. Only those who need to be there should be in attendance. In other words, base your decision on who will make a significant contribution rather than who will get their feelings hurt if they aren't invited.

In the case of a very small staff, such as: a senior pastor, one part-time associate, and a church secretary, your staff meeting is just as important as for a large staff. Prepare well and insist on productivity. If you are a solo senior pastor with no paid staff, I still recommend a meeting in which you select 3-5 effective lay leaders to be your volunteer staff.

### **Design the meeting agenda.**

For the regular staff meeting, an outline of categories for agenda items could look like: Story-telling - Stories of life change Rapid Fire - Quick communication updates Think Tank - Ministry strategy and design From the Heart - Matters of the heart Leader's with a Shepherds heart - Prayer

Distribute the agenda in advance. Give the staff opportunities to participate to their fullest capacity through preparation. As a general rule of thumb, nothing comes up in the meeting that is not on the agenda. This is not intended to squelch the spirit, but the way to stay focused, purposeful, and on time.

### **Know and communicate the value of the meeting.**

Education is always valuable. Occasionally, let your staff know how important the meetings are. (This is preparation in that its real value is usually not in the meeting it's shared, but in meetings that follow.)

On occasion remind your team of good stewardship with God's money. Or, remind the team of the eternal consequences of the work you are tending to. We are not to take ourselves too seriously, but we are to take God very seriously.

### **Have the meeting room completely prepared before the meeting begins.**

## **2. Leading an effective meeting.**

### **Cultivate the right environment.**

A good balance is one of both playfulness and purposefulness. It's like a boat on a tether. There's enough rope for the boat to ebb and flow with the tide, but not so much rope that the boat drifts out to sea. Have fun and laugh, but stay on course.

### **Pay attention to the sense of timing and progress.**

Start and end on time.

It's acceptable to end early, but not late. Respect people's time;

Keep the pace moving briskly;

It's not a race, but keep it moving.

### **Allow breathing room after tense or difficult topics.**

On occasion, there may be a personal issue, or a tense or difficult topic. Take a break, make room for humor, or take some time to pray.

### **Restate and clarify complicated issues.**

No matter how rapt and in awe your staff members may appear, they really don't catch everything that is said. Briefly restate, or better yet, call upon someone to restate complicated issues.

### **Never forget the Next-Steps principle.**

Next-Steps: is about progress and accountability. The Next-Steps principle simply teaches us the importance of identifying what the next step is and clarity on who will take ownership for that step. Note: put a due date on each assignment.

### **Be sensitive and receptive to interruptions from God.**

Because of the kindness and graciousness of God, there are times when He interrupts the meeting. These are sweet moments. Be attentive to His promptings. If He wants to change the agenda, let Him. This does not imply that a meeting without a epiphany is not important or not spiritual. I am assuming that part of your preparation is in-depth prayer. I'm referring to those special, unexplainable moments when the favor of God blesses your experience. Be grateful and go with the flow.

### **Encourage healthy interaction.**

Don't hog and don't hide. It's kind of corny, but nonetheless a helpful guideline. No staff person should dominate or control and no staff member should be silent. Leaders speak up, but don't take the spotlight. Courtesy and kindness are non-negotiable. So is honesty and candor, so from time to time there may be a moment of tension. This is normal, but don't let it pass without resolution. Tend to it by allowing thoughts and feelings to emerge, but only to the extent that the team benefits.

### **3. Follow-through is as important as preparation.**

I'm a terrible golfer. People like me to play only because I'm entertaining. I once won an award in a best ball type tournament raising money for missions by hitting 17 trees off of 18 tees. Some years ago I thought lessons might help. I took six lessons before I realized that God never intended for me to play golf, but one thing I did learn was the importance of good follow-through. Over and over and over again, my golf pro instructor pressed in on the importance of good follow-through on my swing, something, apparently, I never achieved. Follow-through in your staff meetings is no less important. Without follow-through, you might as well just pick up the ball and throw it at a tree. The following will help you follow up and follow through.

### **Evaluation;**

The following seven items are those I hold as critical criteria for a productive meeting:

1. Was the purpose of the meeting accomplished?
2. In what way was the mission of the church advanced?
3. What took place of redemptive value?
4. Did the staff give their undivided attention and their best effort?
5. What are the next steps and who is responsible?
6. What was learned?
7. Was the chemistry of the team such that the meeting was enjoyed?

Produce and distribute necessary follow-up email for clarity and accountability as needed.

#### **4. Final quick tips for added value.**

Create discussion, don't deliver a lecture.

Take advantage of brief coaching, teaching, and mentoring moments.

Always find something to praise.

Do your homework, on paper and with people.

Invite people to attend the meeting for purpose more than protocol.

Watch for messages between the lines.

Thank the people for their time.

Remember: Anything that can be done outside a meeting should be!

## **UNIQUE HABITS OF HIGHLY RELIABLE CHURCHES**

The best way for any company and its people to respond to unpredictable challenges is by building an effective organization that expertly spots the unexpected when it crops up and then quickly adapts to meet the changed environment. In a series of interviews, Weick revealed the five habits of highly reliable organizations.

1. Don't be tricked by your success. HROs do not gloat over their successes. In fact, just the opposite: They are preoccupied with their failures. They are incredibly sensitive to their own lapses and errors, which serve as windows to their system's vulnerability. They pick up on small deviations. In addition, they react early and quickly to anything that does not fit with their expectations.

2. Defer to your experts on the front line. There are so many deviations out there, so much dissonance. How do we know what is really worth paying attention to? The answer: Listen to your experts - the people on the front line.

3. Let the unexpected circumstances provide your solution. I heard about the Mann Gulch fire that killed 13 smoke jumpers in 19. In all, it was a tragic organizational failure. But what was amazing was the reaction of the foreman, Wagner Dodge, when the fire was nearly on top of his men. On the spot, he invented the escape fire - a small fire that would consume all of the brush around him and his team, leaving an area where the larger fire could not burn.

4. Embrace complexity. Business is complex, in large part because it is unknowable and unpredictable. In the face of all of this complexity, HROs are reluctant to accept simplification. They understand that it takes complexity to sense complexity.

5. Anticipate -- but also anticipate your limits. We try to anticipate as much as we possibly can, but we cannot anticipate everything. There is such a premium on planning, on budgeting, on making the numbers. In the face of all that, the notion of resilience has an affirming quality: You do not have to get it all right at first.

### **Identifying Real Leaders**

According to Melvin Sorecher and James Brant, some of the attributes that seem like the best indicators of leadership potential should, in fact, be warning signs.

Team players and those who excel operationally, for instance, often make better seconds-in-command, the authors say in a recent issue of Harvard Business Review. And great public speakers sometimes lack the subtle one-on-one persuasive powers that a top leader needs. And are those shows of raw ambition really more about ego than leadership talent?

Sorcher and Brant promote the idea of identifying leaders by using a carefully crafted series of questions to probe a wide range of leadership criteria, including such "soft" attributes as personal integrity, that are difficult to assess. "Without such information," HBR says, "senior management will remain vulnerable to misidentifying leadership talent, and the wrong people will continue to make their way up the corporate ladder."

## **The Operational Leader**

In a previous edition, we talked about the four main types of successful leaders and the difficulties we face in surrounding ourselves with those who don't share our dominant aptitudes for leadership. In this edition, I want to talk specifically about one of those leadership aptitudes - the operational leader.

I'll help you determine if you are an operational leader. If so, I'll help you play to that strength. If you aren't - if you are more inclined to be a directional leader, a strategic leader or a team-building leader - then this lesson will help you identify one of the greatest needs you have: an operational leader.

We can identify operational leaders by six characteristics:

1. They provide stability to the organization.
2. They devise systems to make things run smoothly. They have a system for every problem in life.
3. They serve as a hub through which activity is coordinated. Just like Atlanta is the hub for the airline industry in the Southeast, operational leaders are the hub of an organization. People turn to operational leaders because they truly know what is happening.
4. They share the bad news. Generally, these leaders aren't paid to bring performance level up, so they often aren't responsible for the bad news. They are, however, aware of it because they are in tune with the organization.
5. They create new solutions to old problems. Operational leaders are the best problem solvers. If you've got problems, you want to have one of these people around you.
6. They often complement the other three aptitudes. This is the person who usually is not the true "out-front" person, but often shows strengths as a servant leader and, therefore, best complements the other three by far.

Operational leaders are essential to the success of an organization, but, like the other three leadership aptitudes, they have their weaknesses. And rather than trying to work on developing other aptitudes of leadership, their time is better focused on shoring up their weaknesses as operational leaders.

Operational leaders, for example, easily slip from leader to manager because they are usually more comfortable managing. They also tend to dislike conflict. They're usually very smart - they know the numbers, they know the realities, they know what needs to be done - but they often avoid getting in the middle of conflict.

Because operational leaders are focused on the details, they often fail to see the big picture and they sometimes lack motivational skills. And because they understand the negative realities, they can be viewed as a hindrance to progress. When the company's moving forward and everybody's seeing the mountain, the operational leader is the person who raises the flag.

Finally, the operational leader usually has the least amount of influence with the other three aptitudes.

In fact, if you're one of the other three, the first person you should seek to be on your leadership team is an operational leader because to a great degree, operational leaders support and serve the other three leadership aptitudes

## **Mentoring: Mission Possible**

If you're planting for a year, plant grain;

If you're planting for a decade, plant trees;

If you're planting for a century, plant people;

Sowing seeds from the Word of God into their young lives and watching those seeds grow has been the most profound accomplishment of my life. No amount of worldly success will ever top it, and I must say that the more I saw these seeds grow in their lives, the more excited I got about sowing more seed. That is why, now that they are grown, married and in ministry themselves, I continue to sow seed as a mentor, not only in their lives, but in the lives of others.

You might find it interesting that the term mentor goes back to Greek mythology. A mentor was "someone assigned as tutor of another." Our dictionary defines it this way: A wise and trusted teacher, guide, and friend; an elderly monitor or adviser. Titus 2:1-8 has been my guide as a mentor for years. Study it well. That special passage of scripture has shaped my thinking as a mentor, so let me share some of my thoughts and experiences with you.

First of all, mentoring takes courage. I say that because I believe mentoring is revealing what you have learned through your own life experience and your understanding of the Word to another person. As leaders, most of us find no greater joy than revealing how much we know about any given subject! However, many of us would rather have a root canal than to share how we have learned these valuable truths, especially if it includes revealing the mistakes we have made, our own poor decision-making, lack of judgment, or, God forbid, some weakness on our part!

But wouldn't you agree that these are some of the greatest lessons we have ever learned and probably some of the most valuable instruction we can offer others? If we come off as always perfect, our followers simply cannot relate. I am quite aware of the fact that I do not have it all together all the time and to pretend that I do is absurd and would make me of little or no value to those I am called to be an example.

A quote that resonates in my heart from the earliest days of mentoring is this one:

"It takes one who has gone deep in his or her own heart to know how to draw out that which is deep within the heart of another."

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us;" Romans 8:18

I have a new motto that I live by now: "Whatever doesn't kill me makes me stronger!" But the truth of the matter is, it not only makes me stronger, but it makes those around me stronger as well.

Here is what Jesus said to Paul about being strong: "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong." 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

So here's how I see it: If you had a map, and at least knew the direction in which to travel, wouldn't you feel inclined to help your fellow traveling companions find their way also? Even if you didn't know all the turns or all the roads that you must travel, you still may know more than others, and wouldn't you feel compelled to share what you did know, and not focus on what you did not know? In my writing and speaking on the topic of mentoring, I teach that mentoring is simply sharing a piece of my "map" with another. Maps provide us with four important things:

The Big Picture

Your current location

Your final destination

Various possible routes

Some of you are already intentionally and successfully mentoring. Well done! Mentoring is time well spent and you should consider it an honor that qualities found in you are of value to a fellow laborer. Most mentors do not see themselves as God's gift to the Body of Christ. They believe if there is anything within them worthy of reproduction it is only because of the tough roads they have walked or the valuable lessons they have learned. They feel a deep desire to make a difference in the life of others and simply make themselves available.

That's my story. If I have anything of value to offer others, it is only because of the investment made in me by God, God's people, and the tough roads I've walked (some, a result of my own poor decisions). I'm nothing special in and of myself. Remember, some of us learn from the mistakes of others, and some of us must be the others! I am constantly growing and changing to become more like Jesus and my goal is to point them in the right direction, while I walk towards Him, to the best of my ability.

Everyone who aspires to leadership is looking for a mentor; someone to believe in them enough to teach them, train them, and even correct them so that they can grow as a leader. The mission of a mentor is to lead the student - this demonstrates courage & builds trust; to love the student - this increases faith & builds confidence; to serve the student - this increases reproduction & creates duplication; and to confront the student - this addresses weaknesses & produces repentance; but it is much more about our ability to affirm the student - this recognizes their giftedness & strengthens their leadership potential. Peter F. Drucker said, "Find the strengths of the student and put them to work, rather than to look at the student as somebody whose deficiencies have to be repaired." I couldn't agree more.

I don't want to talk you into mentoring and not tell you the whole truth because before you begin, you should know that everyone wants to be mentored until you try to mentor them.

Mentoring is risky business, but the greater the risk, the greater the victory. You may give, and serve, and love, and believe, then something happens and you watch your work fall like a house of cards. Winston Churchill said, "To build may have to be the slow and laborious task of years. To destroy can be the thoughtless act of a single day." I have experienced this, and it is always difficult but in leadership we all know the saying, "If everything's coming your way, you must be in the wrong lane."

Mentoring will increase your vulnerability. This means you may make mistakes and you may even fail (in your eyes), but failure is just an opportunity to begin again...more intelligently. Resist the urge to be perfect. A perfectionist is someone who takes infinite pains, and gives them to others. Don't be a pain!

Mentoring often reveals more about yourself and what you have yet to learn, but I've heard that life is a grindstone. Whether it grinds you down or polishes you up depends upon what you're made of. To quote Lord Kelvin, "When you are face to face with a difficulty, you are up against a discovery;" So prepare for some great discoveries!

Mentoring is guaranteed to change your life. Like Heraclitus said, "It is in changing that things find purpose." I believe that nobody learns more than the teacher and you can't help someone to the top, without getting closer to the top yourself.

Here is your mission, "should you choose to accept it." Share your piece of the map. Give what you've got to give. Don't just talk the talk, walk the walk. Sow seeds into the lives of others. Reveal who you are, what you've learned, and how you've learned it because in our weakness - HE is made strong.

# AN ENLARGER IN CHURCH BUILDING

Chamberlain was a great scorer and Russell was known more for his defence, but no matter which end of the court they were on, they played above the rim like no centers before them ever had.

Russell, however, is best-known not for his offense or his defence but for something else - winning. His No. 6 jersey was retired by the Boston Celtics in 1972 to honor his contributions as the anchor to teams that won nine consecutive NBA titles. He added two more titles as a player/coach.

That's why it was such an honor to hear what he said about great team players: "The most important measure of how good a game I played was how much better I'd made my teammates play."

One of the qualities of a great team player, you see, is that they enlarge others. Bill Russell isn't just a large man; he's a man who enlarged others. He made them better.

Here are five characteristics of people who enlarge others.

## **1. Enlargers value their teammates.**

When you think about your teammates, place a "10" on their heads. If we think of others as 10s, we'll do everything to add value to them. Our behavior is totally different when we think of someone else as a two. Seeing others in the very best light makes the entire team better because usually our level of performance equals the level of value placed on us.

## **2. Enlargers know and relate to what their teammates value.**

Here's how you can tell if you value people: Do you value people who won't benefit you or only those who might contribute in some way to your success? Great team players truly value others as people, and they know and relate to what others value.

When I want to know and relate to others, I look for five things. I want to know their dreams, values, skills, attitudes and life questions. We all have questions, by the way. If you can find the pathway to a person's questions, you can always find the pathway to a person's heart.

## **3. Enlargers add value to their teammates.**

Whatever the project, task or situation, enlargers find ways to make others around them better because they approach life as a win/win situation. They realize that making others better isn't just better for others, it's better for everyone. As the old adage goes, a rising tide lifts all boats.

## **4. Enlargers make themselves more valuable.**

You cannot give what you do not have, so self-improvement precedes team improvement. The first step toward improving the team is to improve yourself. I've been teaching leadership for some years and I've stepped into writing some books. Here's what I know - the only way I can keep leading is to keep growing. The greatest way that I can add value to my team is to make myself more valuable. If I can become a better player, if I can continually increase my skills, if I can continually become enlarged within myself, then I have the capacity to enlarge others. Too many people are still trying to give what they learned fifteen years ago, and they're in trouble.

## **5. Enlargers initiate.**

Enlargers believe in others before they believe in themselves, serve others before they serve themselves, and add value to others before they add value to themselves. See the common thread? The word "before." They have the



ability to see potential in another person before they even see potential within themselves. They have the ability to start action. They have the ability to start belief. They are initiators.

Initiate. Enlarge. Be a great team player.

## **FACTORS FOR BUILDING YOUR APTITUDES**

In my immature days of leadership, I used to think there was only one way to lead. Then I read a classic book by Florence Littauer called *Personality Plus*, and it opened my eyes to the way different temperaments and different personalities create different leadership aptitudes.

Over the years, I've identified four basic aptitudes of leadership - the directional leader, the strategic leader, the team-building leader and the operational leader. Each consists of identifiable strengths and weakness.

So the goal, it might seem, is to master all four aptitudes of leadership. In reality, however, no one person scores high on all four aptitudes. Most people are dominant in one and have a secondary strength in another. That's because the four aptitudes don't fit the same type of temperament and personality.

And since no leader possesses all four leadership aptitudes, the ultimate leadership environment consists of a leadership team. Unfortunately, the tendency among leaders is to surround themselves with others who share similar aptitudes. This happens for three reasons:

### **1. Magnetism.**

The Law of Magnetism says we attract who we are, not who we want. The first staff member I ever hired was Stanly, a long-time friend of mine. We were friends even before I hired him as the only other staff person at the small project I implemented. Stanly is a very successful leader in his own right, but he's just like me. Thus, we always wanted the same things.

### **2. Insecurity.**

People who are insecure typically do not like diversity. They wish everybody were like them. They want everybody to think alike, and when somebody is way out there and different, it makes them nervous.

### **3. Humanness.**

It is part of human nature that people who are just like us make us feel more comfortable. When you say, "Here's what I think" and everybody else says, "Yeah, I think that, too," you can't help but feel good. People who are different from us in their leadership aptitudes have a tendency to make us feel uncomfortable.

At AND-Mission, our leadership team includes directing leaders, team-building leaders, strategic leaders and operational leaders. I am in tune with and enjoy the ones who are just like me the most. But the ones who help me the most are the ones who are not like me.

Those who are unlike you in leadership aptitudes are going to make you uncomfortable, not because they're wrong and you're right and not because you're wrong and they're right, but because you're different.

## **MINISTRY VALUES**

In the last chapters I stated that core values are similar to the divider lines on a road. They are a reminder of when we get out of bounds, and therefore help keep us on track. Core values are also like the banks of a river. They don't impede the flow (of life and ministry) but they do guide it in a certain direction.

Core values are what you will live and die for. Ministry values are important, but a little more subjective. Their purpose is to aid you in ministry effectiveness as well as promote teamwork. The Core Values are for the entire church. The Ministry Values are a tool designed largely for staff and primary leaders.

A good way to understand Ministry Values is to look at your own family. You have certain ways of doing things. And when everyone is in line with your family systems, life runs smoother. Christmas traditions are a good example.

Think of how you raise your kids, or any of your family's important priorities. It could be time together, your faith, or even how you do vacations. If you are in agreement (we say 'alignment' in organizations) things work smoothly, if not - enter chaos. My kids will come home on occasion and say something like, "Trevor down the street gets to stay up late on a school night" or "Brandon gets to bring friends with him on their family vacation." Then I shoot off a wise and carefully crafted statement like, "Well that's not how we do things around here!" OK, so I'm not a perfect parent, but my statement revealed something. We do have a way of doing things. That way is what I'm getting at when it comes to ministry values.

North Point Community Church, under Andy Stanley's leadership, calls them "Laws of Ministry." We might call ours a "Ministry Code." No matter how you title them, if followed, they will serve you well.

The following is a first draft, but I'll share them with you as an example you can work from.

### **Fight for focus.**

Distraction is a top enemy of effective ministry. Fight against it. Do everything within your power to achieve and maintain a precision laser focus. Your focus must always support the mission of the church.

### **Never violate the core values.**

Our core values are foundational to who we are. Be intentional about the core. Weave them into your life and ministry. Look for evidence of the values lived out in your ministry.

### **Invest in apprenticeship.**

Jesus modeled apprenticeship with the 12 disciples. Follow His lead. Develop others to lead. Teach others the art of apprenticing. Work yourself out of a job.

### **Think people and process, not programs.**

Programs tend to be event-focused and rarely contribute to life transformation. Take people on a journey. Engage them in a life-changing process. Think long term, don't simply add water and stir.

### **Press for progress.**

Leaders move the ball down the field. They don't make excuses; they get the job done...one day at a time. Take risks, be decisive, but whatever you do, move the ball down the field.

### **Keep it simple.**

Complicated structures and systems slow down progress. Complicated is not the same as wise. Make your ministry easy to communicate and fluid enough that you could redesign it in 48 hours if needed. Design what you do in such a way that a first timer sitting in the back row would get it.

### **Think ahead.**

Creativity can't always be scheduled - but we cannot blame poor planning on lack of creative time or what others have not accomplished. Anticipate. Think. Initiate.

**Make it fun.**

Ministry isn't always easy, and is guaranteed to present significant challenges. Your attitude, however, can and will make a difference. Choose joy. Smile. Bring laughter and a light heart into the mix. Live life in such a way that others want to be around you.

I have chosen eight guidelines for our staff. You may want a few less, but I encourage you not to exceed ten. If your list gets too long, it is less likely that you will truly live them out. I'm confident that you will see a difference when you put this idea to practice.

## **TAKING THE RIGHT TURN**

As president of Ford Motor Co., Robert McNamara once briefly pondered a decision made by one of his executives and then asked him, "What did you decide not to do?"

It wasn't that McNamara thought the executive had made a poor decision - but how could he know for sure if he didn't know what options had been rejected? McNamara, as a wise and successful leader, wanted to be satisfied that multiple options had been considered. He didn't settle for the obvious decision, even if it looked good on the surface. He wanted the best decision.

Why is it important to consider multiple options during the decision making process? Here are three reasons:

**1. With options come possibilities.**

If we don't have options or if we don't know our options, we're stuck. We have little choice but to stay in the traffic jam. In decision making, if we do not have options, we only have one decision. And that decision may be the wrong decision, or it may not be the best decision.

**2. With options come insights.**

The more options we have, the more we can see what is not obvious to others. And people who are successful see what is not obvious to others. They don't see what others can't see; they just see what others don't seem to see.

Successful people engage that creative part of their minds and ask, "Well, I wonder how else I can look at this problem? I wonder how else I could deal with this decision. I wonder what other possibilities I have there;"

**3. With options come options.**

Options are a result of thinking early, often and differently. And when we think early, often and differently, we begin to create more options within our life. Options come from the disciplines of pursuing options. And very often they take us down roads we never would have traveled, to places we never would have seen, where we find new options we never would have considered.

Fred Ben, a businessman in Mbarara has a sign on his desk that says, "But on the other hand..." He's an optional thinker, and he's taught me to be an optional thinker too. So when somebody asks me to make a decision about a situation, I don't offer a solution, I ask a question: What are our options? Give me the good, give me the bad, give me the pretty, give me the ugly, give me the impossible, give me the possible, give me the convenient, and give me the inconvenient. Give me the options. All I want are options. And once I have all the options before me, then I comfortably and confidently make my decision.

# PUSHING FOR A BREAKTHROUGH

Albert Einstein once made a wonderful point about his theory of relativity: He only came up with it once, but it kept him in pipe tobacco for years.

Einstein realized what more leaders need to discover: that a major breakthrough can launch an organization from good to great, so great leaders always push for that breakthrough.

Breakthroughs occur when we continually:

1. Meet needs (which allow us to stay in the arena);
2. Improve ourselves and our team; and
3. Succeed. It's a fact that there is no success like success.

Pushing for a breakthrough generates a leader's best friend - momentum. Momentum makes your work on your mission easier to accomplish than anything else. I often tell leaders that momentum is worth three staff members. In fact, if some leaders would get rid of the right three staff members, they might instantly get some momentum.

Momentum is the great exaggerator for both the good and the bad. When you have no momentum, things look worse than they really are. And when you have momentum, it makes things look better than they ever seemed to be.

So you've got to push for the breakthrough - from build-up to breakthrough, from good to great. Good is build-up; great is breakthrough.

But there's a temptation that comes with a breakthrough and the momentum that comes with it - the temptation to ease up and celebrate the victory. You just kind of want to sit back and say, "Wow! Aren't we good?" It just feels good to know you've achieved something. And while it's OK to celebrate the touchdowns, we have to remember that the next play in the game just might get us beat.

In fact, dancing in the end zone is exactly the opposite of what you should do. When you have a breakthrough, that's when you spend more time, more energy and more money. Once you have that ball rolling, the compounding effect is so huge you don't ever want that ball to stop.

Instead, the time to ease up is when things have slowed down. When you don't have momentum and when you don't have a breakthrough - when the train already has stopped - get off and take a rest. You weren't going anywhere anyway!

But once the train gets going again, don't get off. When you've got momentum and the breakthrough, it's dangerous to jump off. You could hurt yourself. You could hurt your organization.

So if you want to go from good leadership to great leadership, keep pushing toward a breakthrough. And when momentum arrives, either because you are near the goal or because you've broken through, don't ease up. That's when you push the pedal to the metal.

## HOW TO BE A LEADER OF INFLUENCE

### 1) The Character of a leader:

- Godly (Seeks to be holy in what he does and is a person after God's own heart)
- Humble

- Team Player
- Encourager
- Honest
- Disciplined
- Punctual
- Committed
- Relational (Loves people and is interested in what others are doing)
- Has Integrity
- Fair
- Reconciler
- Determined and single focused
- Teachable Spirit
- Others Focused (Looks to make others feel good rather than to get others to like him)
- Genuine / Transparent
- Forgiving
- Has a fear of God
- Prepared to stand alone (If necessary)
- Non Critical

## **2) The Role of a Leader:**

- To be the catalyst for seeing positive changes to a society
- To share his or her vision (To see a vision come to pass)
- To help lead a group of people to achieve that given vision or task
- To help the individual team members to realise their own potential
- To develop new leaders and to raise up and equip others to replicate themselves
- To maintain team unity and to keep the team focused on achieving the vision.
- To ensure that all potential problems are quickly dealt with, lovingly
- To be sensitive to God's leading in either expanding or changing the team's direction
- A good leader also has enough love for his team to discipline and correct team members

## **3) Attributes of an influential leader**

- Has a pioneer spirit
- Is God dependant (A Person of Faith)
- Is good at delegating (The leader focuses on doing those things that others can't)
- Disciples others
- Discerns what is happening within the team context
- The leader is not critical or condemning when correcting people
- Is flexible and open to change and incorporating new and better methods
- Will accept wise counsel from all age groups
- Is not a man-pleaser and is most interested in seeking God's approval
- Openly looks to see others fulfil their dreams and visions
- Always prioritises (Focuses on what matters most at any given time)
- Is a man who has a vision which others can follow
- Willingly submits to other men and women who are more mature in the faith

"The leader is a man of faith and vision. The leader is a "can do" person. He is a Faith Man. He is bold, confident and almost reckless. The leader believes that all things are possible.

## **4) Three essential elements of Leadership**

- Wisdom to know what to do at any given time
- Courage to do what is right no matter what the consequences
- Strength to actually have the capacity to do it, and to stick with it until it is done

## **5) A leader will rise to his lowest ceiling.**

- PHYSICAL (Diet, Rest, Sleep, Exercise, Health)
- EMOTIONAL (Healthy relationships, ability to deal with negative emotions, stability)
- MENTAL (Ability to deal with stress, ability to TRUST God, ability to prioritise, delegate)
- SPIRITUAL (Prayer life, Worship life, Knowledge of the Word, Faith / Resting in God)

## **6) Practices and Disciplines adopted by a good leader**

- A good leader makes everyone his teacher.
- Good leaders esteem others better than themselves.
- They listen and let others do the talking
- Good leaders are hungry to learn from others
- A good leader encourages and builds up others
- A Kingdom leader is a Shepherd of God's people. The ministry is all about people.
- The Shepherd is a "there" person and quickly attends to people's problems.
- A good Shepherd gives people guidance that is simple and clear in all areas of their life
- Good leaders are flexible and are never satisfied with the status quo.
- Great Leaders never live isolated from their team (They spend time with their team)
- Good leaders are quick to forgive and deal quickly with offences
- Good leaders quickly seek to have differences reconciled between team members
- Good leaders have faith in people and look to develop and encourage them to grow
- Good leaders lead by example (Prayer, love for the Lord & others & Service)
- Good leaders keep their eyes on Jesus and stay focused on what God has called them to do
- Good leaders do not dwell on problems, negative or critical people, or other distractions
- Good leaders must carefully choose key team members. (They need a kindred spirit)
- A good leader always gives all the glory to God
- A good leader is always a team player
- Good leaders are men and women of prayer and God dependent when problems arise
- A good leader will always seek to improve his communication and listening skills

"Everyone has the deepest craving to know that they've made a difference in the world, to know that they are somehow significant, that their lives mean something." We must always respect and appreciate our team members and others and acknowledge their input. Good leaders do.

If a person is not interested in people, he or she is badly prepared for ministry. "A good leader always appreciates the efforts of others, encourages others, sees the best in others and acknowledges the efforts of others. A good leader is a visionary and only sees failure as an opportunity to do things better next time."

A good leader delights in seeing others fulfilling their hopes, dreams and God given destinies. A good leader always looks ahead for potential opportunities, possible future problems to avoid and looks to find the potential in every single team member and to see that potential realised.

## **7) Leaders must be "Soldiers of the Cross"**

- Jesus said that a disciple must take up his cross daily (Leaders must die to themselves)
- We were not saved to become comfortable.
- The first disciples left a comfortable lifestyle to become persecuted followers of Jesus
- Offences will come to every Christian serving God.
- Many people back down and give up their God given destinies because of offences
- The cross is the power of God and we need to ask God to crucify our fleshly nature daily
- A good leader will be obedient to Christ at any cost
- A good leader will want to die to self, and lay down his or her life. The old man must die

- Steven forgave those who stoned him
- The cross is designed to offend you. Jesus said to take up our cross daily.
- Marriage helps people to die to themselves.
- When two people die to themselves, Christ can then live in that relationship
- No one in the world is compatible
- We must surrender our lives to Jesus
- Jesus had to forgive all mankind
- God sets us up with opposite people
- God wants us to overcome our differences
- Satan wants to exploit our differences and get us to focus on our differences resulting in strife
- The life of Jesus comes out of our life as we die to self (2 Cor 4:8-11)
- Man has power also (However it is a manipulative power)
- As we die to self, the healing saving loving & delivering power of Jesus will come out of us
- Some of our cross bearing burdens may be at work.
- We need to die to self so that we can be a light in that work place
- We need to choose to love people with their differences
- Teams help us to grow and die to self
- Leaders cannot be manipulated by other people's negative opinions and criticisms
- These situations will never go away
- God and the devil both want us to die
- God wants us to die to self
- The devil wants to kill us and to get us to withdraw from ministry (Destroy our calling)
- Too many Christians are full of self pity and must die to self
- Jesus did not call us to psychologically counsel people, but to MAKE DISCIPLES
- We have far too many comfortable Christians (We need to encourage Christians to serve)
- When people look to serve others and pray and witness to the lost, their own problems go

A Witch manifested in Church and tried to stab Francis Frangipane. This lady had been molested by her Christian father, a pastor & then the police abused her. This woman saw God as a male figure and for this reason hated God. Francis Frangipane told her that He forgave her and then talked about the Cross & Jesus. This lady surrendered her life to Jesus, and was healed saved and delivered. *We must choose to love and serve others as we die to ourselves*

## A LEADER OF VISION (PART A)

It is so important as pastors and leaders (and for all believers), that we are people of vision and purpose. We only have one lifetime in which to make our lives count for all eternity. We are also the generation, which is responsible for passing the gospel on to the next generation. All great Christian leaders will live for a cause to see others helped and set free to fulfil their own God given destinies. A leader of vision will inspire others to follow God's plan for their life.

Every God given vision is beyond our natural abilities to achieve and is totally dependent on God bringing it to pass as we simply step out by faith to follow His plan for our life and church. Moses when asked by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt knew His great need for God's help. (**Exodus 3:11-12**) As leaders of vision we must put our entire trust in God alone. We must consistently seek God for His wisdom and direction in all that we do. Unless the LORD builds the house, they labour in vain who build it. (**Psalm 127:1**)

Like King Solomon we need to ask God to give us His wisdom (**1 Kings 3:7-13**) and strategies for fulfilling our God given destiny. This wisdom will also bless and help many others to complete God's plan for their life. (**2 Chronicles 9:7, 22-23**) Great Leaders of vision trust and obey the Lord as they know that God is absolutely faithful and only has plans to prosper them and not to harm them. (**Jeremiah 29:11**) Walking in obedience is a key to seeing God's supernatural provision in our lives and churches.

Jesus said, "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much..." and "if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" (**Luke 16:10-11**) As we faithfully follow God's best plan for our life He will begin to open up new and greater doors of opportunity and responsibility.

**(Isaiah 55:8-9) (Ephesians 3:20)** A great leader loves God and has a desire to please the Lord as those who love the Lord will obey His commandments. EVERY GREAT LEADER WILL LIVE FOR OTHERS. Jesus Himself said that He did not come to earth to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. **(Mark 10:45)**

Great leaders will inspire others to see the vision of the church come to pass. Leaders of vision have the ability to encourage people to work together as a team to see the vision for the church become a reality. **(Nehemiah 2:11-12 & 17-18)** As church leaders we need to have a vision to see our villages, cities, states and nation won to Jesus. To see God's Kingdom expanded here on earth. **(Luke 11:2)** As a church we need to have a love for the lost and a passion to see the love of Christ transforming our community.

Every great leader has a clear vision for their life. **(Habakkuk 2:2)** A Pastor or leader should have, or develop the following attributes to become a leader of vision and destiny.

**1) A person who spends time with God and abides in Christ. (John 15-4-5)**

- i) A person of prayer (Jeremiah 33:3) (Nehemiah 1:4-6)*
- ii) A person of faith (God dependence) (Psalm 22:4-5) (Hebrews 11:6) (Mark 9:23)*
- iii) A person with Godly passion (Which comes from intimacy with God) (Psalm 37:4)*
- iv) A leader whose first love is Jesus (Galatians 2:20) (Philippians 3:7-8) (Exodus 33:14-15)*
- v) A leader who is led by the Holy Spirit (Whose steps are ordered by the Lord) (Exodus 33:13)*

**2) A leader who follows God's plan for their church or ministry and for their own life**

**3) A leader who is committed to seeing their community / nation won to Jesus (Neh. 2:2-5)**

**4) A leader who is committed to helping others to be passionate about their faith**

**5) A person who stays within his own gifting and ministry call (FOCUSED) (Neh. 6:1-4)**

**6) A servant leader (Who lays down his life for others)**

**7) A leader who has a heart to empower others for ministry**

**8) A person who has a passion to see mature disciples raised up**

**9) A leader who is able to delegate responsibilities to others as God leads (Exodus 18:18-23)**

**10) A leader who has a passion to see the gospel proclaimed (Ephesians 6:19-20)**

**11) A person who can communicate a vision to those that he shepherds**

**12) A leader who is able to encourage others to operate in their gifts and callings**

*i) A good leader encourages others to find out what God has planned for their life*

*ii) God gives all of us a God-given desire or passion to make a difference somewhere*

*iii) God has created each heart differently. God places in our hearts ministry desires and callings. Our heart draws us to the focus of our ministry. (Psalm 37:4)*

*iv) Leaders of vision help people to identify the areas of ministry God has placed on their heart to do*

**13) A person who has initiative. (A DOER) (Nehemiah 6:15-16)**



- 14) A Leader who seeks God for strategies and goal setting
- 15) A person who has a pioneer spirit and is not afraid to take on new challenges
- 16) A person who has the courage to stand up for the gospel and Godly values
- 17) A leader who raises up and mentors other leaders
- 18) A leader who is able to maintain unity
  - i) *Has wisdom and discernment*
  - ii) *Has a shepherd's heart (Father of the faith), and who pastors the leadership team*
- 19) A big picture person (Who mobilises others into their ministry callings)
- 20) A leader who acknowledges and appreciates the efforts of others (A key to team unity)
- 21) An Encourager (**Nehemiah 2:19-20**)
- 22) A person who is Kingdom minded (Networks with other leaders / churches), and
- 23) A leader who leads by example

As Christians we are all called to be examples to those in the world and should have leadership qualities as we have been called to reign with Christ here on earth. (**Revelation 5:9-10**) Husbands also have been given the leadership responsibility within the family. However, God also appoints and empowers specific leaders in the church to help equip and to give direction to the Body of Christ to see God's Kingdom advanced here on earth.

All ministry leadership appointments should be ordained of God. It is God who calls and raises up leaders and who puts people into the five-fold ministry. (**1 Timothy 1:12**) (**Ephesians 4:11-12**) (**1 Timothy 1:1**) (**Exodus 3:7-10**) (**Deuteronomy 31:1-3 31:7-8 & 34:9**) (**Joshua 1:1-3**)

## A LEADER OF VISION (PART B)

It is so important as Pastors and leaders (and even for all believers), that we are people of vision and purpose. We only have one lifetime in which to make our lives count for all eternity. This teaching covers some of the more practical areas of being a Leader of vision. The following focuses are all critical for leaders of vision.

- 1) **Helping to Equip the next generation (Youth)** and all those attending the church to lead fruitful lives by encouraging them to fully use their spiritual gifts. (**Ephesians 4:11-12, 2 Timothy 2:2 and 1 Peter 5:1-4**)
- 2) **Having an emphasis on New Believers Training**, by ensuring that all new believers are given the opportunity to receive training to help them establish their Christian faith on a firm foundation.
- 3) **Helping all believers in the church to identify their spiritual gifts.** God gives the gifts "just as He determines" (**1 Corinthians 12:11**). A leader of vision helps to mobilise ministries by encouraging all believers to become involved in ministry. Holding regular Spiritual Gifts Surveys will help believers to identify their gifts and callings.
- 4) **Leading by example.** A leader of vision will always lead by example in the following areas:
  - i) Character / Walking in Love / Faith in God (**1 Timothy 4:12**)

- ii) Having a heart for evangelism (**Daniel 12:3 and Proverbs 11:30**)
- iii) Having a servant heart (**Matthew 20:26-28**)
- iv) Being an encourager (**Hebrews 10:24-25**), AND
- v) Esteeming others better than himself (Humility) (**Philippians 2:3**)

**5) Being committed to seeing others fulfil their God given destinies by:**

- i) Looking for the potential in every believer
- ii) Understanding the personality types of each believer
- iii) Speaking destiny over the lives of believers
- iv) Being committed to seeing every member in the church leading a fruitful life for God's Kingdom, AND
- v) Releasing ministries to others as the Lord leads. (DELEGATION)

**6) Being a part of the TEAM.** A Leader of vision acknowledges that God has placed each member in the Body of Christ as He has pleased. (**1 Corinthians. 12:18**) As a good leader he is focused on maintaining team unity as each member of the team is allowed to use their spiritual gifts for the benefit of all. (**1 Corinthians 12:4-7**)

**7) A leader who follows the direction of the Holy Spirit.** A Leader who simply trusts and obeys God and who is committed to following God's plan for his life (**Ephesians 2:10**) and the church. (**Psalms 127:1**)

## ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD CHURCH LEADER

- As Christians, we are all called to be leaders in our sphere of influence. We have all been called to reign with Christ here on earth. (Revelation 5:9-10)
- God calls some Christians into Ministry Leadership. (1 Timothy 1:1 and 1 Timothy 1:12)
- Jesus Himself "...gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints..." (Ephesians 4:11-12)
- God rises up leaders in the church to shepherd and oversee other believers. The pastor of a church must be an example to those that God has entrusted to him. (1 Peter 5:1-4)
- A pastor needs to be a good and caring leader
- To be a good leader, a pastor or church leader must live: i) To Serve God , and ii) To Serve Others
- A godly leader has died to his own agenda (*John 12:24-26*) (*Galatians 2:20*)(*Luke 9:23*)and follows God's plan for their life, which bears much fruit

### ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD LEADER

1. They are humble (Philippians 2:5-8) (Numbers 12:3)
2. They are SERVANTS (Matt. 20:25-28) and lead by example (1 Timothy 4:12)
3. They have a HUNGER for GOD'S WORD (Joshua 1:8) (Psalm 119:105) (Matthew 7:24-27) (Colos 3:16) (Hebrews 4:12) (2 Timothy 3:10-17) (Psalm 1:1-3) and (Colossians 2:6-8)
4. They have a VISION for their life and church and are able to effectively COMMUNICATE that vision to others. (Habakkuk 2:2-3) (Proverbs 29:18) (Ephesians 5:15-17)

5. They are STRONG and COURAGEOUS (They never give up on God's plan for their life) (Deuteronomy 31:6) (Joshua 1:6-9) (Hebrews 10:36) (Revelation 3:12) (2 Timothy 4:7)
6. They are APPROACHABLE (1 Peter 5:2-3) (Colossians 3:12-14) (2 Timothy 2:23-25) (Titus 1:7-8)
7. They have a LOVE for, and COMMITMENT to those they are leading or shepherding (Acts 20:28) (1 Peter 5:1-4) (John 10:11) (John 21:15-17) (John 10:15)
8. They are TOTALLY GOD DEPENDENT (Exodus 33:11-13) (Lamentations 3:24-25) AND LEAD A LIFE OF OBEDIENCE (Acts 13:22) Abraham continually put his trust in God (Romans 4:20-21)
9. They have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. (The gifts of the Spirit include: the *word of wisdom*, the *word of knowledge* and the *gift of faith*). (1 Corinthians 12:7-9)
10. They have a close and INTIMATE relationship with the Lord and are:
  - i) Worshippers, (John 4:23-24) The great *King David was a worshiper and a man after God's own heart. He wrote many of the Psalms*
  - ii) Prayer Warriors, (Ezekiel 22:30) (2 Chronicles 7:14)
  - iii) Full of God's Word, (Joshua 1:8) and
  - iii) They have a heart for lost souls (Matthew 9:35-36) (Proverbs 11:30)
11. They have a TEACHABLE spirit (Hosea 4:6) (Proverbs 9:9) (Proverbs 10:17) (Proverbs 11:14) (Proverbs 12:1) (Proverbs 15:22) (Proverbs 16:20) (Proverbs 19:20) Like King Solomon they understand the importance of gaining wisdom (Proverbs 2:1-12)
12. They are great ENCOURAGERS (Acts 11:22-24) (1 Corinthians 14:12) (Hebrews 10:24-25) They also refuse to pull down others
12. They take RESPONSIBILITY for their actions. They are humble enough to acknowledge when they have made mistakes. If others have a better way of doing things they are open to making any necessary changes
14. They have a willingness to DELEGATE authority to others (Deuteronomy 1:9-14) (Exodus 18:21-23)
15. They have an excellent spirit. (Daniel 6:3) They give their best for the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:58) (Romans 12:6-8) (Hebrews 6:10-12) They are faithful in the little things (Luke 16:10)
16. They live a life which is categorized by obedience (John 14:21) (John 14:23-24) (Isaiah 1:19)
17. They complete tasks (They are COMMITTED to finishing what God tells them to do) (Galatians 6:9) Moses was faithful to the end. (Deuteronomy 34) Jesus was committed to finishing all that His Father called Him to do in His ministry here on earth. (John 4:34) (John 17:4)
18. They are honest and have integrity (Good Character) (Titus 1:5-9) (1 Timothy 6:11) (1 Tim 3:2-3)
19. They are quick to forgive those who have hurt them or who have spitefully used them or slandered them. (Luke 6:27-28) On the cross Jesus forgave those who were mocking and reviling Him. (Luke 23:33-36)
20. They manage their time well. They are WELL ORGANISED (Ephesians 5:15-17) They appreciate the importance of each day
21. They MENTOR the next generation (2 Timothy 2:1-3) (Deuteronomy 34:9)
22. They see the potential in others. They never give up on people. They continually speak destiny and vision over people's lives. King David's 400 mighty men of valour were originally all in distress, discontented and in debt. However under the leadership of King David they all achieved great and mighty exploits. (1 Samuel 22:1-2) (2 Samuel 23:8-39) (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)

23. They have a healthy fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of all wisdom. (Proverbs 1:7), and

24. They are team players

## **HOW TO BUILD A CHURCH OF MATURE BELIEVERS**

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLESHIP**

It is important that all churches have a heart to see all believers develop into strong and mature Christians, who are able to stand in the times of trials and temptations, and who will be living examples of the power of Jesus Christ to restore broken lives and to see people walking in victory. The following areas of discipleship are important for every church:

- i) Encouraging people to develop a hunger for the Bible
- ii) Ensuring that all believers have a sound appreciation of Christian Doctrine
- iii) Helping people to identify and follow God's plan for their life
- iv) Encouraging people to develop healthy communication skills
- v) Helping people to develop healthy life skills which will assist them in developing meaningful relationships
- vi) Providing encouragement and pastoral help to people, to enable them to identify and overcome life controlling problems
- vii) Helping all believers to walk close to the Lord, where prayer and worship becomes an important part of their lifestyle, and
- viii) Helping to equip and release people for ministry

### **GOD'S PROMISES FOR ALL BELIEVERS**

#### **i) HIS FAITHFULNESS (Jeremiah 17:7-8)**

"For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'" **(Hebrews 13:5a)**

"I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread." **(Psalm 37:25)** As believers we must simply trust in God's faithfulness (Psalm 62:8)

#### **ii) HIS PROVISION (Matthew 6:26) (Matthew 6:31-34)**

"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." **(Philippians 4:19)**

"Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loads us with benefits, The God of our salvation." **(Psalm 68:19)**

"The Lord will not allow the righteous soul to famish; But He casts away the desire of the wicked." **(Proverbs 10:3)**

We all must learn to have a childlike dependence on God. (1 John 5:14-15) Jesus also emphasised the need to ask for things in prayer. **(John 16:23-24) (Mark 11:22-24)**

#### **iii) HIS GUIDANCE (John 14:26) (John 16:13)**

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way. Though he falls, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds him with His hand.” **(Psalm 37:23-24)**

“Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established.” **(Proverbs 16:3)**

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.” **(Proverbs 3:5-6)**

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” **(Ps 119:105)**

Having an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ is the key to finding and following god’s plan for our life. As we abide in Christ, our lives’ will bear much fruit. **(John 15:4-8)**

#### **iv) HIS UNFAILING LOVE (Hebrews 13:5)**

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” **(John 3:16)**

“How precious also are your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with you. **(Psalm 139:17-18)**

“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God *which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” **(Romans 8:38-39)**

“Because your loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise you. **(Psalm 63:3)**

Even though others may let us down at times, or even reject us, Jesus will never leave nor forsake those who love him. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” **(Hebrews 13:8)**

#### **v) HIS PROTECTION**

“Because you have made the Lord who is my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place, No evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.” **(Psalm 91:9-12)**

*“No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which raises against you in judgment you shall condemn.”* **(Isaiah 54:17)**

“They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you, “says the Lord” to deliver you.” **(Jeremiah 1:19)**

#### **vi) HIS HEALING**

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, who heal all your diseases,” **(Psalm 103:2-3)**

*“And by His stripes we are healed.”* **(Isaiah 53:5b)**

“If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord who heals you;” **(Exodus 15:26)**

#### **vii) HIS FORGIVENESS**

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” **(1 John 1:9)**

*“Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord, Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.” (Isaiah 1:18)*

“As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.” **(Psalm 103:12)**

#### viii) HIS GRACE, MERCY AND COMPASSION

“If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand;” **(Psalm 130:3)**

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

**“The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy. The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.” (Psalm 145:8-9)**

*“The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.” (Psalm 103:8)*

#### ix) ETERNAL LIFE

“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” **(John 3:36)**

Jesus said to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die...” **(John 11:25-26)**

#### x) HIS POWER TO RESTORE LIVES **(The God of Second Chances)**

“Turn us back to You, O Lord, and we will be restored; Renew our days as of old.” **(Lamentations 5:21)**

*“Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies,” (Psalm 103:2-4)*

“I waited patiently for the Lord; And He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, and established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth” **(Psalm 40:1-3a)**

#### xi) HE HAS A UNIQUE PLAN FOR OUR LIFE **(Psalm 139:13-18)**

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.” **(Jeremiah 29:11)**

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10)*

#### xii) ABUNDANT LIFE

Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” **(John 10:10)**

#### xiii) HIS JOY

“But now I come to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.” **(John 17:13)**

xiv) HIS PEACE

“You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, For in YAH, the Lord, is everlasting strength.” **(Isaiah 26:3-4)**

xv) HE WILL STRENGTHEN YOU

“Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord!” **(Psalm 27:14)**

*“The Lord will give strength to His people; The Lord will bless His people with peace.” **(Psalm 29:11)***

“Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.” **(Isaiah 40:30-31)**

xvi) HE WILL EMPOWER YOU TO DO MINISTRY

“And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” **(1 Corinthians 2:4)**

*Jesus said, “Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.” **(Luke 21:14-15)***

The word of the Lord to Zerubbabel was, “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, Says the Lord of hosts.” **(Zechariah 4:6b)**

***KEYS TO HELP CHRISTIANS TO WALK IN VICTORY***

i) TRUSTING IN THE ABSOLUTE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” **(Hebrews 11:6)**

“For all the promises of God in Him are yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.” **(2 Corinthians 1:20)**

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.” **(Ephesians 3:20)**

ii) PUTTING THE PAST BEHIND **(Not dwelling on our past failures)**

The Apostle Paul said, “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended, but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead. **(Philippians 3:13)** *We must also not become complacent by looking back at our past achievements and successes, but be looking to what God has for us now.*

iii) WALKING IN OBEDIENCE

The Prophet Samuel said to King Saul “**Obedience is better than sacrifice**” **(1 Samuel 15:22b)** As a result of King Saul’s disobedience towards God, he was rejected as King of Israel. God also promises to bless those who obey His voice. **(Deuteronomy 28:1-14)**

Walking in obedience is a key to leading a fulfilled and victorious Christian life which bears much fruit for all eternity **(Eternal Rewards)**

iv) HAVING GODLY FRIENDSHIPS

Your choice of friends will significantly affect your Christian walk. To surround you with Godly relationships and good mentors is a key to fulfilling your God given destiny. These Godly relationships will help you to grow in your faith, to avoid potential snares and traps of the enemy and to see you realize your God given potential.

Ungodly friendships on the other hand can negatively affect your Christian walk, and even prevent you from fulfilling God's best plan for your life.

"The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray. **(Prov 12:26)**

"Do not be deceived: Evil Company corrupts good habits." **(1 Cor. 15:33)**

#### v) WALKING IN HUMILITY

*Walking in humility is the key to being used mightily by God. God uses those people who are humble, with a servant heart, who esteem others better than themselves and always give all the glory to God. When a Christian leads a crucified life where they seek to serve and encourage others, God can raise them up to do great things for His Kingdom.*

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." **(1 Corinthians 10:31)**

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteems others better than himself." **(Philippians 2:3)**

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up." **(James 4:10)**

#### vi) SPENDING QUALITY TIME WITH GOD (INTIMACY)

*"Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart."* **(Psalm 37:4)**

"Wait on the Lord, and keep His way, And He shall exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you shall see it." **(Psalm 37:34)**

*"You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."* **(Psalm 16:11)**

#### vii) HAVING A GOOD KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WORD (BIBLE)

*Jesus said, "If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* **(John 8:31-32)**

Studying and Meditating on the Word of God is a key to walking in victory as a Christian. By reading the Word, our old and dysfunctional mindsets are replaced by God's truth about our lives, and how we should relate to others. God's Word also makes it clear that He has plans only to prosper us and to give us a future and hope.

*Reading the Bible enables us to walk in the grace, freedom and authority that God wants us so that we can be a light in this world, as our lives become a living example of the life transforming power of the gospel to restore broken lives; MEMORIZING Scripture is a great habit to get into, as it helps to establish our faith, whilst increasing the effectiveness of our preaching and witnessing*

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper." **(Psalm 1:1-3)**

#### viii) BEING PLANTED IN A CHURCH **(Psalm 92:13-14)**

Being planted in a local church enables a believer to grow in their faith as they interact with other believers. As ministry is about people, such healthy interaction with other believers is necessary for all Christians to become mature in their faith and to develop Godly attitudes and relationship skills. This regular church fellowship is even more important for all those new believers who have come from a very dysfunctional family, or a broken home.



It is within the church family that new believers can be encouraged to grow in Christian character so that they will become victorious in all areas of their life. Every Christian has an assigned mission field. For this reason, it is so important for new believers to be planted in a local church, so that they can be equipped to share with their unsaved friends and workmates. **(Psalm 84)**

ix) CHOOSING TO WALK IN LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

Choosing to walk in love and forgiveness and continually yielding to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives will enable a believer to grow in the fruit of the Spirit. Un-forgiveness however, can cause a person to develop a root of bitterness which has the potential to affect (defile) many others. Jesus emphasized the importance of both walking in forgiveness and loving others:

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” **(John 13:34-35)**

“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. And whenever you stand praying, if you have **anything** against **anyone**, *forgive* him that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” **(Mark 11:24-26)**

x) BEING A PERSON OF PRAYER

Prayer is a key to maintaining a victorious Christian walk. God wants to be a part of all our life and to see us succeed in every area of our life. Prayer helps us to be God focused and God dependent. Prayer enables us to remain strong during the midst of trials and temptations. Time on our knees will help us grow closer to God.

Kneeling down in prayer is one way in which we can descend to greatness. As we humble ourselves in prayer, God can then raise us up to do great and mighty things for His Kingdom. Humility and God dependence go together. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. **(Philippians 4:13)**

***THE ANSWERED PRAYER***

The bible is full of promises that God will answer all of our prayers that are in accordance with His will. Jesus Himself said:

*“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it.”* **(John 14:12-14)**

**In Chapter 5 of 1 John, this promise of the answered prayer is again given:**

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us; And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” **(1 John 5:14-15)**

***FINAL COMMENTS ABOUT THE ANSWERED PRAYER***

**Prayer is agreeing with God’s will.** Immature faith tries to manipulate God. It looks for spiritual shortcuts and formulas guaranteed to produce an answer to any request. But true prayer is not a human effort at persuading God or forcing our will on Him.

True prayer is founded upon finding and coming into agreement with God’s will. **(1 John 5:14)** We ask according to His will; then we stand in faith, confident that God hears us and that what we ask for is already ours. **(1 John 5:15)**

To pray with authority and to receive answers to your prayers, we must make sure that we ask according to His will. If we do not know His will, we can ask Him. **(James 1:5)**

**Believing that God hears our petitions has then already set the answer into motion.**

We must then continue to pray and thank Him until His will is accomplished. We must always be persistent and tenacious in our prayer life.

xi) SEEKING TO FOLLOW GOD’S PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE

“Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established.” **(Proverbs 16:3)** “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth” **(Colossians 3:2)** *abundant life comes from following God’s plan for your life.*

xii) WE NEED COMMITMENT TO FINISH HIS PLAN FOR OUR LIFE

“For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.” **(Hebrews 10:36)**

xii) WE MUST NEVER GROW WEARY IN DOING GOOD

“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” **(Galatians 6:9)**

### **BUILDING MATURE BELIEVERS: CORE VALUES**

- i) THE BIBLE: We believe that the Holy Bible, and only the Bible, is 100% the Word of God. It, alone, is the final authority in determining all doctrinal truths.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” **(2 Timothy 3:16-17) (Proverbs 30:5), (Psalm 1), (Psalm 119:105)**

- ii) THE ETERNAL GODHEAD: We believe in the unity of the true and living God who is the ETERNAL, self-existent one, who has revealed himself as the Creator and preserver of things visible and invisible. **(Deut. 6:4), (Mark 12:29), (Matthew 28:19), (Genesis 1:1), (Psalm 86:9-10), (Isaiah 43:10-11), (John 1:1-3)**

- iii) THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was and is the eternal Son of God; that he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary. (Jesus Christ was conceived by God the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary’s womb) On earth He was 100% God and 100% man. **(Isaiah 7:14), (Matthew 1:23)**

We believe in His sinless life (He was the only man to ever live a sinless life) **(Heb. 7:26, 1 Peter 2:22, 2 Corinthians 5:21)**, *miraculous ministry (Acts 2:22, Acts 10:38)*, substitutionary *atonement* death **(Hebrews 9:12)**, *bodily resurrection (Luke 24:39, 1 Corinthians 15:4)*, glorious ascension **(Acts 1:9)** and *abiding intercession (Hebrews 7:25)*.

- iii) THE HOLY SPIRIT: We believe in the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is ever present and active in the work of convicting **(John 16:7-11)** and regenerating the sinner, and sanctifying and guiding **(Romans 8:14)** the believer into all truth **(John 14:26, John 16:13)**. **(Sanctification** is the ongoing process of yielding to God in order to become more and more like Christ) **(Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Romans 8:29, 1 Thessalonians 5:23)**

- iv) THE ATONEMENT: We believe that God’s answer to man’s sinful state is in the death of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, whose sufferings and shed blood have made full atonement for the sins of the whole world, both original and actual, and that *there is no other ground for salvation*. **(2 Cor. 5:18-21, Galatians 1:4, Colossians 1:20, Romans 5:9, Ephesians 1:7, Coloss. 1:14, Heb. 9:25-28, 1 Peter 1:18-20, 1 John 1:7)**

The blood that Jesus Christ shed on the cross of Calvary was sinless and is 100% sufficient to forgive man of all sins. Jesus allowed Himself to be punished for the sins we had committed, giving all mankind the opportunity of being free from the penalty of sin, (which is death). Each person after reaching an age of reasoning must however make a response of repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ to receive God's forgiveness and gift of eternal life. (**John 1:29, Rev. 1:5 & 5:9**)

- v) **SALVATION OF MAN:** We believe salvation is received through **repentance** toward God and **faith** in the Lord Jesus Christ. This experience is also known as the new birth {Being Born Again} (**Jn 3:3**) and is an *instantaneous* and complete operation of the Holy Spirit, whereupon the *believing* sinner is regenerated, justified, and *adopted* into the family of God, and becomes a *new creation* in Christ Jesus (**2 Corinthians 5:17**) and *an heir of eternal life*. (**Titus 2:11, Titus 3:5-7, 1 Peter 1:23**)

*REPENTANCE is a commitment to turn from sin in every area of our lives and to follow Christ. (Acts 2:38, Acts 3:19)*

*SALVATION is a gift from God and cannot be earned. It is not based on our good works or human efforts. "For by grace you have been saved through faith (in Jesus Christ and His death burial and resurrection), and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

- vi) **THE DEVIL:** We believe in the personality of the devil, who, by his influence, brought about the downfall of man, and now seeks to destroy the faith of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. (**Gen 3:1-15, Matt. 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13, James 4:7, John 13:2, 1 Peter 5:8, John 13:2**)
- vii) **THE FALL OF MAN:** We believe that man was created by God by a specific immediate act and in His image and likeness, morally upright and perfect, *but fell by voluntary transgression*. Consequently, all men are separated from original righteousness, being depraved and without spiritual life. (**Genesis 1:26-28, Genesis 3:1-7, Rom. 5:12-21**)
- ix) **THE CHURCH:** The church is the *body of Christ*, the habitation of God, through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfilment of her great commission. *Each believer*, born of the Spirit, is an *integral part* of the *general assembly and church* of the first-born, which are written in heaven. (**Ephesians 1:22-23, Ephesians 2:19-22, Hebrews 12:23**)
- x) **WATER BAPTISM:** We believe that baptism, by single *immersion*, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is required of all who have repented and believed in Christ as *Saviour* and *Lord*, and that it is symbolic of our identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. Following believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, the new convert is commanded by the Word of God to be water baptized by full immersion.

The Christian Water Baptism is an outward act of obedience by which a *believer* confesses and confirms, the *inward righteousness* he already enjoys in his heart through faith in Christ's atoning death and resurrection, by openly acknowledging their allegiance to Christ. (**Matt. 28:19-20, Acts 10:47-48, Acts 2:38-39, Romans 6:4-5, Colossians 2:12, Mark 16:16**)

- xi) **THE LORD'S SUPPER:** We believe the Lord's supper, consisting of the elements of bread and the fruit of the vine, is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (**2 Peter 1:4**), and a memorial of His sufferings and death (**1 Corinthians 11:26**), and is enjoined upon all believers "until He comes". (**Luke 22:14-20, Acts 20:7, Matthew 26:26-28**)

The Lord's Supper is a unique time of communion in the presence of God when the elements of bread and wine (representing the broken body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ), are taken in remembrance of His sacrifice on the cross for us. (**1 Corinthians 11:23-25**)

- xii) **SANCTIFICATION:** Sanctification is an act of *separation* from that which is *evil*, and of *dedication unto God*. We believe it is the glorious provision for *every* believer in Christ to be made *pure in*

heart and wholly sanctified, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, by the Blood of Jesus and the Word of God. **(1 Thessalonians 5:23-24)**

**(John 17:15-19, Acts 15:8-9, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, Hebrews 2:11, Hebrews 10:16-19, Romans 12:1-2)**

- xiii) THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT: We believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the bestowing of the believer with power *to be an effective witness for Christ*. This experience is **distinct** from, and **subsequent** to, the new birth; *is received by faith*, and is accompanied by the manifestation of *speaking in tongues* as the spirit gives utterance, as the initial evidence. **(Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4-5, Acts 1:8, Joel 2:28-29, Acts 2:1-4, Acts 2:17-18, Mark 16:17 Acts 8:15-19, Acts 11:14-17, Acts 19:1-7, Matthew 3:11)**

Given at Pentecost, it was the promise of the Father, sent by Jesus after His ascension, to *empower* the Church to preach the gospel throughout the whole earth, to edify believers **(1 Corinthians 14:4)**, to enhance the prayer life of believers and as a sign to unbelievers. **(1 Cor. 14:22)**

- xiv) GIFTS: We believe in the **present day** operation of the **nine supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit**, as recorded in 1 Corinthians 12. (*The word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, The gift of faith, Gifts of healing, The working of miracles, Prophecy, Discerning of spirits, Different kinds of tongues and Interpretation of tongues*). We also believe in the **five** ministry gifts of Christ, as recorded in Ephesians 4:11-13. (*Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers*)

OTHER GIFTS FROM THE FATHER INCLUDE: Prophecy, Exhortation, Giving, Leadership, Mercy, Ministry and the gift of Teaching (Regardless of Public Office) **(Romans 12:3-8)** Helps and Administrations are two other gifts. **(1 Corinthians 12:28)** **We must however never forget that whatever we do in life must be done in love. (The Apostle Paul emphasised this in chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians)** (See also Romans 12:9-21)

- xv) DIVINE HEALING: In accordance with the teachings of the Scriptures, we trust our heavenly Father to protect and heal our bodies from sickness and disease. **(Isaiah 53:5)** We believe that divine healing for the body, as with all *redemptive blessings of God*, has been provided for us by the *atonement death and victorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ*; it is the privilege of *all* believers and it is appropriated by faith in our heavenly Father's unfailing promises. **(Exodus 15:26, Matt. 8:16-17, Ps. 103:3, 1 Peter 2:24, James 5:14-15, Mark 16:17-18, John 14:12-14)**

- xvi) THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST: We believe in the pre-millennial, imminent and personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ to gather his people unto Himself. Having this glorious hope and earnest expectation, we purify ourselves, even as He is pure, so that we may be ready to meet Him when He comes. **(1 Thessalonians 4:15-18)**

Jesus Christ will physically and visibly return to earth a second time to establish His Kingdom. This will occur at a date undisclosed by the Scriptures. **(Matthew 24:36)**

**HOWEVER, for those who are faithful in their Christian walk, the Bible promises that they will be kept from the hour of trial, which shall come upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth. (Revelation 3:10). We must simply be ready to meet the lord at any time.**

- xvii) THE MILLENNIUM: We believe in the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to set up His millennial reign on this earth. **(Zechariah 14:5, Daniel 7:22, Revelation 5:9-10, Ps. 96:10-13, Revelation 20:1-10)**

- xviii) THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED: We believe in the everlasting punishment of the wicked (in the sense of eternal torment) that wilfully reject and despise the love of God, manifested in the great sacrifice of his only Son upon the cross for their salvation. **(Romans 6:23, Matthew 25:46, Matthew 13:49-50, Luke 12:47-48, 2 Thess. 1:8-9, Revelation 20:11-15)**. We believe that the devil and his angels and whosoever is not found written in the book of life shall be consigned to everlasting

punishment in the lake, which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. **(Revelation 19:20, Revelation 20:10-15)**

- xix) THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH: “We according to His promise look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness” **(2 Peter 3:13, Revelation Chapters 21 and 22.)**
- xx) RESURRECTION: We believe that Jesus Christ was physically resurrected from the dead in a glorified body three days after His death on the cross. One day all believers who have died in Christ will also be physically resurrected in their glorified bodies and will be judged to determine their eternal rewards in heaven, where they will dwell with God forever. **(Luke 24:36-40, 1 Cor. 15:42, 44, John 20:26-28, John 21:4, Luke 24:15-18)**
- xxi) CREATION: We believe that the heavens and earth and all original life forms, including man, were made by the specific immediate creative acts of God as described in the account of origins presented in Genesis, and that all biological changes which have occurred since creation are limited to variation within each species.

## CORE VALUES FOR IDEAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH

### 1) SERVING OTHERS **(Acts 6:1-3)**

Jesus was known as the Servant King, and willingly gave Himself for all mankind. We believe as a church, that serving others is a key to seeing a church make an impact in the lives of those in the community. All leaders should have a servant heart where they give of themselves so that others grow in their faith and are prepared for ministry.

A vibrant church must look for opportunities to connect with the community, schools and market place. Practically demonstrating the love of God in the community is crucial for any church to make an impact on the community. Having a drop in centre for people is also a great way of connecting with the needs of the community.

**In what other ways could your church connect with the community or village?**

Jesus said, “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” **(Matthew. 20:26-28)**

### 2) THE IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICALLY CARING FOR OTHERS **(Acts 4:32-35)**

- i) The need to reach out into the community to connect with those who are hurting
- ii) The need to practically love people by providing help to those who are disadvantaged or homeless
- iii) The importance of providing a place where people can experience God’s love and acceptance **(A place of belonging)**

### 3) THE IMPORTANCE OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL **(Acts 8:4-8) (Romans 10:13-15)**

Pentecostalism believes that the preaching of the gospel is the key to seeing people come to Christ and having their lives changed. Jesus said, “He who the Son sets free is free indeed.” Every human soul is of importance to God. As eternal life can only come through a person repenting towards God and believing in Jesus Christ, the preaching of the gospel is a major priority at Church of Hope, (both in the Centre and streets of Melbourne, Sydney and in Parramatta Prison).

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” **(Romans 1:16)**

**Maintaining our passion for souls is imperative. Leaders must be the example.**

#### 4) THE ABSOLUTE IMPORTANCE OF UNITY (**Acts 2:46-47**)

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” (**Psalms 133:1**)

- i) Walking in Love (John 13:34-35, 1 Corinthians 13:1-8, 1 Peter 1:22)
- ii) Walking in Forgiveness (Matthew 6:14-15)
- iii) Having no critical and judgmental attitudes towards others (Matthew 7:1-4)
- iv) We need to look out for the interests of others (Philippians 2:1-4)
- v) Encouraging others (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- vi) Genuine acceptance of others (Looking for the best in others)

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (**Hebrews 10:24-25**)

A leader must aim to build unity in the leadership team. Some keys to maintaining unity will be discussed in being a leader of influence.

#### 5) WORSHIP (A KEY TO KEEPING US CLOSE TO GOD)

Pentecostalism recognizes the importance to a believer of worship, both corporately (at church) and privately, in maintaining a strong Christian walk and intimacy with God. King David was a man who loved to worship the Lord and the Bible says that he is the only person who was a man after the heart of God. (**For this reason worship is a key part of all of our meetings and study groups**)

Jesus said, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. (**John 4:23-24**)

True heartfelt worship is a key to ushering in the presence of God. (God inhabits the praises of our worship) *worship is a key to maintaining our intimacy with God.*

#### 6) THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER (**Acts 4:23-31**)

Pentecostal church acknowledges the power of prayer and encourages all believers to have an active prayer life. A strong prayer life and dependence on God empowers us to resist temptations and to remain strong during trials. A strong prayer life is a key to seeing God move in the area of supernatural provisions. When our prayers are in accordance with the will of God and backed by faith, we can expect answers to prayers.

“But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.”

(**1 Peter 4:7**) **Jesus said**, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it.” (**John 14:12-14**)

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us; And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” (**1 John 5:14-15**)

#### 7) THE IMPORTANCE OF GIVING (**To your local church home**)

The bible says that it is more joyful to give than receive. The bible also says that giving is the key to receiving financial blessings. God Himself promises to those who tithe to Him, abundant financial blessings. (**Malachi 3:10-11**)

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And try Me now in this,” Says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. “And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground. Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,” Says the Lord of hosts;”

This is a wonderful **promise** from god. “For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in him Amen, to the glory of God through us.” **(2 Corinthians 1:20)**

#### 8) THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLESHIP **(Matthew 28:19-20)**

Pentecostalism has a heart to see all believers develop into strong and stable Christians, who will be able to stand in the times of trials and temptations, and who will be living examples of the power of Jesus Christ to restore broken lives and to see people walking in victory. Pentecostalism believes in the importance of:

- i) Encouraging people to develop a hunger for the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- ii) Ensuring that all people who attend our Centre have a sound appreciation of Christian Doctrine
- iii) Helping people to identify and follow God’s plan for their life
- iv) Encouraging people to develop healthy communication skills
- v) Helping people to develop healthy life skills which will assist them in developing meaningful relationships
- vi) Providing encouragement and help to people, to enable them to identify and overcome life controlling problems
- vii) Helping all believers to walk close to the Lord, where prayer and worship becomes an important part of their lifestyle, and
- viii) Helping to equip and release people for ministry

#### 9) EQUIPPING (EMPOWERING) PEOPLE FOR MINISTRY

God has a special plan and purpose for every Christian. For many believers their mission field is their workplace, school or another sphere of influence where they can minister the love of Christ to others.

God has placed each believer in the Body of Christ as He has chosen. It is only as we find and follow God’s plan for our life that we will experience the fulfilment and abundant life which Jesus spoke of. Jesus Himself said to His disciples, “**My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to finish His work.**” **(John 4:34)**

**Pentecostalism has a heart to help encourage all believers to find and follow God’s plan for their life.** Pentecostalism is committed to training and equipping believers, to help them realize their God given potential in whatever spheres of ministry God may have placed them. We believe that the five-fold ministry gifts are for the equipping of all believers, including those who are being called into full time ministry.

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” **(Ephesians 4:11-12)**

#### 10) CREATING MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES FOR BELIEVERS **(Romans 12:4-8) (1 Corinthians 12:4-7) (Ephesians 2:10)**

Pentecostalism has a heart to create ministry opportunities for all believers. Our daily outreaches and meetings give all Christians the opportunity to be equipped and used in the area of evangelism and outreach.

All ministry gifts can be used in the streets, but most importantly it is important for the unsaved to see a commitment from Christians to reach out to them. To have a concern for the lost and unsaved must eventually translate into an action to become involved in their lives.

Pentecostalism also provides many opportunities for Christians to have some experience in the area of pastoral care and hospitality evangelism. **Does your church create opportunities for everyone to be used in their ministry gifts?**

Opportunities are given for committed Christians to be raised up in the area of small group leaders and Pastoral Care assistants, as well as many “helps” ministries which are needed to support any extension of ministry activities within the Church.

Pentecostalism encourages all Christians to use their gifts and abilities for god’s glory, **knowing that our labour for the lord is not in vain**

## 11) EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING

Pentecostalism should run evangelism schools to help equip people in the area of evangelism. A part of this evangelism training will include the equipping and preparation of church planting teams.

Pentecostalism has a heart to set up several Worship / Preaching sites any time where other Christians can join us to reach out to the multitudes in the Cities and villages who do not yet know Jesus. These sites would also have the purpose of supporting other Christian teams that come into the area, whilst giving Christians the opportunity of being equipped and mobilized in the area of preaching.

**These eleven core values for an ideal church could be summarised into two main values**

1. That all those within our community and who attend our church meetings will experience God’s love and be encouraged to grow in a relationship with Jesus Christ, and
2. That there will be in all of our church meetings and fellowships an atmosphere of love and acceptance, in which all believers are encouraged to grow in their faith and to fulfil their God given destiny.

## REACHING OUT TO THE UNSAVED WITH GRACE

It truly is God’s desire that no one perish and that all would spend eternity with Him. “Say to them: ‘As I live,’ says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” **(Ezekiel 33:11)**

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” **(John 3:16-17)** Jesus during His time here on earth had compassion for the lost and it was for this very reason that He came, **“to seek and to save the lost”**.

Just as Jesus laid down His life for all of us, so too, must we lay down our lives for the lost in our world; Apostle Paul said, “But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife; And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, **patient, in humility** correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will. **(2 Timothy 2:23-26)**

This chapter shows how Jesus related to the unsaved and finishes with a few practical considerations of how we may have more grace to the lost as *we minister and relate to them*. This teaching also looks at how the great apostle Paul made every effort to communicate the gospel to all men. All our actions should be continually motivated by the love of God as we seek to warn those people who have been blinded by the devil, of the consequences of rejecting God’s gift of eternal life. In His earthly ministry, Jesus demonstrated how we should reach out to the lost in love.

### 1) JESUS WAS FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH

“So all bore witness to Him, and marvelled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth...” **(Luke 4:22)** “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” **(John 1:14, 16-17)**



Jesus said, “But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who spitefully use you. But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. **For He is kind to the unthankful and evil; Therefore be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.**” (Luke 6:27, 28, 32-33, 35-36)

“There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. And when they came to the place called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the other criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, ‘*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do...*’ Then one of the criminals who were hanging on the cross next to Jesus blasphemed Him, saying, ‘If you are the Christ, save yourself and us.’ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong’ Then he said to Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom. And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’” (Luke 23:32-34, 39-43)

The Apostle Paul said, “Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” (Col. 4:5-6)

## 2) JESUS WAS INTERESTED IN THE WHOLE PERSON AND IN RESTORING BROKEN LIVES

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” (Luke 4:18-19)

“Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.” (Matthew 9:35)

“Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, ‘I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with me three days and have nothing to eat, and I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.’” (Matthew 15:32)

## 3) JESUS HAD COMPASSION FOR THE LOST

“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” (Matthew 9:36)

“The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over *all His works*.” (Psalm 145:8-9)

“Jesus said, ‘Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.’” (Matthew 11:28-30)

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27)

“Now as He drew near, **He saw the city and wept over it**, saying, ‘If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.’” (Luke 19:41-42)

## 4) JESUS REACHED OUT TO PEOPLE AND LOVED THEM WHERE THEY WERE

“After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ so he left all, rose up, and followed Him. Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. And the scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, ‘Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?’ Jesus

answered and said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” **(Luke 5:27-32)**

#### 5) THE APOSTLE PAUL BECAME ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN

“For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law... that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men that I might **by all means** save some. Now this I do for the gospels sake, that I may be partaker of it with you. **(1 Corinth. 9:19-23)**

#### 6) IT IS THE KINDNESS OF GOD WHICH LEADS PEOPLE TO REPENTANCE

“Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and long suffering, not knowing that the **goodness of God leads you to repentance?**” **(Romans 2:4)**

#### 7) PRACTICALLY HOW CAN WE SHOW THE GRACE AND KINDNESS OF GOD TO OTHERS

- We need to have compassion for the lost and refuse to have any self-righteous attitudes towards unbelievers
- We must never forget that we were once lost but that God never gave up on us
- We need to always remember that the devil is trying to send as many people as he can to hell
- We need to see people as Jesus would. What they can become as new Christians filled with the Holy Spirit
- It is imperative that we take an interest in the lives of others. First the natural and then the spiritual
- We should preach and witness with a heart attitude of seeing people becoming a part of the family of God
- To have the compassion of Jesus when reaching out to others, we must have an intimate relationship with Jesus
- We must endeavour to continually walk in the Spirit so that the Holy Spirit can minister **through us** to others
- When Peter ministered full of the Holy Spirit to the Sanhedrin, they realized that he had been with Jesus
- Only the Holy Spirit can convict people of their sin. We need to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit
- We need to allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives and to change us more and more into the image of Christ
- Our own lives will be the greatest witness as to the power of the gospel to change lives
- Jesus healed people out of his great compassion to see lives restored to wholeness
- Where there is grace and love there is great power (and accompanying miracles, signs and wonders)

“And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.” **(Acts 4:33)**

## BUILDING EFFECTIVE MINISTRY TEAMS

### Introduction:

One will put a thousand to flight but two will put ten thousand to flight. Having a unified team enables individuals to do more than they could achieve if they were to do things separately. The combining of different gifts and talents in a team gives each person the ability to accomplish more than if they were to operate in isolation.

God is vitally concerned about each member of the body being connected and in relationship with others. It is in working together with others who God brings into our life, that we can realise the potential in our own lives.

Jesus Himself had twelve disciples who walked with Him. The bible says much about the need to be connected with others. Right from the beginning God has said, **“It is not good that man should be alone;”** (Genesis 2:18) **Jesus sent out His disciples two by two.** (Luke 10:1)

- “For by wise counsel you will wage your own war, and in a multitude of counsellors there is safety. **(Proverbs 24:6)**
- “Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.” **(Proverbs 15:22)**
- “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them.” **(Matthew 18:20)**
- “A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment.” **(Proverbs 18:1)**

When Peter began to preach his sermon on the day of Pentecost **(Acts 2:14-36)** the eleven other disciples stood with him in unity. **(Acts 2:14)** On that day three thousand souls were saved. **(Acts 2:41)**

**There are several keys to having a team of influence:**

- 1) There must be a shared vision:

“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint.” (Proverbs 29:18a)

“Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it.” (Habakkuk: 2:2a)

- 2) We must allow the Lord to build our church / teams:

Leaders must seek the Lord for His strategies for their church.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)

- 3) We must (as a team) have faith in God:

**Israel failed to enter the Promised Land for forty years because:**

- i) Ten of the team of twelve spies had unbelief
- ii) These ten spies were crippled by fear
- iii) They only saw the giants in the land (The size of the enemy),
- iv) They failed to trust God and His promise to them, (That they would possess the promised land),
- v) Only two of the team of twelve spies had faith to take the Promised Land.

We must have faith to believe that our churches can make an impact in our community and that our cities and nation can be won to Jesus.

***“For with god nothing will be impossible” (Luke 1:37)***

- We need to become God dependent (Just do what Jesus says to)
- We need to acknowledge that His ways are higher than ours

“Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” **(1 Corinthians 1:25)**

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways,” says the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” **(Isaiah 55:8-9)**

- **He must be our strength**

The Lord said to the apostle Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness...” **(2 Corinthians 12:9)**

- **Prayer must be a priority in our church and ministry teams**

Prayer was a big part of the early church. Persecution drove the first disciples to pray together. (**Acts 4:24-31**)

“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” (**Acts 4:31**)

- **We must do things in His strength and in his Power**

This was the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the Lord of Hosts.” (**Zechariah 4:6**)

#### 4) **We must stay focused on our vision:**

- **We must be committed to completing our destiny**

Jesus said, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.” (**Luke 9:62**)

Jesus also said, “For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it – lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, “saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’” (**Luke 14:28-30**)

It is important that we never give up on what God has called us to do. However it is always imperative that we:

- 1) *Only do what God wants us to do,*
- 2) *That we allow Him to build and establish his plan for our team, and*
- 3) *That we do not run ahead of God.*

We must allow the Lord to unfold his strategies for our church and ministry teams and allow each season of preparation to be completed before we commence the next phase or level of ministry.

- **We must not grow weary in doing good**

“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” (**Galatians 6:9**)

- **We must have persistence**

“For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.” (**Hebrews 10:36**)

- **We must have courage to complete our destiny**

“**Be strong and of good courage**, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and **very courageous**, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may **prosper wherever you go**.”

“This Book of the Law shall not depart **from your mouth**, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. **For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.**

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God **is with you wherever you go.**” (*Joshua 1:6-9*)

- **We must be prepared to make sacrifices**

Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” (**John 12:24-25**)

In a world full of temptations, distractions and challenges, we must choose to commit to god’s plan for our church, our life and whatever ministries we are involved in. We must set our mind on things above.

**5) The power of unified prayer**

The first disciples operated in power in the early church and saw thousands impacted by the gospel and the signs and wonders that accompanied the preaching of the word. United prayer was key factors in seeing the early church grow.

“These (Disciples) all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.” (**Acts 1:14**)

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.” (**Acts 2:42-43**)

After being persecuted for sharing their faith in Jesus, the disciples raised their voice to god with one accord:

“Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to your servants that with all boldness they may speak your word, “By stretching out your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of your holy Servant Jesus.” “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were **all filled with the Holy Spirit**, and they ***spoke the word of God with boldness.***” (**Acts 4:29-31**)

**6) Team unity will produce powerful results:**

Much emphasis in the early church was placed on unity and prayer. Being of one accord was a dominant trait of the early church leaders. Their unity and agreement was both spiritual and practical, and not only theological, for they shared their lives and possessions. They met often to pray, revealing both a relationship with each other and a total reliance on God.

“Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart...And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (**Acts 2:44-46, 47a**)

Where there is unity, there is power and grace one heart and one soul

“Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.” (**Acts 4:32-33**)

This kingdom view for our finances is a key to seeing the church make an impact in the community. We must be missions minded. If Jesus is truly lord of our heart, our finances will be his as well and we will give to the work of evangelism and missions as he purposes in our heart to give.

***WE MUST ENDEAVOUR TO MAINTAIN UNITY AT ALL TIMES***

Like a chain, a team is only as strong as its weakest link (team member). Our lives impact the lives of others

Jesus said, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.” **(Matthew 12:25)**

We need to seek unity with all Christians and be of one accord in our churches and ministry teams

#### **SOME KEYS FOR MAINTAINING UNITY ARE:**

- i) **Walking in love towards each other (By this people will know that we are His disciples)** Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” **(John 13:34-35)**
- ii) **All team members knowing how to walk in the Spirit.** The Apostle Paul said, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” (Galatians 5:16) The bible says in the book of James, “But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth... For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there... Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” **(James 3:14,16, 18). The Apostle Paul cautioned the church in Galatia:** “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!” **(Galatians 5:14-15)**
- iii) **Dealing quickly with any spirit of division** “But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.” **(Titus 3:9-11)** The Apostle Paul said in his letter to the church in Rome, “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.” **(Romans 16:17-18)**
- iv) **Each team member has a heart to serve others, and** “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant... Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many,” **(Matthew 20:26,28)**
- v) **Each team member (church leader) has died to selfish ambition. Loyalty and humility are two necessary traits for all those who are placed in leadership.** “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another.” **(Romans 12:10)** “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.” **(Philippians 2:3)**

A church must have discipleship structures in place to help all believers to grow in the fruit of the spirit and to find and follow god’s plan for their life.

#### **7) Individually each team member must seek to become more Christlike:**

The call to discipleship involves following in the steps of Jesus and becoming more like Christ. To become a disciple involves surrendering all of your life to Jesus Christ. Those in leadership in churches need to be living examples of what it is to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

A leader who is passionate for the things of God, for lost souls and who is servant hearted will by his own example encourage others to lay down their lives for Jesus Christ. Jesus said,

“If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it” **(Luke 9:23-24)**

Small (growth) groups or care (home) groups are a key to seeing new believers disciplined and growing in their faith

Encouraging the mature Christians to mentor new believers is also another key to seeing Christians growing in their faith. All leaders in particular should have accountability with other mature Christians. *The relationship of Apostle Paul to Timothy is a biblical model for mentoring.*

*Having good discipleship and mentoring structures in place in a church, enables new believers to grow more quickly in their faith and in developing Christian character in their lives. (Fruit of the Spirit)*

The following areas of character, which are important in the lives of all Christians, can be addressed in small care groups and mentoring relationships. Christians who struggle in these areas are capable of bringing disunity into any church, group or team:

**i) Any form of pride (God resists the proud)**

- a) Rebellion
- b) Being easily offended
- c) Religious Pride
- d) Excessive desire for praise
- e) Finding it hard to say 'I am sorry' even when in the wrong
- f) Inability to acknowledge when you are wrong
- g) Defensive / critical spirit

**ii) Having an unteachable spirit**

“For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not...They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.” **(Titus 1:10-11 & 16)**

**iii) Not adapting to or yielding to the best interests of the group or team (Having an independent spirit)**

**iv) A person who is envious or self seeking**

The following traits can be encouraged and developed in the context of a loving small group, or mentoring relationship:

- i) Humility,
- ii) Forgiveness and reconciliation,
- iii) Integrity (Through accountability to others),
- iv) Personal obedience to God,
- v) Helping new believers to become encouragers of others,
- vi) Developing relationship skills, and
- vii) Helping new believers to walk in love towards others.

**8) The importance of esteeming others better than yourself (Helping others to fulfil their destinies):**

“Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another.”  
**(Romans 12:10)**

“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteems others better than himself.” **(Philippians 2:3)**

**9) Each team member is using their gifts**

God gives each believer gifts and abilities to be used for the Body of Christ and in expanding God’s kingdom. It is so important that believers are given an opportunity to use their spiritual gifts. The church must encourage all believers to use and exercise their ministry and spiritual gifts for the edifying and expansion of the Body of Christ.

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:

For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. **But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.” (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)**

**10) Each member of the team is placed where God has positioned them**

God has a unique plan and purpose for every Christian’s life. It is only in doing what God has called us to do, do we experience the fulfilment that comes from serving Him. To have a team of influence it is imperative that each member of the team is:

**i) Placed by God in the team**

“But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.” **(1 Corinthians 12:18)**

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way.” **(Psalm 37:23)**

**ii) Has a role which is suited to them**

The apostle Paul said in his letter to the Colossian church:

“And say to Archippus, “Take heed to *the ministry which you have received in the Lord*, that you may *fulfil it*.” **(Colossians 4:17)**

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which *God prepared beforehand* that we should *walk in them*,” **(Ephesians 2:10)**, and

**iii) Each team member is given the opportunity to use their gifts**

“From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which *every part does its share*, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” **(Ephesians 4:16)**

“Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.” **(1 Corinthians 14:12)**

It is imperative that in building a church leadership team and when forming ministry teams, that we allow the lord to be in control of all that we are doing: unless the lord builds the house we labour in vain: when god builds a team



- i) There is a greater likelihood of there being team unity,
- ii) Each individual team member will be placed in a role that fulfils him or her,
- iii) The team building process will be far easier (The Lord knows what is best, and the best blend of people and gifts for a particular church or ministry. Churches must be able to minister to the needs of the people in the community. These needs can vary considerably from place to place),
- iv) The team will operate in power and there will be much fruit forthcoming, and
- v) The team will just seem to run smoothly as everyone does their part

**11) That all team members have a heart to see people won to Jesus. (He who wins souls is wise)**

Every church leadership team and ministry team should never lose sight of the fact that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost. The heartbeat of every church and ministry team should be to see heaven populated and hell plundered. Jesus had compassion for the lost

*“Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.*

*But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” (Matthew 9:35-36)*

**JESUS SAID PRIOR TO RETURNING TO HEAVEN**

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:19)

“Go into the entire world and preach the gospel to every creature.” (Mark 16:15)

**GOD WANTS ALL PEOPLE TO HAVE ETERNAL LIFE**

“Say to them: ‘As I live,’ says the Lord God, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live...’ (Ezekiel 33:11a,b)

**12) The focus of all leaders of churches, small groups, ministry teams and other teams / groups should be:**

<b>Training</b>	<b>Teaching</b>
<b>Equipping</b>	<b>Empowering</b>
<b>Assisting</b>	<b>Affirming</b>
<b>Multiplying</b>	<b>Mobilising</b>

Others to help them to find their fit in the Body of Christ and to fulfil their God given destiny as part of the team;

**THE ROLE OF THE FIVE FOLD MINISTRY**

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11-13)

## **SO THAT EVERY PART (OF THE BODY OF CHRIST) DOES ITS SHARE, CAUSING GROWTH TO THE BODY AND THE EDIFYING OF ITSELF IN LOVE**

We all have a role to play in the Body of Christ and we are all part of a bigger team where our gifts complement the gifts of others in helping to see the world won to Jesus. Church leaders must look at encouraging each believer in their church to find and follow God's plan for their life.

### **A VIBRANT AND EFFECTIVE CHURCH PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR EACH BELIEVER TO FIND AND FOLLOW GOD'S DIRECTION FOR THEIR LIFE.**

*Spiritual gifts workshops enable believers to identify their spiritual and helps gifts, whilst small group and mentoring relationships help believers to grow in their Christian walk and to use their spiritual gifts*

Leadership training and ministry preparation classes help to prepare and equip believers to use their ministry and spiritual gifts.

*The Apostle Paul said to Timothy, "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witness, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:1-2)*

### **13) We cannot allow past setbacks and failures to stop us from fulfilling our destiny:**

Every church and individual will at times experience failures or disappointments. It is always important to keep our focus on Jesus and His vision for our Church or ministry team and for our own life.

We must be focused on fulfilling everything that God has for our church and for our own personal lives. What God starts He will complete

"Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;" **(Philippians 1:6)**

We are never a failure when we experience failures. It is only if we fail and give up that we are a failure.

**We must be single minded like the apostle Paul**

#### **THE APOSTLE PAUL:**

##### **i) DID NOT ALLOW HIS PAST FAILURES TO DEFEAT HIM**

"Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead." **(Philippians 3:13)**

##### **ii) KEPT FOCUSED ON GOD'S PLAN FOR HIS LIFE**

"Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me... I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." **(Philippians 3:12,14)**

##### **iii) KEPT HIS FOCUS ON FINISHING THE RACE AND FULFILLING HIS GOD GIVEN DESTINY**

Towards the end of his life here on earth, the Apostle Paul said, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." **(2 Timothy 4:7-8)**

**14) It is important for team members to have regular fellowship with each other (Leaders Meetings) and informal meetings to have FUN TOGETHER**

It is important for church leaders and team members to meet together regularly to maintain unity and focus. These meetings also enable the team members to encourage one another in their faith, particularly during times of tribulation. Prayer and worship should be an important part of these meetings.

Leaders and team members should be friends and not just acquaintances. Spending quality (social time) together on occasions will help to strengthen the unity in a ministry or church leadership team. We must ensure that we are always naturally spiritual and spiritually natural. We all need times of refreshing off the front line. We are in a marathon and not in a sprint.

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” *(Hebrews 10:24-25)*

**15) It’s all about our hearts:**

The impact that our church, our ministry teams and our own lives have on the community depends primarily on the condition of our hearts. Our lives and our churches have the potential to impact the lives of thousands, and even to see cities won to Jesus Christ. Reinhard Bonnke has been used by God to see most of Africa impacted by the gospel.

But like Isaiah, we must respond to God’s call,

“... Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” **(Isaiah 6:8)**. With a whole hearted,

“HERE AM I! SEND ME” **(Isaiah 6:8)**

**Having a right heart means:**

**i) Loving God**

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” **(Deuteronomy 6:5a)**

**ii) Obeying Him**

Jesus said, “If you love me, keep My commandments. He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me... If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him... He who does not love Me does not keep My words...” **(John 14:15, 21a, 23, 24)**

“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,” **(1 Samuel 15:22b)**

**iii) Loving others**

Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” **(John 13:34-35)**

**iv) Serving others**

Jesus said, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” **(Mark 10:42-45)**

In the end we must never lose sight of the mission that we have as believers: to share the message of hope that we have in Jesus Christ and to see heaven populated and hell plundered.

## THE CHURCH SERVING THE POOR

**Ways Your Church Can Fight Domestic Poverty.** "Meet needs, but teach personal responsibility."

**I realize society has dealt** with poverty since the beginning of time, *but I still am young enough to believe the church can do something about it.* According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, **hunger is at a high point** with one in six families going hungry this past fall (49 million people). The *New York Times* reported in August that unemployment for men under 35 may be at the highest rate in 61 years! The homeless count, though difficult to track, is off the charts (article from Guardian.co.uk).

**Below are some things our church is doing** to help. Items 1-4 are more general in nature, and items 5-8 specifically deal with empowering volunteers to fight poverty. I truly would love to hear your feedback! Help the rest of us figure out how to break the vicious cycle of poverty in our country. **Here are 8 Ways Your Church Can Fight Domestic Poverty:**

**1. Fight spiritual poverty.** One of the best places your church can start is by helping people who are spiritually broken. I believe spiritual poverty is the root cause of all other forms of poverty. Help people understand that they have hope and help them meet and grow in Jesus, and many times, the other pieces will begin to fall into place for them.

**2. Educate the young.** Empower young children to be successful and get an education. Give them a chance to be the first in their family to graduate high school and go to college. Our church is currently working with 40 volunteers to figure out how to help high-risk students at a local elementary school. Most of the kids are stuck in a vicious cycle of poverty. One by one, we are helping them get an education.

**3. Be a voice for those that don't have a voice.** What platform do you or your church have? Is it one of influence? Millions around the world have no platform, no voice. Be the voice they need. "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed." Proverbs 31:8

**4. Meet needs, but teach personal responsibility.** Instead of just giving away meals, teach on parenting, help someone find a job, ask questions that will help. Coach people into becoming more responsible; Help them find the resources they need until they can become more independent. Realize that many cannot become independent without some significant help. Don't put conditions on what you do to help (you won't give someone a meal unless you get to teach them something). Just keep this in mind as a goal you would like to accomplish.

**5. Empower your people to believe in someone else.** Often, a person has never believed in themselves enough to get out of a tough situation. Not only do they not believe in themselves- neither does anyone else. Let them borrow the faith of your church for a while. Encourage those you believe to believe in someone else. Start by believing in those you lead! Believe in them until they can believe in themselves. Tell them what you see in them. Encourage them. Show them the love they may have never had. Then ask them to go and do the same with others in the community!

**6. Partner with those already fighting poverty.** Chances are there are dozens of well-established organizations in your area that are fighting poverty and doing it well. Find out who they are and see what type of help they need. Ask how long they have been established, what their objectives are, and what you can do to help. Then dig in and get dirty!

**7. Be aware, so you help your church be aware.** Get out of your own little world and look around, then help those you lead to do the same. You'd be amazed to see what needs are out there! Read the paper, get news apps on your phone, whatever you can do to become more aware of what is going on. My two-year-old daughter prays for the people that "sleep in trees" and "don't have food in there refrigerator" simply because we get out of our house

and try to open out eyes to the realities in our city. You can become aware, too, then you can help your church become aware of what needs are out there.

**8. Help people discover their vision and passions.** Don't just tell those you lead to look for an organization where they can serve. Help them first discover their life vision and passions. (We use a tool called Chazown.com.) This passion will fuel them over the long haul as they serve the community. What do they value? Is it family? Help them serve to build up families. Is it injustice? Help them by partnering with someone fighting injustice. Are they good at tutoring? Help them connect with a local school.

### ***The Bible on the Poor or, Why God is a liberal***

*The Bible contains more than 300 verses on the poor, social justice, and God's deep concern for both. This page contains a wide sample of them, and some reflections. It's aimed at anyone who takes the Bible seriously.*

*As you read these passages, you will very likely feel a good deal of resistance (possibly at first manifesting itself as indifference). American churches have departed strongly from Biblical values in these areas, and even created a rationalization-- "prosperity theology"-- for rejecting them. It takes time and reflection to get past this misteaching.*

*But try to get past the resistance. Spiritual growth doesn't come from what goes down easily, or what we like to hear and read. It comes from what's different, and even difficult.*

### **God's concern for the poor**

*In this section we are not yet concerned with what the believer should think or do for the poor, but with God's thoughts. Though we often forget poverty and oppression, it is clear from the Bible that they are always on God's mind.*

**Deut. 26:5-9.** The Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, and imposed hard labor on us. Then we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction and our toil and our oppression; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror and with signs and wonders; and He has brought us to... this land flowing with milk and honey.

**Luke 4:16-21.** And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read... "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He appointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD... Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

**Ps. 140:12.** I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and justice for the poor.

**Is. 25:4.** For you have been a defense for the helpless, a defense for the needy in his distress.

**Ps. 10:14.** The unfortunate commits himself to you; you have been the helper of the orphan... O LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; you will strengthen their heart, you will incline your ear to vindicate the orphan and the oppressed.

**Is 41:17** The afflicted and needy are seeking water, but there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst. I, the LORD, will answer them myself, as the God of Israel I will not forsake them.

**Luke 6:20-21.** Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

**James 2:5.** Did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

**Commentary:** I think it's fair to say that American attitudes toward the poor-- and perhaps not just in America are mostly disdain and fear. They're dangerous and different. Sometimes there's a suspicion that their condition is their

own fault, that they're simply lazy or inferior. Other Americans are more kind-hearted, but prefer not to look at the poor too closely; it's depressing, and they're surely not fun people to be with.

These attitudes are a world away from God's attitudes, as described in these verses. Neediness arouses compassion in God-- and action.

We may think: "Of course God loves the poor; he loves everybody." But it's not so simple as that; God's character is presented as a model for our own. If God values the poor, we have to think about what that means for us.

### **God's commands concerning the poor**

*This section collects some specific commands from Old and New Testaments on serving the poor.*

**Deut. 15:7.** If there is a poor man among you, one of your brothers, in any of the towns of the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand to your poor brother; but you shall freely open your hand to him, and generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks.

**Deut. 26:12.** When you have finished paying the complete tithe of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the orphan and the widow that they may eat in your towns, and be satisfied.

**Lev. 19:19ff.** Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, neither shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the LORD your God.

**Prov. 31:8ff.** [Commandment to kings.] Open your mouth for the dumb, for the rights of all the unfortunate. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and defend the rights of the afflicted and needy.

**Is. 58:66ff.** Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke? Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into the house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

**Jer. 22:3.** Do justice and righteousness, and deliver the one who has been robbed from the power of his oppressor. Also do not mistreat or do violence to the stranger, the orphan, or the widow; and do not shed innocent blood in this place.

**Luke 12:33.** "Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves purses which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, nor moth destroy."

**Luke 3:11.** And [John the Baptist] would answer and say to them, "Let the man with two tunics share with him who has none, and let him who has food do likewise."

**Mt. 5:42.** Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

**Commentary:** The message here is really very simple: *help the needy*. It's not hard to understand; it's just hard to do.

And the message is continuous. It's in the Torah; it's in the Prophets and Psalms; it's in the Gospels; it's in the Epistles. How many churches emphasize serving the poor as much as the Bible itself does? Would the world look the way it does if all believers followed these commands?

Another thing to note about these verses is the lack of caveats-- the lack of excuses. None of them add "...once a year" or "...when you feel you can" or "...if they're moral" or "...unless they're black" or "...if they speak English". We have plenty of reasons (I'm sure you can think of a dozen) why we can't go out and feed the hungry, why we have to turn away the needy borrower-- and God help us, how many of us have sold so much as a lawnmower in

order to have money to give away? But all those reasons belong to our sinful human nature, not to God. God just wants those needy people helped.

If you wanted to be a Biblical one-issue voter, you'd do well to make that one issue serving the poor.

### **Blessings on those who serve the poor**

*Serving poor may be The Right Thing To Do; but the Bible also associates it with material and spiritual reward. Here we'll look at the benefits promised to those who serve the poor; in the next section we'll examine the consequences of not doing so.*

**Prov. 22:9** He who is generous will be blessed, for he gives some of his food to the poor.

**Jer. 22:16** "Did not your father eat and drink, and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. He pled the cause of the afflicted and needy; then it was well. Is that not what it means to know me?" declares the LORD.

**Deut. 15:10.** You shall give generously to [your poor brother], and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all your undertakings.

**Prov. 19:17.** He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for his good deed.

**Jer. 7:5-7.** "For, if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly practice justice between a man and his neighbor, if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your own ruin, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever."

**Is. 58:10.** "And if you give yourself to the hungry, and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then your light will rise in darkness, and your gloom will become like midday. And the LORD will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones; and you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail."

**Luke 14:12-14.** "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and repayment come to you. But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

**Luke 12:44.** "Sell your possessions and give alms; make yourselves purses which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

**Mt. 19:20ff.** The young man said to Him, "All these commands I have kept; what am I still lacking?" Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

**Commentary:** Americans like money; the American dream is about being rich. No wonder we're susceptible to religious quacks who promise riches to those who believe in God.

We do find promises of reward in the Bible-- *to those who serve the poor*. God's making a very simple proposal here: "You help the poor, and I'll repay it."

Full disclosure: there's a little bait-and-switch going on. Jesus promises treasure *in heaven*. In the sociology of religion game, we call this spiritualization. In plain English, it means that Jesus is asking us to go way past our comfort level in giving things away. And in not getting them back.

Who are the poor, by the way? Among our rationalizations is the feeling that the actual poor aren't people we really have to pay attention to. They may be of different races, or not speak our language, or aren't moral enough

for us; they may be illegal immigrants. (Imagine that, a class of human beings that are illegal. Imagine explaining that to God.)

God doesn't want to hear these excuses; he specifically commands us to help the stranger, the alien, the sojourner. Jesus' command on dinner parties couldn't be clearer: the people you need to help are *not* the people like you, the people you like, the people who can repay you. As for racial prejudice, note that the first person in the gospel of John to whom Jesus clearly confesses to being the Messiah is a Samaritan; Samaritans were despised by the orthodox Jews of the time. (And for that matter, she was a woman, and an adulteress.)

Can you give too much? We believe in moderation in all things. Unfortunately, we get this idea from the Greeks, not the Bible. Jesus asks for immoderate giving.

### **Consequences of not serving the poor**

*As there are blessings for those who serve the poor, there are consequences for those who oppress them... or who simply ignore them.*

**Ezek. 16:49ff.** "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food, and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy. Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore I removed them when I saw it."

**Is. 10:1-3.** "Woe to those who enact evil statutes, and to those who continually record unjust decisions, so as to deprive the needy of justice, and rob the poor of My people of their rights... Now what will you do in the day of punishment, and in the devastation which will come from afar?"

**Luke 1:52ff.** [Mary's Magnificat.] "He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has exalted those who were hungry. He has filled the hungry with good things; and sent away the rich empty-handed."

**Ezek. 22:29, 31.** "The people of the land have practiced oppression and committed robbery, and they have wronged the poor and needy and have oppressed the sojourner without justice... Thus I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; their way I have brought upon their heads," declares the Lord GOD.

**Jer. 5:28f.** "[The wicked] do not plead the cause, the cause of the orphan, that they may prosper; and they do not defend the rights of the poor. Shall I not punish these people?" declares the LORD. "On such a nation as this, shall I not avenge myself?"

**James 5:1-6.** Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. ...Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields and with you have withheld, cries out against you; and the outcry of the harvesters has reached the ears of the Lord of Shabaoth. You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

**Luke 6:24.** "But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full;"

**Luke 16:19-25.** "Now there was a certain rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, gaily living in splendor every day. And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs would come and lick his sores.

Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.

And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that



during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony..."

**Commentary:** Many Evangelicals worry what might happen to our country if sexual immorality flourishes. Now, the sexual morality the Bible tells us to be worried about is our own, but that's another discussion. A more serious worry is what will happen to us, our churches, our nation, if we don't serve the poor.

Obviously, adding to the misery of the poor is bad exploiting workers, oppressing immigrants, robbing the needy. But it doesn't stop there. Merely *ignoring the poor* is a crime. Sodom wasn't destroyed because of sexual immorality; it was destroyed because it "had arrogance, abundant food, and careless ease" and isn't that a pretty good description of America? and it "did not help the poor and needy".

There isn't the least suggestion that the rich man being punished in hell was responsible for Lazarus's condition... except in the most general sense: he was responsible as a fellow human being, as a man who was aware of the one suffering at his door and did nothing to help.

"Pleading the cause" of the poor, being their advocate and defender, is simply something a righteous person does. Are you someone who, when others are silent, advocates for the poor in your company, your church, your nation, your political party?

### **Biblical attitudes for believers toward the poor**

*So far we've examined only the surface God's commands concerning the poor, what happens if we obey or if we don't. Here we consider the spirit in which we respond. Without some of these correctives, we might make many mistakes serving the poor.*

**Prov. 29:7.** The righteous is concerned for the rights of the poor; the wicked does not understand such concern.

**1 John 3:17.** But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

**Luke 6:33ff.** "And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, in order to receive back the same."

**2 Cor 9:7.** Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.

**Mt. 6:2-4.** "When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you."

**Mt. 6:24.** "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Money."

**1 Tim. 6:10.** For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.

**Gal. 2:9ff.** Recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John... gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship that we might go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. They only asked us to remember the poor-- the very thing I also was eager to do.

**Lev. 19:15.** "You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly."

**Acts 2: 44.** All those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; and they began to sell their property and possessions, and share them with all, as anyone might have need.

**Acts 4:32-35.** And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales and lay them at the apostles' feet; and they would be distributed to each, as any had need.

**Eph. 4:28.** Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need.

**Commentary:** Some unimpressive ways to give:

- With a big frown on your face
- Back to those who've given you things
- Showing others that you're giving

How do you tell if you're worshipping Money? Well, how do you tell if you're worshipping anyone? What do you spend your time on; what do you worry and talk about the most; what do you make sacrifices for? I often wonder how people can read these verses on Sunday and on Tuesday go vote for the Money Party. James and Peter and John don't exhort Paul to remember the tax cuts.

Acts 4 is a mini-description of the proverbial Christian Nation. *There was not a needy person among them.* Why isn't that said about us? We have a lot more resources than a mob of mostly poor first-century Palestinians.

Another excuse sometimes used to ignore passages like this is Dispensationalist roughly, the idea that since we have Scripture, we can ignore large parts of Scripture. It doesn't make much sense when you state it in plain English, does it? There *are* some good reasons that we need not follow the Jewish Law; but the obligation to help the needy has not been repealed. It's found throughout the New Testament, with a good deal more emphasis than many subjects that Christians prefer to focus on.

With the prohibition on stealing, we may feel that we're on more familiar ground. But note the actual advice; it's not "Build so many jails that you rival the worst dictatorships for the percentage of your population in prison." Simply let the thieves stop stealing and do honest work.

When you think "thieves", by the way, do you picture a poor person? The Bible doesn't assume that the poor are especially prone to sin; on the contrary. Rich thieves as well should put aside their thievery: accountants swindling stockholders, corporations cheating taxpayers, CEOs making millions while their companies fail, presidents' spending money they don't have to benefit their wealthiest contributors.

### **God's identification with the poor**

*Like a good king, the Lord is concerned with his poor subjects. In the passages below, we see that His heart goes deeper still: he identifies with the poor; he puts himself in their place.*

**2 Cor. 8:9.** For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

**Prov. 19:17.** He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for his good deed.

**Prov. 14:31.** He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, but he who is gracious to the needy honors Him.

**Mt. 25:31-46.** "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on His left.

Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? And when did we see you a stranger, and invite you in, or naked, and clothe you? And when did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' Then they themselves will also answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

**Commentary:** God isn't a conservative; he's a revolutionary. He not only takes the side of the poor; he puts himself in their place. In the very alarming parable of the sheep and the goats he speaks of salvation as depending on how we treat the poorest and the most afflicted.

According to prosperity theology (and according to the best Pharisaical opinion) Jesus should have come as a lord, a tycoon, a cult leader. Some of his followers today act as, presumably, they felt Jesus *should have acted*, building multi-million-dollar cathedrals. But Jesus came as a poor man.

There are all sorts of meaning in that, but at the very least we can say that Jesus takes the issue of poverty personally. A church or a nation that ignores its poor or places stumbling blocks in their way, whose supreme good is Money, is very far from the spirit of God.

## SIGNS AND WONDERS AS WE PREACH THE GOSPEL

Healings are a great way in which the power of God is displayed, and will support the Gospel message that we preach. Jesus told his disciples to go and preach the gospel and to heal the sick.

"And as you go, preach, saying, 'The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, and raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give." **(Matthew 10:7-8)**

"Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and heal the sick." **(Luke 9:1-2)**

### **The Apostles also prayed:**

"Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to your servants that with all boldness they may speak your word, 'by stretching out your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the Name of Your Holy Servant Jesus.'" **(Acts 4:29-30)**

There are a number of key principles, which we need to apply in our own lives if we are to preach the gospel with power and healings being a consistent part of our ministry to others

### **1) We need to have compassion for the lost** (This comes from Jesus being our *FIRST LOVE*)

“And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.” **(Matthew 14:14)**

“And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” **(Matthew 9:35-36)**

## **2) We need to spend time with Jesus**

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marvelled. And they *realized that they had been with Jesus.*” **(Acts 4:13)**

- Anointing comes from our relationship with Jesus
- Prayers need to be inspired by the Holy Spirit
- God sets up divine appointments (We need to be led by the Holy Spirit)

“And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother’s womb, who had never walked; this man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, “Stand up straight on your feet;” And he leaped and walked;” **(Acts 14:8-10)**

- We need to involve Jesus in all of our life and commune with Him always
- We need to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit **(Ephesians 5:18)**
- We need to learn to listen to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit
- We should seek to worship the Lord in Spirit and Truth **(John 4:23-24)**

## **3) We all need to humble ourselves**

- **The apostle Peter gave all the glory to God when he healed the lame man**

“Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon’s, greatly amazed. So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: “Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our power or godliness we had made this man walk? His Name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.” **(Acts 3:11, 12 &16)**

- **We must always give ALL the glory to God**

The apostle Paul said, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” **(1 Corinthians 10:31)**

- **We descend to greatness. God’s Kingdom is an upside down Kingdom**

**Jesus said,** “But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” **(Matthew 23:11-12)**

- 4) We need to meditate on the scriptures relating to healings and miracles (We need to get them into our spirit. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God)**

- 5) Don't allow yourself to spend time with people who are sceptics and speak against healings (They will quench the fire in your belly and dilute your faith)
- 6) Be assured that Jesus has given all believers the authority and power to heal people and to deliver people from strongholds in his name
  - *Just as Jesus commissioned His disciples to preach the gospel and to heal and deliver people (Luke 9:1-2), so has He commissioned all believers*

“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” (Mark 16:17-18)

## 7) **Our obedience to god's word is a key to god's power operating in our life**

- We must be faithful in the *little things*
- Our obedience helps us to continue to hear the Lord's voice clearly
- Partial obedience is disobedience
- Delayed obedience is disobedience
- Doing the Lord's will but murmuring is also disobedience
- God is looking for an army of Christians who will be radically obedient to His call on their lives, and who will be men and women of faith.
- We need to have a **childlike faith** and dependency on God.
- God will only pour out His Glory through Holy Vessels. (People who are disciplined in both their actions and thought life.) We must aspire to be Holy and Christlike. This comes through **obedience** as we **walk in the Spirit**. This does not mean legalism, but freedom in the Spirit as we allow the Holy Spirit to guide and direct our lives. Having a repentant heart and short accounts with the Lord is the key to walking a victorious Christian life.

## 8) **The importance of being filled with the holy spirit (Refer to Receiving the Holy Spirit Teaching)**

## 9) **Signs and wonders with the preaching of the gospel**

“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord **heeded** the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralysed and lame were healed. **And there was great joy in that city.**” (Acts 8:5-8)

# CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHURCH PLANTING

- 1) Is God calling you to plant a new church? (**Psalm 127:1**)
- 2) *Where is God calling you to plant a new church?*
- 3) The importance of building a strong team before planting the church
- 4) *Having a vision for the church plant / s*
- 5) No two churches are ever the same. God has a strategy for reaching every community
- 6) *Having a unified and committed founding team, is the key to building a church which will stand*
- 7) God's timing is also important in establishing a new church. We must not run ahead of God. We must allow the Lord to establish our steps

- 8) *There must be a total commitment when planting a new church*
- 9) Leadership training should be an ongoing focus in every church. We must always be investing in the next group of leaders. (Some of the founding leaders may eventually move on to do other things)
- 10) *DON'T PUT GOD IN A BOX (There are many types of churches)*
  - i) *Street Churches*
  - ii) *Church plants in the prisons*
  - iii) *Work placed cell groups, and*
  - iv) *School small groups (Meetings)*
- 11) We must allow the Lord to lead us and to build His church
- 12) *Church planters must be gatherers and not scatterers of people*
  - i) *Leaders must not have rough edges in their personality*
  - ii) *It is hard enough to get some people to church as it is. People need to feel accepted*
  - iii) *All people in ministry positions, particularly those who are the first contact point for visitors to the church, must have warm personalities. (Fruit in their life)*
  - iv) *The right choice (God's selection) of ministry team members for the church plant is crucial to the success of any new church plant*
- 13) A church plant is best preceded by a season of evangelism, where members of the church planting team start connecting with the local community.
- 14) *Weekly (Regular) meetings between the founding members of the church planting team, is crucial in establishing a firm foundation for a church plant*
- 15) Every church plant should be preceded with much prayer
- 16) *Having a sound church structure (legal entity) and accounting and administrative structure is imperative. Integrity and accountability is crucial for any church. (Being accountable to other Pastors is wise for all church leaders. Being part of a group or denomination of churches is also a healthy safeguard for any church. There is wisdom in a multitude of counsellors)*

## KEEP YOUR EVANGELISM LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

### INTRODUCTION

The church today is in the middle of a real spiritual battle as the enemy tries to dilute the power of the church and discourage and prevent Christians from sharing the love of Jesus Christ with others. Whilst many people love going to church and fellowshiping with others, they often find it hard to share their faith with others.

This manual has been designed to equip all Christians in the area of personal evangelism, in a practical and relevant way, so that everyone has the ability to lead someone into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Whilst not everyone has the gift of evangelism as their main ministry gift, we are all called to be a witness to our faith. **(2 Corinthians 5:18-20)** God does however on many occasions, anoint every single Christian with the ability to lead a person to Christ.

There is no greater joy than in leading someone to the Lord, and it is hoped that many people will be encouraged to lead others to the Lord as a result of reading this manual. All that God needs is for people to be available to serve Him and to walk out by faith. The Holy Spirit will always give us the words and wisdom to lead others into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Fear prevents many people from sharing their faith, however I can testify to the fact that God will never leave nor forsake you as you share your faith with others, as it is His desire that no one perish. As a believer we can do all things through Christ Who strengthens us. It is only as we step out by faith to witness to others, that we will see the power of God working fully through our lives.

This manual also contains a number of short gospel messages, which can be preached in the streets and at school or other outreaches. These gospel messages address common questions, which are often raised by non-believers, as well as the need for everyone to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour.

The bible says that he who wins souls is wise. It is my own heart's desire that this manual will inspire many people to become soul winners, and to experience the joy of leading people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

## **MOTIVATIONAL TEACHINGS IN THE WORLD**

The world has in recent years been experiencing great stresses and uncertainties which have been unprecedented. In a time when families are breaking down, morality is on the decline, and financial and social problems are escalating, non-believers and even some uncommitted Christians have turned to different sources to find a meaning for their lives.

New age, witchcraft, and Satanism are now all growing in popularity, as people seek to find a spiritual component to their lives. This upsurge in their popularity has been chiefly brought about by the complacency of many churches and their fear and resistance to change.

The time is now when the church must stand up and be counted, and where it must again become relevant to the community. There has never been a better time for the gospel to be preached, and a greater opportunity to win souls for the Kingdom of God. In a climate where sin is abounding in society, God's grace is being poured out more and more, with the result that many people are now giving their broken lives over to Jesus Christ.

There has also been an increase in healings, signs and wonders in recent days, as was predicted by the prophet Joel. The harvest is truly plentiful, but the labourers are few. God is now roaming the earth seeking all those people who have a heart for Him, and who will be a part of His end time plans.

Many people of the world have greater work and social and convictions than many Christians, and have a greater passion in expressing their beliefs. Communism for example spread from the efforts of 10 men sharing a common vision with passion. Many successful business people also have better work values and convictions than many believers.

As Christians, we should all strive to be men and women of destiny, no matter what God has called us to do in life.

The following list of attitudes and beliefs were found in a book written by a now Christian author that I read, which outlined the attitudes and character traits necessary for people to be men and women of destiny

- Be clear about what you value in life
- When they zig, you zag (Do not be conformed to this world)
- Get a mentor
- Become a specialist, not a generalist
- Get out of the office early and work at home more often

- Write thank you notes daily
- Don't lie
- Give small gifts often
- Don't watch TV for more than one hour per week
- Spend half an hour each day thinking (Start the day with God)
- Guard your mind
- Never underestimate the power of a smile
- Constantly give
- Have a spiritual life
- Aim to be the best in the world at what you do
- Take ten risks a year
- Exercise daily
- Don't spend too much time alone. (Have fellowship)
- Associate with the kind of people you want to become
- Address personal problems early
- Get rid of addictions. (TV, gossiping, jealousy, selfishness)
- Be part of the 3% who write down life goals.
- Have no more than three major goals a year
- Know the awesome power of persistence

The apostle Paul said: *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have kept the faith"* (**2 Tim 4:7**)

### **WHY EVANGELISM (SCRIPTURAL BASIS)**

**Jesus said:** *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"* (**Matthew 28:19**)

*"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"* (**John 14:6**)

*"Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God"* (**Luke 12:8**)

*"The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest"* (**Luke 10:2**)

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives...To preach the acceptable year of the Lord"* (**Luke 4:18**)



**The book of proverbs also comments on the importance of sharing our faith:**

“Deliver those who are drawn toward death, and hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, “Surely we did not know this,” does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?” **(Proverbs 24:11-12)** “And he who wins souls is wise” **(Proverbs 11:30)**

**The Apostle Paul wrote:**

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace...” **(Romans 10:15a)**

“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.” **(2 Corinthians 5:18-20)**

Prophetic evangelism and signs and wonders will be prominent in these last days.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on my maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:17-21)

**WHY EVANGELISM (HEAVEN OR HELL)**

It is a common saying that there are only two things guaranteed in life, death and taxes. There are two possible destinations for our soul when we experience our physical death, since the real us, our spirit, lives on for eternity. All people can experience either one or two possible deaths, depending on their response to the gospel message.

The first death is our physical death; however, for some people they will also experience a second death, which is their spiritual death. It is only the second death that should be feared. For Christians their physical death only means being with Jesus Christ in heaven. This is a glorious hope that all Christians have.

Jesus said: “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus. It was because of God’s great love for mankind that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. It is God’s wish that no one should perish, but that all people should come to repentance. However, entry to heaven can only be achieved in one way.

Jesus said: “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God. For a person who decides not to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, awaits the second death, which is eternal separation from God’s love. (Hell) Whilst heaven is a place, which provides Christians with a great hope for the future, Hell is a place of eternal torment, and where the worms will never die.

The book of Luke describes the eternal destinies of two men. The first man was Lazarus, who was a beggar full of sores, whilst the second man was a rich man who lacked for nothing, and who lived mainly for himself. Whilst in torment in Hades, the rich man lifted up his eyes to see the beggar in the bosom of Abraham.

The rich man cried out to Abraham to have mercy on him, and if he could send Lazarus over to dip the tip of his finger into some water and to cool his tongue, for he was being tormented in the flames of hell. The plight of the rich man can be clearly contrasted to the eternal destiny of the criminal who called upon Jesus when he was hanging on the cross next to Him. Jesus said to the repentant criminal: “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

**KEYS TO LEADING A FULFILLED CHRISTIAN LIFE**

- i) Godliness with contentment is great gain.
- ii) Intimacy with God
- iii) Be a real person. Don't live in some spiritual orbit.  
(The apostle Paul became all things to all men that he might by all means save some)
- iv) Desire to grow in Godly Character.
  - a) **Servant hood** (Matthew 20:26-28)
  - b) **Humility** (Proverbs 29:23)
  - c) **Compassion** (John 11:32-44)
  - d) **Righteousness** (Sharp Conscience)
  - e) **Obedience** (Better than sacrifice) (**1 Samuel 15:22-23**)
  - f) **Optimism** (Hope) (**Romans 15:13**)
  - g) **Liberality** (Draws God's abundance) (**Proverbs 11:24-25**)
  - h) **Diligence** (2 Timothy 2:15)
  - i) **Endurance** (Galatians 6:9)
  - j) **Loyalty** (Proverbs 17:17)
- v) Great leaders have a sense of destiny (The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord) (**Psalm 37:23**). A sense of destiny produces:
  - a) Drive, zeal and passion of heart
  - b) Determination, discipline and courage
  - c) The ability to do great things for God in His strength
  - d) A realisation that you are part of a corporate body
- vi) The motivation of our hearts must be right:
  - a) Why are we doing something?
  - b) What are any leadership motives?
  - c) Beware of the Judas Spirit. (**2 Kings 5:20-27**) (Elisha's servant lied to gain wealth)
  - d) Do not be a lover of recognition
  - e) Do not be a lover of self-advancement
  - f) Do not be a lover of influence
  - g) Seek to be a part of body ministry

- vii) The joy of the lord is your strength

## **SOME KEYS TO EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM**

### **a) INTIMACY WITH GOD (Fall in love with Jesus)**

(Acts 4:13, Psalm 37:4, John 15:4-5 & Mark 12:30)

- Praise and worship God frequently  
**(John 4:23-24, Acts 16:25-26, Colossians 3:16 & Psalm 18:49)**
- Have regular quiet times and seasons of rest with the Lord (Recharge yourself) **(Isaiah 40:28-31)**
- Meditate on the Word of God (Allow Scriptures to become a reality in your lives) **(Joshua 1:8)**
- Allow God to be a part of all of your day, seven days a week.
- Talk to and be real with God
- We need to have an intimate knowledge of the God that we are serving **(Ephes 3:17-19)**
- Pray and seek God's advice on all major decisions, as well as everyday issues **(Jeremiah 33:3, Proverbs 16:3)**
- Enjoy fellowship with other Christians who are on fire for God
- Every day seek to experience the manifest presence of God
- Read books on the character and nature of Jesus
- Study the emotive aspects of the four gospels and the epistles
- Really try to understand fully what Jesus has done for us

We must first experience intimacy with God ourselves, before we can get really excited about sharing our faith with others.

As Christians it is so important to guard our hearts from being affected by a love for the things of this world. It is imperative that Jesus Christ is always our first love. The Ephesus church was full of good works but they had left their first love. **(Revelation 2:1-5)** We must ensure that we never become lukewarm in our faith. **(Revelation 3:14-19)**

Our love for Jesus gives us his compassion for the lost and a passion to share our faith with those who are unsaved.

### **b) UNDERSTAND HUMANITY**

- Without a vision people perish
- All people are created with a need to worship God (Man has to worship something)
- Every person experiences a deep sense of loneliness without Christ
- All mechanisms to cope with the non existence of a relationship with God eventually fail
- Coping mechanisms include: Alcohol, drugs, busyness, work, accumulating assets, gambling, investing lives in raising kids, sexual affairs, football worship, collecting trophies, etc

- Until people find a relationship with Jesus, they will always be seeking some spiritual experience, excitement or thrill in life to overcome the void in their lives.
- The spirit of the world has destroyed human relationships through self-centredness (sin)
- THE POWER OF PEER GROUP PRESSURE. Many people will do anything not to be left alone or isolated. The fear of being rejected by one's peers is very strong among the youth.
- There is NO certainty in life today. No job, friendship or marriage can be guaranteed
- All human inspired activities will always leave us dry and empty (Works of the flesh)
- Most people would like to think that they were remembered for something that they did
- As Christians, we can leave a mark not only on this world, but for eternity
- 63% of Australians said that they prayed at some time (Social Science Survey)
- Only 10-13% of Australians however, had been to a church (Social Science Survey)
- People are now seeking a spiritual reality and are open to Christianity
- The post modernists are non-rationalistic.
- Rationality is pretty well dead and buried. (We only have to look at today's violence)
- Many people are now seeking emotional experiences (drugs and sex) to cope with the emotional pain and emptiness that they feel in life
- The reality for many young people in the western nations, that buying a home (without a huge mortgage) is now becoming a far more remote possibility given the high house prices and unstable economic situation at the moment. For this reason, many of the youth have now just learnt to live for the moment

We must fully appreciate that every unsaved person has a deep down need to know Jesus, if we are to evangelise effectively

- c) WE MUST BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL TO CHANGE LIVES. As Christians we need to believe that the gospel is good news (**rom. 10:15**) (**rom. 1:16**) and the only real hope for a world which is full of pain and suffering and the only hope for eternity (**Acts 4:12**) (**Matthew 16:26**) (**John 3:3 & 5**) (**Psalm 103:2-5**)
- d) WE NEED TO HAVE AN ONGOING COMMITMENT TO SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH THOSE WHO DO NOT YET KNOW CHRIST. (**We need to be open to every God given opportunity**) (**2 Timothy 4:2**)
- e) WE NEED TO LEARN HOW TO CLEARLY COMMUNICATE THE GOSPEL MESSAGE TO UNBELIEVERS (**1 Timothy 4:12-16**) (**2 Timothy 2:15**)
- f) WE NEED TO HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIBLE (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**) **especially relating to:**
  - God's love for all mankind and His wish that no one perishes
  - God's love for you, and that He loves you with tender mercies

- The gospel message. (These key Scriptures should be memorised): **John 3:16, John 14:6, John 1:12, Rev. 3:20, Rom. 10:9, Rom. 3:23, Rom. 6:23, Ephes. 2:8-9, Acts 2:21)**
- God's provision and protection for His own people
- The hope we have in Christ
- How God has a plan for each and every one of us. **(Psalm 37:23) (Ephesians 2:10)**
- The power that we have as believers to perform healings, signs and wonders. **(John 14:12-14, Mark 16:17-18 and Mark 11:24)**

We must always believe in the power of the gospel to change lives and that as Christians we have been given the power and authority to heal others and to help deliver and set people free. **(Mark 16:15-18) (Acts 8:4-8) (1 Corinthians 1:17-18)**

- g) WE MUST BE AWARE OF OUR ENEMY (We must be vigilant and have discernment in the area of spiritual warfare) **(2 Corinthians 10:3-5) (1 Peter 5:8) (Ephesians 6:10-18)**
- h) THE IMPORTANCE OF DEPENDING ON THE HOLY SPIRIT  
(Zechariah 4:6) (1 Corinthians 2:1-5) (1 Thessalonians 1:5-6) (John 14:26) (John 16:13) (Acts 1:8)
- i) OBEDIENCE: GOD'S WAY (Isaiah 55:8-9) AND HIS TIMING
- j) HAVE LOVE AND COMPASSION FOR PEOPLE
- We must first love our brothers and sisters in the Lord. **(John 17:20-21)** Unity within the Church will cause the world to believe
- The friendship factor (Pride isolates us) **(John 15:12-17)**
- We must be an example of the gospel we preach
- Faith without works is dead
- Jesus had great compassion for people **(Matthew 9:35-36)**
- We must love people to the Lord (For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son)
- Always look for ways to serve the lost (Jesus was an example being the servant king) **(Matthew 20:28)**

People must experience the love of Christ in our lives as we share the gospel. We must live and be what we preach. (A new creation in Christ with His love shed abroad in our hearts)

### THE SIMPLE GOSPEL MESSAGE

- Many people would like to believe that when we die we go automatically to heaven
- This is not the case, and people will go to one of two places when they die, either Heaven or Hell.
- The Bible makes it clear that there is only one way to get to heaven. "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." **(Acts 4:12)** Jesus also said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, and no one comes to the Father (in Heaven) except through me. **(John 14:6)**
- All of us do bad things or have wrong or hateful thoughts from time to time. No one has ever loved God all the time and loved their neighbour perfectly. Jesus said even to lust after another person's wife was to

commit adultery. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (God’s standard of Holiness) **(Romans 3:23)**

- The good thing is that we don’t have to be perfect to go to heaven.
- “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” **(2 Corinthians 5:21)** “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and *he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*” (John 3:36)
- God loves us so much that He sent His own Son Jesus to die for you and me, so that we can enter heaven when we die. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” **(John 3:16)**
- Jesus said to those who loved and believed in Him, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also. **(John 14:1-3)**
- God is however a Holy and just God and requires that all of us turn from our sins and give our lives to His Son Jesus, if we are to enter His eternal kingdom.
- Jesus said to the Galileans, “unless you repent you will all likewise perish.” Jesus also said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. **(John 3:3)** and that “unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. **(John 3:5a)**
- As you can imagine, a righteous God would not like people killing each other in wars, assaulting one another, or even deceiving and using one another. All of us at times have lied or had wrong attitudes to others.
- God is Holy and loving, and whilst hating the sin in our lives, He actually loves us incredibly. We all deserve to go to hell, because all of us sin and fall short of the glory of God.
- God however, wants all of us to go to heaven, and for this reason He sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for you and me. When Jesus hung on the cross, He took all of our filthy attitudes, hateful thoughts, addictions, hurts and wrong actions upon Himself, as a sacrifice for us. **(ROMANS 5:6-9)**
- “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” **(Romans 6:23)**
- To get to heaven we only have to receive what Jesus did for us, by acknowledging that we are not perfect, and then turn to Jesus to ask Him to be our Lord and Saviour.
- Like any gift however, we must first receive God’s gift of salvation. “But as many as received Him (Jesus), to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.” **(John 1:12)**
- When we acknowledge and confess the mistakes that we have made, and choose to turn from our sinful and wrong ways and ask Jesus to be our Lord and Saviour, God’s Holy Spirit connects with our own spirit and we are born again.
- All of a sudden you are truly alive (born again of the Spirit of God), and you have the inner peace that comes from being in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- When you are born again, God completely forgives you of all of your past mistakes and sins, and all that He sees in you is the righteousness of Jesus.
- Most people think of religion as being all about rules and regulations, however, being a Christian is totally different, as you actually have a close and intimate relationship with God, in which you find the inner peace that we all seek.

- When people don't know God, they try all types of things to fill the deep down emptiness in their life, some destructive like drugs or gambling, or others in a more socially accepted way such as overworking
- All of us were made to worship God; however man right from the beginning of time decided to rebel against God and do his own thing. Like many of our ancestors, so many of us can continue to run from the peace of God, struggling in our own strength.
- Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." **(Matthew: 11:28)** Jesus also said, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" **(Matthew 16:26).**
- Jesus said, "behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door (of their heart) I will come in and dine with him and him with me."
- Jesus did all the hard work by hanging on the cross. Jesus bled and died for our sins, but death could not hold Him down. Three days later He arose from the dead triumphantly with the keys to death and hell. However, to receive the gift of eternal life you must receive Jesus as your Lord and Saviour.
- The bible says "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." **(Romans 10:9)**
- The following prayer will ensure that you have a place in heaven, as you call upon the name of the Lord Jesus. If you say this prayer with all your heart, you will experience the inner peace that comes from having a relationship with Jesus.

Dear God, I know that I have run from you for many years, but today I turn to you and I ask that you forgive me of all my wrong doings and sins in the past. I believe that Jesus Christ died and shed His sinless Blood for my sins and that He arose again from the dead three days later. I now invite Jesus Christ to come into my heart to be my Lord and Saviour from this moment on. Amen

## **HOW TO BRING SOMEONE INTO THE KINGDOM**

- Always be led by the holy spirit
- Seek divine appointments. Each morning it is good to let God know that you are available to be used by Him. God is a Gentleman. Divine appointments come about through prayer and having an intimate relationship with God)
- Follow God's directions when evangelising. Be where God wants you.
- All divine appointments will generally be with people who have common interests or a background similar to yourself. (True Holy Spirit led evangelism is energizing and not tiring)
- Many divine appointments come at times, which are not always the most suitable. We must however be obedient to God at these times, because it is usually at these times, that the greatest witnessing experiences happen.
- Always go by God's gentle first initial prompting. This first gentle voice is always God's voice directing us to someone to share the gospel. The second voice is always the enemy trying to suggest that the first voice was not God's voice, and the third voice is our own thoughts confirming the second thought. Always act on the first gentle prompting.
- When approaching someone to share the gospel, as a result of a gentle prompting, always ask God for an ice breaking first line. These may be lines such as "Have you got the time please." followed by "Thanks, how has your day been?" Or you may open with something like this. "Hasn't it been cold today" "I trust you have been

having a good day today” Or you may say to a person “How old is your baby” God will usually provide you with a first line to break the ice with.

- “For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say” (Luke 12:12) Jesus told His disciples not to worry about what they should say when they were brought before the synagogues, magistrates and authorities, as the Holy Spirit would teach them what to say in that very hour.
- Always listen for the Holy Spirit to give you the next question to ask the person.
- All questions should eventually lead the person to opening up their life to you, and the need in their life for a relationship with Jesus. You may reach this point in one minute, or it may take 20 minutes. Do not rush your time with the person at this crucial stage. At this stage it is good to look for common interests or to share common experiences with the person. The Holy Spirit helps us greatly in finding a common denominator with others.
- Never introduce Jesus into the talk until it becomes natural to do so. The turnaround point ALWAYS comes naturally.
- Introduce the benefits of having a relationship with Jesus when a person has become aware of their deep down need for this relationship.
- Sometimes we are only meant to sow a seed, at other times, to be a living example of the gospel, however on many occasions, (especially given the spiritual hunger of so many people today) we should be able to lead a person into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- If there is no resistance and the Holy Spirit is giving the prompt to bring them into the Kingdom of God, at this point it is critical that you lead the person into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They might never be this open and responsive to the gospel again. Expect distractions and possible fears at this time. Fight for their soul at this stage.
- Be gentle as you invite the person to give their heart to the Lord. The following is a suggested way. “It looks like you have given up trying to cope in your own strength. How about we hand all of your life’s struggles over to Jesus and let Him take over your struggles. The following is the greatest prayer you will ever say. Let’s pray together. Just repeat the following prayer with all your heart and you will feel the greatest peace you have ever experienced. However it must be said from your heart:
- The following prayer is an example of a prayer which could be used to bring a person into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ:

“Dear God, I know that I have lived a life apart from You up to today, living for myself, but today I turn to You and I am asking You to forgive me of all the wrong things that I have done in the past. I repent of all my past sins and I now invite Jesus Christ to come into my heart and life to be my Lord and Saviour from this moment on. I believe that He died for my sins and arose again on the third day and that the sinless Blood that He shed on the cross at Calvary has washed all of my sins away and that I now have eternal life. Guide and direct my life from this day on I pray, in Jesus Name, **Amen**”

### **THERE IS POWER IN THE USE OF SCRIPTURE.**

Before I lead most people into the sinners’ prayer, I will share Rev. 3:20 with them. During the course of sharing about Jesus I will share as many scriptures, such as John 3:16, as the Holy Spirit leads me to.

I must again stress the importance of avoiding all distractions whilst taking a person through the sinners’ prayer. at this point the prayer must be completed

Sometimes I get people before praying the sinners prayer, to Imagine there being a zip over their heart, and to get them imagining that they are unzipping the door to their heart.



On some occasions it is necessary to bind other spirits, before a person is able to open their heart up to Jesus. I normally at this point tell the person that I will first say a prayer that will enable them to yield their life over to Jesus.

The following short prayer is most crucial when someone has had either a religious past, (and you can sense a religious spirit coming against you) or if someone has dabbled in either witchcraft or the occult:

“Dear God, thank you for this man’s desire to want to know you personally. I now bind every spirit in this man who is not of You in Jesus name, with chains unbreakable, so that this person can now receive You Jesus as his Lord and Saviour.”

- At this point, I would then ask the person to pray with me a prayer of salvation.

### **THERE IS NO SINGLE FORMULA FOR WINNING SOULS**

Always be directed by the Holy Spirit. Below are some of the ways that God has used to bring people into the Kingdom of God:

- a) Worship Tapes. “Amazing Grace” followed by “Lord I give you my heart”
- b) Get well card with Amazing Grace on the front and a sinners prayer inside
- c) Mum playing amazing grace whilst I shared the gospel with someone
- d) Prayed for a lady who had been on crutches for 6 months. She was totally healed and came next day around to see me to find out more about Jesus before giving her life to Him
- e) Uncle came to Lord by reading Why Jesus tract, before saying the sinners prayer
- f) People in old people’s home read sinners prayer after singing “Amazing Grace”
- g) Distributing tracts in letter boxes and putting tracts (with website contact details) on car windcreens just prior to Christmas in large shopping centre car parks.
- h) Preaching on ministry websites such as [www.sonintl.org](http://www.sonintl.org)
- i) **Always be directed by the holy spirit when evangelising or witnessing**

### **WHY 90% OF CHRISTIANS NEVER LEAD ANYONE TO THE LORD**

- a) Lack of teaching in the church by evangelists to stir people to witness **(Ephesians 4:11-12)**
- b) Fear of man **(Luke 12:4)**
- c) More worried about man’s approval, than god’s approval **(Matthew 10:32-33)**
- d) Caught up with things of the world
  - Status, Looks, Image **(James 4:4)**
  - Compromise values: TV, videos, films, magazines
  - Worldly Possessions **(Matt. 16:26)**
  - Ambition (Work, Sport)

- No sense of eternal priorities

*Jesus said, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:19-21)*

e) Have lost contact / relevance with unsaved world

- Christianize
- No unchurched friends
- All social activities are in the church
- Us Versus Them Mentality

The Apostle Paul said, “For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all that I might win the more. And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law: to those who are without law, as without law, ...that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men that I might by all means save some.” (1 Cor. 9:19-22)

f) Discouraged by past failures (Philippians 3:12-14)

g) A failure to comprehend that hell will be a reality for many of our friends and family members

h) Lack of love for humanity (the lost)

i) A reluctance to count the cost of discipleship

The Apostle Paul said, “Are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool. I am more: in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity.” (2 Corinthians 11:23-30)

## CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

Responses to life’s difficult questions; (ideal to be used when street preaching)

Shorter responses to difficult questions (to guide people to a decision for Christ)

### - (I am a Catholic already)

I used to be an Anglican but I never knew God personally. The moment I invited Jesus Christ into my heart to be my Lord and Saviour, I had an inner peace for the first time in my life.

### - (I am already a very religious person)

I used to be very religious myself, but I never had a peace in my heart, and as I struggled through life, I never knew that there was a God who actually cared about me so much that He sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for me. When I met Jesus Christ and invited Him into my heart to be my Lord and Saviour, all of a sudden I had a real and exciting relationship with God and an inner peace at last.

### - (I was baptized as a baby, so I am already a Christian)

I was also baptized as a baby, however as I grew up I never got to know Jesus Christ, even though I went to a Church service every week. The bible even says how many people will come up to Jesus at the end of their life and say how they ate and drank in His presence, and how He taught in their streets, but Jesus will say to them, depart from Me, I never knew you. All of us have to get to know Jesus Christ personally before we die, and receive Him into our hearts and lives to be our Lord and Saviour. If I ask you this question today, could you answer “yes?” Do you really know Jesus Christ personally as your Lord and Saviour?

**-(All the wars are over Religion)**

Many wars are over religion, but if everyone had the love of Jesus Christ in their hearts, there would be no wars at all in this world. In fact it was the religious people who hung Jesus Christ on the cross, after He had spent 33 years on this earth healing the sick and oppressed and demonstrating the love and compassion of God.

**- (What about all the Hindus and Buddhists; surely they go to Heaven as well)**

Jesus Christ came to this earth for one reason, to die for the sins of mankind, so that all of us can have a relationship with God and a place in heaven for eternity. Three days later He rose from the dead with the keys to death and hell. Buddha is now dead, so is Krishna but Jesus is alive and the only way to heaven. Jesus said I am the way, the truth and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through me. Jesus stands at the door of heaven and lets all those in who have made Him their Lord and Saviour. If you were the Son of God, would you die on the cross if there were another way for mankind to get to heaven? In the same way, if I asked you to open up a security gate so that you could get in, which had a unique code 777, would it help you if I gave you every other combination except this one. Jesus is the only name under Heaven by which man can be saved.

**- (All that churches do is take peoples' money)**

The bible says that when you give ten percent of your income to God, you will be blessed and that you will be unable to contain the blessings. When I give my money to a church I am always giving to God rather than to a church institution. When I have been obedient in my giving to God, I have seen God's incredible blessing on my own life. I can only but encourage every person, that if they give to God what is His, He will always bless them, as His promises to us never change, because He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

**- (I am not a bad person. I don't believe that people are really bad and that everyone goes to Heaven when they die)**

Most people do not think that they are bad people, nor did I think that I was a bad person before I became a Christian, but the moment I invited Jesus Christ into my heart to be my Lord and Saviour, I realized just how sinful many of my attitudes were. I can now clearly see why the Bible says that we are all sinners, and that we all fall short of the Glory of God, and that there is no one righteous, no not even one. I am just so glad that Jesus died for all of My sins, and that He came into my heart to be My Lord and Saviour several years ago. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through Him. It was only when I gave my life to Jesus that I found what true happiness was, and I found the ability to truly love others in an unconditional way.

**- (I don't believe that there is any evil in the world)**

Most people when they see the news each night can now only describe many of the atrocities that they see happening all around the world as evil. The brutal execution of so many innocent civilians in Indonesia by the Malisha can only be described as brutal and evil. When old people are stabbed 20 to 30 times in a frenzied attack, the only word which can adequately describe these attacks is the word evil. It is almost impossible now to believe that evil does not exist in this world.

**- (I don't believe people are evil. People are just a product of their upbringing)**

A person who has killed thirty innocent people can only be described as evil. It is true however, that our upbringing has a significant effect on our lives, and determines whether or not a person becomes evil or not. People who have been physically and emotionally abused as kids can allow hatred and evil to come into their hearts. The bible even says that murder begins with an angry thought. People can feed their eyes and minds with so much violent, pornographic and demonic films, that they begin to have their own hearts and minds changed as they begin to become more and more evil. Some people are evil, as they have allowed evil to come into their hearts as a result of what they have seen, experienced and heard.

**-(I don't believe that there is any such thing as a devil)**

A lot of people don't believe that there is any such thing as the devil, and this is just what the devil wants people to think. The bible says how the devil a master of lies and deception is, and that he roams around seeking to kill and destroy as many people as he can. Many people have heard the lies of the devil telling them that they had no future and ended up taking their own life in response to these lies. Many people have also experienced broken marriages because the devil has told them that the pasture was greener on the other side, only to find that it wasn't.

You only have to look at the high divorce rate, the number of suicides, and the ever, increasing use of drugs, as people begin to believe that they have no future. The increase in heroin overdose deaths, single parent families and depression, clearly illustrates that the devil is certainly succeeding in his efforts to see the death and destruction of as many lives as he can. The bible however tells the truth that Jesus came to give life and life abundantly, and that all those who call upon the name of the Lord will receive eternal life.

**- (If God is loving, why does He allow wars and evil to take place in the world?)**

God is never the one who is responsible for wars; in fact it is actually quite the opposite. Wars start because the people responsible for starting them do not have the love of God in their hearts. If everyone had the love of Jesus Christ in their hearts, there would be no wars. America is a perfect example of how violence, homicide and immorality have increased, since God was banned from the schoolyard several years ago. It is now not even safe to walk down the streets at night in many of America's larger cities and towns.

The bible says that the human heart is wicked beyond measure, and only Jesus Christ can change the heart of a person. Only the love of God in the hearts of people will prevent wars; however so many people reject Him, and choose to live for themselves. It is when people live for themselves, and follows the spirit of this world, which emphasizes self-gratification and self-seeking, that wars and evil actions originate. God will however eventually judge the world, and all those who do not make Jesus Christ their Lord and Saviour, will ultimately spend eternity in Hell.

**- (If God is so loving, why would He allow people to go to Hell)**

God so loves this world that He sent His one and only Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our sins, so that all those who humble themselves and put their trust in Him, can have a place in Heaven for eternity. Many people however, reject Jesus Christ and choose to go down the broad path that leads to death and Hell, as they choose to live for themselves and in their own strength. It is God's desire however, that no one perishes and goes to Hell.

**- (Everyone should be entitled to his or her own beliefs)**

To me if I really love someone, I want the best for him or her, and part of this is being honest with them. If I didn't tell you that Jesus Christ is the only way to get to heaven, and that when you invite Him into your heart to be your Lord and Saviour, you will find inner peace and God's perfect plan for your life, I would not really be wanting the best for your life.

I care for you and value your friendship very much, and I would be devastated if I did not have your friendship for eternity. I could not stand the thought of you being in Hell one day, when today you can get into a right relationship with God, by accepting Jesus Christ into your heart to be your Lord and Saviour.

**- (Why do I need to become a Christian to get to Heaven?);**

There is only one way that we can have a relationship with God, and spend eternity in Heaven when we die. All of us sin and fall short of the Glory of God, and our sins prevent us from being in a relationship with Him. Because of God's great love for us, and His desire that all of us come into a relationship with Him, He sent His Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross to pay the penalty for all of our sins;

It is the sinless blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanses us from all of our sins. When we turn to God and invite Jesus Christ to come into our hearts and life to be our Lord and Saviour, we exchange our own sinfulness for His righteousness, so all God sees in us is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. It is for this reason that only Christians will get to heaven.

**- (If Christians are so good, how come children are molested by priests?);**

The bible says that we all sin and fall short of the Glory of God, and that none of us are perfect. The bible also says how a Christian's life is characterized by the fruit in their life. This changed lifestyle should demonstrate the qualities of God such as love, peace and long suffering. There is a saying that there is always one bad apple in the bunch, and this is usually the case in every single organization. The simple fact is that humanity is sinful, and only Jesus Christ can change the heart of a person, and it is only a person's ongoing relationship with God, which makes it possible for a person to live as a true Christian.

I don't believe that any Christian, who has the love of Jesus Christ in their heart, could molest a child, however a religious person who does not know Jesus Christ personally, may well struggle in this area. It is only when a person has invited Jesus Christ into their heart to be their Lord and Saviour that God sends His Holy Spirit into their life, so that he or she has the ability to live in a Godly and loving way.

- **(I would need some proof that God exists before I would become a Christian)**

Becoming a Christian is all about faith, believing that something will happen, when logic says it should not happen. When you look at nature, the first impression that most people have is that some higher Being must have been responsible for creating this earth. Most kids will say instinctively how God created the sun. The bible says how we must have a childlike faith to accept Jesus into our heart to be our Lord and Savior. It is amazing how when little kids at church hear about Jesus; all of them raise their hands to accept him into their hearts.

The older we get the more hurts we have experienced in life, and the more we begin to complicate life. Right now Jesus is knocking at the door of your heart hoping that you will open up your heart by faith to accept Him in. When you do, you will experience the peace of God that passes all understanding, and all of a sudden you will realize just how real it is having a personal relationship with God. Right now you too can open your heart up by faith and invite Jesus Christ into your heart to be your Lord and Savior.

- **(I believe in reincarnation, and that this life is just a trial run for our next life)**

Most people would say that living once in this world is hard enough, however many people would like to believe that there is another chance to have a better life later. The bible says that it is appointed for man to die once and then to face judgment. However the bible also says how we can all experience a better life, not only now, but also in the future. The bible also speaks about a place called Heaven, which is a place where there will be peace and joy and no more tears for eternity. All those who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus shall be saved, and have a place set-aside for them in Heaven for eternity. The good thing however is that when you turn to God and repent of all of your sins, and invite Jesus Christ to come into your heart, you will also experience the peace of God now, as you enter into God's perfect plan for your life.

- **(I can't take this thing about being spiritual beings. When we die we just die)**

I am sure that every person who has seen a dead body will realize that what remains is just a piece of meat, because the real person, the spirit of the person has left the body to go to one of two places that the bible calls Heaven or Hell. Similarly when someone is in another room, you are also aware of the spiritual presence of that person, as you are when a person is stalking you.

The simple fact is that we are spiritual beings, and all of us were made to be in fellowship with God, however because of our own sinful and independent nature, none of us can come into fellowship with God until we invite Jesus Christ to come into heart to be our Lord and Saviour. Until a person does, they will always experience an inner emptiness or void in their own spirit, as their spirit is not in relationship with God. Today you can experience the inner peace of God by repenting of your sins and inviting Jesus Christ to come into your heart to be your Lord and Saviour, so that you can enter into God's perfect plan for your life.

- **(I believe in God already. I pray to Him from time to time when in trouble)**

A lot of people believe that there is a God, but never actually have the joy of getting to know Him personally. I have seen many people on TV who I know of, but I do not actually know. I have seen John Howard on TV many times, but I do not know him personally. When you get to know God personally, you have so much joy just being in His presence, that you want to spend time with Him every day, and not just when your life is falling apart.

I have found that allowing God to guide my life is the most exciting and fulfilling way to live my life, as He opens up each new door in my life. Today you too can enter into a real and personal relationship with God

simply by humbling yourself before Him, acknowledging your own sinfulness, and inviting Jesus Christ to come into your heart to be your Lord and Saviour.

- **(Why did God allow my mum to die from cancer?);**

The bible says that there is a good man who perishes in his righteousness, yet there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his wickedness. The bible also says that it is appointed for man to die once and then to face judgment, and how death for a righteous person is really only the beginning of a new and better life in Heaven. People die early for many reasons, through taking unnecessary risks on the road, high stress levels, wrong eating patterns and from the pressures which often come from trying to control their life. People will usually suicide when they believe that they have nothing to live for, yet God has a plan and a purpose for every single person.

God will often supernaturally intervene to prevent someone from dying, to give them a chance to get their life right with Him. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. It is God's desire that no one perish, but some people will never ever turn to and love God. Death is inevitable for all of us; however God will sometimes supernaturally prolong the life of a person, to give them the opportunity to get their life right with Him. For those who have asked God to forgive them of all of their sins, and have asked Jesus Christ to come into their heart to be their Lord and Saviour, death in the body is just the beginning of a new and far better life in Heaven.

- **(God is in all of us anyway)**

A lot of people believe that God is in them, and whilst this can be true, it is only true if someone has invited Jesus Christ into their heart to be their Lord and Saviour. All of us have a God vacuum that only He can fill, and all of us will have an inner loneliness until God's Spirit fills that void and joins our own Spirit. Today you can find that inner peace by acknowledging your sinful state and asking God to forgive you of all of your sins. When you ask Jesus Christ to come into your heart and life to be your Lord and Saviour, you come into a personal relationship with God as the Holy Spirit comes into your life to join with your spirit.

- **(My life is fine at the moment. I don't really need Jesus.)**

A lot of people go through life living a second best life. When a runner is used to always running in a cheap pair of runners, he wouldn't even consider that there is a better way, as he pulls up each day slightly sore in the knees. If someone all of a sudden gave him a gift of a new pair of runners, and he put them on the next time he ran, he would feel like he is running on air. So many people choose to live life apart from God for many years of their life, until often; life's struggles literally bring them to their knees. The bible says that there is a way, which seems right to man, but in the end it leads to death. The bible also says that there is a path, which leads to life.

It is only when you invite Jesus Christ to come into your heart to be your Lord and Saviour that you will find true life and enter into God's perfect plan for your life, with an assurance that when you die, you will immediately have a place in Heaven for eternity. Without this personal relationship with Jesus Christ, you can never get to Heaven, and when you die, your spirit will reside for eternity in a place the bible calls hell. Today you can find eternal life however by simply humbling yourself and repenting of all of your sins, and inviting Jesus Christ to come into your heart to be your Lord and Saviour.

- **(I don't believe that there is any such thing as Hell)**

Most people would like to think that there is no such place as Hell, whilst many people's lives are in so much turmoil that the word Hell is almost an appropriate word to describe their lives. The bible says how there are two paths that we can take in life, the broad path, which leads to death and destruction, or the narrow path, which leads to life. Hell was only ever meant for a group of fallen angels that were led by a chief angel called Lucifer, who is also known as the devil. The bible tells how these angels wanted to take over from God, and as a result they were cast out of Heaven down to earth, where they have deceived man into wanting to be like God.

All of us when we are born instinctively live for ourselves, wanting what is best for us, trying to be something in our strength, and never wanting to involve God in our lives. It is God's desire that no one go to hell, however many people chose that path and reject God all of their life. God has however made the way where you can come into a real and personal relationship with Him. All you have to do is acknowledge your own

sinfulness and rebellion and repent of your sins and invite Jesus Christ to come into your heart to be your Lord and Saviour.

**- (I don't need Jesus. I have done enough good things to go to Heaven!)**

The bible says how we all sin and fall short of the Glory of God, and that there is no one righteous, no not even one. The simple fact is that Jesus has made it possible for the worst sinner, the murderer, the armed robber, the selfish businessman, the billionaire and the peasant to have a place in Heaven when they die. Jesus said I am the way, the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father in Heaven except through me.

There is no other name or way under Heaven by which man can be saved. Neither our money, our status in the community, our pale shade of goodness, or anything else will be able to get us into Heaven when we die. In fact the bible even says how, when compared to God's goodness, all of our own righteous acts are like filthy rags. We all need Jesus, however many people fail to humble themselves before God, and acknowledge their own sinfulness, and as a result, never end up going to Heaven. God resists the proud, but He gives saving grace to the humble. Today, you too can be assured of a place in Heaven by humbling yourself before God and repenting of your sins, and inviting Jesus Christ into your heart to be your Lord and Saviour;

**- (I believe already that there is a God or some higher spiritual being out there)**

Most people when they look at creation are made aware of the existence of a God; however so many people do not have a real and personal relationship with Him. Praying to a God who is not real in your own life is like talking to a statute. God longs to be in a real and personal relationship with all of us; however our own sinfulness prevents us from getting into His presence. It is because of His great love for us, that God sent His Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for all of our sins, so that all of us can have a real and personal relationship with God. Today you too can have a real and personal relationship with God by humbling yourself and repenting of all of your sins, and asking Jesus Christ to come into your heart and life to be your Lord and Saviour from this day on.

**- (How can Christians say that we are all sinners)? Surely babies are not sinful.)**

I have seen enough babies yelling and screaming at their parents in a supermarket, to realize that babies too are sinners. Likewise, I have seen enough fights between my young nieces to know that all of us, no matter what age we are, have a natural tendency to want our own way, and to do things that we want to do. Sin is categorized by selfishness and independence, and the bible even says that we all sin and fall short of the glory of God, and that there is none who does good, no, not one. Even as a Christian, I still have at times attitudes which are sinful and selfish, and I know that the only reason that I will go to Heaven when I die, is because I humbled myself before God, repented of all of my sins, and invited Jesus Christ to come into my heart to be my Lord and Saviour.

Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through me. Jesus is now standing at the door of your heart knocking, wanting to come into your heart to be your Lord and Saviour. Jesus loved you so much that He hung on a cross for your sins, and all you have to do is open your heart up and trust Him to be your Lord and Saviour. When you do, you will have a real and personal relationship with God forever, and an assurance that when you die, you will go straight to Heaven.

**- (What happens to people who do not hear about Jesus? Will they go to Hell?)**

It is God's desire that no one perish, and that all of us spend eternity in a relationship with Him, both while we are here on earth and in Heaven. God can and has revealed Jesus in many ways to people, including directly in an audible voice, through a bible, through graffiti on a wall, and even in a dust storm in Somalia, where the image of Jesus was seen and three thousand people gave their hearts to Jesus Christ. God will never ever give up on anyone; however each one of us must choose to follow Jesus before we die. Only God knows how He has revealed Himself to people, and right now He is giving you the opportunity to give your heart to Jesus Christ, so that you can have a relationship with Him for eternity. All you have to do is turn to Him and repent of your sins, and invite Jesus Christ to come into your life to be your Lord and Saviour from this day on.

**- (I have done too much wrong for God to want me. Jesus could not forgive me)**

Jesus actually came down to earth to save the sinners and not the righteous from their sins. In fact the bible says where sin abounds, grace abounds even more, and Jesus actually shared this principle in a story. In this story a religious man stood and prayed within himself the prayer, thank God I am not like other men who are sinners. On the other hand, a much-despised tax collector who was barely able to look to Heaven, cried out to God, be merciful on this sinner. Jesus said it was the tax collector rather than the religious man who went home in a right relationship

with God that night. Jesus died for all of our sins, and everyone from the criminal to the billionaire has the same opportunity to enter into Heaven when they die.

Everyone's good deeds are all like filthy rags before a Holy and loving God. It is only those who humble themselves before God and call upon the name of Jesus who will be saved. I don't care what you have done in the past; today you too, can be forgiven of all of your sins and find the peace of God which comes from humbling yourself before God and confessing your sins, and inviting Jesus Christ into your heart to be your Lord and Saviour.

**- (Religion is just a crutch for people who cannot cope with life)**

When I walk down the street, I see many people who are struggling to cope with life. The bible says that without a vision people perish, and in today's ever changing environment, genuine friendships are becoming harder to make. Many people are now resorting to drugs, alcohol, gambling, explicit adult entertainment or affairs to help them cope with living from one day to the next without a hope. Others throw themselves into a career, or the accumulation of material assets, or the building of a business, to help them cope with the inner emptiness within. Without realizing it, everyone has some form of method, or crutch, to help them get through life, and to cope with their inner loneliness. Religion, without a real and personal relationship with God is also not the answer. Having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is the only way that anyone will ever have the inner peace of God that so many people are now searching for in so many ways. Whilst being the most rewarding life ever, being a Christian is also full of trials and tribulations, as you go against the world's values of materialism, status, body image and immorality.

In fact, because you need to have character to become a Christian, many go down the broad path of life that leads to death and destruction. Today however, you can be one of those who enter into God's perfect plan for their life, and be one of those who can give people a hope in a world which is fast falling apart at the seams. All that you have to do is turn to God today and repent of all of your sins, and invite Jesus Christ to come into your heart and life to be your Lord and Saviour. When you do, you will not only experience the peace of God, but you will begin to follow God's perfect plan for your life, with the assurance that the moment you die, you will be in Heaven for eternity.

**- (I can see how your faith helps you, and that's fine, but I don't need it myself)**

Very few people, no matter how bad things are going, like to admit that they are struggling in life. Others are very well off materially, but never ever give much consideration as to how they could help others in society. All of us though, no matter whether we are well off materially or struggling to get by, have an inner emptiness that only Jesus Christ can fill.

Whilst one person may drink to cover up the pain in his life, someone else may eat out at restaurants frequently and seek constant entertainment to fill the void within. Every one of us will one day give an account of our lives to God. The bible says that none of us are righteous, no not even one, and that we all sin and fall short of the Glory of God.

All of us will die one day, and our spirits will leave our body to go to one of two places, either heaven or hell. It does not matter whether we have had a great life materially or a struggling life here on earth, we will all stand before God to give an account of our life. Jesus Christ came to this earth to pay the penalty for all of our sins, by dying on the cross and he shed his blood for us, so that all of us can have our sins washed away, if we trust Him to be our Lord and Saviour.

All of us, whether poor or rich, have to humble ourselves before God and ask Him to forgive us of all of our sins before we die, and invite Jesus Christ into our hearts to be our Lord and Saviour. The bible says that it is harder for a rich man to get to heaven, than it is for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.

Many people have rejected God all of their lives, only to find the reality of spending an eternity in hell, after they heard Jesus at the gateway to Heaven sadly saying the words, depart from Me, I never knew you. Today is the only day that you can be assured of getting your life right with God, for tomorrow may never come? Today you too can get to know Jesus Christ personally by inviting Him into your heart and life, to be your Lord and Saviour from this day on.

## **TWO QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (LONGER ANSWERS)**

**Comment: I don't need Jesus. I have done enough to go to Heaven?**

**Response:** A lot of people believe that they are good enough to get to heaven, and for many years I believed that I was a good person compared with others. I hadn't killed or beaten up anyone, nor had I committed any armed



robberies and basically I was friendly on the outside to most people. When God met me on the steps of Flinders Street Station, I gave my heart to Jesus Christ the next day at a church service. All of a sudden I became aware of how selfish I really was, and how many of my heart attitudes were so sinful and deceitful. The bible says that the heart is wicked beyond all measure and all of a sudden God's Holy Spirit was revealing just how true this was, and God began the process of changing all of my bad attitudes and actions.

If you look at a half clean shirt it is still dirty, and the same is the case with each and every one of our lives. We may have some good attitudes in life but there will invariably be people in our lives that we may find hard to love, or we may lie or deceive people, to get what we want, or we may covet things that our neighbours have. All these attitudes and actions are sins and the bible says that we all sin and fall short of the Glory of God. The bible also says that the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus. Because of sin none of us can come into the presence of a Holy and loving God, unless we receive the gift of salvation which is free to those who humble themselves and acknowledge their sinful nature, and ask Jesus Christ to come into their lives to be their Lord and Saviour.

God says that He resists the proud but He gives grace to the humble. This is why Jesus was most accepted by the tax collectors and harlots of His day, because they knew that they were sinners and lost, whereas many of the religious figures of His time were more worried about their appearance in public, than about being real and getting their heart right with God. One religious person said to Jesus how he was glad that he was not like the sinful tax collector next to him, and how he faithfully did all the religious stuff.

The tax collector on the other hand barely able to look into the eyes of Jesus said to Him, "Have mercy on me for I am a sinner". To this Jesus said it was the tax collector and not the religious person who went home that night in right standing with God, and that he had received eternal life that day. Jesus said I am the way, the truth and the life, and no one comes to the father except through Me. One day we all die and Jesus will say one of two things, either I know you, or depart from Me, I never knew you. We can only get to know Jesus whilst we are alive, and we can only accumulate treasures in Heaven whilst we are here on earth. These treasures will last for eternity, however our treasures here on earth will eventually be eaten away by moths, or rust away.

We all need Jesus, as it is only by making Him our Lord and Saviour, that we can spend eternity with God in Heaven rather than spending eternity in a place the bible calls hell, when we die. Living for Jesus here on earth is challenging but also the most rewarding thing that anyone can do. By making Jesus truly Lord of our lives here on earth, we will be able to set up for ourselves treasures in heaven which last forever, as we do those things that God has called us to do in this life. We do need Jesus not only to save our soul, but also to direct us along that path which will give us the greatest satisfaction in life.

**Comment: I believe already that there is a God or some sort of higher spiritual being out there.**

**Response:** So many people these days believe that there is something spiritual out there, as most people can now see how the pursuit of material possessions, pleasure and status is not the answer to a person's reason for existence. In the heart of every human being is a desire to be in fellowship with God, our creator and maker. All of us have been made in the image of God, and we were all created to be in fellowship with God. However right from the outset man chose to rebel against God and do his own thing.

The first man and woman created by God, Adam and Eve, were made in God's likeness and image. God gave them the opportunity to eat of every good thing except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because God knew that if they did eat fruit from this tree, and knew the difference between good and evil, the human race would begin to war against one another. The number of wars and divorces are testimony to this as people argue and fight amongst one another, each believing that they are right and that the other person is wrong.

This choice by our ancestors to rebel against God's wisdom resulted in the human race being separated from God, as they chose to listen to the voice of a serpent who enticed the first couple to disobey God's instructions not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This serpent was actually one of a large number of angels who were evicted from Heaven as they wished to take over from God in Heaven. Rebellion against God has therefore existed in man from the beginning of time, and this is why the bible says that no one seeks after God but everyone turns to his or her own ways.

However, man has always missed having a relationship with God, and deep down everyone longs to know God. It is for this reason that so many people are seeking a spiritual reality in so many ways, all of which are a substitute to having a real and personal relationship with God. Many people burn incense or pray to Krishna or read the horoscopes seeking a meaning and purpose for living, however none of these can fill the void that only the Spirit of God can fill in our lives when we invite Jesus Christ to come into our hearts to be our Lord and Saviour.

The spirit of every human is lonely until it is reconnected to God and this is the reason why so many people are lonely when they are by themselves and even in a crowd. Deep down their spirits are longing to be back in fellowship with God, because man was created to be in fellowship with God. All of us can however have a spiritual encounter with God because two thousand years ago God sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our rebellious and sinful ways, so that all who call upon His name and humble themselves can immediately resume fellowship with God. Only Jesus has paid the penalty for our sinful and rebellious ways.

When He died on the cross He took every single sin that we will ever commit upon Himself, as He became a sacrifice for all of our sins. On the cross Jesus Christ exchanged His righteousness for our sin, and for all those who ask Jesus to be their

Lord and Saviour, they immediately have their sin exchanged for His righteousness. When Jesus prayed to His Father whether there was another way that mankind could come back into fellowship with Him, He knew that there was not. The bible says that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins, so Jesus shed His blood on the cross for all of us so that all of our sins can be washed away when we call upon His name.

Everyone deep down longs to be in a relationship with God and today you too can experience the peace that comes from having a relationship with God. All you have to do is receive the gift of eternal life and salvation by humbling yourself and admitting your sinful nature, and asking Jesus Christ to come into your heart to be your Lord and Saviour, so that all of your sins will be forgiven. When you ask Jesus Christ to come into your heart to be your Lord and Saviour you are once again back in relationship with God and He only sees the righteousness of Jesus Christ in your heart.

Right now you can repent of your sins and turn to live for God, and ask Jesus Christ to come into your heart and life to be your Lord and Saviour, so that you can have that spiritual relationship with God that everyone deep down seeks.

Jesus said, behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door of their heart, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me. Only you however, can open the door of your heart to Jesus Christ, and right now He is touching your heart just longing for you to invite Him into your life to be your Lord and Saviour from this moment on.

## HOW CHURCH LEADERS COMBAT SPECIFIC AREAS OF SATAN'S ATTACK

### 1. DISCOURAGEMENT

Discouragement **never** comes from God. The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering without hypocrisy. **(James 3:17)** We need to **instinctively** reject discouragement and give it **no place** in our thoughts.

### 2. CONFUSION

God is **not** the author of confusion, and what you are being hit with is **not** from God. We must learn that confusion is a part of **many battles**, and we need to **not** let it lead to discouragement, but rather to **anticipate** and to **look** for an **opportunity** to **gain** an advantage over the enemy.

When the enemy hits you with confusion, stick to what you have been **doing** until God tells you otherwise. Don't make major changes during these times of confusion. Seek the peace of God and allow Him to speak to you.

### 3. DEPRESSION

God gave to Cain the most effective remedy for overcoming depression. We need to refocus on the basic spiritual disciplines:

- Becoming still before the Lord. Spend two hours just waiting upon the Lord. (Listening for His direction)
- Reading the Word
- Worshipping the Lord
- Fellowship with others (Especially with mentors and close friends)
- Reading biographies of great men of God
- Listening to teaching tapes or videos

WE NEED TO REFOCUS ON WHAT GOD HAS CALLED US TO DO

#### 4. LOSS OF VISION

When we begin to lose our vision, we need to **commit** ourselves to **strengthening** our vision. Without a vision people perish. “Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it.” (**Habakkuk 2:2**)

Sink your roots deeper and establish your purpose even more firmly upon the Word of God. Hold your course. Do not change course until you can **clearly** see the new course. Like the World War 1 ships facing a smoke screen, when we have a clouded vision, maintain the same vision and plan without deviating from it.

#### 5. DISORIENTATION

We cannot trust and rely on our feelings. We must not walk by feelings but by **faith** in the **sure** testimony of the **Word of God**. The Word of God will keep us orientated, even when our feelings are telling us to do something else.

#### 6. WITHDRAWAL

The safest place to be is on the front line. This is the same whether you are a soldier, or in **spiritual warfare**. You cannot ask the enemy for a break to have a cup of coffee, or because you have a headache.

- There are times of reprieve from conflict, but when you **know** you are on the **frontline**, even your breaks are taken with **vigilance**.
- Christians must never take off their **spiritual armour** and must never lose their vigilance.
- There are times and occasions in warfare for **strategic** retreats.
- Even when we have overcommitted, retreat should always be a **last option**. An enemy in retreat is in its most vulnerable condition.
- Defeat is **not** an option **in** Christ.
- We **will** gain the victory in **that which** He has **led** us to **do**.

#### 7. DESPAIR

**It is not good for man to be alone.** We are social beings and we must never withdraw from fellowship, otherwise we will usually sink into the deepest pits of hopelessness.

Witchcraft is basically the practice of cursing others.

Even those who love us can practice witchcraft against us by trying to control or manipulate us.

***Always rely on the Holy Spirit to bring ministry teams together.*** A gathering of people does not necessarily represent a display of unity. ***Unity can only come out of a shared vision***, and where the Holy

Spirit works within each team member a *desire to submit to one another to see their shared vision come to pass.*

## FINISHING OUR CHRISTIAN WALK STRONGLY

All church leaders and Pastors have the responsibility of helping to see those entrusted to them becoming strong and mature in their faith. **(Acts 20:28)** The Apostle Peter also wrote about the importance of church elders shepherding and being an example to those that God had entrusted to them. **(1 Peter 5:1-4)** Jesus also emphasised the importance of Peter tending to and feeding His sheep when He commissioned him to be a shepherd to those in the early church. **(John 21:15-17)**

This teaching is a study which church leaders, pastors, small group leaders and mentors can use to help train up and empower other Christians for the work of the ministry. If Christians can remain strong in their faith and follow God's plan for their life, their lives will make a big impact in this world for the Kingdom of God. **(2 Timothy 2:2)** As church leaders we need to be continually encouraging all pastors and believers entrusted to us, to fulfil their God given destiny. **(Ephesians 2:10)**

God has the best plan for every believer's life. His plan for our life will give us great purpose and meaning in our life here on earth. The bible also says that God honours those who serve Him.

**Jesus said:** "If anyone serves me, let him follow me; and where I am, there my servant will be also. If anyone serves me, he My Father will honour." **(John 12:26)**

**The Apostle Paul also wrote:** "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be **steadfast**, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." **(1 Corinthians 15:58)**

**As Christians we have a faithful God who promises that he will never leave nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5)**

**The Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the church in Rome:**

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." **(Romans 8:38-39)**

**Jesus Himself said,** "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." **(John 3:16)**

Eternal life is a free gift which we receive when we turn to god (*repent*) and put our faith and trust in Christ alone for our salvation (*believe*) **(acts 3:19)**

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." **(Romans 6:23)**

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." **(Ephesians 2:8-9)**

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified." **(Galatians 2:16)**

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is **justified by faith** apart from the deeds of the law." **(Romans 3:27-28)**

### OUR CHRISTIAN WALK IS A CONTINUOUS RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST.

**Jesus said,** "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and *they follow me*. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand..." **(John 10:27-29)**

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name; who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." **(Joh 1:12-13)**

### GOD HAS A UNIQUE PLAN AND PURPOSE FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN'S LIFE

“For we are **His workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them;” (**Ephesians 2:10**)

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, **to give you a future and a hope**. Then you will call upon me and go and pray to me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek me and find me, when you search for me with all your heart.” (**Jeremiah 29:11-13**)

### **AS CHRISTIANS IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO STAY CLOSE TO JESUS AND TO ALLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT TO GUIDE AND DIRECT OUR STEPS IN LIFE**

**Jesus said to His disciples**, “If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. (**John 14:15-17**)

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” (**John 14:26**)

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you all things to come.” (**John 16:13**)

### **GOD LOVES US WITH A PASSION AND DESIRES THAT EVERY CHRISTIAN’S LIFE WILL BEAR MUCH FRUIT FOR ALL ETERNITY. AS WE ABIDE IN CHRIST OUR LIVES WILL BEAR MUCH FRUIT**

**Jesus said**, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine and you are the branches. **He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit**; for without Me you can do nothing.” (**John 15:4-5**)

### **WHILST GOD WANTS US TO HAVE A BLESSED LIFE WHICH IS FULL OF MEANING AND PURPOSE, THE DEVIL ALSO WANTS TO DESTROY EVERY GOOD THING THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIFE**

**Jesus made this very clear**: “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (**John 10:10**) **AND** “that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (**John 3:15**)

**The Apostle Peter wrote**: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” (**1 Peter 5:8-9**)

### **THE APOSTLE PAUL EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE OF ALWAYS MAINTAINING A STRONG WALK OF FAITH**

“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” (**1 Corinthians 9:27**)

**Towards the end of his life the Apostle Paul wrote**:

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, **I have kept the faith**. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.” (**2 Timothy 4:7-8**)

Every Christian, like the apostle Paul, should be focused on fulfilling god’s destiny for their life and finishing their Christian walk here on earth strongly, full of faith

Jesus loves us with a passion and died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. We must not allow anything to impact our relationship with Jesus Christ.

## **THE BIBLE STRESSES THE IMPORTANCE OF CLINGING TO OUR FAITH AS WE WALK IN A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.**

### **The writer of the book of Hebrews wrote:**

“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an **evil heart of unbelief** in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.” **(Hebrews 3:12-14)**

### **The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Colossi:**

“For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

**Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words...**As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and **established in the faith**, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

Beware lest anyone cheat you **through philosophy and empty deceit**, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. **(Col. 2:1-4, 6-8)**

## **AND TO TIMOTHY**

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,” **(1 Timothy 4:1-2)**

**Jesus Himself said**, “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” **(Matthew 24:12-13)**

## **AS BELIEVERS, OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST MUST ALWAYS BE THE MOST IMPORTANT FOCUS IN OUR LIFE.** (1 PETER 1:3-9)

The book of Hebrews also gives a solemn warning of the consequences for those who have experienced the saving grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives, if they decide to make a deliberate and decisive decision to abandon their Christian faith. These are **not just backsliders** but apostates.

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame.” **(Hebrews 6:4-6)**

### **How wise it is to heed the Apostle Paul’s encouragement to the church in Philippi:**

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” **(Philippians 2:12)**

## **THE BIBLE ALSO SAYS IN PROVERBS:**

“Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be **health to your flesh and strength to your bones.**” **(Proverbs 3:7-8)**

Having a reverential respect of Who God is (A healthy fear of the Lord) and knowing His incredible love for us, helps us to keep on that narrow path which leads to life and life more abundantly.

**PRACTICAL KEYS (AND SCRIPTURE REFERENCES) TO HELP CHRISTIANS TO FINISH THEIR CHRISTIAN WALK STRONGLY AND TO FULFIL THEIR GOD GIVEN DESTINY**

- 1) Spending quality time with the Lord (**Psalm 37:4**) (**Psalm 46:10**) (**Isaiah 40:28-31**) (**Psalm 16:11**) (**Acts 2:28**) (**Acts 4:13**) (**John 15:4-5**)  
  
(Jeremiah 33:2-3 > Isaiah 55:8-9 {**His ways are higher than ours**})
- 2) Having a lifestyle of worship (**John 4:23-24**) (**Acts 16:25-26**) (**Colossians 3:16**) (**Ephesians 5:19**) (**PSALM 95**) (**PSALM 150**)
- 3) Meditating on God's Word (**Psalm 1:1-3**) (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**) (**Joshua 1:8**) (**Romans 12:2**) (**John 8:31-32**) (**Matthew 7:24-25**) (**Psalm 119:105**) (**Hosea 4:6**)
- 4) Being filled with the Holy Spirit (**1 Thessalonians 1:5**) (**Ephesians 4:18**) (**Acts 1:8**)
- 5) **The importance of prayer.** Seeking God's help during times of trials and temptations. (**Matthew 26:41**) (**1 Peter 4:7**) (**James 5:16**) (**Ephesians 6:18**) (**Jude 20**)
- 6) Walking in obedience to God's plan (Will) for our life (**Ephesians 4:15-17**)
- 7) Choosing every day to live for the Lord (**Proverbs 16:3**) (**Luke 9:23-26**) (**Romans 12:1-8**) (**Matt 6:9-11**)
- 8) Choosing your friends wisely (**1 Corinth 15:33**) (**Prov 12:26**) (**Prov 13:20**) (**Psalm 1:1**)
- 9) Walking in Humility (**Matt 23:11-12**) (**1 Peter 5:5-6**) (**1 Corinth 1:18-31**) (**Philip 2:5-8**) (**Prov 16:18**) (**Prov 18:12**) (**Romans 12:3**) (**James 4:4-10**) (**Psalm 34:1-4**) (**Psalm 147:5-6**) (**Psalm 149:4**) (**1 Corinth 10:31**) (**Luke 18:9-14**) (**2 Corinth 8:9**) (**Prov 22:4**) (**Numbers 12:3**) (**Luke 14:7-11**)
- 10) Having a teachable spirit (**Proverbs 15:22**) (**Proverbs 12:1**) (**Proverbs 11:14**) (**Proverbs 19:20**)
- 11) Having a healthy fear of the Lord (**Proverbs 2:5-8**) (**Proverbs 14:27**) (**Proverbs 1:7**) (**Proverbs 3:7**) (**Proverbs 9:10**) (**Luke 12:4-5**) (**Psalm 34:7**) (**Psalm 111:10**) (**Psalm 112:1-2**)
- 12) Being wise and fleeing all forms of sexual temptation (**1 Corinthians 6:18**) (**1 Corinthians 10:13**) (**Proverbs 6:32**) (**Proverbs 7:1-27**)
- 13) Having a servant's heart (**Matthew 20:20-28**) (**John 13:3-15**) (**Luke 16:10-12**)
- 14) Being accountable to other Christians and Church leaders. (**1 Peter 5:5**) (**Proverbs 18:1**) (**Proverbs 18:1**) (**Proverbs 14:14**)
- 15) The importance of fellowship (**Hebrews 10:23-25**)
- 16) **Being planted in a local church** (**Psalm 92:13-14**)
- 17) Choosing to walk continually in love and forgiveness (**Mark 11:25-26**) (**Galatians 5:13-14**) (**1 Corinthians 13:4-8**) (**Philippians 2:3**) (**Romans 14:10-13 & 19**) (**Ephesians 4:31-32**) (**Eph 5:1-2**)
- 18) Being content with what God gives us. Having an attitude of gratitude and being thankful for all the blessings that we receive in life. (**1 Timothy 6:6-11**) (**Hebrews 13:5**) (**Ephesians 5:20**) (**James 3:14-16**)

- 19) Being careful about what we meditate on. (We must be careful to guard our eyes and ears from those things which could ensnare us) **(Philippians 4:8)**
- 20) Knowing the joy that comes from finding and following God's plan for our life **(Matt 25:14-23)**
- 21) Developing a disciplined thought life where you take captive wrong thoughts and replace them with God's Word. **(2 Corinthians 10:3-5)**
- 22) Daily putting on the full armour of God **(Ephesians 6:10-17)**
- 23) Keeping a soft heart by keeping short accounts with God **(1 John 1:9) (Proverbs 28:13) (Psalm 119:127-135)** A life of obedience is a key to experiencing God's peace and joy on an ongoing basis **(John 15:9-11)** and to receiving God's blessings. **(Matthew 6:31-33) (Isaiah 1:19) (Deuteronomy 28:1-14)**
- 24) **Having a clear understanding that we have been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ** and that our salvation was a free gift and has nothing to do with our good works. (That when we repented and gave our life to Jesus Christ, all of our sins were washed away by the sinless Blood that He shed on the cross at Calvary and that His righteousness was imputed to us.) **(Isaiah 1:18) (Ephesians 1:7) (2 Corinthians 5:21) (Ephesians 2:8-9) (Romans 5:6-11) (Romans 8:1) (Philippians 3:9)**
- 25) **Putting all of our past mistakes, disappointments and hurts behind us.** We need to refuse to dwell on our past failures and continually look to the future that God has planned for our life. **(Philippians 3:12-14) (2 Corinthians 5:17) (Psalm 103:2-5) (Isaiah 43:18-19) (Luke 9:62)**
- 26) Knowing God's incredible love for us **(Romans 8:38-39) (Ephesians 3:17-19) (Jude 21)**
- 27) Having a clear God given vision for our life. **(Habakkuk 2:2) (Proverbs 29:18)**
- 28) Dying to self and **living** for Christ. (Living a crucified life) **(John 12:23-26) (Luke 14:26-27) (Luke 14:33) (Galatians 2:20) (John 15:9-17) (1 Corinthians 10:31) (Philippians 1:21) (Philippians 3:7-8) (1 Corinthians 2:9)**
- 29) **KNOWING** that God is in control of our life IF we have fully yielded our life to Him. **(Psalm 24:1) (Proverbs 21:1) (Psalm 23) (Matthew 6:25-34) (Psalm 91) (Proverbs 3:5-6) (Psalm 62:8) (Hebrews 11:6) (2 Corinthians 12:7-10) (Psalm 37:23-24) (Psalm 27) (Isaiah 54:17) (Deuteronomy 8:18) (Deuteronomy 28:1-14)**
- 30) Learning to live a life controlled by the Holy Spirit. **(Walking in the Spirit) STARTING THE DAY IN THE LORD'S PRESENCE IS THE KEY. (Galatians 5:16) (Galatians 5:25)**
- 31) Not allowing the cares of this world or the desires for other things to undermine our faith. **(Mark 4:18-19)** Focusing on the cares and pleasures of this world will negatively impact the faith of a believer and cause their life to become less fruitful.

Meditating on God's promises in the Bible rather than the cares of this world helps to keep the faith of a believer strong. **(Romans 10:17)** Being preoccupied with the things of this world however, can cause a believer's love for Jesus to grow cold. **(1 John 2:15) (Revelation 3:15-17)**

When experiencing trials or challenges we need to be able to commit our cares to the Lord **(1 Peter 5:7) (Matthew 12:28)** and learn to keep ourselves in His love. **(Jude 21)** As we do this we will find rest for our souls **(Matthew 12:29-30)** and allow the Lord to give us wisdom and direction for our life. **(Proverbs 16:3) (Proverbs 3:5-6)** God is well able to redeem even the most hopeless situations in our life. **(Psalm 103:2-5)**

- 32) **Finally, we must simply just continue to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 12:1-2) (Colossians 3:1-2) (Psalm 34:5) (Isaiah 26:3)**

When we look to others and even to Christian leaders for help, rather than to Christ, we can sometimes be disappointed.



All of us have the ability to disappoint others from time to time. The devil will always try and bring up offenses to separate believers. But Jesus said that where two or three are gathered together in His Name He is in the midst of them (**Matthew 18:20**) and that where brethren dwell together in unity, God commands a blessing. (**Psalms 133:1-3**)

**Maintaining Christian fellowship is always a key to walking victoriously as a believer.** We must simply refuse to take on offenses. If we continually make Jesus Christ our first love, we will also be able to love and forgive others more easily.

Keeping our eyes on Jesus and His plan for our life will help to ensure that we finish our Christian walk strongly and that we complete what God has planned for our life.

Jesus himself promises all believers that his love is unconditional and that he will never leave nor forsake those who love him. (**Hebrews 13:5a**)

THE BIBLE ALSO SAYS: “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the Lord.” (**Jeremiah 17:7**)

## **WE MUST PREACH THE ONE TRUE GOSPEL**

The apostle Paul emphasised the importance of not adding to or taking away from the gospel message. In his letter to the churches in the region of Galatia the apostle Paul warned the churches not to depart from the purity of the gospel and to preach a different gospel. (**Galatians 1:8-9**) As Christians we must never be tempted to dilute the gospel or to leave out the call to repentance to make the gospel more appealing to others. Nor must we ever add good works as being a basis for obtaining salvation.

The apostle Paul made this very clear in his letter to the churches in Galatia, “*knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.*” (**Galatians 2:16**) Salvation only comes through repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. “*For by Grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*” (**Ephesians 2:8-9**)

There is power in the gospel message. It is so important that we do not add to or dilute the gospel message. We need to be ready in season and out of season to preach the gospel. (**See 2 Timothy 4:2**)

**This teaching contains a number of thoughts on the importance of preaching uncompromisingly the pure gospel to the lost.**

### **WHEN WE PREACH THE GOSPEL MESSAGE PEOPLE ARE SAVED**

**The Apostle Paul wrote,** “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” (**Romans 1:16**)

### **THE TRUTH SETS PEOPLE FREE**

**Jesus Himself said,** “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (**John 8:31-32**)

### **THERE IS ONLY ONE TRUE GOD**

“You are my witnesses,” says the LORD, “And My servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after me.” (**Isaiah 43:10**)

“Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God.” **(Isaiah 44:6)**

**Every other thing that is worshipped is called an idol. The bible says idolatry is foolishness**

“Those who make an image, all of them are useless, and their precious things shall not profit; they are their own witnesses; they neither see nor know, that they may be ashamed. Who would form a god or mould an image that profits him nothing?” **(Isaiah 44:9-10)**

“Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshippers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.” **(Acts 17:16-17)**

### **ONLY JESUS CAN SAVE US FROM OUR SINS**

“I, even I, am the LORD, and besides me there is no saviour.” **(Isaiah 43:11)**

“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” **(Acts 4:12)**

**Jesus said**, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” **(John 14:6)**

“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” **(John 3:36)**

### **WE MUST NOT ADD TO OR DISTORT THE GOSPEL MESSAGE**

**The Apostle Paul wrote**, “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ;” **(Galatians 1:8-10)**

### **WE MUST NEVER BE ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE**

**The Apostle Paul said**, “And for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” **(Ephesians 6:19-20)**

### **WE MUST PREACH REPENTANCE TOWARDS GOD AND FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST. WE MUST NEVER LEAVE OUT THE CALL TO REPENTANCE**

“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.” **(Acts 4:19)**

After John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God, “The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel.” **(Mark 1:15)**

### **WE NEED TO ALWAYS PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED**

**The apostle Paul wrote**, “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” **(1 Corinthians 1:17-18)**

“But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness.” **(1 Corint 1:23)**

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” **(1 Corinthians 2:1-2)**

“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” **(Galatians 6:14)**

### **THE FATHER’S HEART FOR THE LOST**

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” **(John 3:16)**

### **JESUS GREAT LOVE FOR US**

“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” **(Hebrews 12:2)**

### **IT IS THE GOODNESS OF GOD THAT LEADS PEOPLE TO REPENTANCE**

**The apostle Paul wrote**, “Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance.” **(Romans 2:4)**

“For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” **(Romans 5:6-8)**

### **IT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO CONVICTS PEOPLE OF THEIR SINS.**

**We must preach in the power of the Holy Spirit. (Not with human wisdom)** The Apostle Paul wrote, “And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” **(1 Corinthians 2:4)**

**Jesus Himself said**, “But now I go away to Him who sent Me ... It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.” **(John 16:5, 7-11)**

**The Apostle Paul wrote**, “And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” **(1 Corinthians 2:4-5)**

**We must preach the entire gospel (the whole counsel of god).** The Apostle Paul said, “For I have not shunned declaring to you the whole counsel of God.” **(Acts 20:27)**

## **USING THE LAW TO HELP PEOPLE COME TO FAITH**

This teaching is designed to help Christians when they are witnessing to someone who says that they are a good person. The Bible makes it clear that no person is good and that without Christ the human heart is “...deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked...” **(Jeremiah 17:9)**

**The Apostle Paul wrote**, “There is none righteous, no, not one;” **(Romans 3:10a)** and “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” **(Romans 3:23)** The Apostle John also wrote, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” **(1 John 1:8)**

It is only when a person becomes a Christian and the Holy Spirit comes to live on the inside of them, that they realise just how sinful they were prior to becoming a Christian.

This teaching is designed to help people to become aware of their need to come to Jesus Christ to receive His forgiveness. I will now share a 5 step process which will help those people who think that they are good people

come to Jesus Christ in true repentance and faith. The first step has two methods of approaching the person that we are witnessing to.

It is very important however, that this method never just becomes a mechanical procedure for witnessing to non believers. Rather, this method should always be employed as guided by the Holy Spirit as we share our faith in love to unbelievers.

The Apostle Paul wrote in the book of Galatians, "...the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." (**Galatians 3:24**)

### **A SUMMARY OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

- 1) You shall have no other gods before Me (God should be number one)
- 2) You shall not make yourself any graven image (Don't bow down to anything but God)
- 3) You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain (Don't use your lips to dishonour God)
- 4) Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy (Don't neglect the things of God)
- 5) Honour your Father and your Mother
- 6) You shall not kill
- 7) You shall not commit adultery (Adultery leaves a heart broken)
- 8) You shall not steal
- 9) You shall not lie
- 10) You shall not covet (To want what others have)

I will now share the 5 steps that can help in bringing a person to faith in Jesus Christ, particularly when they say that they are a good person or if that person is somewhat self-righteous. (What Did Jesus Do)

#### **STEP 1**

- i) **When a person says to YOU after hearing the gospel, "But I am a good person."**

**OUR RESPONSE TO THIS CAN BE**

"**W**hy do you think that you are a good person?"

**OR**

- ii) **We can initiate a witnessing opportunity by going up to someone and asking them the question,**

"**W**ould you consider yourself to be a good person?"

#### **STEP 2**

**After the person has responded to one of the above questions we can ask the next question,**

"**D**o you think that you have kept all of God's Ten Commandments?"

*After this question we can ask a number of the following questions as prompted by the Holy Spirit*

Has God always been number one in your life? **(Wait for answer)**

*(If no, you can say that you have already broken the first commandment)*

Have you ever told a lie in your life? **(Wait for answers)**

*(If yes, you can say to them, "what does that make you?")* **{A LIAR}**

Have you ever stolen anything in your life? **(Wait for answers)**

*(If yes, you can say to them, "what does that make you?")* **{A THIEF}**

Have you always totally honoured your parents? **(Wait for answer)**  
*(If no, you can say, “This means that you have broken the fifth commandment)*

Jesus said even to lust after someone who was not your wife was to commit adultery in your heart. Have you ever lusted after anyone other than your wife/husband? **(Wait for answer)**

*(If yes, you can say to them, “So what would that make you?” You can help them by saying “So that would make you therefore an adulterer at heart”)*

*You can then conclude these questions by summarising their answers as follows with another question (This question may or may not be used. When asking this question we need to do so in a non-judgemental and light hearted way. STEPS 3 AND 4 WILL BRING CONVICTION)*

“So by your own admission you are saying that you have been a liar and a thief and an adulterer at heart who has not always honoured you parents and that you have not always made God number one in your life? Is that right? **(Wait for answer)** **YES.** Before going to step 3 it is also good to share the following two scriptures with the person you are witnessing to. **The Bible says,** “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.” **(James 2:10).** **Jesus also said,** “There you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” **(Matthew 5:48)**

### **STEP 3**

Now ask the following question. **“If you were to be ☐ Judged by the Ten Commandments would you be innocent or guilty? WAIT FOR ANSWER**

### **STEP 4**

**☐Destiny:** Now ask the following question. **“Given that you have broken many of God’s ten-commandments, would you go to heaven or hell if you were to die tonight? WAIT FOR ANSWER**

### **STEP 5**

*Now that they have been convicted of their sins and their need of a saviour*

Share about the good news of the gospel and the free gift of eternal life to all those who repent and believe in Jesus Christ

**AGAIN ALL THAT WE DO MUST BE DONE IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

However these five steps will help many who are still learning how to share their faith with unbelievers, to have a structure which can help them in their witnessing to others.

## **USING THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT**

The Spirit-filled experience is more than just “speaking in tongues.” In reality it is coming into the fullness of the gifts and fruit of the Spirit as outlined in the New Testament. **(1 Corinthians 12:7-11) (Galatians 5:22-23)**

The Bible reveals that the Person of the Holy Spirit has been the primary agent in all of the ministry of the Word throughout the centuries. The Scriptures show the Holy Spirit uniquely and distinctly at work in all of the following roles:

- 1) **He is the Author of the Old Testament** (2 Samuel 23:2; Isaiah 59:21; Jeremiah 1:9; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:21)
- 2) **He is the Author of the New Testament** (John 14:25-26; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; Revelation 1:10-11; Revelation 2:7)
- 3) **He is the Old Testament Anointer.** The Scriptures name no less than sixteen of the Old Testament leaders in Israel who received this anointing. These leaders were as follows: **Joseph** (Genesis 41:38); **Moses** (Numbers 11:17); **Joshua** (Numbers 27:18); **Othniel** (Judges 3:10); **Gideon** (Judges 6:34); **Jephthah** (Judges 11:29); **Samson** (Judges 14:6, Judges 14:19) (Judges 15:14-15); **Saul** (1 Samuel 10:10) (1 Samuel 11:6); **David** (1 Samuel 16:13); **Elijah** (1 Kings 18:12) (2 Kings 2:16); **Elisha** (2 Kings 2:15); **Azariah** (2 Chronicles 15:1); **Zechariah** (2 Chronicles 24:20); **Ezekiel** (Ezekiel 2:2); **Daniel** (Daniel 4:9) (Daniel 5:11) (Daniel 6:3); **Micah** (Micah 3:8).
- 4) **The Holy Spirit Has empowered Believers in the Church age** (Acts 1:8) (1 Corinthians 2:3-5) (1 Thessalonians 1:5) (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)

### **RECEIVING THE FULLNESS OR INFILLING OR BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Book of Acts provides five accounts of people receiving the fullness or infilling or baptism in the Holy Spirit. **(Acts 2:4) (Acts 8:14-25) (Acts 9:17-20) (Acts 10:44-48) (Acts 19:1-7)** In these accounts five factors are manifest.

#### **Five out workings of the fullness of the spirit as recorded in the book of acts**

- 1) There was an overwhelming in breaking of God's presence experienced by all who were present.
- 2) There was an evident transformation in the lives and witness of the disciples who were filled.
- 3) That which was experienced became the impetus for the growth of the church, as "daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ." **(Acts 5:42)**
- 4) The immediate evidence in three of the five accounts was speaking in tongues and magnifying God. **(Acts 10:46) (Acts 2:4) (Acts 2:11)**
- 5) The ultimate purpose of this experience was empowered witnessing **(Acts 1:8)** and a deeper dimension of Christian commitment for the achievement of happiness **(Ephesians 5:19)**, gratitude **(Ephesians 5:20)**, humility **(Ephesians 5:21)**, and fruitfulness. **(Galatians 5:22-23)**

**Thus speaking with tongues is a properly expected sign, affirming the Holy Spirit's abiding presence and assuring the believer of an invigorated living witness. It is not viewed as a qualification for fullness of the Holy Spirit, but as one indication of that fullness.**

### **THE TWOFOLD FUNCTION OF THE GIFT OF TONGUES**

The Bible describes two basic functions of "tongues." Firstly, it is for personal edification and secondly, for public exhortation. In the experience of the baptism in or infilling of the Holy Spirit, "tongues" functions as a sign of the Holy Spirit's presence. Jesus prophesied it as a sign **(Mark 16:17)**, Paul referred to it as a sign **(1 Corinthians 14:22)**, and Peter noted its uniformity as a sign-gift in confirming the validity of the Gentiles' experience in the Holy Spirit. **(Acts 10:44-46) (Acts 11:16-17) (Acts 15:7-9)**

### **TONGUES FOR PERSONAL EDIFICATION**

First, “speaking in tongues” is a private affair for self-edification, **(1 Corinthians 14:2-4)** and is practiced devotionally by the believer during his most intimate moments of communication with God as he is moved upon by the Holy Spirit. In line with this understanding the following reasons are propounded for speaking with tongues.

1. Speaking with tongues as the Holy Spirit gives utterance is the unique spiritual gift which can be identified with the church. All other gifts, miracles and spiritual manifestations were evident during the Old Testament times, before the Day of Pentecost. This new phenomenon of speaking with tongues was ordained by God for the church. **(1 Corinthians 12:28; 14:21)**
2. Speaking with tongues is a specific fulfilment of prophecies by Isaiah and Jesus. Compare **(Isaiah 28:11)** with **(1 Corinthians 14:21)** and also **(Mark 16:17)** with **(Acts 2:4)** **(Acts 10:46)** and **(Acts 19:6)**
3. Speaking with tongues is also a proof of the resurrection and glorification of Jesus Christ. **(John 16:7)** **(Acts 2:26)**
4. Speaking in tongues is also an evidence of the baptism in or infilling of the Holy Spirit. **(Acts 2:4)** **(Acts 10:45-46)** and **(Acts 19:6)**
5. Speaking in tongues is also a spiritual gift for self-edification **(1 Corinthians 14:4)** **(Jude 20)**
6. Speaking with tongues is a means by which the Holy Spirit intercedes through us in prayer. **(Romans 8:26)** **(1 Corinthians 14:14)** **(Ephesians 6:18)**
7. Speaking with tongues is a spiritual gift for communication with God in private worship. **(1 Corinthians 14:15)**
8. Tongues are one of the signs that follow and confirm the Word of God when it is preached. **(Mark 16:17)** **(Mark 16:20)** **(1 Corinthians 14:22)**
9. Speaking with tongues is a spiritual means for rejoicing. **(1 Corinthians 14:15)** **(Ephesians 5:18-19)**
10. The Apostle Paul’s application of Isaiah’s prophecy also would tend to suggest that speaking with tongues also brings “rest” or “refreshing” into our lives. **(Isaiah 28:12)** **(1 Corinthians 14:21)**
11. Speaking with tongues is also a spiritual gift for the spiritual edification of the church when accompanied by interpretation. **(1 Corinthians 14:5)**

## **TONGUES FOR PUBLIC EXHORTATION**

Turning to the second function of “tongues” – public exhortation – *1 Corinthians 14* bases the gifts of the Spirit on the one sure foundation of love. **(1 Corinthians 14:1)** Public “tongues” also calls for integrity in practice to help ensure the preservation of order in our fellowship and worship services.

Although in the past some may have abused this gift as an occasion for fleshly pride, we must recognise that it can be a vital and valuable part of our worship meetings when placed in its proper setting, for the edification of the Body of Christ. **(1 Corinthians 14:12-13)**

The sincere Spirit-filled believer will not be preoccupied with this gift alone for he or she sees it as only one of many gifts given for the “wholeness” of the church. The spiritually sensitive believer recognises the following New Testament guidelines regarding the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues for public exhortation.

- 1) **Speaking in “tongues” only edifies public worship when it is interpreted.** The worshipper is to pray for the interpretation and if it is withheld, he keeps silent, unless someone who functions in the gift of interpretation is known to be present. **(1 Corinthians 14:5, 28)**

- 2) The exercise of tongues is to be limited to a sequence of two or three at the most. (1 Corinthians 14:27)**  
While many hold this to be a rigid number, others understand it to be a guideline to keep the worship service in balance. In actuality, the Holy Spirit rarely moves beyond these limitations; however, on occasions, for special reasons to meet special needs, there may be more than one sequence of two or three tongues for public exhortation, appropriately spaced apart in a given service. The overriding guideline however is, “Let all things be done decently and in order.” **(1 Corinthians 14:40)**

Before giving a description of the nine gifts of the Spirit, it is good to consider the importance of having a right heart attitude and the right motivation when using our spiritual gifts. Five important things to consider when using our spiritual gifts will now be considered in turn.

### **1. THE BASIS FOR EXERCISING ALL GIFTS SHOULD BE LOVE**

For those who exercise spiritual gifts, the qualifying factor should always be love and not the experience of a gift. Having love for others and caring for others in the body of Christ is clearly emphasised in the Bible as being the motive for all ministry. Jesus Himself said in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...” and in John 15:12-13, “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”

Ministry to others should always be motivated by love, even when strong discipline needs to be given to members within the body of Christ.

**The Apostle Paul wrote on the imperative of love in his epistle to the church in Corinth.**

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.” **(1 Corinthians 13:1-2)** “That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the **same care** for one another.” **(1 Corinthians 12:25)**

### **2. WE MUST AVOID ALL FORMS OF PRIDE (THE AUTHOR AND DISPENSER OF ALL GIFTS IS THE HOLY SPIRIT)**

“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.” **(1 Corinthians 12:11)**

**The Apostle Paul wrote,** “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,” **(2 Corinthians 3:5)**

“And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.” **(Coloss 3:23-24)**

“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” **(1 Corinthians 10:31)**

“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” **(Galatians 6:14)**

“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteems others better than himself.” **(Philippians 2:3)**

**John the Baptist said, “He (Jesus) must increase, I must decrease. (John 3:30)**

### **3. THE SPIRIT WORKS ONLY TO EDIFY (THE USE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS SHOULD NOT CREATE DISORDER IN OUR CHURCH MEETINGS)**

The Holy Spirit works only to edify. **(1 Corinthians 14:26)** For this reason whenever the gifts of the Spirit are in operation, there will be order in our meetings and no one will feel embarrassed or uneasy. **(1 Corinthians 14:40)**



**The Apostle Paul wrote,** “But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.” **(1 Corinthians 14:3)**

The “spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets” **(1 Corinthians 14:32)**. The divine gift of prophetic utterance is put under the control and responsibility of the possessor. Each Spirit-filled person can exercise self-control. For this reason confusion can and should be avoided so that decency and unity may prevail in all of our church meetings. **(1 Corinthians 14:33)**

As speaking in “tongues” in a public worship meeting only edifies those attending when it is interpreted, the worshipper is to pray for the interpretation before using this gift. If the interpretation is withheld, he should keep silent unless someone who functions in the gift of interpretation is known to be present. **(1 Corinthians 14:5) (1 Corinthians 14:28)**

#### **4. THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES BELIEVERS GIFTS TO USE SO AS TO BUILD UP AND ENCOURAGE THE BODY OF CHRIST AND TO HELP SEE GOD’S KINGDOM EXPANDED. *(Jesus also emphasised the importance of having a servant heart)***

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.” **(1 Corinth 12:7)**

“Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.” **(1 Corinthians 14:12)**

Apart from those times when we pray in tongues for self-edification and for building ourselves up in our own faith **(Jude 20)** exercising our spiritual gifts which the Holy Spirit has distributed to us, is to be for the building up, edification and restoration of others. Having a humble servant heart will help to safeguard us against any pride that may try to arise as we begin to exercise the gifts of the Spirit that have been entrusted to us.

**Jesus Himself said,** “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” **(Matthew 20:26-28)**

#### **5. THE IMPORTANCE OF GROWING IN CHARACTER**

The bible say much about the importance of growing in character as Christians **(Romans 8:29)** and living a life which reflects the nature of Jesus Christ.

**The Apostle Paul wrote,** “Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts.” **(Romans 13:13-14)**

**Jesus Himself said,** “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” **(Matthew 5:16)**

It is so important as Christians that our life reflects what we preach and share with others. **(Colossians 3:12-16)** For many people the only bible that they will ever read will be our lives. The bible says much about the importance of walking in the Spirit as Believers. **(Romans 8:14) (Galatians 5:16) (Galatians 5:25-26)** As we learn to walk in the Spirit our lives will reflect the character of Christ more and more. “But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...**” **(Galatians 5:22-23)**

Whilst it is important to desire spiritual gifts **(1 Corinthians 14:1)** so that our witness will also be attested to by supernatural manifestations of God, we must also balance this with a desire to glorify God with our own lives. The bible says that as we humble ourselves before God, He will raise us up into greater levels of ministry. “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.” **(James 4:10)** Jesus Himself also said, “...he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.” **(John 14:12)**

How important it is in these last days that people in the world can see, both the power of God operating in and through our lives and our lives reflecting more and more the character of Christ, as we learn to walk in the Spirit. To conclude this teaching, a definition of each of the nine gifts of the Spirit will now be given.

### THE NINE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

- 1) **The word of wisdom** – is a spiritual utterance at a given moment *through the Spirit*, supernaturally disclosing the mind, purpose and will of God as applied to a *specific* situation.
- 2) **The word of knowledge** – is a supernatural revelation of information pertaining to a person or an event, given for a *specific purpose*, usually having to do with an *immediate need*.
- 3) **The gift of faith** – is a *unique form of faith* that goes beyond natural faith and saving faith. It supernaturally trusts and does not doubt with reference to the specific matters involved.
- 4) **Gifts of healings** – are those healings that God performs *supernaturally by the Spirit*. The plural suggests that as there are many sicknesses and diseases, the gift is related to healings of many disorders.
- 5) **The working of miracles** – is a manifestation of power beyond the ordinary course of natural law. It is a *divine enablement* to do something that *could not be done naturally*.
- 6) **Prophecy** – is a *divine disclosure* on behalf of the Spirit, an edifying revelation of the Spirit for the moment, a sudden insight of the Spirit, prompting exhortation or comfort.
- 7) **Discerning of spirits** – is the ability to *discern the spirit world*, and especially to detect the *true source* of *circumstances* or *motives* of people.
- 8) **Different kinds of tongues** – is the gift of speaking supernaturally in a *language not known to the individual*. The plural allows different forms, possibly harmonizing the known spoken languages of Acts 2:4-6 and the unknown utterances in Corinthians, designed particularly for praying and singing in the Spirit, mostly for private worship.
- 9) **The interpretation of tongues** – is the gift of making the unknown (translational) message of the Spirit *meaningful to others* when exercised in public. It is not the translation of a foreign language.

### SPIRITUAL GIFTS QUESTIONNAIRE

God's purpose for our life as a Christian is revealed in the spiritual gifts that He has given us. Our church believes in the present day operation of the nine supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, as recorded in **1 Corinthians 12:4-11**. (*The word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, the gift of faith, gifts of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, different kinds of tongues and the interpretation of tongues*)

Our church also believes in the five ministry gifts of Christ, as recorded in Ephesians 4:11-13. (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers); OTHER GIFTS FROM THE FATHER INCLUDE: Prophecy, Exhortation, Giving, Leadership, Mercy, Ministry and the gift of Teaching (Regardless of Public Office) (**Romans 12:3-8**) Helps and Administration are two other gifts. (**1 Corinthians 12:28**)

**Spiritual gifts are given to Christians for the building up of the Body of Christ. They are not natural abilities, fruits of the Spirit or acquired skills.**

	<b>NATURAL ABILITIES</b>	<b>SPIRITUAL GIFTS</b>
<i>Given</i>	<b>By God</b>	<b>By God</b>
<i>To</i>	<b>Every Person</b>	<b>Christians</b>
<i>When</i>	<b>At birth and as acquired</b>	<b>At the New Birth</b>
<i>For</i>	<b>General Life Activities</b>	<b>Christian Ministry</b>
<i>As a</i>	<b>Natural Ability</b>	<b>Supernatural Ability</b>

#### **TEST OF A SPIRITUAL GIFT**

- 1) Are you blessing others
- 2) Is your ministry proving to be fruitful
- 3) Are you meeting a need
- 4) Is it helping you to love others
- 5) Do you get a sense of deep joy

#### **EVERY BELIEVER HAS A MINISTRY**

Every Christian has a ministry and mission field. “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. **(1 Corinthians 12:4-6)** “But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.” **(1 Corinthians 12:18)**

#### **KNOWING AND OPERATING IN OUR GIFTS IS THE KEY TO ABUNDANT LIFE**

True purpose and meaning in life is only experienced when a Christian finds and fulfils his destiny in God. It is as a believer uses their spiritual gifts that they experience the fullness of joy and the abundant life that Jesus promised to those who love and serve Him.

A Christian with a gift of evangelism will have great purpose when sharing their faith, but most likely less fulfilment, if they find themselves doing an administrative role in their life which limits their ability to use their gift of evangelism.

#### **DISCOVERING AND USING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

- 1) Have faith
- 2) Pray
- 3) Understand
- 4) What Stirs You (Motivates you)
- 5) Seek Guidance (Commit your ways to the Lord. Seek counsel from your leaders)
- 6) Get Involved

- 7) Never Fear Failure
- 8) Make Jesus Christ Lord of all that you do
- 9) Develop a Servant Spirit

### SPIRITUAL GIFTS QUESTIONNAIRE

This following spiritual gifts questionnaire is designed to help all Christians to identify their spiritual gifts. In identifying their spiritual gifts, a Christian can then prayerfully find a ministry role in which they can use their gifts and as a result experience the joy and purpose that comes from using your spiritual gifts for the work of the Kingdom. **(The following questionnaire has been developed based on a survey done by Robert Logan)**

### INSTRUCTIONS

For each of the questions contained in the following Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire, say: “This has been experienced in my life **“much”, “some”, “little” or “not at all”** and circle the appropriate number.

		<i>Circle one number</i>					
		<b>Much</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>Little</b>	<b>Not at all</b>		
1.	Do you feel a great amount of satisfaction Performing routine tasks for God’s glory?	5	4	3	2	1	0
2.	Do you have a sensitivity to recognise people’s prayer needs before others do?	5	4	3	2	1	0
3.	Has anyone ever told you that he/she understands the Bible better because you explained it clearly?	5	4	3	2	1	0
4.	Are you able to provide food/lodging graciously to those in need?	5	4	3	2	1	0
5.	Are you effective in persuading others to move toward achieving bible objectives?	5	4	3	2	1	0
6.	Have you regularly visualized great things for the future of God’s work and seen them accomplished?	5	4	3	2	1	0
7.	Do you know when and to whom to delegate important responsibility?	5	4	3	2	1	0
8.	Do you find yourself attracted to unbelievers in order to share Christ with them?	5	4	3	2	1	0
9.	Do you adapt easily to a different culture than your own?	5	4	3	2	1	0
10.	Does God give you special insight that solves problems or meets needs?	5	4	3	2	1	0
11.	Have people involved in ministry sought you out to assist them in some way?	5	4	3	2	1	0
12.	Do you manage your money well in order to give over-and-above the tithe to the Lord’s work?	5	4	3	2	1	0



33. When you need to make a decision between several biblical alternatives, do you have a clear sense of which one is best?
34. Do you sense the need to help other people become more effective in their ministry?
35. Do you enjoy giving to the Lord's work without asking the question of whether or not you can afford it right now?
36. Can you sense the Holy Spirit's anointing upon a believer?
37. Are you able to restore persons who have wandered away from their Christian community?
38. Do you find that you are a good and patient listener?
39. Have you shared insights and information that have brought conviction to other Christians?
40. Do you feel a lot of compassion for those who are suffering physically and think of ways to care for them?
41. Do you proclaim what God reveals to you in such a way that people are strengthened and encouraged to mature spiritually?
42. During prayer, do you speak in a language you do not understand which strengthens you to edify and love others?
43. Have others encouraged you to work with other congregations and church leaders?
44. Have you been used by God to do supernatural acts which authenticated the message of Christ?
45. Have others affirmed power in your faith and prayer to see suffering people healed?
46. Have you enjoyed interpreting for the Body a prayer given in tongues?
47. Would you enjoy being called upon to do special jobs around the church that no one else will do?
48. Do you pray a lot and enjoy it?
49. Do you enjoy spending time learning new biblical truths in order to share them with others?
50. Do you have a knack for making strangers feel at home?
51. Do you enjoy leading, inspiring and motivating others to involve themselves in the Lord's work?
52. Do you find God working in incredible ways when you encounter difficult circumstances?

[illegible]



72.	Have you been effective in communicating biblical truths to others which produced a change in knowledge, attitudes, values or conduct?	5	4	3	2	1	0
73.	Do you take unexpected guests in stride, without apology for how your house may look?	5	4	3	2	1	0
74.	Have you influenced others to accomplish a particular task or biblical purpose?	5	4	3	2	1	0
75.	Has God done miraculous works for you and others in response to your prayers?	5	4	3	2	1	0
76.	Do you have a desire to help organize ministry areas and activities?	5	4	3	2	1	0
77.	Do pre-Christians come to you with questions because they know that you care?	5	4	3	2	1	0
78.	Would you enjoy living in a foreign country, not just visiting?	5	4	3	2	1	0
79.	Do you feel an unusual presence of God and personal confidence when important decisions need to be made?	5	4	3	2	1	0
80.	Do you regularly look for ways to relieve leaders of responsibilities that you or others could do?	5	4	3	2	1	0
81.	Do you give consistently and sacrificially to the Lord, knowing He will meet your needs?	5	4	3	2	1	0
82.	Do you know with certainty that a person isn't a Christian even though he/she professes faith in Christ?	5	4	3	2	1	0
83.	Have you been effective in helping needy Christians by guiding them to relevant portions of the Bible and praying with them?	5	4	3	2	1	0
84.	Do you really get a lot of joy encouraging people who are going through personal problems and trials?	5	4	3	2	1	0
85.	Has God revealed to you problems or pain within an individual's life before they have made it known to you?	5	4	3	2	1	0
86.	Have others encouraged you to have a special ministry toward the sick and suffering?	5	4	3	2	1	0
87.	Do you feel compelled to expose sin in the culture, church or an individual's life in order to have them walk consistently in the truth?	5	4	3	2	1	0
88.	Do you pray to God in a language you do not understand?	5	4	3	2	1	0
89.	Do you often think about how to develop more effective strategies for the expansion of God's Kingdom?	5	4	3	2	1	0



90.	Have people believed in Jesus because of the miracles you have done in His name?	5	4	3	2	1	0
91.	Do people seek you to pray for their physical healing?	5	4	3	2	1	0
92.	When you have interpreted tongues, has it encouraged and edified the Body?	5	4	3	2	1	0
93.	Are you always looking for jobs to perform and complete?	5	4	3	2	1	0
94.	Do you always take prayer requests very seriously?	5	4	3	2	1	0
95.	When you hear a spiritual question, are you anxious to both find and give an answer?	5	4	3	2	1	0
96.	Do you enjoy making your home available to those in the Lord's service for an extended period of time?	5	4	3	2	1	0
97.	Do others give you the leadership role in a group?	5	4	3	2	1	0
98.	When all looks dim, do you say and do things that demonstrate your confidence in God?	5	4	3	2	1	0
99.	Is planning easy for you?	5	4	3	2	1	0
100.	Of the people you've influenced toward Christ, have you seen many become active Christians in a local church?	5	4	3	2	1	0
101.	Do you make friends easily with people from different cultures?	5	4	3	2	1	0
102.	Do you enjoy working out solutions to complicated problems?	5	4	3	2	1	0
103.	Do you sense great satisfaction in helping someone else to be successful?	5	4	3	2	1	0
104.	Do you look for extra opportunities to give without hearing any appeals?	5	4	3	2	1	0
105.	Do you readily see and expose Satan's attempts to short-circuit God's leading?	5	4	3	2	1	0
106.	Is it important for you to know intimately and be well-known by those you serve and guide?	5	4	3	2	1	0
107.	Do you enjoy verbally encouraging the wavering, troubled or discouraged?	5	4	3	2	1	0
108.	Have you had the experience of receiving knowledge about someone through prayer?	5	4	3	2	1	0
109.	Do you desire to work with those who have physical or mental problems in order to alleviate their suffering?	5	4	3	2	1	0
110.	When you clearly communicate a message given to you by God, are people inspired to turn from sin and obey God's word?	5	4	3	2	1	0

111. When you publicly speak in tongues, is it interpreted?
112. Do pastors, church planters or missionaries seek and follow your counsel for their ministries?
113. Do people tell you that you were God's instrument which brought supernatural change in lives or circumstances?
114. Have you seen God answer your prayer for a miraculous healing on several occasions?
115. Without knowing the language, are you sometimes able to interpret publicly what is spoken in tongues?

5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0

**Spiritual Gifts  
Questionnaire  
Scoring Instructions**

- 1) After completing the entire questionnaire form, transfer the numbers that you have chosen for each question into the "Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire Scoring Chart" on the next page and record them in the box which has the same question number.
- 2) Then add up the five numbers in each row and place this figure in the "**Total**" column in the Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire Scoring Chart.
- 3) Then enter the gift names into the "**Gift Name**" column which corresponds to each Alphabet Letter. (The list of spiritual gifts is on the page after the Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire Scoring Chart. The Alphabet letters are before each gift name)
- 4) Then numerically rank each gift and choose your top three spiritual gifts

**Spiritual Gifts  
Questionnaire  
Scoring Chart**

	Value of Answers (For each question)					Total	Gift Name	Rank
A	1	24	47	70	93			
B	2	25	48	71	94			
C	3	26	49	72	95			
D	4	27	50	73	96			
E	5	28	51	74	97			
F	6	29	52	75	98			
G	7	30	53	76	99			
H	8	31	54	77	100			
I	9	32	55	78	101			
J	10	33	56	79	102			
K	11	34	57	80	103			
L	12	35	58	81	104			
M	13	36	59	82	105			
N	14	37	60	83	106			
O	15	38	61	84	107			
P	16	39	62	85	108			
Q	17	40	63	86	109			
R	18	41	64	87	110			
S	19	42	65	88	111			
T	20	43	66	89	112			
U	21	44	67	90	113			
V	22	45	68	91	114			
W	23	46	69	92	115			

**THREE HIGHEST RATED GIFTS**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire Gift Definitions</b></p>
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- A. **SERVICE:** The gift of service is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ, to identify the unmet needs involving a task related to God's work and to make use of available resources to meet those needs and help accomplish the desired goals.
- B. **INTERCESSION:** The gift of intercession is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to pray extended periods of time on a regular basis. Those with this gift see frequent and specific answers to their prayers to a degree much greater than that which is expected of the average Christian.
- C. **TEACHING:** The gift of teaching is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to communicate information relevant to the health and ministry of the Body and its members in such a way that others will learn.
- D. **HOSPITALITY:** The gift of hospitality is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to provide an open house and warm welcome for those in need of food and lodging.
- E. **LEADERSHIP:** The gift of leadership is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to set goals in accordance with God's purpose for the future and to communicate these goals to others in such a way that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish those goals for the glory of God.
- F. **FAITH:** The gift of faith is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to discern with extraordinary confidence the will and purposes of God for the future of His work. Those who have this gift have the supernatural ability to believe God without doubt and to combat unbelief. They have the supernatural ability to meet adverse circumstances with trust in God's messages and words.
- G. **ADMINISTRATION:** The gift of administration is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to understand clearly the immediate and long-range goals of a particular unit of the Body of Christ and to devise and help execute plans for the accomplishment of those goals.
- H. **EVANGELISM:** The gift of evangelism is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to draw closer to pre-Christians and effectively communicate God's message of love and redemption so that people respond to Jesus and become responsible disciples in a local church.
- I. **MISSIONARY:** The gift of missionary is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to use whatever other spiritual gifts they have in a cross-cultural ministry.
- J. **MESSAGE OF WISDOM:** The message of wisdom is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to know the mind of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to receive insight into how given knowledge may best be applied to specific needs. People with this gift have a divinely given power to receive spiritual intuition in problem solving and have a supernatural perspective to ascertain the divine means for accomplishing God's will in given situations.

- K. HELPS:** The gift of helps is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to invest the talents they have in the life and ministry of other members of the Body, thus enabling the person helped to increase the effectiveness of his or her spiritual gifts.
- L. CONTRIBUTING:** The gift of contributing is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to give their material resources to the work of the Lord with generosity and cheerfulness.
- M. DISTINGUISHING SPIRITS:** The gift of distinguishing spirits is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to discern with assurance whether certain behaviour purportedly to be of God is in reality divine, human or satanic.
- N. PASTOR:** The gift of pastor is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to assume a long-term shepherding responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers.
- O. ENCOURAGEMENT:** The gift of encouragement is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body to minister words of comfort, consolation, exhortation and counsel to other members of the Body in such a way that they feel helped.
- P. MESSAGE OF KNOWLEDGE:** The message of knowledge is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to obtain information from the Holy Spirit about someone or something that could not be known from any other source. Those who have this gift have supernatural insight or understanding of circumstances or a body of facts by divine revelation.
- Q. MERCY:** The gift of mercy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to feel genuine empathy and compassion for individuals, both Christian and non-Christian, who suffer distressing physical, mental or emotional problems, and to translate that compassion into cheerfully done deeds that reflect Christ's love and alleviate the suffering.
- R. PROPHECY:** The gift of prophecy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to His people through a divinely-anointed utterance.
- S. TONGUES:** The gift of tongues is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to pray to God in a language they have never learned.
- T. APOSTLE:** The gift of apostle is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to assume and exercise general leadership over a number of churches with an extraordinary authority in spiritual matters that is spontaneously recognized and appreciated by those churches.
- U. MIRACULOUS POWERS:** The special ability that God gives certain members of the Body of Christ to serve as human intermediaries through whom it pleases God to perform powerful acts that are perceived by observers to have altered the ordinary course of nature.
- V. HEALING:** The gifts of healing are special abilities that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to serve as human intermediaries through whom it pleases God to cure illness and restore health apart from the use of natural means. Those who have these gifts of Healing are used by God to supernaturally heal others without human aid.
- W. INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES:** The gift of interpretation of tongues is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to translate the message of one who speaks in tongues.



**The Author:** Mr. Sabiiti Fenekansi is a trained teacher, researcher, counsellor, social worker and a Human Rights defender. Born and raised in a rural community in Uganda, Sabiiti has been in Community Development and Humanitarian work for the last 12 years working for local and international NGOs and the Church.

Now, Sabiiti is ready to take his rich experience in Church and development and use it to engage in church leadership and church building through his own innovative approach “The Apostles Network Development Mission (AND-Mission)”.

Sabiiti’s childhood interests in education and development were boosted by his life experiences and working with various humanitarian organizations with a focus on families, and later his numerous participation in research on education, health and leadership in various parts of the country.

His early interactions with various professionals in education, health, family life, peace building, poverty monitoring, human rights advocacy and church programming lead to the formation of the AND-Mission.

Serving with the local church in local communities, working with Christian non-denominational programs has made an overwhelming impact in Sabiiti's life and understanding. By going out of the church and hearing about successes and testimonies from real Christians, Sabiiti is ready to apply the principles he has learned to his own culture as he brings forward new approaches to Christian leadership and Church building, particularly for Pentecostal Evangelical churches.

Being a part of the multidimensional, multicultural Christianity has given Sabiiti the chance to see Christianity in Uganda and beyond just sitting around the table of tests and trials. It is because of this experience that Sabiiti returns to his community enriched and ready to persevere, trusting that God's perfect timing in everything is sovereign, and so he waits for it to begin reaching Uganda, East Africa and beyond.

Sabiiti is a Pentecostal Born Again Christian. Being able to make a difference in the lives of Christians, their churches and families in our community is what inspired us to start AND-Mission and carry on –this is how we define success.

**VISION 2040 RESOURCE CENTRE (V2040RC)**

**Tel: 256-772888149, 752888149, 712888149**

**Email: [v2040rc@gmail.com](mailto:v2040rc@gmail.com), [s.fenekansi@yahoo.com](mailto:s.fenekansi@yahoo.com)**

**Website: <http://v2040rc.wordpress.com>**