

A REVELATION OF.....

**GOD'S CALL TO HIS
CHURCH**

A call for change.

**ONE OF A SERIES OF REVELATIONS ON VARIOUS
ASPECTS OF SCRIPTURE, AS INSPIRED BY THE
HOLY SPIRIT.**

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A NOTE FROM DAVID.....

This word is a little different to others in the series, in that it a compilation of articles written over a period of 3 months as editorials for our weekly email newsletter of encouragement, PGIM! (Praise God it's Monday!) <http://www.wwj.org.nz/wwword.php> The inspiration however, was received at the beginning. It just took time to write, for like most of us, I am good at putting things off until the last minute!

We live in a church system that has evolved over the past, nearly 2000 years. It is obvious that the church had problems of doctrine and organisation right from its formation. Many people are reluctant to admit to this, but there were difficulties between Jews and gentiles in a theological sense, as well as practical organisational problems in terms of looking after the needy widows. However, over the centuries, church structures developed and became formalised along human lines. While the Reformation saw some changes, both in theology and organisation, the old, unbiblical, structures have tended to replicate themselves within our modern denominations and groupings. The Bible warns of this.

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. (Colossians 2:8)

Today, in these end times, God is calling His church back to basics. To its relational roots rather than formal structural organisation and methods that restrict, through human intervention, the Holy Spirit from truly working in the way He would wish.

Yes, God is calling us today to return to the principles set out in the New Testament, not to create the 'perfect church', for it will still have you and I in it, but rather, one capable of absorbing the promised bountiful end-time harvest.

His servant and yours,
David Tait

PART 1: THE BACKGROUND

Included specifically for theological students and teachers. General readers may prefer to proceed directly to PART 2: A REVELATION OF..

DEFINITION OF TERMS

CHURCH — Derived probably from the Greek kuriakon (i.e., “the Lord’s house”), which was used by ancient authors for the place of worship.

In the New Testament it is the translation of the Greek word *ecclesia*, which is synonymous with the Hebrew *kahal* of the Old Testament, both words meaning simply an assembly, the character of which can only be known from the connection in which the word is found. There is no clear instance of its being used for a place of meeting or of worship, although in post-apostolic times it early received this meaning. Nor is this word ever used to denote the inhabitants of a country united in the same profession, as when we say the “Church of England,” the “Church of Scotland,” etc.

We find the word *ecclesia* used in the following senses in the New Testament: (1.) It is translated “assembly” in the ordinary classical sense (Acts 19:32, 39, 41).

(2.) It denotes the whole body of the redeemed, all those whom the Father has given to Christ, the invisible catholic church (Eph. 5:23, 25, 27, 29; Heb. 12:23).

(3.) A few Christians associated together in observing the ordinances of the gospel are an *ecclesia* (Rom. 16:5; Col. 4:15).

(4.) All the Christians in a particular city, whether they assembled together in one place or in several places for religious worship, were an *ecclesia*. Thus all the disciples in Antioch, forming several congregations, were one church (Acts 13:1); so also we read of the “church of God at Corinth” (1 Cor. 1:2), “the church at Jerusalem” (Acts 8:1), “the church of Ephesus” (Rev. 2:1), etc.

(5.) The whole body of professing Christians throughout the world (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Matt. 16:18) are the church of Christ.

The church visible “consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children.” It is called “visible” because its members are known and its assemblies are public. Here there is a mixture of “wheat and chaff,” of saints and sinners. “God has commanded his people to organize themselves into distinct visible ecclesiastical communities, with constitutions, laws, and officers, badges, ordinances, and discipline, for the great purpose of giving visibility to his kingdom, of making known the gospel of that kingdom, and of gathering in all its elect subjects. Each one of these distinct organized communities which is faithful to the great King is an integral part of the visible church, and all together constitute the catholic or universal visible church.” A credible profession of the true religion constitutes a person a member of this church. This is “the kingdom of heaven,” whose character and progress are set forth in the parables recorded in Matt. 13.

The children of all who thus profess the true religion are members of the visible church along with their parents. Children are included in every covenant God ever made with man. They go along with their parents (Gen. 9:9–17; 12:1–3; 17:7; Ex. 20:5; Deut. 29:10–13). Peter, on the day of Pentecost, at the beginning of the New Testament dispensation, announces the same great principle. “The promise [just as to Abraham and his seed the promises were made] is unto you, and to your children” (Acts 2:38, 39). The children of believing parents are “holy”, i.e., are “saints”, a title which designates the members of the Christian church (1 Cor. 7:14). (See BAPTISM.)

The church invisible “consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ, the head thereof.” This is a pure society, the church in which Christ dwells. It is the body of Christ. It is called “invisible” because the greater part of those who constitute it are already in heaven or are yet unborn, and also because its members still on earth cannot certainly be distinguished. The qualifications of membership in it are internal and are hidden. It is unseen except by Him who “searches the heart.” “The Lord knoweth them that are his” (2 Tim. 2:19).

The church to which the attributes, prerogatives, and promises appertaining to Christ’s kingdom belong, is a spiritual body consisting of all true believers, i.e., the church invisible.

(1.) Its unity. God has ever had only one church on earth. We sometimes speak of the Old Testament Church and of the New Testament church, but they are one and the same. The Old Testament church was not to be changed but enlarged (Isa. 49:13–23; 60:1–14). When the Jews are at length restored, they will not enter a new church, but will be grafted again into “their own olive tree” (Rom. 11:18–24; comp. Eph. 2:11–22). The apostles did not set up a new organization. Under their ministry disciples were “added” to the “church” already existing (Acts 2:47).

(2.) Its universality. It is the “catholic” church ; not confined to any particular country or outward organization, but comprehending all believers throughout the whole world.

(3.) Its perpetuity. It will continue through all ages to the end of the world. It can never be destroyed. It is an “everlasting kingdom.” 1

CHURCH.

I. Meaning

The English word ‘church’ is derived from the Gk. adjective *kyrialos* as used in some such phrase as *kyriakon dōma* or *kyriakē oikia*, meaning ‘the Lord’s house’, *i.e.* a Christian place of worship. ‘Church’ in the NT, however, renders Gk. *ekklēsia*, which mostly designates a local congregation of Christians and never a building. Although we often speak of these congregations collectively as the NT church or the early church, no NT writer uses *ekklēsia* in this collective way. An *ekklēsia* was a meeting or assembly. Its commonest use was for the public assembly of citizens duly summoned, which was a feature of all the cities outside Judaea where the gospel was planted (*e.g.* Acts 19:39); *ekklēsia* was also used among the Jews (LXX) for the *’congregation’ of Israel which was constituted at Sinai and assembled before the Lord at the annual feasts in the persons of its representative males (Acts 7:38).

In Acts, James, 3 John, Revelation and the earlier Pauline letters, ‘church’ is always a particular local congregation. ‘The church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria’ (Acts 9:31) may look like an exception, but the singular could be distributive (*cf.* Gal. 1:22) or, more likely, is due to the fact that the verse concludes a section about how ‘the church in Jerusalem’ (Acts 8:1) was persecuted and its members scattered. Although

every local congregation is ‘the church of God’ (1 Cor. 1:2), Paul makes no use of the term in connection with his doctrine of justification and salvation, and it is conspicuously absent from his discussion of Israel and the Gentiles in Rom. 9-11. But in the later Colossians and Ephesians Paul generalizes his use of ‘church’ to indicate, not an ecumenical church, but the spiritual and heavenly significance of each and every local ‘body’ which has Christ as its ‘head’, and by which God demonstrates his manifold wisdom through the creation of ‘one new man’ out of all races and classes. In God’s purpose there is only one church, one gathering of all under the headship of Christ. But on earth it is pluriform, seen wherever two or three gather in his name. There is no need to explain the relation between the one and the many. Like the believer, the church is both local and ‘in heaven’. Heb. 12:23 also has a picture of a heavenly ‘assembly’ (ekklesiā), but this is based on the model of the ‘congregation of Israel’ at Sinai, and it is uncertain whether the ‘first-born’ who comprise it are human or heavenly beings. Likewise, Jesus’ ‘church’ of Mt. 16:18 may not be identical with what Paul means by ‘church’. Jesus may mean the gathering of his apostles to form, under him, the restored house of David (cf. Mt. 19:28; Acts 15:16), by means of which salvation would come to the Gentiles (Rom. 15:12). (In Mt. 18:17, ‘the church’ refers to the synagogue.) Paul likens the local church to a *body whose members are mutually dependent (1 Cor. 12:12ff.), and to a building being erected, especially a *temple for God’s Spirit (1 Cor. 3:10ff.). Metaphors of growth are used, and also the image of a flock being fed (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2). ‘Church’ is not a synonym for ‘people of God’; it is rather an *activity* of the ‘people of God’. Images such as ‘aliens and exiles’ (1 Pet. 2:11) apply to the people of God in the world, but do not describe the church, *i.e.* the people assembled with Christ in the midst (Mt. 18:20; Heb. 2:12).

II. The church at Jerusalem

The church in the Christian sense appeared first in Jerusalem after the ascension of Jesus. It was made up of the predominantly Galilean band of Jesus’ disciples together with those who responded to the preaching of the apostles in Jerusalem. Its members saw themselves as the elect remnant of Israel destined to find salvation in Zion (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:17ff.) and as the restored tabernacle of David which Jesus himself had promised to build

(Acts 15:16; Mt. 16:18). Jerusalem was thus the divinely-appointed locale for those who awaited the final fulfilment of all God's promises (Acts 3:21). Externally, the group of baptized believers had the character of a sect within Judaism. It was called 'the sect of the Nazarenes' by a professional orator (Acts 24:5, 14; *cf.* 28:22), while its own adherents called their distinctive faith 'the *Way'. It was more or less tolerated by Judaism throughout the 30-odd years of its life in Judaea, except when the Jewish authorities were disturbed by its fraternization with Gentile churches abroad. But the essentially Jewish character of the Jerusalem church should be noted. Its members accepted the obligations of the law and the worship of the Temple. Their distinctive belief was that Jesus of Nazareth was Israel's Messiah, that God himself had vindicated this by raising him from the dead after he had suffered for Israel's redemption, and that the 'great and manifest day' of the Lord was even now upon them and would culminate in a final appearance of Messiah in judgment and glory.

Their distinctive practices included a baptism in the name of Jesus, regular attendance at instruction given by the apostles, and 'fellowship' on a household basis, which Luke described as being 'the breaking of bread and the prayers' (Acts 2:41-46). The first leadership of the church was by the twelve (Galilean) apostles, especially *Peter and *John, but soon gave way to that of *elders in the regular Jewish manner, with *James the brother of Jesus as president (Gal. 2:9; Acts 15:6ff.). The latter's presidency extended through most of the life of the Jerusalem church, possibly from as early as the thirties (Gal. 1:19; *cf.* Acts 12:17) until his execution *c.* AD 62. It may well have been associated with the church's Messianic conceptions. 'The *throne of David' was a much more literal hope among believing Jews than we commonly realize, and James was also 'of the house and lineage of David'. Was he thought of as a legitimate Protector, or Prince Regent, pending the return of Messiah in person? Eusebius reports that a cousin of Jesus, Simeon son of Clopas, succeeded James as president, and that Vespasian, after the capture of Jerusalem in AD 70, is said to have ordered a search to be made for all who were of the family of David, that there might be left among the Jews no-one of the royal family (*EH3*. 11-12).

The church became large (Acts 21:20) and included even priests and Pharisees in its membership (6:7; 15:5). At the outset it included also many

*Hellenists, Greek-speaking Jews of the Dispersion who came as pilgrims to feasts or for various reasons were staying in Jerusalem. Such Jews were often more wealthy than those of Jerusalem, and displayed piety by bringing ‘alms to their nation’ (*cf.* Acts 24:17). When the church adopted the practice of mutual support, a typical benefactor was the Cypriot *Barnabas (Acts 4:34-37), and when a committee was needed to administer the relief the Seven appointed were, to judge by their names, Hellenists (6:5). It was apparently through this Hellenist element that the gospel overflowed the narrow limits of Judaistic Christianity and created fresh streams in alien territories. *Stephen, one of the Seven, came into debate in a Hellenist synagogue in Jerusalem (of which Saul of Tarsus was possibly a member) and was charged before the Sanhedrin with blaspheming the Temple and the Mosaic law. His defence certainly shows a liberal attitude towards the inviolability of the Temple, and the persecution which followed his death may have been directed against this sort of tendency among Hellenist believers rather than against the law-abiding Christianity of the apostles who remained in Jerusalem when others were ‘scattered’. *Philip, another of the Seven, took the gospel to Samaria and, after baptizing a foreign eunuch near the old Philistine city of Gaza, went preaching up the coast till he came to the largely pagan Caesarea, where soon afterwards Peter found himself admitting uncircumcised Gentiles to baptism.

Significantly it was Hellenists who went from Jerusalem to Antioch and there preached to Gentiles without any stipulation about the Mosaic law. After Stephen, the Hellenistic element in the Jerusalem church seemed to disappear and its Judaic character to prevail. Some of its members disapproved of the gospel’s being offered to Gentiles without obligation to keep the law and went off to press their point of view in the new churches (Acts 15:1; Gal. 2:12; 6:12f.). Officially, however, the Jerusalem church gave its approval not only to Philip’s mission in Samaria and the baptism of Cornelius at Caesarea, but to the policy of the new church at Antioch and its missionaries. In *c.* AD 49 a *council of the Jerusalem church was formally asked what should be demanded of ‘those of the Gentiles who turn to God’. It was determined that, while Jewish believers would, of course, continue to circumcise their children and keep the whole law, these requirements should not be laid on Gentile believers, although the latter

should be asked to make certain concessions to Jewish scruples which would make table-fellowship between the two groups easier, and to keep the law concerning sexual purity (Acts 15:20, 29; 21:21-25). The proceedings reflect the primacy of Jerusalem in matters of faith and morals. Indeed, throughout the first generation it was ‘the church’ *par excellence* (see Acts 18:22, where the Jerusalem church is meant). This is noticeable in the attitude of Paul (Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6), who impressed it on his churches (Rom. 15:27). His final visit to Jerusalem *c.* AD 57 was in recognition of this spiritual primacy. He was greeted by ‘James and all the elders’ and reminded that the many members of the church were ‘all zealous for the law’. Its scrupulosity, however, did not save it from suspicion of disloyalty to Jewish national hopes. James ‘the Just’ was judicially murdered at the instigation of the high priest *c.* AD 62.

When the war with Rome broke out in AD 66 the church came to an end. Its members betook themselves, says Eusebius, to Pella in Transjordan (*EH* 3. 5). Thereafter they divided into two groups: the Nazarenes, who keeping the law themselves, had a tolerant attitude towards their Gentile fellow-believers, and the Ebionites, who inherited the Judaizing View of obligation to the law. Later Christians listed the Ebionites among the heretics.

III. The church at Antioch

The Jerusalem believers had no exclusive claim on the term *ekklesiá*, despite its OT associations, and the mixed assemblage of Jewish and Gentile believers which was formed at Antioch on the Orontes was without ceremony also called ‘the church’ there (Acts 11:26; 13:1). Moreover *Antioch, not Jerusalem, was the model of the ‘new church’ which was to appear all over the world. It was founded by Hellenist Jews. Here believers were first dubbed *Christians, or ‘Christites’, by their Gentile neighbours (Acts 11:26). Antioch became the springboard for the expansion of the gospel throughout the Levant. The key figure at first was *Barnabas, himself perhaps a Hellenist but enjoying the full confidence of the Jerusalem leaders who sent him to investigate. He is first named among the ‘prophets and teachers’, who are the only functionaries we know to have been in this church. He brought Saul the converted Pharisee from Tarsus—an interesting solvent for the ferment! Barnabas also led two missionary

expeditions to his own country of *Cyprus, and with Paul made the first incursions into Asia Minor. There were important links between Antioch and Jerusalem. Prophets from Jerusalem came up and ministered (Acts 11:27), as did Peter himself and delegates from James (Gal. 2:11-12), not to mention the Pharisaic visitors of Acts 15:1. In return, Antioch expressed its fellowship with Jerusalem by sending relief in time of famine (Acts 11:29) and later looked to the Jerusalem church to provide a solution to the legal controversy. The prophetic leadership of the church included an African called Symeon, Lucius of Cyrene and a member of Herod Antipas's entourage. The author of Acts has been claimed as a native of Antioch (Anti-Marcionite Prologues). But the greatest fame of the church at Antioch was that it 'commended' Barnabas and Saul 'to the grace of God for the work which they. . . fulfilled' (Acts 14:26).

IV. Pauline churches

While *Paul and Barnabas were clearly not the only missionaries of the first generation, we know next to nothing about the labours of others, including the twelve apostles themselves. Paul, however, claimed to have preached the gospel 'from Jerusalem and as far round as Illyricum' (Rom. 15:19), and we know that he founded churches on the Antiochene pattern in the S provinces of Asia Minor, in Macedonia and Greece, in W Asia where he made *Ephesus his base, and, by inference from the Epistle to *Titus, in *Crete. Whether he founded churches in *Spain (Rom. 15:24) is unknown. Everywhere he made cities his centre, whence he (or his associates) reached other cities of the province (Acts 19:10; Col. 1:7). Where possible, the Jewish *synagogue was the jumping-off point, Paul preaching there as a rabbi as long as he was given opportunity. In time, however, a separate ekklēsia-the word must sometimes have had the flavour of *synagōgē* (cf. Jas. 2:2, RV) of Jewish and Gentile converts came into being, each with its own elders appointed by the apostle or his delegate from among the responsible senior believers. The *family played an important role in the development of these churches. The OT in Greek was the sacred Scripture of all these churches, and the key to its interpretation was indicated in certain selected passages together with a clearly defined summary of the gospel itself (1 Cor. 15:1-4). Other 'traditions' concerning Jesus' ministry and teaching were laid on every

church (1 Cor. 11:2, 23-25; 7:17; 11:16; 2 Thes. 2:15), with fixed patterns of ethical instruction in regard to social and political obligation. It is unknown who regularly administered *baptism or presided at the *Lord's Supper, though both ordinances are mentioned. How frequently or on what days the church assembled is also unknown. The meeting at Troas 'on the Saturday night' (Acts 20:7, NEB) may be a model, and if so would support the view that the use of 'the first day of the week' (or 'the first day after the sabbath') for Christian assembly began simply by using the night hours which followed the close of the sabbath (see H. Riesenfeld, 'The Sabbath and the Lord's Day in Judaism, the Preaching of Jesus and Early Christianity', *The Gospel Tradition*, 1970).

But it is not clear that there was a church at Troas; the occasion may merely have marked the parting of Paul's travelling companions, the time being dictated by travelling arrangements. The first day could not have been observed as a sabbath, however, since it was not a holiday for Gentiles, and Paul would have no binding rules about keeping days unto the Lord (Rom. 14:5). Jewish members must have observed many customs not joined in by their Gentile brethren. The fullest evidence for what took place when a church actually assembled is 1 Cor. 11-14. There was no organizational link between Paul's churches, though there were natural affinities between churches in the same province (Col. 4:15-16; 1 Thes. 4:10). All were expected to submit to Paul's authority in matters of the faith hence the role of Paul's letters and of the visits of *Timothy— but this authority was spiritual and admonitory, not coercive (2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10). Local administration and discipline were autonomous (2 Cor. 2:5-10). No church had superiority over any other, though all acknowledged Jerusalem as the source of 'spiritual blessings' (Rom. 15:27), and the collection for the saints there was a token of this acknowledgment.

V. Other churches

The origin of the other churches mentioned in the NT is a matter of inference. There were Jewish and Gentile believers in Rome by c. AD 56 when Paul wrote his Epistle to them. 'Visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes' were present at Pentecost (Acts 2:10), and among greetings in Rom. 16 is one to two 'of note among the apostles', * Andronicus and Junias, kinsmen of Paul's who were converted before him. Is this a

complimentary reference to their having brought the gospel to Rome? 'Brethren' came to meet Paul and his party when they went to *Rome, but our knowledge of the church there, its composition and its status, is problematical.

The address of *1 Peter shows that there was a group of churches scattered along the S coast of the Black Sea and its hinterland ('Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia') of either Jewish or Jewish-Gentile membership. These are the parts which Paul was prevented from entering (Acts 16:6-7), which may imply that they were the scene of another man's foundation, perhaps the work of Peter himself. But we learn nothing distinctive of these churches from the Epistle. Oversight and responsibility for 'feeding the flock' in each place was exercised by elders (1 Pet. 5:1-2).

This exhausts our knowledge of the founding of particular churches in NT times. A little more about the W Asian churches emerges from the Apocalypse. It is thought that churches must surely have been founded at least in Alexandria and in Mesopotamia, if not farther E, within the 1st century, but of this there is no certain evidence.

Of the life and organization of the churches generally, we know very little, except for Jerusalem, which was not typical. Yet what we know makes us confident that their unity lay in the gospel itself, acceptance of the OT Scriptures and acknowledgment of Jesus as 'Lord and Christ'. Differences of *church government, forms of *ministry, moulds of thought and levels of moral and spiritual achievement were probably greater than we commonly realize. No one NT church, nor all the churches together—though they formed no visible unity— exercises any authority over our faith today. This divine *authority belongs only to the apostolic gospel as contained in the whole of the Scriptures. (*Power of the Keys; *Peter, **IV**.)

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CHURCH GOVERNMENT. The NT provides no detailed code of regulations for the government of the church, and the very idea of such a code might seem repugnant to the liberty of the gospel dispensation; but Christ left behind him a body of leaders in the apostles whom he himself had chosen, and he also gave them a few general principles for the exercise of their ruling function.

I. The Twelve and Paul

The Twelve were chosen that they might be with Christ (Mk. 3:14), and this personal association qualified them to act as his witnesses (Acts 1:8); they were from the first endowed with power over unclean spirits and diseases (Mt. 10:1), and this power was renewed and increased, in a more general form, when the promise of the Father (Lk. 24:49) came upon them in the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8); on their first mission they were sent forth to preach (Mk. 3:14), and in the great commission they were instructed to teach all nations (Mt. 28:19). They thus received Christ's authority to evangelize at large.

But they were also promised a more specific function as judges and rulers of God's people (Mt. 19:28; Lk. 22:29-30), with power to bind and to loose (Mt. 18:18), to remit and to retain sins (Jn. 20:23). Such language gave rise to the conception of the keys, traditionally defined in both mediaeval and Reformed theology as: (*a*) the key of doctrine, to teach what conduct is forbidden and what permitted (this is the technical meaning of binding and loosing in Jewish legal phraseology), and (*b*) the key of discipline, to exclude and excommunicate the unworthy, and to admit and reconcile the contrite, by declaring or praying for God's forgiveness, through the remission of sins in Christ alone.

Peter received these powers first (Mt. 16:18-19), as he also received the pastoral commission to feed Christ's flock (Jn. 21:15), but he did so in a representative, rather than in a personal, capacity; for when the commission is repeated in Mt. 18:18, authority to exercise the ministry of reconciliation is vested in the body of disciples as a whole, and it is the faithful congregation, rather than any individual, which acts in Christ's name to open the kingdom to believers and to close it against unbelief. None the less, this authoritative function is primarily exercised by preachers of the word, and the process of sifting, of conversion and

rejection, is seen at work from Peter's first sermon onwards (Acts 2:37-41). When Peter confessed Christ, his faith was typical of the rock-like foundation on which the church is built (Mt. 16:18), but in fact the foundations of the heavenly Jerusalem contain the names of all of the apostles (Rev. 21:14; *cf.* Eph. 2:20); these acted as a body in the early days of the church, and, despite Peter's continued eminence (Acts 15:7; 1 Cor. 9:5; Gal. 1:18; 2:7-9), the idea that Peter exercised any constant primacy among them is refuted, partly by the leading position occupied by James in the Jerusalem *Council (Acts 15:13, 19), and partly by the fact that Paul withstood Peter to the face (Gal. 2:11). It was in a corporate capacity that the apostles provided leadership for the primitive church; and that leadership was effective both in mercy (Acts 2:42) and in judgment (Acts 5:1-11). They exercised a general authority over every congregation, sending two of their number to supervise new developments in Samaria (Acts 8:14), and deciding with the elders on a common policy for the admission of Gentiles (Acts 15), while Paul's 'care of all the churches' (2 Cor. 11:28) is illustrated both by the number of his missionary journeys and by the extent of his correspondence.

II. After the ascension

Their first step, immediately after Christ's ascension, was to fill the vacancy left by the defection of Judas, and this they did by means of a direct appeal to God (Acts 1:24-26). Others were later reckoned in the number of apostles (1 Cor. 9:5-6; Gal. 1:19), but the qualifications of being an eye-witness of the resurrection (Acts 1:22), and of having been in some way personally commissioned by Christ (Rom. 1:1, 5), were not such as could be extended indefinitely. When the pressure of work increased, they appointed seven assistants (Acts 6:1-6), elected by the people and ordained by the apostles, to administer the church's charity; these seven have been regarded as deacons from the time of Irenaeus onwards, but Philip, the only one whose later history is clearly known to us, became an evangelist (Acts 21:8) with an unrestricted mission to preach the gospel, and Stephen's activities were not dissimilar. Church-officers with a distinctive name are first found in the elders of Jerusalem, who received gifts (Acts 11:30) and took part in Council (Acts 15:6). This office (*Presbyter) was probably copied from the eldership of the Jewish synagogue; the church is

itself called a synagogue in Jas. 2:2, and Jewish elders, who seem to have been ordained by imposition of hands, were responsible for maintaining the observance of God's law, with power to excommunicate law-breakers. But the Christian eldership, as a gospel ministry, acquired added pastoral (Jas. 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1-3) and preaching (1 Tim. 5:17) duties. Elders were ordained for all the Asian churches by Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:23), while Titus was enjoined to do the same for Crete (Tit. 1:5); and although the disturbances at Corinth may suggest that a more complete democracy prevailed in that congregation (*cf.* 1 Cor. 14:26), the general pattern of church government in the apostolic age would seem to be a board of elders or pastors, possibly augmented by prophets and teachers, ruling each of the local congregations, with deacons to help, and with a general superintendence of the entire church provided by apostles and evangelists. There is nothing in this system which corresponds-exactly to the modern diocesan episcopate; *bishops, when they are mentioned (Phil. 1:1), form a board of local congregational officers, and the position occupied by Timothy and Titus is that of Paul's personal lieutenants in his missionary work. It seems most likely that one elder acquired a permanent chairmanship of the board, and that he was then specially designated with the title of bishop; but even when the monarchical bishop appears in the letters of Ignatius, he is still the pastor of a single congregation. NT terminology is much more fluid; instead of anything resembling a hierarchy, we meet with such vague descriptions as 'he who rules', those who 'are over you in the Lord' *proïstamenoï*, 'presidents'; Rom. 12:8; 1 Thes. 5:12) or 'those who have the rule over you' or 'your leaders' (*hēgoumenoi*, 'guides'; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24). The *angels of the churches in Rev. 2:3 have sometimes been regarded as actual bishops, but they are more probably personifications of their respective communities. Those in responsible positions are entitled to honour (1 Thes. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 5:17), maintenance (1 Cor. 9:14; Gal. 6:6) and freedom from trifling accusations (1 Tim. 5:19).

III. General principles

Five general principles can be deduced from the NT teaching as a whole: (a) all authority is derived from Christ and exercised in his name and Spirit; (b) Christ's humility provides the pattern for Christian service (Mt.

20:26-28); (c) government is collegiate rather than hierarchical (Mt. 18:19; 23:8; Acts 15:28); (d) teaching and ruling are closely associated functions (1 Thes. 5:12); (e) administrative assistants may be required to help the preachers of the word (Acts 6:2-3). See also *Ministry and bibliography there cited. G.S.M.W. 2

1. Easton, M. G., M. A. D. D., *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1996.
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PART 2: A REVELATION OF..... GOD'S CALL TO HIS CHURCH

1: FROM MARTHA TO MARY

Since the visit of a family member a couple of weeks ago, I have been thinking! Always dangerous! For within our families we see and we analyse, and know our relatives do the same with us! This visit caused me to ponder upon an attitudinal principle that has separated people from the days of Mary and Martha, onwards. What started as thinking turned into revelation!

At the Home of Martha and Mary

³⁸ *As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" ⁴¹ "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴² but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:38-42)*

Martha was ruled by her mind. She saw the work to be done, the meal to be prepared and the house to be tidied. Mary, on the other hand, preferred to absorb all that Jesus had to teach and impart.

I have seen this paralleled in my own family line, starting 2 generations ago (as far back as I can go) with two sisters who were both committed Christians. One was efficient and organising; the other, a little out of line from normal expectations, but through whom the glow of the Holy Spirit shone. Within our family, some were attracted to my Grandmother some to my Great Aunt. These differing natures have continued down through the generations.

Of most interest to me though, is the influence my various family members have had within the church. For it is the 'Marthas' who have been the elders, deacons and leaders, while the 'Marys' have been tolerated, being regarded as ' a little strange' , for they haven' t slotted well into the accepted ' church system' . You may guess into which category I fall!

Looking at the worldwide church, irrespective of culture, it' s easy to see that the 'Marthas' run it. Those interested in organisation, programmes, buildings, and, dare I mention it, position!

Yet, it is also apparent, that revivals down through the ages have arisen out of the intercession and inspiration of Marys' , not the organisational skills of Marthas. God has always used the most unusual, unexpected people to further His work.

One example is particularly appropriate at the present time, for 2006 is the 100th anniversary of the Azusa Street revival and the founding of Pentecostalism. God used William Seymour, a 34 year old, one eyed (literally - and spiritually!) black man, the son of ex slaves to spark the revival. He learned about the Bible from the hallways of Charles Parnham' s (another Mary misfit) Bible school, because of segregation. Yet through his devotion to the Lord, the Lord used him to trigger the most influential spiritual movement of the 20th century. The organised Martha church hated him and did all in their power to stop him.

Yet God is greater than the church! That bears repeating. God is greater than the church! His will, will be done! In fact, the church is His, and delegated to the control of Jesus. And, like it or not, it is through the Marys' of the world that He works in it.

¹⁸ I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, ²⁰ which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated

him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. (Ephesians 1:18-23)

Today God is calling out a new generation of Marys. A generation of people fully sold out to Jesus. A generation prepared to lay down everything for their Savior and Lord. For it is this Mary generation that will arise from the depths of criticism and ridicule within the church to usher in the return of the Lord.

Are you a Martha or a Mary? It is never too late to change!

PRINCIPLE 1: God is calling out to Himself today a 'Mary church'.

DAVID' S DOUBTS "Maybe God, we can organise a seminar then, on how to become a Mary?" "No David, for I am roaming the earth searching out those whose hearts are truly towards me. Seek me with all your hearts, my sons and my daughters, as did Mary. Then I can, and will, use you to change the world."

2: FROM GREEK TO HEBREW

Far more than we realise, we are all products of the society we' re brought up in. We understand this when it comes to our favorite foods. ' Fish and chips' is a New Zealand and British favorite while Americans prefer hamburgers. Too, for us men, the code of ' football' we enjoy, and for the ladies, your society' s marriage customs. Then there is social etiquette and hundreds of other things, both big and small, from the weather to the toilets we are used to!

When travelling abroad, we enjoy learning about new cultures, but are generally pleased to get back home, where we know, and are comfortable in, our familiar surroundings. Those who emigrate to another country must adapt to their new situation, but it normally takes 1 or 2 generations before a family totally assimilates into the culture of their new country.

This principle also applies to the church. Over the centuries we have adapted the church to our culture, far more so than we realise. Very often too, we have attempted to export Western culture, along with Jesus, to other parts of the world.

However, the greatest change in church culture is one we don' t even consider, so ingrained has it become in us from very early times. This is the church' s Hellenization, its change from Hebrew ways and precepts, to those of Greek thought, upon which Western society was built, and still operates today. The clash between the Hebrew and dominant Roman (Greek based) culture of the day, existed from the very beginning of the church, as Paul explained in his letter to the Colossians.

*"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ."
(Colossians 2:6-8)*

Of course, by the time the Emperor Constantine made Christianity the official state religion of Rome in 350AD, the change was complete. Since then we have had a church based on the mind, upon reasoning, upon logic. Hence doctrine, theology and study have assumed a major, and sadly, ever more increasing role in the church. To the extent that now, 'Theological Qualification' is virtually an essential requirement for anyone wishing to pastor a church in the Western world. And is increasingly becoming so in other areas also. For most, Christianity has become an intellectual exercise rather than a physical experience.

Greek thought places man at the centre of the universe, refusing to accept moral absolutes, believing that everything must be experienced or proven to be valid. Effectively this is humanism. This too, is the understanding of large parts of the church today, worshipping reason rather than God.

Hebrew thought and culture on the other hand, is centred upon 'one' God whose existence they experience on a day to day basis. He lives inside His people, who are seen as His children. His people are to live like Him, rather than simply giving mental assent to His lordship. This is beautifully displayed in the relationship between a Rabbi and his students. They stay close by him, hanging on to his every word, copying his mannerisms and ways until they became like the Rabbi they are under. Jesus is our 'Rabbi'. We are meant to become like Him in every way.

The apostle Paul faced this challenge of the clash of cultures within the early church. Apparently he wasn't impressive of appearance, super-confident, nor an eloquent orator. All things that appeal today in a super-preacher! What then was the secret of his success?

"When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power." (1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

That' s right - the Spirit' s power! Imitating Jesus. A church based not on men' s wisdom but God' s power! This is the church God is calling us to today. A church operating in the image and ways of Jesus!

PRINCIPLE 2: God is calling out to Himself today a ' church of ' Christ-like disciples' .

DAVID' S DOUBTS: "You mean God, I am to be like you 24/7, not just 1/168!" "Yes David" "Okay Lord, I hear you, believe you, and will do my best to be as Jesus was - but without the beard, please, for mine is so wispy!"

3: FROM REVIVAL TO HABITATION

Over the centuries since the Reformation, there have been thousands of Revivals. They have had many similarities and lots of differences, but all have one feature in common - each and every one has come to an end! Why is this?

Some would say that the intensity is so great that we cannot cope with revival for more than a certain time. Or that the Holy Spirit does His work and leaves.

But the key reason, seemingly common to all, is that revivals die when the people involved start to organise them, instituting systems to organise their behaviour. For once leaders gain an understanding of how the Spirit moves in their situation, through experience, they expect Him to continue that way, formalising, yes, institutionalising ' the method' , to help the Holy Spirit out!

This is a natural human trait. Even the great man Moses, fell into this trap when he hit the rock to obtain water, for that method had worked for him previously. This time though, he was instructed to speak to the rock. His human based reaction, even though triggered by a time of great stress in dealing with a difficult people, so disappointed God that Moses was prevented from entering the Promised Land.

⁶ Moses and Aaron went from the assembly to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and fell facedown, and the glory of the LORD appeared to them. ⁷ The LORD said to Moses, ⁸ "Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink." ⁹ So Moses took the staff from the LORD's presence, just as he commanded him. ¹⁰ He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" ¹¹ Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. ¹² But the LORD

said to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them.' ¹³ These were the waters of Meribah, where the Israelites quarreled with the LORD and where he showed himself holy among them. (Numbers 20:6-13)

As well, people soon focus on the 'experience' of the supernatural rather than the repentance and life change that is at the heart of the Holy Spirit's desire for each one of us during revival. They will travel large distances for a 'touch from the Lord' rather than being listening to the Lord seeking the changes He desires to make in their lives. Revivals start with repentance, but fizzle out when people look more to the manifestations than to the giver.

¹⁷ From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.'" (Matthew 4:17)

One minister I know travelled many thousands of kilometres to Toronto where he had a great time experientially. While there, the Lord ministered to Him very clearly about his treatment of his wife. Coming back home, he testified of what the Lord had said. Those who knew him understood the accuracy of the Lord's word, yet nothing changed in 'life with the wife' ! Since that time his ministry has reduced considerably. You may be the judge as to why?

Our God is seeking more. He is seeking a people who will listen to Him! Those prepared to make changes in their lives as and when He requires. Ones who will be obedient to His will. Those willing to repent of old ways and to change their behaviour to become more like Jesus, no matter the cost. Those prepared to overcome pride, to move out of the comfort zone of learned behaviour.

²⁸ Peter said to him, "We have left everything to follow you!" ²⁹ "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel ³⁰ will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes,

brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.” (Mark 10:28-31)

Ironically, I have been challenged this week, in an area of my life. Let me assure you, it isn't easy to change! Particularly when it is a behaviour you have grown up with from your youth, one which is a part of you and who you are. But change is essential if we are to grow into the character of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit earnestly desires to be of influence in our lives, to teach us, guide us, to help us change, on an ongoing basis, yesterday, today and forever! While we can't influence yesterday's behaviour, other than repenting of our actions, today is a new day. The question the Holy Spirit gently asks each one is whether we will let Him 'inhabit' our lives. Are we prepared to give ourselves fully and completely to our Lord, doing His will for us, today and forever? Living in permanent personal revival each and every day, establishing His spiritual kingdom within, preparing for the glorious day when He returns to establish His physical kingdom in which to rule and reign with His overcoming disciples for 1000 years.

⁴ I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. ⁵ (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. (Revelation 20:4-6)

PRINCIPLE 3: God is calling out to Himself today a people prepared to allow the Holy Spirit to inhabit and change their lives on an ongoing basis.

DAVID' S DOUBTS: "But Lord, it is so much easier to stay as I am! I am comfortable with me!" "But David, are you like me then?" "Ah, well Lord..... no! Okay Lord, I take the hint!"

4: FROM KINGSHIP TO SERVANTHOOD

In Christian circles there is much talk about kingship, about taking the land, ruling and reigning, and much more victorious analogy.

"We will take the land for Jesus!" Unfortunately, it rarely seems to happen - does it? The emphasis on victorious kingship, in a worldly sense, which most of us interpret it in, neither rings true, nor is a reality in the church today.

We teach excellence, we teach vision, we teach success principles, and much more in a similar vein. We look for perfect pastors (an oxymoron) who are as handsome and worldly-wise as was King Saul. Successful men, and women too, to lead us powerfully into the Promised Land of milk and honey.

Just like Jesus was! Conquering the Romans! Leading the people to retake the Promised Land! Taking the kingdom by physical force...! I don' t think so. In fact, He died a pauper, on a cross, a criminal' s fate, battered and bruised, suffering an agonising death for you and for me. And we are called to become like Him! Oh dear - not a pleasant thought!

In one of the most amazing pieces of New Testament Scripture, Philippians 2, we learn that Jesus, God, came in humility, not seeking recognition, but as a servant. Obedient to the Father, he suffered and died on the cross. It was then, and only then, that Jesus was exalted to the highest place and proclaimed Lord of all!

⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue

*confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
(Philippians 2:5-10)*

You see, my friend, we have things all the wrong way round. We look for the glory without first paying the price necessary to attain it. We seek glory now, rather than building treasures in the heavenly kingdom, those that will last for eternity.

In God, down is up! It' s no good seeking promotion in the kingdom without being prepared first to sacrifice our life spiritually, as Jesus did physically, on the cross. To serve others. To feel the pain of rejection by the world, often those helped, as Jesus did. Even rejection by fellow Christians, that which hurts most of all. Then, continuing to serve, no matter what the cost to pride, ego, comfort, to our very life.

But finally, when we do, we can look forward to hearing those wonderful words, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'(Matthew 25:21)

PRINCIPLE 4: God is calling out to Himself a servant church, one prepared to sacrifice everything for Him, as did His Son, Jesus.

DAVID' S DOUBTS: "But God, it would be nice to be appreciated - sometimes!" "You are by me all the time, my son." "Thank you God!"

5: FROM RECEIVING TO GIVING

It' s a truism, that in many churches the best and most important sermon preached on a Sunday is for the offering!

Conversely, the twin signs of a true conversion are; making amends with those, one has wronged, plus having a generous wallet!

Yes, money, giving and receiving, shows where our heart truly is. For we all love receiving, but giving reflects the heart of God within.

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)

It is true too, that the structure of the church with its emphasis on buildings, paid clergy and programmes is a heavy consumer of financial resources, simply to keep going.

It follows from this then, that most teaching on giving is proclaimed in anticipation of the teacher, whether it is an individual or a church, being the recipient of the gifts! Put harshly, it is simply disguised self-interest.

In the Old Testament, the principle of tithing is established in 6 passages. The most detailed treatment is in Deuteronomy. Interestingly here, it only involves giving the tithe to the Levites and the poor, every third year. In the other two, the tithe is to be taken to the Temple where the tithers themselves are to consume it, giving thanks in front of the Lord.

22 Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year. 23 Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name, so that you may learn to revere the LORD your God always. (Deuteronomy 14:22-3)

12 When you have finished setting aside a tenth of all your produce in the third year, the year of the tithe, you shall give it to the Levite, the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. (Deuteronomy 26:12)

The New Testament does not mention the tithe. Why? Simply because we have moved from the Age of Law to the Age of Grace. The emphasis in the New Testament therefore, is on giving. Giving comes out of our heart attitude towards God, our desire to bless Him as He has blessed us. It is an ' internal' , heart decision under the New Covenant, not an ' external' requirement of the Law of the Old.

For those who follow Jesus fully, the heart response towards giving is likely to be more than 10%! In fact, one rich man was asked to give not 10%, but everything he had! The emphasis too, is always on giving to the poor.

21 Jesus answered, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.' (Matthew 19:21)

The focus of the prosperity type doctrines so prevalent today in the church today though, is on giving to receive. Give the Lord (by way of me) a Ford (with apologies to Henry!) and you will receive from the Lord (not from me) a Rolls Royce. Not only does this rarely happen, and if so, for other reasons, but it is contrary to the entire tenor of New Testament Scripture. For our rewards are to be heavenly, not carnal, illustrated in the example of the rich young man above, and confirmed again by Jesus here.

¹⁹ 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)

Today God is calling His church, his people, away from a mindset of receiving to one of giving. Sacrificial giving! Giving of our time, our resources, our thought lives, our leisure, our all, to Him. For giving is the very heart of servanthood, to which we are all called. Yes, it is nice to receive, but it is blessed to give. To give our whole life to Jesus, as Jesus did for us. That is the call upon His people today.

PRINCIPLE 5: God is calling out to Himself today a people who are prepared to give all to Him.

DAVID' S DOUBTS: "But God, I need an aeroplane to be efficient for you!" "If it is that critical David, I will get you there - my way!" "Okay God..."

6: FROM SONG TO HEART WORSHIP

Worship is a most difficult subject to write about, for we all have our own views! Ask a pastor to itemise the areas of greatest controversy within their church and worship will almost certainly be included. We all have worship styles we enjoy and which we believe take us into God' s presence. But they, and we, are all different! Praise the Lord for that!

True worship though, is far greater than our feelings or a desire for a particular music style. For true worship comes from deep within.

Whether it is King David in the Old Testament:

*11 Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. 12 I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever. 13 For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths of the grave.
(Psalms 86:11-13)*

Or the greatest commandment of the New:

27 He answered: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"(Luke 10:27)

Worship is at the heart of our faith and walk with Jesus.

In the Tabernacle of Moses, worship comprised specific ceremony detailed within the Law, as given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. The closest thing to a musical instrument was the shofar (ram' s horn trumpet) used to call the people to the most holy, annual Day of Atonement, the time when the High Priest made sacrifice for all the unintentional sins of the people. Music however, didn' t form part of the ritual ceremonies.

Then along came David! King David, that is! A man after God' s own heart!

¹⁴ But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command.”(1 Samuel 13:14)

One who worshipped Him with musical instruments and with song. God liked it! And He still does! So David set up another Tabernacle, a simple tent, one where the people could see the Ark of the Covenant for the first time. David truly put his mouth where his heart was!

*² Test me, O LORD, and try me, examine my heart and my mind;
³ for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth.
(Psalm 26:2-3)*

A picture of what Jesus would do when He died on the cross and the Temple curtain was ripped in two, from top to bottom.

Jesus opened up the Holy of Holies to us, which we may now enter through worship. True worship from deep within, from the spirit, and in truth. Not just by singing songs - whether hymns, choruses or full-on pentecostal praise for an hour.

²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”(John 4:23-4)

Very quickly, whatever form of worship we participate in can become familiar and rote. We have done it all before! We know the method! Or maybe, we are just bored with it all!

Today, God is seeking worshippers with a ' David heart' , ones who will worship Him with their whole being. Not just for an hour on a Sunday, but those to whom worship is a lifestyle. For our worship is to be reflected in our actions. Others should be able to see that we are sold out to Jesus in both word and action. A challenge? Yes! But the people God is seeking today.

PRINCIPLE 6: God is calling out to Himself today a people who will worship Him with their whole life and being.

"But God, surely Sunday is enough?" "But you want Me to be with you 24/7, don' t you?" "Okay God, I get it!"

7: TO CHANGE FOCUS FROM US TO HIM

What is the focus of ' your church' On ' the house' or on ' the Lord' ?

I guarantee that 99% of us will read the first question and see nothing wrong with it. The second may cause us think - a little.

But in reality, the first question is flawed, for it makes the incorrect assumption that the church is ours! The church, as God sees it, doesn' t belong to us and never will. Rather, it is meant to be His people, created in accordance with His pleasure, not for our own purposes.

4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. (Ephesians 1:4-6)

In our humanness, we focus on what can be seen rather than the unseen spiritual realm. We so easily slip into the way of substituting the church, the buildings, the priesthood and the programmes, for God, for our spiritual relationship with Jesus. We want to see the church (if we are really honest, our own church, not the one down the road) expand and grow. We claim it for God' s glory, but that' s only half the story!

Recently, I was in a large church where the pastor spoke about his vision for ' the house' . Only a couple of convenient scriptures were used and, to my recollection, God was not referred to once during the sermon. The church would grow, the church would become influential in the city, the church buildings would be improved, etc., etc.. The entire focus was upon ' the house' . I left the service feeling dejected and sad! Both God and I together!

Instead of making our services ' seeker friendly' why not make them ' God friendly' ? Why not seek Him and His will in our meetings rather than providing professional entertainment designed to titillate our human

senses? Should we not be more concerned with offending God rather than the world - or even the congregation?

On a personal level, why do we really go to church? To be blessed? To fulfil a weekly obligation before getting on with our day to day lives? To feel good through emotional worship? To receive a spiritual blessing from the pastor or priest?

Or do we go to worship the Lord our God with everything we have and to hear what He has to say to us personally, in whatever way He wishes. Prepared to be changed into His image, no matter what sacrifice this requires. This indeed, is the church our God desires.

As Jesus so simply stated in His single commandment:

27 He answered: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Luke 10:27)

Let us focus fully on Him today.

PRINCIPLE 7: God is calling out to Himself today a church fully focused upon Him.

DAVID' S DOUBTS: "But God, if we don' t be user friendly, people will get upset and not come." "Why not try being friendly to Me, and see what I will do." "Okay, God - it is Your church, after all.."

8: FROM NUMBERS TO DISCIPLESHIP

When one pastor meets another, the first question usually asked is, "How big is your church?" The replies immediately establish the relative pecking orders. The pastor with the larger church automatically has the greater status.

Numerous seminars are conducted on ' church growth' , on the latest and greatest way to attract more people into your church, and the programmes that will surely succeed in growing your numbers.

When one asks pastors for their God-given vision, usually it will be focused around increasing the numbers of people in their church. Visions range from hundreds to thousands.

Yet the reality is, 90% of churches worldwide, based on my experience, would have less than 100 members with the majority, less than 50. This would seem to indicate that God is either giving impossible visions, or that most pastors are complete failures. I don' t think so. The reality is, we do measure success by numbers, and in most cases our visions are human, rather than God, based. Put very basically, we measure success by ' bums on seats' . Or perhaps, on the floor, as in some countries.

But is this really God' s way? What really are we called to? What does the Great Commission actually say?

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

It does not say to get everyone in the world into a church (preferably our own!) on a Sunday, but to make "disciples", for it is only disciples who will "*obey everything I have commanded you.*"

Jesus, although He spoke to a lot of people, only attempted to train 12 male disciples, and one of those didn't last the distance. He did of course, train a number of women also, but in the custom of the times, they weren't listed as part of the group.

The point really is, it is virtually impossible to disciple people in large groups. For developing discipleship is a relational activity. One on one - or in small groups. This is the most effective way for a pastor to ' shepherd' God's people. And shepherding is the true role of a ' pastor' .

Today God is calling on His church to discard the human based philosophy that ' big is best' and to go back to the relational basis of discipleship which Jesus modelled.

I want to encourage the vast majority of pastors out there whose churches are not growing into 'mega-churches' . The Lord first and foremost desires you to encourage your people to a deeper commitment, not to you of course, but to the Lord. It is through this pastoral commitment to discipleship that the Lord will say, "*Well done, good and faithful servant*" .

Let us put aside the ways of man's ' biggest and brightest' philosophy and return to the Biblical pattern of discipleship, of commitment, submission and obedience to God's will.

Remember the warning to the Laodicean church, the well-established pattern of today's church.

15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16 So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. 17 You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. 18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. (Revelation 3:15-18)

To those prepared to change their ways to become disciples of Jesus, a wonderful promise is made.

*19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.
20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.
(Revelation 3:19-20)*

Pastors, leaders, your shepherding role is to encourage your people to open their door to Jesus.

PRINCIPLE 8: God is calling believers to grow into disciples.

DAVID' S DOUBTS: "BuGod, if I have a big church it will glorify you - and pay my salary!" "Who will it glorify David?" "OK God, me really! I understand now. Forgive me Lord."

9: FROM BUILDINGS TO COMMUNITY

A new church begins. It starts to grow. It soon gets too big for the home or meeting place. So what to do? Where to meet now? Maybe split into two, but then we would miss fellowship with half our friends. Perhaps we can find a hall to hire. But a hall is never like home, is it? An idea! I know! We will build a church of our own - for the glory of God, of course!

So we build a building. It draws the men of the church together, working on the construction project. For we men love projects! While raising money is never easy, at least raising building funds is less of a problem than fundraising to support a missionary or church in a far distant land. At least, with a building, we can see what we are getting for our money, and we will benefit from its facilities.

The great day comes. The church is finished. We open it, inviting the mayor or chief, and the community, to come. It is a time of celebration. Surely all will return.

Next week however, only the members turn up. While the doors are open to the community, the community is not rushing in through them. So programmes are instituted to draw others to the church. When a programme proves to be unsuccessful, another replaces it. Why won't the people come in, we cry? We have so much to offer! Gradually, a siege mentality develops. We will do our thing - they can do theirs. They can come and join us when they see the light. And so we run our Christian Club, in our separated 'club premises', which we call the Church. The community lives its life and we live ours. But our building remains, standing solid, for God's glory. Or is it?

We must ask ourselves the question, "What really is the church?" And the answer truly is "Not buildings, but people." A building, no matter how beautiful or functional is not salt and light to the world.

SALT AND LIGHT

13 'You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. 14 'You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.
(Matthew 5:13-16)

We are not simply to be salt, ' salted away' (excuse the pun) in our church buildings. Nor are we just to be the light, shining in the house! Rather, we are to be lights shining before the men, and women, and children of the community. And we can only do that by moving beyond our safe, protective church walls into the community itself, not restricting our light to our church ' bowl' .

Yes, God is calling His people back into the community, opening up our homes, being Jesus in our workplaces and social institutions, so becoming effective servants and witnesses to our neighbourhoods.

It is true that the early church did minister in the synagogues and other public meeting places, from which they were regularly ejected. But their primary focus was not upon preaching but on relational ministry, one on one or in small groups, following the example Jesus set with His disciples. Sure, Jesus spoke to the crowds, but most of His time was spent training disciples, both men and women, on a personal, relational basis.

The ' tradition' of creating beautiful buildings for God' s glory grew out of the institutionalisation of the church during Roman times. Mankind' s kingdom is found in monuments, parliaments, palaces - and churches. But God' s kingdom isn' t built of bricks and mortar but is living, vibrant, vital linkage of human hearts submitted in discipleship to Jesus. Don' t take my word for it though, listen to Jesus.

THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

20 Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, 'The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, 21 nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you.' (Luke 17:20-21)

May we not be beguiled into believing that God lives in buildings of brick, stone or wood, irrespective of how beautiful, serene or peaceful they may be to our eyes. Instead, let us seek to instil the truths of Jesus into the hearts of men and women, where the real church, God' s kingdom, is found.

PRINCIPLE 9: God is calling His people out of buildings and back into the community.

DAVID' S DOUBTS: "But God, if I have a big building, many will be attracted to You." "To me - or to you?" "OK God, I understand."

10: FROM SERVING PROGRAMMES TO MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

The major thrust in just about every church, everywhere, is implementing the church' s programmes to bring in the lost, build up the body, feed the hungry and serve the community. These are worthy goals. Not only in themselves, but also to help build a sense of teamwork and unity in the body. And also, to be seen to be doing something positive to build God' s kingdom, through your particular fellowship.

The Parable of the Lost Coin

⁸ ‘Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ ¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.’ (Luke 15:8-10)

Yes, programmes are at the heart of our church life, in fact, are the heart of our church life! To be involved in the programmes is seen as the model of an effective member of the church. Our commitment to God is judged by our loyalty to our church' s programme.

But do our programmes work? Being really honest and realistic, if 10% of the promises proclaimed about the potential success of each and every programme was achieved, the world would have been ' saved' and ' transformed' many times over. But it hasn' t been, has it? Yet we persist with programme after programme in the vain hope that the next one will succeed where the others failed.

PARAGRAPH FOR PASTORS: Pastors, you attend the latest seminar on the greatest programme that has proved to be successful in growing a church or churches somewhere in a spectacular fashion. You get fired up! You come home and apply the programme, the method, to your own church. The programme fails or meets with limited success. You are deeply

disappointed. You attend another seminar. You apply another programme. The cycle continues. You end up disillusioned and your people burned out. If you are resolute you continue the cycle. Or you quit, your resilience having reached its limit.

Enough of the negative stuff! But no, not another programme in the making here! What did Jesus do? While Jesus preached to the multitudes on occasions and fed the 4,000 and 5,000, (ineffectually in human terms, for there were only about 120 dedicated followers left after the disappointment of His death), He spent most of his time ministering to the needs of, and training, individuals. Just one of numerous examples follows.

40 A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, 'If you are willing, you can make me clean.' 41 Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!'" 42 Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.
(Mark 1:40-42)

He sent His disciples out two by two.

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.
(Luke 10:1)

They ministered both to people' s physical and spiritual needs.

9 Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.' (Luke 10:9)

We are to show the love of Jesus to others, to love our neighbours as ourselves. True agape love, one of self-sacrifice for others, can really only be given and received on a personal basis. Programmes, no matter how good they are, tend to lose sight of this reality. ' Programmed love' is not possible. For agape love comes from within.

Instead of promoting programmes then, let us encourage one another to develop servant hearts of agape love. Then we will naturally identify with and meet community needs, so becoming as Jesus to its members.

Our relationship with Jesus is an individual, not a corporate, one. Personal love and concern for non-believers physical and spiritual needs is by far the most effective form of building the kingdom. God' s kingdom, not ours, that is. Of course we need to co-operate, helping and encouraging one another, but the extension of God' s kingdom depends upon you, and upon me, doing the work. This will not happen through reliance upon man-generated programmes that have worked somewhere else. Yes, God is calling on you and on me individually, to be the light of Jesus to a lost world.

PRINCIPLE 10: God is calling His people to become personally involved in meeting individual needs within the community.

DAVID' S DOUBTS: "But God, this latest programme is sure to work! It increased XYZ Church 100 fold! And they have told me how to do it!" "David, why not try following my instructions, and be as Jesus to your neighbours." "Okay God, but it' s hard!" "But not when I am with you, my son."

11: FROM PRIESTLY FOCUS TO PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

One of the greatest frustrations to church leaders is in getting their people involved in doing the work of the church. We have, of course, previously dealt with the difference between the 'churches work' and 'God's work', so we won't go there again.

Why is it though, that people don't want to be involved? While we constantly hear the excuse that today we are too busy, I would suggest that this is an 'excuse' rather than the 'reason'. For we all find time to do the things that that we consider most important to us. Put simply, God's work is further down the priority list than other pursuits in the time we have available.

I would suggest, even going back 50 years when the pace of life was slower, the situation was little better. Sure, at this time when mothers stayed at home with the kids, there was a greater people resource available, but it still didn't result in a big increase in God's kingdom.

So there has to be another, more basic reason why people don't feel the need to become involved, even while claiming that God is their No. 1 life priority!

To find the answer we need to go right back to the time of Constantine and the early Roman church where we saw the formalisation of a paid priesthood placed over the laity. It is no good criticising the Roman Catholic Church about this, for the division has been perpetuated through all the reformations that have taken place since. From priests to ministers to pastors, the basic organisation structure has remained. The common perception is that the 'professionals' are far better qualified to do the job - and this is what we are paying them for anyway!

Pastors will cry out, "No David, you are wrong! We aren't like that at all!"

But ' Pastor Tait' has a title, perhaps wears a robe, or clerical collar, or more subtly, dresses better than his people. He likely has a formal qualification, may even be called ' Rev' or ' Dr' . He stands behind a pulpit on a raised platform, maybe even sitting on a grand throne on the stage. He is placed on a pedestal by his people and takes the place of honour at banquets. Then wonders why the people might perceive him (or her) as a superior Christian to them! To know, deep down, that they are inferior believers and the Lord would certainly use the pastor first to build His kingdom. Besides, that is (generally) what he is paid to do.

Yet this Old Covenant system is not the way it is meant to be under the New Covenant. Jesus criticised the Rabbis for precisely the same things!

5 'Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; 6 they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; 7 they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.' 8 'But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. 9 And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. 10 Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. 11 The greatest among you will be your servant. 12 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. (Matthew 23:5-12)

Jesus came to bring a new way, with a brotherhood to replace the hierarchy.

¹¹ Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. ¹² He says, 'I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises.'" (Hebrews 2:11-12)

It is a sad fact, that in the church, we generally have more hierarchy than in the world. There are very few people accorded leadership titles in the world, yet so many in the church.

God is calling His leaders to a change in attitude, from one of getting the people to help fulfil the pastor' s vision towards encouraging and training the people to seek the Lord for personal vision and then helping them implement what the Lord reveals. For it is the saints who are designated to do the work, not the leaders.

*11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.
(Ephesians 4:11-12)*

In those rare situations where equipping and encouraging the people to do the work is the primary focus of ministry, you will almost always find a healthy, happy and effective ' church' , of whatever form it might take. One of people willing to work for Jesus in the way the Lord has shown them to do. It is a more difficult road for the leadership, but the truth is, we are to be like Jesus and act as He acted.

28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."(Matthew 20:28)

PRINCIPLE 11: God is calling all His people to become personally involved in the ministry of the kingdom.

DAVID' S DOUBTS: But God, how can I fulfil MY vision if I have no flock to help me, for surely my vision is their vision!" "David, my son, serve your people and give your life up for them, as Jesus did." "But God... OK God!"

12: FROM MATERIALISM TO SPIRITUALITY

As we conclude our study of God' s call upon the church today, we will look at a final, difficult area of church life. The area of a Christians ' right' to material wellbeing, epitomised in the closely related ' name it and claim it' and ' prosperity' doctrines.

One thing I have noticed when travelling around the world, is the makeup of congregations in prosperity teaching churches. It would be reasonable to assume, if the teaching was effective, that the people attending would be of above average wealth for the community in which they live. For prosperity is relative. What is considered poverty in New Zealand is regarded as wealth in Africa. Yet, whether in the USA or the heart of Africa, the congregations of prosperity preachers are invariably poorer than the community average. Why? The teaching appeals to the poor, those who see this as a way out of their financial disadvantage. It is noticeable too, invariably, that the preachers are rich.

But what does the Bible say? Much of our confusion comes because we fail to understand the fundamental difference in the manifestation of God' s blessing between the Old and the New Covenants.

The Old Testament was based in the natural. Ongoing physical sacrifices of animals were required for forgiveness of sin, while wealth and the possession of land measured blessing. The glory days of God' s blessing of Israel were found in the reign of King Solomon. Unfortunately however, In spite of being the world' s wisest man, Solomon' s character was unable to resist the temptations wealth brings. A sobering warning to us all! From the final part of Solomon' s reign onwards, it was all downhill for the Jews.

Jesus came to change the system. Believers accept with gratitude the incredible final sacrifice Jesus made on the cross and are gladly prepared to spiritually apply the power of His blood for the forgiveness of sin. For we have read in Hebrews:

8 First he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them' (although the law required them to be made). 9 Then he said, 'Here I am, I have come to do your will.' He sets aside the first to establish the second. 10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Hebrews 10:8-10)

Logic would dictate that if the sacrifice were changed from physical to spiritual, blessings also, would take a new form. And they do. Solomon failed through lack of character. New Testament blessings therefore, are focused around character building, rather than the acquisition of wealth. This is epitomised by the ' Sermon on the Mount.'

3 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. (Matthew 5:3-9)

In fact, rather than receiving a promise of the comfort of wealth, we are promised blessings for pain and suffering! The sermon continues:

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 'Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. (Matthew 5:10-11)

Sobering, isn' t it?

Much of the New Testament deals with the subject of wealth. But only in 1 or possibly 2 places, in a positive light. Probably the most hard-hitting passage is about the Rich Young Ruler.

22 When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. 23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' (Matthew 19:22-24)

Of course, everything is possible in God, but this was a huge warning to the Jews (and us!) for they hankered for the return of the days of King Solomon.

The lifestyle Jesus modelled was one of ' daily provision' , as expressed in the Lord' s prayer *Give us today our daily bread.*

His emphasis was on seeking spiritual understanding with its associated blessings:

31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:31-4)

Yes, Jesus came with a new covenant. One based on the spiritual ' kingdom of God' . Today God is calling on us to put aside the seductive temptations of materialism and embrace principles of kingdom living. Jesus died, not that we might become wealthy in the world, but to build spiritual treasure in heaven.

32 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Luke 12:32-34)

There will come a time when the physical and the spiritual will be reunited as it was in the Garden before Adam and Eve sinned. But that is another story, one dependant upon the spiritual development of our character to become like Jesus.

PRINCIPLE 12: God is calling His people to change focus from the material to the spiritual.

DAVID' S DECLARATION: "This time, God, I understand. For I have been a millionaire twice and bankrupt twice and know in which state I come closer to you. And recently, you called on us to give away our protective ' nest-egg' , Lord. I am learning not to worry about tomorrow - well, most of the time!"

THE PRINCIPLES OF GOD' S CALL TO THE CHURCH - A SUMMARY

PRINCIPLE 1: God is calling out to Himself today a ' Mary church' .

PRINCIPLE 2: God is calling out to Himself today a ' church of ' Christ-like disciples' .

PRINCIPLE 3: God is calling out to Himself today a people prepared to allow the Holy Spirit to inhabit and change their lives on an ongoing basis.

PRINCIPLE 4: God is calling out to Himself a servant church, one prepared to sacrifice everything for Him, as did His Son, Jesus.

PRINCIPLE 5: God is calling out to Himself today a people who are prepared to give all to Him.

PRINCIPLE 6: God is calling out to Himself today a people who will worship Him with their whole life and being.

PRINCIPLE 7: God is calling out to Himself today a church fully focused upon Him.

PRINCIPLE 8: God is calling believers to grow into disciples.

PRINCIPLE 9: God is calling His people out of buildings and back into the community.

PRINCIPLE 10: God is calling His people to become personally involved in meeting individual needs within the community.

PRINCIPLE 11: God is calling all His people to become personally involved in the ministry of the kingdom.

PRINCIPLE 12: God is calling His people to change focus from the material to the spiritual.

ARE WE UP TO THE CHALLENGE?