



Ecclesiology

**The Biblical Study of
The Doctrine of the Church**

Earl Cooper, Ph.D.

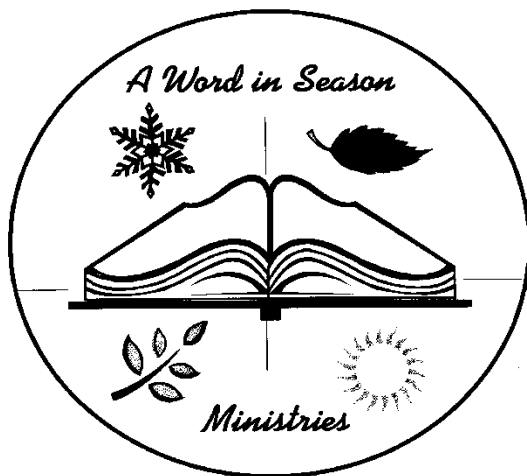
ECCLESIOLOGY

Earl Cooper, Ph. D.

Cameroon Biblical Seminary

Class Transcripts

January 2016



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Dr. Earl Cooper

1248 Healey Lk. Rd.

Bracebridge, ON. P1L 1X3

Web: DiscipleshipMinistries.ca

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The Doctrine of the Church

PREFACE

It has been my responsibility since 2003 to be involved in International Theological Education with the Canadian mission Across Borders for World Evangelism. In seeking to evaluate my teaching performance I audio recorded all my first classes. For reasons I fail to remember, I continued recording every class that I taught over the following 15 years.

Due to health reasons I was unable to return to overseas teaching from July 2018 to the present (October 2019). Anxious to carry on some measure of ministry during this time of convalescence, Kathi and I determined to develop a book for each course I taught, by combining the student manuals with transcripts of the classes. These we intend to supply for the school libraries where I got.

The format we decided upon was simple. Each class transcript is clearly marked. Within each class transcript the interactions between me and students are identified in italics. The lecture content for each class is in regular text with the major student manual outline interspersed. Bible text are from the NKJV. The Bible texts are italicized with regular text Bible references.

Please note: In the transposition of the recorded classes, the English portions of the recordings were used as the source. As a result, some of the French language recorded portions by the translator were omitted. These included clarifications and excellent explanations which were omitted, along with correction of the occasional verse number involving the differences between the English and French Bible verse numbering. If in the reading of Bible texts the reference is wrong for French language Bibles, a perusal of the verse context should enable finding the proper verse reference in question.

Ecclesiology is the name for the Doctrine of the Church. It is a summary of what the Bible says about the local church founded by God at Pentecost. Paul wrote of God's decision to make believers his people: "God said, 'I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people- 6:16). The church consists of God's people. They belong to Him and He belongs to them.

The concept of the church as the people of God emphasizes God's initiative in choosing them. In the Old Testament, he did not adopt as his own an existing nation, but actually created a people for himself. He chose Abraham and then, through him, brought into being the people of Israel. In the New Testament, this concept of God's choosing a people is broadened to include both Jews and Gentiles within the church. Paul writes to the Thessalonians: "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:13-14; see also 1 Thess. 1:4).¹

CLASS 1

Prof. Question: It is always good before we start a class to understand what we already know. I want you to share with me what the church, the local church, means to you.

Student Answer: It is a group of people meeting together in a place to pray, to examine the Word of God, to sing songs.

Prof. Response: You have given us your definition. That is a good place to begin. Now if I can be bold and ask you, add to this what the church means to you personally.

Student Response: To me the church is not a building, but people who believe in God, coming together as a family to worship God and learn about God together.

¹ Erickson, M.J. Christian Theology, (Baker Book House, Volume 3, Grand Rapids, Mi.,) pg. 1035.

Prof. Response: Thank you. Can someone else tell me, what does the church mean to you- definition and personally how does it affect you?

Student Response: For me I think the church is the core, the called of God, the body of the born again people of God.

Prof. Response: If someone asked you, can you live without the church, what would you say and why?

Student Response: -It is impossible to live without the church because it is the place where we meet together and grow in the faith.

-I say the same thing. The church is the body of people who believe in Jesus Christ.

-I think it is to prepare also everybody for the future.

INTRODUCTION

The reason I begin this class this way is to help us understand the thinking that is going on regarding the doctrine of the church. Every age in the history of the church has had its own doctrinal issues. If we look to the NT Scriptures, we see one of the first doctrines that had to be argued and thoroughly defined is the doctrine of Christology. When the church began, there was the struggle to believe he was really a man because he did such wonderful things. The people who saw him do his miracles, who heard Him had no trouble saying, He is God.

After the generation of those who actually witnessed Jesus on the earth was gone, then the church changed. Now the problem was accepting He could possibly have been God, because they accepted He was a man. When the true church defined Christology, what did they say? Is Christ man, or is Christ God? For the church, he is 100% man and 100% God. Yes, they had to define it. The Scriptures taught it, but they had to articulate it in a way it would be a conviction for them. The church has gone through the process of defining and stating doctrine.

I am not saying the Scriptures change in time, I am saying that man's understanding changes with different languages and we have to go back and restate all the time. We know live in the age where the doctrine of the church has to be redefined, not because it has changed, but because our understanding has wavered and weakened. In America today the local church is not as important as it used to be. There are millions of Christians in America who "do church" by turning on the television. What is missing is the necessary fellowship between believers. Today a movement defining

church as the ‘expression of worship’ only has arisen. That is a deception of Satan.

This has introduced an element of confusion. There are churches today that claim to be the true church. However, all they amount to is a gathering together for an emotional expression without truth. The opposite is also true. Some would say that church is just hearing the word of God preached with solemn faces, and no smiles or interaction. Our task is to study what the Bible says about “ecclesia” (the true church). This is the word for ‘assembly’ or ‘church’ in the NT. As we walk through this study in the next 4 weeks, I pray that each of you will grow to appreciate what the true church is. We will find as our brother has said that it is not an institution. Nor is it a building. It is a living entity in the world.

I want to say at the very beginning that when we talk about the church, there are two basic ideas. When you read and study commentaries, you will see that people refer to the universal church. Of course, this refers to the entire body of Christ, all the born-again believers that are living on earth today. Then of course, we look carefully at what commentaries say about the local church. There has been much discussion historically about the texts of Scriptures whether it speaks of the universal church or the local church. We are not going to take time in this class to discuss and argue this point. This is something you will have to study on your own. From where I am coming from, I would define the universal church as the group of local churches around the world. There is in the NT about 104 references to ‘ecclesia’. The word itself means ‘assembly’. In the book of Acts, I believe it is Stephen refers to the “church in the wilderness” (7:38), which has nothing to do with the body of Christ. He is referring to the nation Israel gathering in their worship, he is not suggesting it is the church in the NT.

There are maybe one or two references in the epistles that speak in a general way of the body of Christ in the world. The overall majority, many, many, most of the references, refer to the local church. I think we are wiser to think of the term ‘church’ as the local church. Recognize that the body of Christ consists of thousands of individual assemblies. Therefore, as we go through our study and think of Church, think of the local church. The universal church does not have pastors or deacons, the universal church does not send out missionaries, that is the local church. The universal church does not exist outside the many, many local churches all around.[21:39](#)

What we want to do is examine where the local church began. This does make a great difference in your theology. If you are a part of reform theology you would be saying the church began with Israel. If you understand the Scripture and the history of humanity in a dispensational way, you will conclude that the church began in Acts 2. I have the greatest respect for our reform brothers and sisters, but I think in this area, they are mistaken. How do we determine this? We do so by examining Scripture to see the historical development of the doctrine of the church.

I. INSTITUTION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

A. The Great Prediction

Matt. 16:18-19: *And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*

We are looking at the words of Jesus Christ in response to a very important question he asked the disciples. The greater context of course is the feeding of the 5000 and the response to this. In the context of the response to the feeding of the 5000 Jesus has spoken about the leaven of the Pharisees. Of course, the disciples were not following Jesus' explanations. They had witnessed the miracle that Jesus performed, to feed people physically, but he wants to bring them back to the real issues, the spiritual issues. The leaven of the Pharisees, the falsehood of the Pharisees that can grow and destroy they work of God. They did not understand where He was going. He wanted them to recognize that who His is, is more than the Messiah who would rule and feed the people, and that the greater issues were His purpose in coming as the Son of God.

In this context, He gives this great challenge and prediction to his disciples. He says 'I will build my church.' He says this in the context of something very, very important. In this passage we have Christ's prophecy of building his church. There is foundational doctrine for us here to understand. In asking the disciples: 'Who am I?' Peter, speaking for the disciples, made this great statement in verse 16: "you are the Christ, the Son of the living God". From this statement, Jesus lays down a foundation for building His church.

1. Built by Christ

In verse 18, He tells us who will build the church. Who will build the church? Jesus Christ Himself. He builds the church. It is a work of God, in

particular, a work of the Son of God. We are told in Ephesians that Christ is the head of the church (5:23). He says in this very passage *“that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”* (5:27).

2. The gates of hell cannot prevail against
Matt. 16:16-17: *Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.*

Immediately before Christ promised to build His church Peter made a great confession: *You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.* Peter's confession leads Christ to declare Himself the cornerstone of His church: *‘Upon this rock (the truth of Peter's confession) I will build my church.*

In verse 18, Christ says he will build the church, and then he makes a statement that demonstrates the power of the church. What does he say? The gates of hell will not prevail against it. He is referring to the spiritual realm of Satan. The phrase is a metaphor of old evil kingdom of unseen Satanic kingdom. The gate suggests the site of world political power and authority influenced by Satan.

Satan is called the god of this world. In Eph. 6 we are told we wrestle against principalities and powers in this world. How did Satan become the god of this world? He defeated Adam in the garden and gained the keys of earthly kingdom from him. God created the universe, the world. He put Adam and Eve in the on this earth. He said to Adam, ‘you will have dominion over this.’ God gave the keys of authority to this world to Adam. He was the one to care for and look after the details of the earth. He was accountable to God, but he was clearly given the dominion of the earth. When he submitted to Satan's deception and sinned, he immediately was spiritually separated from the Father. How do we know that? The Word of God says this. God said, ‘if you eat this, you will die.’ The definition of death is separation.

Was Adam separated from God after he partook of the forbidden fruit in sin? Yes! The Bible says Adam and Eve hid themselves from God. We see Adam was spiritually separated from God. God had to initiate the restoration of Adam. But in doing this, God promised Adam that the seed of the woman would defeat the seed of Satan. In this statement we have the promise of the Messiah. But we also have the reality of Satan's present

rule in the world. That statements says to us the keys that Adam had in the world were now in the hands of Satan.

3. Given the “keys to kingdom of heaven

Yet, following the statement that Christ is the rock, the cornerstone, ‘I will build my church and the gates of hell will not rule, will not defeat it, Jesus declares to Peter: *And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.* In this we see the Church possessing Christ’s authority to open the gates of heaven, to share the gospel message which establishes the church, the body of Christ on earth.

4. Given a ministry of “binding and loosing”

Jesus added this responsibility and authority: *whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.* This statement affirms the power of the gospel invested in the church:

Peter was told he would possess the keys and be able to **bind** and **loose** people. These were decisions Peter was to implement as he received instruction from **heaven**, for the binding and loosing occurred there first. Peter simply carried out God’s directions. This privilege of binding and loosing was seen in Peter’s life as he had the privilege on the day of Pentecost to proclaim the gospel and announce to all those who responded in saving faith that their sins had been forgiven (Acts 2). He was able to do the same thing with the household of Cornelius (Acts 10–11; cf. Acts 15:19–20). The same privilege was given all the disciples (John 20:22–23).² In this we must realize that ‘Missions’ is the responsibility of every local church.

The Roman Catholic Church uses this verse to say Peter was the first Pope. They miss the entire point of what Jesus is saying. The point comes when you understand the difference between the name ‘Peter’ and the word ‘rock’. Jesus says: You are Peter.” Peter means ‘small stone.’ These are the stones your children pick up and throw and sometimes break windows, but the word ‘rock’ upon which Jesus will build His church means ‘chief cornerstone’ or ‘foundation stone.’

² Barbieri, L. A., & Jr. (1985). Matthew. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Mt 16:17–20). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Jesus is not saying that Peter, the little stone, is the foundation stone. He is referring to that the foundational stone Peter referred to in his statement: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” of which Jesus said God the Father revealed this to Peter. Jesus is saying He himself is this great stone of stability, this foundation stone is what He will build the church upon. The truth that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Cornerstone and all who confession that ‘Christ is the Son of God will become the church built upon this cornerstone.

To confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living god is to confess all truth about Him: The truth that Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God is the Saviour of the world; The truth that Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God is risen Saviour; That He suffered, he died. He rose again; And the truth that He is the head of all things (Phil.2). Jesus, in these words, is showing us that the foundation of the church began when God’s Son became a man and in the work of the incarnation that the cornerstone was laid.

If this is true, could Israel have been the church, in the sense of the body of Christ? No, because the Son of God always existed, but the Son of God became the Christ in the incarnation. Christ is the God-man. The Son never became the God-man until the incarnation. We see in this great statement, the source of the church. Who builds it? Jesus Christ did!

We see the power of the church is Christ Himself. The realm of Satan, which is the world, will not prevail against God’s church. We see the beginning foundation. The statement, ‘you are the Christ, the Son of the living God’. The foundation stone is the entrance to the church. It is the confession that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and all that that entails. Who reveals that confession, that truth to man? God the Father does through the Word by the Spirit. We have already laid much truth regarding the church. 53:11

Although Christ is speaking to Peter, the disciples are there. There is nothing that says Jesus took Peter aside and spoke privately to him. Jesus in responding to Peter’s statement. Jesus acknowledged Peter as spokesman for all the disciples, even though Peter said things that were foolish, such as stating Jesus would not go to the cross. In Canada, we say he put his foot in his mouth, which means you made a big mistake.

Student Question: Can you explain this again, I am do not understand what you are saying about the keys

Prof. Response: *O.K. I will repeat his because it is very important to understand:*

Matt. 16:19: *And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*

I use the example of the keys of earth that Adam was given at creation and that Satan now has. A key is a symbol. The man who has the keys has the authority. Jesus uses the same illustration. He says 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.' Adam had lost the keys of earth, forfeiting them to Satan. That has not changed. Jesus is not saying, "Oh, now I am now taking the keys away from Satan. No, he says I have a different plan. In the midst of this reign of Satan on earth, I'm going to build my church. Satan's kingdom will not prevail against my church. I give to you men the keys of the authority to regarding the kingdom of heaven that will be represented by the local church." Listen to what He says "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven." Clearly, the church is given the authority that opens the door to the kingdom of heaven.

Prof. Question: *What is the cornerstone?*

Student Response: *Jesus Christ. The confession, you are the Christ is the acceptance of the gospel which brings salvation.*

Jesus says this is the foundation stone. Then he says you have the keys. You see the connections: the church God is building. The foundation is the confession that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, which accepts all the Bible says about Him. This is the ministry given to the apostles: the gospel foundation of the church according to Ephesians 2.

Eph. 2: 17-20: *And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,*

Jesus is saying that the church is all about a mission. The mission is to take that foundational statement and bring it to the world. This is the con-

fession that opens the door to the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven. This is the business of the church. He is speaking about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Do you agree? Can anyone see the Father without the Son? He is talking about the truth that brings salvation to a soul. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God including all that this means, the Christ is the Saviour, the Christ is the King. This is the entrance, the key to the kingdom of God. This message is the mission of the local church.

You notice that this ministry, or this mission, is a mission of binding and loosening. You need to understand by the grammar used here and what this means. When he speaks of binding and loosening he is not talking about church discipline, not talking about the authority of the elders to discipline a member and cast them out of the church. The words used here is a past-participle. It would be better translated this way: "What you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven." The way the grammar is given shows it is not the power of the apostles or the church to make the determination. It is the deliverance found in the confessional statement that is foundational. This deliverance will establish what God has established in heaven, revealed to people by God's grace and predestination.

The delivery of the key is the message that the church is responsible to bring. The reception or the rejection of this message, which is determined in heaven, is delivered by the faithfulness of the church. What the church is responsible for is being faithful to the mission, is to exercise responsibility and follow through with what has already been decided in heaven.

Student Question: Which of the godhead is responsible?

Prof. Response: Let me try and back up a little to help understand.

The works of God are clearly given in Scripture- creation, revelation, inspiration, all of these great works of God are attributed to each of the persons of the Godhead. When I teach the Christology class I think I begin by saying God spent 4000 years of history telling man that God is One God. When the world's historians look at the nation Israel, I'm not talking about Christian historians, the world's historians, when they look, they say the nation Israel was historically unique. Do you know what makes Israel unique among all the nations of the world? The chosen nation- the world would not know this.

The world has looked at the history of Israel and says this is the first nation that was mono theistic, they believe in one God, it was a battle for

Israel, in the OT you see Israel falling back and worshipping many gods. That is why God repeatedly called them harlots because they had many lovers instead on one true God, but finally god brought them to hold onto that one truth, there is one true God.

The great statement Moses made is foundational to the nation- Deut. 6:4. It is called the 'shema' The lord thy God is one lord. In our minds in the NT church, with weakness in preaching the OT, we have mistakenly divided the One God into three Gods. When we think of God, we think of the three, Father, Son, Spirit. But the greater truth is that God is one God. The church had one of those theologies to hammer out who God is. The confessions boiled down to this statement- there is one God, who exists in three persons. There is one God who exists in three persons. There is one God who You get the point? Jesus said to the disciples, if you've seen me, you've seen the Father. Do not ask me to explain this, it is beyond my understanding. There is nothing that explains this adequately. There is one God, three persons. The persons define in our small understanding, how God operates. The Father is the planner, The Son is the executer of the plan, the Spirit is the applier of the plan. But in truth we can say God the Father created the world, in truth we can say God the Son created the world, in truth we can say God the Spirit created

I believe Jesus is referring to the Father repeating this to Peter to follow in His call as the Son. The Son honours the Father. The Son carries out the Father's will. In the same way John 14 when Jesus talks about the Spirit, he says the Spirit will come and teach you all things I have told you. The Spirit exalts and honours the Son. The Son honours and submits to the will of the Father. Who gives spiritual gifts? The spirit, the father, the son does. In the context here, Jesus is saying 'the father reveals to you this work'. It is the role of the Son to give honour to the Father, but it is God who reveals. By the grace of God, we are given insights into the three persons.

CLASS 2

When we began our class we looked at Matt. 16 to see the institution of the church. This was a great passage of Scripture as Christ interacted with his apostles. Jesus had performed miracles and taught with great authority. After feeding 5000 he was talking to the disciples about the leaven of the Pharisees. He was trying to tie together the works that he was doing

with who He was. But the disciples like you and I had fog in their brain. They thought he was still talking about eating so he made it very pointed. Who do people say that I am? Who do you say that I am? Peter, with his usual boldness, stepped forward and said, ‘you are the Christ, the Son of the living God’.

Christ’s response to Peter’s words gave us a foundation for understanding the work and the existence of the church. Jesus said: “Blessed are you Peter, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. You are Peter, the little stone. But upon this great foundation stone (referring to the statement that Peter had made), Jesus said “I will build my church. The gates of hell will not prevail against it.” In essence, Jesus stated that he gave to Peter and the disciples, who became His apostles, the key that opens the door to the kingdom of heaven. You have the ministry of binding and loosing. What you bind and what you loosen will have been bound and loosed in heaven.”

Prof. Question: From that statement, that passage, tell me some of the things we learn about the local church.

Student Response: The church has been given the power of the keys to heaven.

Prof. Response: I want you to tell me exactly what you mean. Are you saying that the church decides who is going to heaven and who is not going to heaven?

Student Response: The church is given the responsibility to share the gospel which opens the door to heaven for those who believe.

Prof. Response: Aha! OK. The essence of the church authority is to declare the Word of God. The church has no authority apart from the Word of God directing the church. Good, so they have the authority to declare the message which determines salvation. What else do we learn in this passage?

Student Response: The power of the devil will not prevail on the church.

Prof. Response: What do you mean by the power of Satan? What is your understanding of the phrase ‘the gates of hell’?

Student Response: Those who believe in Jesus Christ are no longer under the power of Satan.

Prof. Response: Why does Satan have power?

Student Response: Satan got power from Adam when he deceived when he deceived Eve in the garden of Eden.

Prof. Response: *We have to remember to think biblically. God gave the authority on the earth to Adam. When he submitted himself to the word of Satan, he forfeited that.*

We know from Scripture the church has enemies. Can you tell me what they are?

Student Response: *The world, Satan, the flesh.*

Prof. Response: *OK. You will see that the flesh is the enemy because of our sin nature. We can not blame Satan on that.*

5. Enemies of the church

All humanity inherits this sin nature because Adam is the father of our race. Therefore, we are born spiritually separated from God. We are born without the necessary direction God designed in man to have. When God created Adam, He breathed into him the breath of life. That is the single greatest thing that distinguishes man from all creation, only man had the Spirit of God within him. The spirit of man, the immaterial part of man, had fellowship with the Spirit of God at creation. That is how God led Adam and Eve. It was guidance from God himself. However, when Adam and Eve sinned, the fellowship was broken. As a result, Adam's nature became sinful (Rom. 5:12). Man had no opportunity to be led by the Spirit anymore, but man needs to be led. It is a part of the way God designed man. When God's Spirit no longer directed Adam, he searched for anything to lead him. Like Adam, all humanity defaults back to the soul and the flesh, man's intellect, emotions and will and man's desires and cravings. Therefore, the soul and flesh are the enemy of man because he is no longer led in the way of God.

We also have the world. This is the influence of a wicked world upon believers who are born and live in the world (1 Jn. 2:15-16). Before salvation our minds are programmed by the world's beliefs and behavior. Salvation implants God's nature into our life, but it battles against the old nature and the old mental programming until renewed by the Word applied by a walk in the Spirit. Three times in the Gospel of John, Jesus said his people were "*not of the world.*": Paul reminds believers: "*do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*"

We could take much time to discuss what the world is. It is not really the purpose of this class. Obviously the world under which Satan rules, consists of unbelievers who follow Satan. But, Paul says we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, and powers and the rul-

ers of darkness. Ephesians tells us Satan has blinded the minds of the unbeliever and this is where we were without Christ. The world is the system of the unbeliever. It is the collective value system of the world that is opposed to God. It is the collective wisdom of the world that is opposed to God. It is the collective philosophy of the world that is opposed to god.

Yes, it is the world of unbelievers, but it is more than just the individual unbeliever, it is the collective force of unbelievers moving away from God toward their own way of thinking and their own value system. Yes, the philosophy of the banks is opposed to God's philosophy of stewardship. Nevertheless, we can use the bank as a resource to help us with our finances as long as we are guarded from buying into the philosophy of the bank of having money and not sharing with anyone. Yes, the school system teaches, at least in Canada, things that are opposed to God. It teaches evolution. It teaches that all faiths are equal. It teaches selfishness. It teaches that success means you have lots of money. However, it also teaches the basics of mathematics; it also teaches how to understand languages. If we have no choice of teaching our own children, then we can use the school system. But, we must be sure that we are teaching our children the dangers and the true philosophies while they are going into that environment.

We have the enemy of the flesh, we have the enemy of the world, then we have Satan and his host of demons. That is a true and real force. Satan and his demons have been on the earth at least 6000 years, depending on how you understand the days of creation. Exodus 20:11 states that God created everything in six days. Somewhere in those six days, God created the angels of heaven. Angels have been around since creation. Demons and Satan have been around since creation. Angels and demons are not like God that know everything. However, can you imagine how much they have learned in 6000 years? For 6000 years, Satan has been studying humanity to destroy the work and credibility of God in humanity. I think Satan has become good at his job, proficient at his deception. Think of the chief or the mayor of your people being 500 years old and still as strong as he was when he was 20 years old. He would be a very wise man, having lived that long?

Student Response: I do not think he would be wiser because we see in the Bible that the world's wisdom is against Christ.

Prof. Response: That is a good point, thank you. I should have said 'worldly wisdom' the chief would be wise in worldly wisdom.

I say all this to help us recognize the strength of Satan as the enemy. He and his demons are real enemies. We cannot cast aside their work lightly. However, Jesus promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against the church. He is declaring that by virtue of being a part of the kingdom of God, through the statement that Peter made, a confession of salvation; "you are the Christ, the Son of the living God." The statement acknowledges all that it means for the Son of God to become the Christ. This statement delivers us out of the world, out from under having to be subject to Satan. What did Peter say? "Submit to God, resist the devil, what is the result." He will flee from you..

This great worldly theme, all this worldly wisdom has no power if we choose to submit to God and resist. We learn from this passage other things about the church. Who built the church? Jesus Christ. It is His work.

The church I grew up in had one pastor for 40 years. When he went to the church there were about 80 people. After 40 years of ministry, it was about 80 people. Did he fail? No, no, no he did not. He did what God asked him to do, be faithful. Who builds the church? The pastor? No, God. Jeremiah labored for 40 years and had very few converts. Did he fail? No, he was faithful. Think biblically! Do not measure the way the world does. In America the successful pastors, who are asked to go and speak at big conferences, who write books to tell people how they must do church work, they are recognized because their churches are 10000 people. The world thinks that way. Do not do that. Discipline yourself to look at God's servants from the "faithfulness perspective." If a man serves God faithfully for 40 years and God chooses not to grow the church very much, that is God's business.

We came to understand in this passage that the foundational mission of the church is to declare to this truth, this gospel. Jesus said: "I give you the keys. What you bind will have been bound. What you loose will have been loosened in heaven." I want you to see that it is impossible to understand the work of the church and the mission of the gospel to be brought to the people. You cannot separate the people who constitute the church and the purpose that God has for them to proclaim the message. The church is fundamentally missional. The primary function of the church is to be on a

mission from God. That is why I want to take you to Matthew 28 so we can see after understanding the institution of the church, the commission , the command, the marching orders of the church.

B. The Great Commission

Matt. 28:19, 20: *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, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.*

Jesus is with the eleven disciples (16). This was after Judas killed himself for betrayed Jesus. Jesus is talking to the people He said He gave the keys to: I give to you, not just Peter, the keys to the kingdom. He has died for our sins. He was buried and He rose again. Now He is completing His task on earth by giving the church its commission, its command. This passage is directly related to Matthew 16. He is talking about carrying out the message that Peter declared: “You are the Christ, son of the living God.” In this passage, which we call the great commission, there are 4 responsibilities given to the church.

Prof. Question: When some of you were in the army, were any a commissioned officer?

Student Response: Yes, I was.

Prof. Question: Can you explain to us what it means to be a commissioned officer?

Student Response: First of all you have a team. I had three men who were leaders of the sections. Every one of them had a group of people to lead. They also had subgroups in that. I gave commands to the 3 men and they also gave them to the leaders of their group.

Prof. Response: Did the men obey you?

Student Response: They had to obey and if they do not obey, they receive discipline.

Prof. Response: Why did they have to obey?

Student Response: Because I am the chief.

Prof. Response: Who gave you that authority?

Student Response: I also had a chief commander who gave me authority.

Commission means to represent the one who has invested in me his authority. In the church I pastored in Canada three of our members, young men, went to military school. When they graduated, they went through a

ceremony of commissioning. They were given a certificate of commissioning. This certificate was from the Queen of England, who is the monarch over Canada. We are still a part of the British Commonwealth. The Queen signed these commissions personally. This certificate said something like this:

By the authority invested in me as the monarch of Canada, I give you the authority as lieutenant in the Canadian armed forces, to pass on to those under you, my commands and my desires for your people. You are responsible for carrying out my orders and you will hold them responsible for carrying out your orders. In receiving this commissioning, you are committing an oath of allegiance to those who are in authority over you, and you are promising to carry out your orders as you are directed. Signed by Queen Elizabeth.

This is a commissioning. It is a very special thing. It is the authorization in the military world of highest authority giving their own authority to those who represent them. This is what Matthew 28 is about. It begins with Jesus saying all authority is given unto me. He is saying there is no greater authority than Jesus Christ. Then he says ‘with this authority I give you the command to go, make disciples, baptize them teach them all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And he says I who have all authority, I will always be with you. This not only is a promise of His presence to continue, but it is a promise of His power to be invested in them always, because you cannot separate His presence from His power.

1. The four-fold responsibility

a. Going

When we look at this we see the 4 responsibilities. It begins with a participle in the original language. This particular form of the participle has significant meaning. It is a command that is assumed. They can be translated ‘as you go’ because you see Jesus had already called them to go when he gave them the keys. He is following this up by assuming they understand and they know they are responsible to be missional. It has the power of a command but it assumes obedience.

I can tell you ‘go to my room and get my computer’. You can obey or you can disobey. However, if it is something I want you to do every day, if I have the authority to say to you ‘bring me a glass of water for every class.’ Now if I have the authority and you are a good man to obey, how many times do I have to tell you this? Just once. But if I want to explain further to you, details about bringing me the glass, I will say something

like this: “When you get me the glass of water would you also put a little lemon juice in it?”

With this, I am adding information to a command that I have already given you. Nevertheless, I am still saying it as a command. “Going or When you go,” assumes you already got the command and you are doing it. This is the way Matthew 28:19-20 comes out in the words Jesus uses. It is because he has already told them ‘you have the keys’. There is an understating there. There is a mission that they are called to go on. It is a command, but it is stated in a way that assumes you are going to do this. This is significant in our church today!

God said I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail. He gave the commission of bringing the declaration to the church. The keys are ours. God assumes and expects that we will carry this out. Going, the word ‘go’ here, assumes a response to God’s command that we will go. There are people in the church who think carrying the gospel is the job of the pastor. People believe that doing the job, going, is just the pastor’s work. Is this true? The statement is true, people say this, but it is the wrong thing, the wrong conclusion. Everybody who is in this kingdom as part of the church has this responsibility.

When you are teaching this, please help your people to understand that God expects them to go. Our brother here had to carry out the commands of his superior and when he passed those commands to those under him, they had to carry them out. The great commission is a standing order to the body of Christ. We can not separate this command from the people and the apostles. The very nature of the way Jesus said this assumes that this will continually be carried out even after the apostles are gone. Because we already have seen in Matthew 16 you cannot separate the church, the people from the responsibility, the kingdom message.

b. Make disciples

Everyone that is a believer is a missionary. Because everyone that is a believer is commissioned by Christ. The first responsibility is going, going out and declaring the message. Now after giving this first assumed responsibility, Jesus gives more specific details about the actual job. He says, “made disciples” of all nations.

God’s door is open for all people. We are talking about the actual activity of going. The first responsibility is to make disciples. This is not the word that means ‘to teach,’ this is the word that basically means to evangelize. I call this the process of “Insemination.”

Prof. Question: Who here are farmers? What is insemination?

Student Response: To spread the seed in the field.

Prof. Response: In Canada, for those who raise beef cattle, artificial insemination means to plant the seed into the cow by human means. A veterinarian would take the seed, the semen from the bull, a good strong bull, and by the use of a syringe, artificially implant this in the cow. This guarantees the production of strong calves.

I use this term because this is exactly what evangelism is. The people of God spread the seed. Paul said some sow, some water, who gives the increase? God does. That is why we are told we are born again by the word of God. We are not responsible for getting people saved. We are responsible for spreading the seed. We got the easy job. We are the farmer who puts the seed on the ground. The rest is in God's hands. Think biblically.

The man who sows for 40 years, but the seed lands only on rocks and does not produce, he's still faithful. Some people have, by God's grace and God's plan been given very productive fields. You probably know people who just have a blessing of God to share the gospel and see many people come to Christ. This is so important that God tells us He gives some of God's people the gift of evangelist.

In Ephesians 4 we are told that Christ gives people that are evangelists to churches. We are talking about the spiritual gifts now. If you take the course on pneumatology, you will see how the gifts relate to the great commission. He gave some apostles and prophets. They are the foundation of the church, evangelists and pastors and teachers are labourers in the church. Here, the way the gifts are given are not referring to the ability, but they are referring to the people. The first part of this great commission was evangelize: sow the seed of the good news.

When I was in Bible college many, many, many years ago. We had a course called personal evangelism. We were taught three or four procedures of sharing the gospel. One was the called the Romans Road. One was called the ABCs of evangelism. Years ago the methodology usually began by telling someone they were sinners. God had judged them to hell. But, God sent his Son to die on the cross of our sins. He died was buried and rose again. As the living Saviour He offers to you the gift of eternal life. If you confess your sins and agree with God that you are a sinner and deserve hell and believe that Jesus died and rose again, then all you must

do is to exercise faith and ask Jesus to forgive you and give you the gift of eternal life. The true prayer of faith will bring you new birth.

Now I want to share with you something that might provoke some more thinking. You have heard of the parable of the sower. It is found in three gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke. Included in the parable are the four soils producing different results of fruit bearing. This teaches us that when we sow the seed of the gospel, the people who receive the seed will not produce in their lives fruit. But, for those that have the good heart or the good soil, the seed will be planted and will produce? Now most people miss something. You only see this when you examine what Jesus said in each of the gospels.

In Matthew 13, when Jesus explains the parable he tells us who the good soil is. He says here he is the one who hears the word and ‘understands.’ This word in the original Bible language, means to comprehend the truth, to put it together in one’s mind. It means that there is a comprehension of the significance of all the information regarding man’s sin; Christ the Son of God, His death, His burial, His resurrection. This compares to the words of the Scripture that relate the learning cycle. These are three terms translated in English, knowledge, understand, and wisdom.

The first two words tell us how someone comes to understand. ‘Knowledge’ means the facts are brought in to the mind, information is brought into the mind. ‘Understanding’ is the facts now are perceived in the relationship to reality. Here, the person who gets the information understands how it relates to his life. Jesus is saying in verse 23 of Matthew 13 that the good soil is the one who knows the facts and understands the relationship of the facts to his life.

In Mark 4:20 Jesus uses different words from Matthew. He says the good soil is the one who hears the word and “accepts it” or embraces it. This term goes beyond understanding. This relates to the third word in the learning cycle. The first word is ‘knowledge,’ to receive the facts; the second word is ‘understanding,’ implying relating the words to life. The third word is ‘wisdom,’ meaning applying the understanding practically to your life. It is to embrace this or appropriate this in life. It is to act upon it and embrace the truth. Of course, we know this is the step of faith of receiving Christ as Saviour.

It is the person who acknowledges that in his sin he is spiritually dead to God and stands condemned. It is like the man who falls in the water and is drowning because he cannot swim. The man tries to stay above the wa-

ter so he can live, but he is helpless, knowing he is going to die. Someone throws him a lifebuoy. He grabs the lifebuoy because it is the only way for him to live. That is the accepting, the embracing of the true facts. Spiritually I'm grabbing Christ, he's my only chance. Mark has told us there is more than just knowing and understanding. There's holding on, grabbing, embracing as a reality of truth.

Luke again is relating the parable of the good soil. However, this time Jesus says that the good soil is the one who has heard and 'keeps' the seed. It becomes the pattern of his life, he keeps this in his heart. The Bible language term means to hold on and protect so no one will remove. It is more than the knowledge of getting some facts, it is more than more than understanding, the embracing of truth, it is making the truth a pattern of life, a change in attitude and behaviour.

It is as Paul declared: *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.* (2 Cor. 5:17). The parable of the good sower, when examined, teaches us that there are different hearts that will not receive the Word of God, but for those who do hear as the good soil, there is a process involved. It goes back to the learning cycle that is mentioned throughout Scripture; the three words: knowledge, getting the facts; understanding, relating the facts to my life; and wisdom, acting upon the truth and embracing and holding on to.

I tell you this because the process has to be taken into consideration when we do evangelism. I want you to imagine that you are a person who has never heard anything about God. You have never had a Bible in your hand. No one has ever told you about God. That is who you are. I come to you, knock on the door of your house and I say this to you: 'You are a sinner and God has condemned you to hell'. How much are you going to understand? 'Who is God?' 'What's hell?' What is sin? That man is under the power of Satan. That man is under the influence of the world. That man is led by the flesh and has no comprehension of what I'm saying. My job is to give him, first, knowledge, information about the truth of the world. Do you think I should start with telling him he is a sinner?

Prof. Question: Where should I start?

Student Response: You should start with the story of Adam.

You are telling me you are going to start where the Bible starts. What are the first words of the Bible? 'In the beginning God..' now I know you have to fix your manuals tonight, so I'm not going to give you this as homework to write, but I want you to think and even talk about 'how are we going to do evangelism in Africa'. Remember, the people out there without Christ are in darkness. How many of them even know there is a God, that God created man to be in fellowship with him?

Although this is not homework, I want you to come back on Friday with a list of things that is important for people to know before they can have Christ as Saviour. You need to think about where you grew up, where your church is. Or where the church is that you are serving now. You have to ask yourself: What do the people in the community of our church know already? What do they believe about God or about man? Until they understand God's truth about God and man, are they not going to know and understand the real implications of the truth" 'thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God'. What I am asking you to do is to define the Bible essentials, the essential things for a man who knows nothing, to be able to embrace Christ. It will probably not begin with quoting John 3:16.

To know when you come across someone is it necessary to ask him 'does he know God?' when I was here in January, Dr. Simon and I went to Douala. When we went there we sat in different seats. For 2 ½ hours I sat beside one of Cameroon's government officials. He was a Muslim. I wanted to tell him about Christ. Where do you think I began? When I was flying here from Canada, there was a man sitting beside me. I had seven hours to be with him. The man was a Roman Catholic; his wife was a Muslim. Where do you think I began with them? In each situation I began where the Bible begins. I want us to realize we got to think this thing through before we open our mouth to start passing on the seed.

CLASS 3

We have stopped and looked at these questions because the mandate of the church is the mission of sharing the news about salvation. There is great confusion among believers regarding salvation of the OT. Your answer for the first question should obviously have been as the man said, God provided a means for salvation since Adam. Adam was born in the fellowship of God, created rather. He sinned and lost that fellowship. Adam became spiritually dead. God told him the promise of the seed that

would restore the paradise that he lost. God clothed him with animal skins teaching that a blood sacrifice was necessary by killing an animal and covering Adam and Eve with the skin. He believed God and was restored to fellowship. He was saved.

God always made provision for man. What was the means of salvation in the OT? I think you have also captured the truth. Right from Adam there was the provision of sacrifice and the requirement of faith in God so that the sacrifice was sufficient. You have to think it though. In the OT there is distinguish between God's teaching regarding the importance of faith and the necessity of sacrifice. For example, in your homework Achu used the story of the serpent that was raised before the people. Those that look in faith were delivered. They were delivered from the death of the poison of the serpent. In this situation it was not a matter of salvation spiritually, it was a matter of deliverance of their physical body. Nevertheless, God was teaching them the necessity of faith. We know that the serpent lifted up on the stick was a picture of the work of Christ on the cross. However, for the people who looked, this snake on a stick did not replace the sacrifice, it was just faith that brought them physical healing.

When you go through the OT there are many kinds of deliverances. These deliverances are often referred to as salvation. They were saved from their enemies, saved from poison water, saved from snake bites, saved from starvation in the wilderness and they were saved spiritually by faith in the sacrifice.

When Elijah was a prophet of God, what was the number of people within the whole nation of Israel who were truly believers? 7000. A whole nation of 2 or 3 million people but there were only 7000 who truly saw the provision of sacrifice by faith as the restoration of their souls. We have to make the distinction of what 'deliverance' the texts of Scripture are talking about. Even though, in most of these Biblical situations God is showing the people faith is necessary, there is a second distinction I want you to make. What is the difference of the sacrifice for salvation in OT and Christ's sacrifice in the NT?

You have understood that in the OT faith in God's provision of the sacrifice was salvation, because salvation has always been by faith alone. However, from God's perspective the sacrifice of the OT only covered the sins. The people of the OT looked forward to the promised Messiah who would redeem them. Even Job, one of the oldest records of the OT, spoke of the Redeemer. The faith of the OT believers in the sacrifice looked for-

ward to the true and complete provision of God. Christ was that sacrifice. His sacrifice did not cover, He redeemed the sinner, He removed the sin as far as the east is from the west. That is why we say Christ died for all the sins of the world, for all time. If Christ did not die on the cross, the OT sacrifice would have provided nothing. That is what Hebrews tells us: 'the blood of bulls and goats cannot remove sin.' It was a covering for sin that was sufficient because of faith, until Christ became the true sacrifice.

The last question was a challenge for you. It helps me understand how you determine how to find the answers for the verses. If you were looking in the OT for the word new birth, you will not find it. Perhaps you said OK it is the same things as a new heart. And if you looked in the concordance for new heart, you may have found it once in Ezekiel. And depending on the translation, in Psalm 51 when David spoke of the necessity for a clean heart, a new heart.

However, you should have at least thought about Paul's example in Romans that declares justification by faith. Because he spoke of Abraham and he spoke of David. And if you have memorized Scripture you should have gone to Psalm 51 where he speaks of a clean heart. Definitely you should have gone to Ezekiel where he speaks of a new covenant is promised where God would give the people a new heart. And in the context of Ezekiel where the declaration for the necessity for a new heart is there, another good chapter would be 37, the dry bones coming back to life. You see I think Jesus even acknowledged that because Nicodemus was a teacher, he should have known this. It is not a hidden truth. But it was definitely an overlooked truth. Thank you for your good work. Dr. Simon will be responsible for the marking.

Student Question: Why did God choose the brass serpent to be lifted up on the stick, given the fact that in Genesis it speaks of the serpent and the seed of the woman?

Prof. Response: My first response would be that the serpent is a type of Satan. The brass serpent on the serpent suggests that it is dead because it is hanging there. The issue was snakes bit them. Yet, when they looked at this image of the snake, they were healed. Which to me is a type of the cross destroying Satan power. The key was to look in faith. When you want people to be healed of snakebite by faith, you would not put an image of a cow on a stick. Therefore, in a practical way, they were looking in faith at the image of a dead snake. We have to be careful in our teaching not to

take types farther than God intended. It is possible and has happened, that pastors have said every single aspect of this meant something spiritually; the snake on the stick, the head of the snake, the tail was, the brass, all were significant in meaning. God said to Moses: "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." Moses had to be practical and make something that would be durable so he made the serpent from brass not clay. I do not give special significance to the brass or the pole. In their day it was the easiest thing to work with.

We have looked at the promise of the church from Matthew 16. The great statements and information that Jesus gave us from the statement of Peter: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." We see in that context the church that God builds has a mission. That mission and church cannot be separated. Then we went to Matthew 28, the great commission. Here Christ develops further the necessity for the mission. And, in Matthew 28 we see there are 4 responsibilities.

The first one is the assumed response of what was previously said, the mission. The words that Jesus used refer to the assumption of obeying the command to "Go." We saw that in the going there was the making of disciples. When we were looking at making disciples, we looked at the parable of the sower. This helps us understand the business of making followers by evangelism or sowing the seed. This clarifies the activity of the church having the keys of the kingdom. The key being the truth received, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Therefore, the message of the gospel of who Jesus Christ is was the significance of His being the Son of God and Saviour is the message that we spread.

Christ in that parable made it very clear that not every one's heart will receive the seed. It appears as though only a small group of people will. There were 4 types of soil, only one of these actually produced seed that was equipped to reproduce itself. That shows us that even in the OT this truth was there. What was the population of Israel in the time of Elijah? Probably 2 or 3 million people. How many true believers were there? There were only about 7000. Our job is to sow the seed. Some sow, some water, God gives the increase. That verifies what Jesus said to Peter- flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but my Father.

Where we examined the information of the parable of the sower in all the gospels we were able to see there was a process involved with the re-

ceiving and the multiplying of the good seed. Matthew said the good soil was the people hearing and understanding. Mark said the good soil was people hearing and accepting. Luke said the good soil was people who have heard and have embraced this, to protect this and to keep this in their lives.

We discussed how important it was for the church to do everything in our power to bring understanding even though it is the work of God. I can not remember who it was who said this, but it was a good thing to say. "I pray for men knowing that salvation is all of God, but I speak to men as though salvation is all of me." In other words, he is saying I will do everything in my power to bring understanding and to plead salvation even though I recognize that life will only come from God.

We concluded that it is important for us to understand where the people are when we are sowing the seed. There is more involved than just giving information. The 'good soil' are those who understood, who could take information and relate it to their lives. That is why I ask you for homework, to think about what does someone, who knows nothing about God, need to know to be saved. It is interesting that in our own mission, ABWE, the president we had in America was a missionary in Romania. He was born as a missionary child and his parents were in that same country. So all of his life he was watching his parents and then he was involved in sharing the message of Jesus Christ. He lived to see Romania under Communist rule break the bonding and in great numbers come to know Christ as Saviour.

He was asked to be president of the mission, so he left Romania and came to America where the office. For the first time he realized America is not doing so well when it comes to the church. Yes, we hear of the grand churches, the 10000, 15000 people in the church. You could count the number of those churches on 2 hands. Most evangelical church in USA are getting smaller, closing the doors. Bible colleges that were once doing a great job training people are closed. So this man got the experienced missionaries of our mission, our mission has been going probably 80 or 85 years and God continues by His grace to bless the mission.

There are maybe 1300 missionaries all around the world and by the grace of God ABWE missionaries have planted many church throughout the world. This new president asked: What is ABWE doing that the churches in America are not doing? He wanted to help the churches see that their evangelism strategy was not working and something different was required. When they got

these experienced missionaries together to think this through it is amazing what they found out.

In the countries where these missionaries are serving, most people know nothing about God. The missionaries began where God begins, in Genesis chapter 1. They go through the whole Bible presenting the story of redemption in the order that God did. They teach the absolute essentials someone needs to know before they can come to Christ. As a result, of the whole picture, of all the information given to these people, beginning with who God is and working through those essentials, God is using the mission to continue to build the church, the body of Christ around the world.

When they looked at the churches of America, they realized that America has failed to see the culture they are ministering in. The churches in cities that were strong 50 years ago have not changed in terms of their cultures. Years ago most of the people in all of these cities knew about God and went to church someplace. Therefore, the church 50 years ago could knock on the doors and begin to tell the people about Christ starting at John 3:16. That approach does not work anymore. It is difficult to convince a person they are condemned to hell because of their sin when they have no idea of what hell is, they do not have any idea they are accountable to God, they do not have any idea who God is.

I pause at this place to ensure that you, as ministers of the gospel in Cameroon, keep up with the culture you are in. We are talking about evangelism here in Matthew 28 but it is only the first of the responsibilities. This mission cannot be separated from the church. Because it involves the necessity of understanding, you have got to have an appropriate plan.

Prof. Question: Our brother, stand and tell us about the evangelism training class you went to and the training you took.

Student Response: This training was taken from Luke 5, where fishing was either by net or by line and hook. With a net, you catch many at a time. This compares to Evangelism Crusades like Billy Graham. Most churches cannot do that. With a hook, we need to put a worm onto catch one at a time. This is how most churches will do evangelism. The class taught how to use their book to attract people to God by the appropriate ‘worm.’

Prof. Response: Can you summarize and tell them they trained you how to use a hook?

Student Response: They trained me how to use the hook. The book begins by presenting 1. the problem of sin, 2. Christ on the cross, 3. Making a faith decision.

Prof. Response: Now you have been using this material in Cameroon. Have people been coming to Christ?

Student Response: Yes.

Prof. Response: What I am trying to show you and I do not know all the details of this program. I am trying to show you there was a plan made so people can be taught how to present the gospel. You need to teach the people how to share, not just to tell them you have to do it. Our brother has been blessed in Cameroon with this approach starting with sin and is probably because the people he speaks have had some understanding of the Bible. They have been taught who God is, so there is already a foundation there. Yet, there will be places in Cameroon where that information is not there.

Our mission has taken the information that these missionaries came up with and made an evangelism book as well. It has 20 stories of the OT and 20 stories of the NT. It captures the essentials someone needs to know before they can accept Jesus Christ even though they know nothing. I'm not going to give you this book because then you'll know your homework answers. It is made in such a way as you can use it as a tract and talk about the gospel in as little time as 10 or 15 minutes.

Every story has a picture. Every story has an explanation, very short. I can take you by reading just the explanation I can take you through all 40 stories in 10 minutes depending how fast I read. We do not recommend that you do this with the book, but it is possible: There are 40 stories and taking someone through 40 stories in 15 minutes segments is too much information. By the time we are into the 9th or 10th story, they already have so much information they are not going to remember it all. Each story also has a study to do. I recommend you use the book with small groups and you take groups of people in your home through 1 or 2 stories each week and you do this for 10 weeks or 15 weeks.

This is a chronological presentation of the redemption story. Our mission is not the first mission that has developed this kind of material for churches. A friend, John Cross, has written a book called *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*. This also is a chronological presentation of the gos-

pel. Many missions have used this and it has been translated into many languages.

A review of the book from the Good Seed website gives a solid overview of the main message of the Bible. It ties together key Old and New Testament stories to reveal the identity of God and the nature of sin, all the time answering two questions: “Who is Jesus?” and “What is the story of the cross and the tomb all about?” It helps a person understand clearly the main message of the bible. It assumes readers have a concept of only one God who is a person, not a force. It begins with the creation of the universe, and then progressing sequentially through key Old Testament stories, it moves into the New Testament to reveal the meaning of the cross and the tomb. The main story of the Bible is tied together into one universal, all-encompassing drama. The story is told by weaving Bible verses throughout the narrative and using over 100 drawings, maps and diagrams to help explain the story.

There is another mission in the USA who has taken this same approach but they have it on a movie on a DVD that you can present on the television. It is 18 stories of the Bible from Genesis through to the work of Christ on the cross, and while it is being told, actors are acting out the stories. This is from New Tribes Mission (Ethnos360). It has their own material, (Firm Foundations, Ethnos360--materials following God’s progressive pattern of revealing His character and plan of redemption within the context of history. It is also a chronological approach to evangelism and church planting. I am trying to help you understand there is a necessity for a church to have a plan for evangelism and to train your people to do evangelism. It is critical for us to continue to reach your community.

If you are in a community of RC people, you know they already have much foundational information. Perhaps this kind of approach like in America, will work. Please understand, as a leader in the church you must first have a plan. Perhaps it is using weekly small groups to reach people. Perhaps it is providing a meal in your church once a week for people. Perhaps it is taking, training people in your church and going out door to door. Pray that God will give you an understanding of an appropriate plan for your church. If we do not plan, you will never make progress. Secondly, train your people. Some will be good at this, some will not. But it is still their responsibility. Train them to do the work. They will do everything in their power by God’s strength to give understanding.

As pastors please consider these questions: Are all your church members fully aware of their responsibility to reach the lost? Do you have a plan for Evangelism and Discipleship? Are you training your church members to use it?

c. Baptize

We are looking at Matthew 28: 19, 20. Jesus is opening up our understanding about the church's mission. The mission is to carry the message to the people, to sow the seed. Jesus makes it very clear; that the mission does not stop with evangelism. I have entitled the evangelism part as the process of insemination. Where we sow the seed, the Spirit of God implants the seed in the heart. However, the great commission is not complete with just evangelism. There is the command to baptize people in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. I call this the process of integration.

God never intended His children to be orphans. Baptism, as we see in the book of Acts, is the means by which people identify with the local church. Yes, it is a public demonstration by immersion in the water that Jesus Christ is my personal Saviour. In the day of Jesus Christ, and the day of apostles, baptism was used by cults as well, to say I have turned away from my previous beliefs to join and identify with this faith, or group, or practice, this is where I belong.

For the believer, it is a special visual testimony: as we are placed under and raise up from the water, we are demonstrating our union with Christ in His sacrificial death and resurrection to new life in Him. You cannot separate the public testimony from the identification with the local assembly that is baptizing you. It is true that in the book of Acts there was an individual who was baptized without a local church.

Prof. Question: Who am I talking about?

Student Response: The Ethiopian eunuch.

Prof. Response: Yes, and if you carefully review the story, you'll see that Phillip was planted here by a miracle of God. Phillip was obviously a worker and a member of a local church. God transported him there because this Ethiopian eunuch was unique in God's plan. He was a black man from Ethiopia, with a great position. He obviously turned away from paganism and embraced Judaism. He had come on a journey to experience the Passover that the nation Israel celebrates. As he is going home he is reading from Isaiah 53. God drops Phillip into his location. The Ethio-

pian was obviously a proselyte of the Jewish faith. He has by faith accepted the Jewish sacrifice as the only way to God. However, Christ has already come. Therefore God obligated Himself to show this man the further truth of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for redemption of sin..

Prof. Question: *Did the Ethiopian believe?*

Student Response: *Yes.*

Prof. Response: *Of course he believed, he was already a believer and he already knew that to identify with this new truth was important. He immediately said, What prevents me from baptism?*

Did baptism save him? No. he was already saved. He received in this transition period the truth that was essential for him to know. The Bible does not speak of him anymore, but church history seems to. One of the strongest churches in the first generation of the church was in Ethiopia?

It seems that God used this Ethiopian, with strong connections, to start the Ethiopian church movement. This is especially significant because God used the church in Ethiopia to preserve the documents of the NT in an environment that would last for thousands of years and become part of the texts to give us certainty of God's inspired word today. Now we do not know who started the church. But for me, I do not have to be a rocket scientist to see that God had a plan for this Ethiopian to start a church.

Every other situation of baptism was involving a local assembly of believers that the person was identifying with. In some situations the baptism was the beginning of a local church. We need to understand that the great commission involves evangelism, the process of insemination, sowing the seed so God can plant it in the hearts, but the great commission also involves a process of integration, planting the new believer in a local church family. Paul explains this in 1 Corinthians:

1 Cor. 12:12: *For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ...*

The church is a body, and every member is important. There is no such thing as a tongue existing without a body, there is no such thing as an ear existing without a body. God intended His people to be integrated into a local church. This is why discipleship ministry must be explaining the necessity of the local church. It saddens me that in America there are many parachurch organizations that preach the message of evangelism but, because they are interdenominational, they do not teach baptism.

Although some of the material is very good, by omitting the necessity of becoming a member of a church through baptism, it does not complete the task of the great commission: “teach them to observe all things.” This leads us to the third responsibility of the great commission; teaching or instruction

d. Teach

The fourth responsibility of Jesus is clear: Teaching God’s Word: **Matt. 28:19, 20:** *teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*

If you chose to use material that other organizations make, for evangelism and discipleship, be sure it is true to the Bible. Seventh Day Adventists have pamphlets like this that are very attractive, but they do not have the truth. Many organizations have good discipleship ministry and they are evangelical, they believe salvation the same way we do, but when you go through their material, they do not speak about baptism in the local church. Therefore, they are ignoring what Jesus said is very important, get in a local church. The sad thing about America is that many millions have television as their church. They have no caring family of believers that love them and look after them. They have no church leadership to be accountable to in terms of their lives. They have no avenue of serving Christ in the local church they are orphans and God never intended this to be.

We are talking about Ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church. We see from Matthew 28 that there is more to the mission than just evangelism. There is sharing the message and God takes the message that we have delivered to the best of our ability and He sows this in hearts. There is baptizing new believers to give public testimony and to embrace them in the local church. The last part of that passage is to teach them all things that God has commanded us.

Student Question: *You are talking about the baptism, I would like to know as a means of salvation if they evangelize and they accepted Jesus Christ and after that if they die before the baptism, what would be their situation?*

Prof. Response: *Are you asking, will they be saved without baptism? Is that what you are asking?*

Student Response: *Yes, that is my question.*

Prof. Response: *Is there anyone in the Bible that was saved by faith in the NT without baptism?*

Think of Jesus dying on the cross, what happened while he was dying there?

Student Response: There were two thieves. One repented and Christ told him today you will be with me in paradise.

Prof. Response: This man had everything necessary for salvation. He said, Will you remember me in your kingdom? He knew Jesus was dying unjustly. He knew He would rise again to have his own kingdom. In his heart he had acknowledged you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus said to him, this day you will be with me.

God did not say, well I'd like you to come with me, but you haven't had a chance to be baptized. Salvation has always been by faith in the provision of God, nothing else. That does not mean it is not important to God. Because baptism is a part of the great commission does not mean it is part of salvation. Remember, the great commission is to build the church. The purpose is more than just to see people saved. It is from one generation to the next generation to the next generation to carry the message to the world. That is why Jesus is expanding the importance of having the keys of the kingdom. It does not stop with evangelism, it brings people into the church so they can be taught everything God has told them. #1 they can live to glorify God and #2 they can live to tell people about the salvation of God. Does that help you understand why Jesus included baptism to the great commission, not to add anything to salvation, but to prepare people to do the great work of the church?

CLASS 4

We have begun our look at the doctrine of the church by examining Jesus' words regarding His plan. We have examined the passage in Matthew 16 about the prediction of the church. We have examined the great commission from Matthew 28, which expands the responsibilities of the church. In looking at Matthew 28: 19, 20 we see there are four responsibilities. The first is a participle, which assumes the action will be taken. In giving the commission to his disciples Jesus in essence said: "while you go." Going, or doing the work, is united to the church. Church and missions cannot be separated.

The next 3 responsibilities come out of the explanation of what we do when we go. First, we are to make disciples. We call this the ministry of evangelism. Then we are to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and

the Holy Spirit. The purpose of this is to integrate new believers into the church. This is to be sure each believer is part of the local church and in the care of the family of God. This activity would be under the ministry of discipleship.

We have evangelism, where it focuses on giving the message of salvation and then we have baptism, which is one of the first functions of obedience in the discipleship ministries. This introduces a new believer into a local church to begin the process to mature this individual as a follower of Christ and to teach them to observe all things, which involves the continued ministry of discipleship.

The goal of discipleship is for an individual to reproduce himself, but discipleship never stops. I accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour on June 2, 1963 and was baptized by my pastor. I was baptized, joined the church and within a year began to teach a Sunday School class. I have been teaching the Bible ever since, yet I am still learning how to follow Jesus. This is a lifetime activity. That is Jesus said 'teach them all things.'

The Cameroon Biblical Seminary believes the leadership of a church should teach the whole council of God. What does this involve? You should be able to answer this in one very brief sentence: "I am teaching the whole council of God."

Prof. Question: *What am I teaching? Say it.*

Student Response: *The Bible.*

Prof. Question: *How much of the Bible?*

Student Response: *The whole Bible.*

2. Given to the representatives of the church

Do not think that because we are the NT church that started in Acts 2 that it is only the NT that we teach. In the NT, we are told that things that took place in the OT are for our learning. In 'going' we see the 3 activities: insemination, spreading the Word and the Spirit of God sows it into hearts for salvation; integration, baptizing individuals so they are a part of the local church; teaching, so that all the council of God is taught.

Eph. 4: 9-11: *Now this, "He ascended" what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,*

You notice that this passage is introduced by verse 7, where it speaks of Christ bringing gifts to the church. Here we are told that Christ gave these people gifts to the church. He lists these individuals. There are apostles and prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. In Ephesians 2:20 we are told the apostles and prophets are the foundation. There is only one foundation to a building. There is no ministry of apostles and prophets today. They laid the foundation. The apostles stood in the authority of Christ to the church in its beginning, the gift of prophecy (OT and NT writings of prophets) bringing revelation to the church. The ministry of passing on the commission and the authority by the apostles and the ministry of giving the revelation are complete.

In my class on the Spirit of God, I share that I do not believe the gift of prophecy is for today. In the church the foundation is laid in the apostles and prophets, so the three remaining gifts of people are given to the church today are Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers. These three gifts of people match the exercising of going? God gives the evangelists to the church to do the work of making disciples (evangelism). God gives the gift of the pastors to the church to care for the family. God gives the gift of teachers to the church to teach the whole council of God.

Some scholars teach that the Greek grammatical form of the words ‘pastor and teacher’ unites these as one person. It is the Greek language Grandville Sharp rule. I believe this rule does not apply to plurals as is the situation here. The teacher that taught me Greek did his thesis on this. He convinced me that the Grandville Sharp rule works only for words that are in the singular. I say all this to say when you read in commentaries that pastor and teacher are the same person, I do not believe this. Of course, the pastor has to do teaching, he is called to do teaching. I believe that God also gives others as a gift to the church who are gifted to teach.

Student Question: Who is the teacher, someone who has PhD or diploma, who is the teacher? Prof. Response: I know we think this because of secular education. In chapel on Sunday I was talking about the gifts from Christ that equip us. A part of God’s grace to us is giving us gifts that are spiritual abilities to do His work. I think I said in that sermon that my father is an example. My father never completed Grade 8. He stopped going to school when he was 13 or 14 years of age. He had to stop because he was a part of a large family. He had 10 brothers and sisters. His mother died and his father had a job that did not give much money. The oldest

sons went to work to help support the family. My grandfather, my father's father, was a Brethren preacher and he taught the children God's Word. Although my father had very little public education, he was taught from the Bible.

The people in the church where I grew up in loved my father's teaching. A piece of paper that gives you a degree is nothing. The church practices the pattern of the OT where church leaders or synagogue leaders are trained. It is a good thing, it is wonderful that you men are taking time to get into the Word deep. It will equip you to teach. Not everyone has the gift of teaching. My own pastor probably did not have the gift of teaching, but he preached every Sunday. The church people saw his labour of love for people. There were better teachers in my church but God called him to be the pastor. We respected him and loved him as the leader of the church. It is good to have the opportunity to study in a Bible College and learn the Scriptures, but do not think that because you have the education, you are going to be the wisest person in your church. I had several men in the churches I pastored, who, like my father, had very little formal education, nevertheless, they knew more about the Bible than I do with a Ph. D. in Biblical Studies. As a pastor I would often go to them and ask for advice. They had spiritual wisdom that I did not have and do not even now. In your ministry of teaching and preaching do it as Christ did his ministry, in humility. For God will not bless a proud man.?

Student Response: I have two questions, the first is to know when you evangelize someone is it an obligation to send him to a church after he accept Christ?

Prof. Response: I will answer by a question- are we completing the commission when we only do the evangelism?

Student Response: No.

Prof. Response: We have been ordered by our captain, our commander to do these 3 things. Therefore, the job is not complete until all have been done.. We will explain this further. What is the second question?

Student Question: The second question is about spiritual gifts. Today we have many pastors, they claim to have the healing gift, what do you think about it?

Prof. Response: I do not believe they are for today. That is the simple answer. The course I teach on Pneumatology, the doctrine of the Spirit, examines the spiritual gifts. We do not have time to go into detail in this class. There are only 6 passages that give us the list of spiritual gifts. When I

was in a master's program, this was my thesis. I incorporated it into the Pneumatology class. Be sure to take this class or copy the notes from someone who has. We need to focus on ecclesiology.

Student Question: You said that according to verse 2 of 1 Timothy, you say the pastor must be able to teach. You say that a pastor may not teach without the gift.

Prof. Response: No, no. what I said was, he does not necessarily have to have the gift of teaching. It is two different things. He is responsible for teaching, but may or may not have the gift of teaching. As with my pastor, he faithfully taught the Bible and was the church leader. His greatest ability was a brick layer. Although not a spiritual gift, still an ability from God. God used him to build a new church building. This man was our pastor for forty years and many people were led to missions and pastoral work through his ministry.

Having the gift of teaching or not did not limit God in completing His purpose through this pastor.

Student Question: I want to know if I give the gospel to someone who has never accepted Christ and he accepts Christ and he say that he is a member of another church, do you think I have to have him come to my church for the baptism?

Prof. Response: In response to this question, I am going to give you the assignment I have planned. I want you men in your tables to look at the great commission and those 3 activities. I want you to discuss and report back this question: How does the church complete all 3 of these responsibilities? I want you to talk about methodology. I do not want you to discuss that evangelism uses the 4 spiritual laws, or evangelism uses the Romans Road, I want you to discuss how the church does the activity of evangelism.

For example, is Saturday morning knocking on doors the only way to do evangelism? Then for baptizing and teaching, you have to ask the question: How does the church begin to disciple people? How does the church carry on that ministry? What is the plan of the church? If in your church you do not have a plan, then discuss in your table a plan that will work, come up with a plan. Do you understand what I am asking you to do? I want you to discuss among yourselves a methodology that will complete all three of these tasks.

3. Necessitates a Plan

The Great Commission is fundamental to the life of the church. Missions is not a take it or leave it option. All life on earth continues through reproduction. The continued life of the church is no exception. Nevertheless, the continued life of church has a unique necessity in conjunction to the power of Jesus Christ.

Prof. Question: I have put this sign on the board to explain why I am asking you to do this exercise. What does this say?

PLAN AHEAD

Student Response: Plan Ahead.

Prof. Question: What's the problem here?

Student Response: No space.

Prof. Response: The man who made the sign failed to plan ahead. This is a picture of most churches. We talk about the job, we preach that we have the responsibility, but we do not exercise a plan. It is important, as God leads you into ministry, that you have a plan to do the great commission. It cannot be just a plan for evangelism, but it must include evangelism. It must be a plan for beginning discipleship, but not just this. There must be a plan to continue to teach the whole church the whole council of God.

The continued life of church has a unique necessity in conjunction to the power of Jesus Christ, this necessity is a determined, workable plan for accomplishing the Great Commission. You have been asked to discussed this in your class groups. Although we had a good laugh about some of your plans, one thing everyone acknowledged is there must be training. As a leader, you have to think what is involved in training. When and where are we going to train? How do we recruit the people we want to train. This group said they would select people to be a part of this, determine who you will use. Others may encourage all to be involved by inviting the whole church. Then there is the activity of going out as you have all focused on.

You need a plan for this: Where will you meet and will you pray? What happens if some of the adults have children? Who will babysit the children? How will they go? What is the transportation? Will they drive?

Walk? How will you keep track of where each individual has gone? How will they report back so you have information of where they went and what was the response. There needs to be a reporting and recording system. If a couple goes to a home and they say we are not interested, please leave. You do not want to send another couple next week. You have to keep track.

You see the importance of focusing on a plan for evangelism. The thing that interests me is that all of you have chosen the same method, knocking door to door or street evangelism. Let me tell you something- if you were in the average village or city in Canada, you would not be successful. They will not welcome you into their homes. The culture in America has changed; the door represents my privacy. No one bothers me. The average American says 'this is my house. You stay out there. I stay in here'. How will we do evangelism now? I am not exaggerating, this is why America is failing. The churches are doing exactly what they have done 50 years ago and what did they do 50 years ago? Exactly your plan. Society changes. We have to think differently.

Our church in Canada has some very interesting ways of doing evangelism. We invite the children of the community to come to learn soccer skills. We have a big field, volunteers who are skilled at soccer, for one or two weeks every day the children come to learn soccer. In the middle of the training session, we break in to small groups and the instructors tell them about Jesus and about salvation. The children get excited and talk to their parents and their parents want to know more. We follow up by calling each home and asking the parents, 'are your children enjoying the soccer? Have they said anything about what we are saying about God? Are you interested in us coming to your home to talk about God?'. Many people say no, but some say yes, we would like to know. Now we are in their home, we have been invited. That is different in society in America. We go to homes by invitation.

We encouraged our church to make friends with neighbours. Invite them for a meal, they will be surprised. Remember, the idea in America is doors are closed. They will say, I will come. While they are in your home, just show an example of Christianity. For example, when we get around the table to eat, the father would say 'in our home we thank God for our food. Will anyone be offended if I pray and thank God?'. I have never heard anyone say 'yes, I will be offended'. They will be very curious. Many have never heard anyone pray. This is the pagan America for today. When they

hear someone say ‘Father, I thank you for your love for us, I thank you for our neighbours.’ They are surprised. Who is he talking to? He really thinks there is a god listening? There’s curiosity. It begins people to be allowed to talk. We teach ‘become friends with the unsaved people’. Do not compromise by going out drinking with them. Be friends with them. Invite them to a baseball game or soccer game. Go to a park and have a picnic. Show you are a friend. Build a relationship. You hear someone is painting his house. Go and say ‘can I help?’. Build relationships before you even talk about Christ. When we first meet people we talk on a shallow level ‘the weather is nice today.’ ‘I’m going to the soccer game because I really enjoy soccer.’

These conversation starters are not threatening. We do not meet a new person and say ‘Oh, the weather is nice today. Are you saved?’ You build a relationship so you learn to talk about things more personal. As you build a relationship talking about things and beginning to be a friend. One day your neighbor may say ‘I do not know what to do about my son.’ Now he’s talking personally. You can talk to him about this. Or he may say ‘I am really having problems with my job.’

In order to get to people so they can talk to you about things, you have to build a relationship. That is the way it is in America. I have been in Africa, stepped into a taxi, and two minutes later was sharing the gospel because the driver was very interested. In this culture there is an openness, either that or the driver was being polite. However, there may not have been openness if he was Muslim. Nevertheless, there are many ways of doing the work of evangelism.

Find the interest of the people in your area. Perhaps they love music. Well, rent a building and have a concert that is free for people to come to listen to good music. And do not preach to the people, but have your church people there to befriend people. To meet on person they have never met before, to get to know them in that meeting, and then invite them to their house for a meal. Then you can begin the process. You have to think outside the box.

There is a church in Canada that lives in a poor area. The students usually go to school with empty stomachs. This church has a meal for the children in the area every morning that school is. The children are sent out of their homes early and they go have breakfast in the church. That is all the church does. They do not preach, they do not teach the children. But they pray- God have the parents ask us why we love the children. Not eve-

ry parent has come and said ‘thank you and why do you do this?’ but every moth some parents do. The response is ‘I’d love to tell you. Will you come to my place, my house and we will sit down and I will tell you why’. We build friendship. The culture makes a great difference on how you evangelize?

For your homework list hat are the major doctrines that are necessary to understand for someone to be saved. The Bible begins with God, the Doctrine of Theology, so what comes next of the necessary doctrines. Do not come back with a list of 25 doctrines. That is your assignment for next class.

CLASS 5

4. Appropriate tools

Today I’m going to show you how our mission has taken the chronological story of redemption through the Scriptures and focused on 8 essentials. There are many ways of doing this. I am not saying if yours is different, it is incorrect. It is as our missionaries have served around the world, these 8 things help people when they no nothing. These are in the book I showed you, our mission’s book on evangelism. This is called Good Soil evangelism seminar. By God’s grace we will have the books in French and I will be sharing this at the pastors’ conference in January.

Good Soil: God, Man, Sin, Death, Christ, Cross, Faith, Live

We look at these essentials as the bridge between being lost and being saved. We begin where God begins with God. The second one is man. When we speak of God we talk of Him existing forever. God is the greatest of all. When we speak of man, we talk of man being created in the image of God, the only being to do so. We make sure they understand man is unique, he is special, he is like no one else in the image of God with the Spirit of God in his life.

Then we talk about sin. We do not use the word ‘fall’ because that creates misunderstanding. We know it but the world does not know it. But we show ho sin is disobedience to God and that all people disobey God because God is great and God is holy. Then we talk about death. We explain that death is the consequence of sin. That death is physical but also spiritual. We explain that death has a simile with is the word ‘separation’. We show Adam and Eve were separated from God and they hid themselves. The fellowship between God and man that they had in the garden was bro-

ken. Then of course we explain that physical death began to work in their lives. Man has to understand the bad news before he can understand the good news. In the culture here in Cameroon, with so much understanding of the Bible, I can see why you might begin evangelism with sin and death rather than these God and Man.

We have these four points; half of the essentials are found in the first 2 chapters of Genesis. In chapter 3, verse 15 we have the promise of the seed and in Good Soil manual we use the word 'Christ.' We show how the promise of the seed or Christ in Genesis was the hope that Adam had. Then we show what this hope involved in the OT sacrificial system. We have God, man, sin, death, Christ. We have been explaining now the sacrificial system, the clothes that Adam was clothed in which meant death. We talk about the necessity of the sacrifices for Israel which covered sin.

They understand then why Christ is born as the Lamb of God. We share about Christ being the Son of God and man and he was without sin. If he is without sin, then He is not under the curse of death. But the sacrifices of the OT required blood and death. Now we explain that the Christ, the Son of God, died on Calvary. Now we are at the cross. Now we are explaining why the cross was the true sacrifice that all OT sacrifices pointed to. We explain that on the cross Jesus paid the full penalty for sin. We show that His sacrifice conquered death because He rose from the dead. Then we talk about faith. We go back and show that every time we looked at sacrifice in the OT God required the faith of the people. We even remind them of the story of the snake that was lifted up and share that, in NT times, we are saved through faith as well.

The last Truth topic is 'Life,' Here we explain that the New Life that is provided by faith is restored fellowship with God. The Spirit of God is now back in our life the way it was with Adam when he was first created. We explain that our physical body will someday probably die, but we will never be separated from God. We explain that the life is not only the Spirit of God in us now, but whether we die or go when the Lord goes back into His presence, we will ever be with the Lord, that is life.

2. Work the plan

I share this to reinforce what we were saying the other day. You must have a plan for evangelism and you must teach your people how to do it.. You have to determine what will work in your culture and your community that are the essentials. And, you have to train your people to do this and allow them to practice before they go out. Work the plan!

Student Question: *Where does man's Judgment of death come in.*

Prof. Response: *When we talk about death, we talk about all of death. First, man's spiritual death being separated now from God, because God's Spirit does not reside in us. Second, if we die without Christ, we will forever be separated from God physically. The real judgment is this eternal death. But, if we start talking about the believers' Bema Seat judgment, the judgment for our works, and if we talk about the white throne judgement, we are adding things that may create confusion. We believe it is sufficient or people to understand that death is eternal and the unsaved will forever be outside of God's presence.*

Remember, there are two books of Good Soil discipleship. As persons come to Christ as Saviour and they continue our discipleship program with book 2. Then they go into the whole council of God. It has been my experience for people to realize that separation from God is enough judgment. One of the ways I do this is with this verse: "Every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights." (Jam. 1:17). Even though we are separated from the Spirit of God now, because of His common grace, He does bless people with His gifts. Mankind still breathes, is physically alive, is sustained by God's creation. The rain falls on crops whether I believe or do not believe. Man eats whether believer or do not. These are all gifts from God.

Then I say this: "Imagine an existence where everything that is good is removed. There is no comfort, only pain. There is no joy, only sorrow. There is no peace, only turmoil, only discomfort, only worry. That is life without God. That is eternity for the unsaved. This is usually enough for people to go 'oh I do not want this'.

When we have shared the message of the gospel have we completed the commission?

Student Response: *No.*

Prof. Response: *Correct, the commission includes "Teaching them to observe all that the Scriptures teach.*

you had a group assignment, please take that out now. In your group you had a plan for evangelism, a plan for beginning disciple ship where it says be baptized in the name of the Father, and a plan for continuing discipleship- teach them all things I have commanded you.

Remember, when we were talking about sharing the gospel, I suggested that in America we have to go back to the very beginning. We do not assume that people know anything. In our culture, if you invite people to come to your church, they probably have no understanding of the relationship between the church and the gospel. Church in America is seen as just another club, another organization. Newly saved people would ask: What does this have to do with the church? If I am now saved, why do I have to join a club? Therefore, instead of beginning with the church, we encourage them to come to a Bible study to learn the skills of their new life.

We tell new believers when they come to Christ; the Bible calls this being born again. They see this. We then say “Now you are like a baby in Christ, which is also a Bible term in Peter. God has a way for you to live. Can we invite you to study with us in my home what these first basic steps of life are? If they are truly saved, they wish to do this. The Spirit of God has already given them a thirst for His Word. Then we tell them that we have another book that will help them take the first steps of faith. This book introduces them to the first things they should know about their salvation.

Prof. Question: What are some of the first things someone should know about their new life?

Student Response: Assurance they are saved.

Prof. Response: Yes, that is where we begin. They are saved, their sins are forgiven, but they may not fully understand they will still sin. If a man has a bad temper and is always using God’s name in vain, he may think he lost his salvation. We need to teach the basics, assurance of salvation.

What else, what else is essential?

Student Response: How to confess sins.

Prof. Response: How do we confess our sins?

Student Response: Pray.

Prof. Response: Yes. Now think of this as a new baby. A new baby needs to be hugged to receive the assurance of love. What else does a new baby need? Student Response: Food.

Prof. Response: How does a believer get food?

Student Response: Read the Bible.

Prof. Response: You need to teach the importance of being in the Bible every day. That is the way God speaks to us. However, when God speaks to us, do we want to speak to him? Does a baby learn to talk? Yes. There-

fore, you teach them prayer. You teach them if we confess your sins, God is faithful to forgive. You teach that prayer is communicating with God and telling Him we love him. Prayer is a privilege of bringing the concerns of others so as God's children we can help them

People must understand that as they are digesting the Word and communicating to God in prayer, God will be teaching them His will. It is important for them to know and follow God's plan (God's will) for their life. As God speaks to them through the word and they pray, He reveals His will and therefore, God's children obey. One of the first things a child learns is to obey their parents. Now that we are talking about walking into obedience, you can introduce God's commands regarding baptism. You can teach what the Bible says about baptism. As you teach what the Bible says about baptism, it will include that baptism is becoming a part of a Bible-believing church.

Now they have gone through a period where they are learning what it means to: walk as a Christian. They know about the assurance of salvation; the importance of the word of God; prayer; obedience, and they have learned about baptism. This is a perfect time to challenge them to follow God in His will by encouraging them to be baptized. Here you can explain the truth about what a true church is. After you talk about what a church is, you teach them about communion. In America all of this usually comes before you even ask join you in the church.

Most of the time when you are talking about baptism and joining a church, they will ask where you go to church? This presents another opportunity to teach: The following conversation usually occurred with me:
ME: "I go to the Riverside Baptist church. Would you be interested in coming with me?"

THEM: "I'm a member of the Catholic church."

ME: "OK, but think about this, was the baptism you had in the Catholic church the baptism we learned about in the Bible?"

THEM: "Hmmm, no."

ME: "When attending the Roman Catholic church, were you taught what the Bible says about salvation?"

THEM: No.

ME: Well, it is your choice, but where do you think God would want you to attend to learn about him?

Now you gently encourage them to think about what church they should be a part of. You are not telling them, you are teaching. The decision is theirs. Cultures are different. Nevertheless, if Christ does not come back soon Cameroon will become like America. Cameroonians want wealth, comfort, leisure, like Americans. They want education like Americans. They want cars and toys. You are now battling Satan's hold on Cameroonians, which has been for generations in the bondage of spirit worship, traditional African religion.

Some of you are in cities where spirit worship is very small. Some are in villages where everyone practices traditional African religion. This is the way it is in Ghana and Togo. I have not been coming to Cameroon as long, but I still see it. As Africans move away from Spiritism with education and the desire to be like Americans or Europeans, Satan will let go of them regarding Spiritism because he will be able to grab hold of them with materialism, which is rampant in America.

Here is an interesting thing, America is in a financial crisis. The U.S.A. is trillions of dollars in debt. We do not know the plan that God has, but I can tell you what is happening in America: Spiritism is growing in leaps and bounds. More Americans are turning to Spiritism than ever before. The churches of Africa may soon be sending missionaries back to Spiritist America. Some missionaries have already arrived.

Student Question: Can you give a definition of Spiritism.

Prof. Response: A Dictionary Definition of Spiritism is:

- 1. the belief or doctrine that the spirits of the dead, surviving after the mortal life, can and do communicate with the living, especially through a person (a medium) particularly susceptible to their influence.*
- 2. the practices or phenomena associated with this belief.*
- 3. the belief that all reality is spiritual.*

Do the same with discipleship that we have done here. Define what the essentials are: assurance, studying the Bible, prayer, obedience, baptism and the local church, communion and fellowship in the church, sharing your faith with others. Continue to teach the whole council of God. When you have done evangelism and they are joining the church through baptism, the great commission is not complete. You must teach the whole council of God. Therefore, have a plan.

Let us think about what God has asked His church to do. He says ‘teach them to observe all things I have commanded.’ The plan for competing this has to involve several things. It has to involve a plan for curriculum content, similar to a Bible College. God’s people need to know all the Bible doctrines. Therefore, you need to have a curriculum that will lead people through the doctrines of the Word of God. They also need to know the books of the NT and OT very well. There needs to be a curriculum plan that takes people through the whole Bible. There are other needed teachings: what God says about the family, about finances, about business ethics, etc. You need to have a topical curriculum that people can study through. All this is much work, but that is why you are in Bible college. You are being given the tools to do this, and many publishing organizations already have this curriculum.

The challenge is: When you go to do this. Now in America the pastors are pulling their hair out because most Christians will only come to church once each week. They will come to church on Sunday for one hour, or perhaps 1 ½ hours if there is more singing, however, the preaching is only about 20-30 minutes. I had a man say to me, ‘the pastors are not teaching the whole counsel of God.’ I asked him, ‘How often do you attend church?’ He said, ‘I come every Sunday morning, rain or shine.’ I asked ‘How long does the preacher preach?’ He said ‘Thirty minutes.’ Then I said ‘How long do you think it will take the pastor to teach the whole counsel of God in only 30 minutes?’ I then said, ‘When you get serious about learning, then the pastor will get serious about teaching.’

In the church that I pastored, we had an evangelism program. We did this by our church families inviting their unsaved friends to come to their homes and study through a prepared evangelism study. Then, for the early discipleship for the people that were saved, we gave them a choice. Go to a home, perhaps the same home, and do a prepared discipleship study. We also had discipleship study as an adult Church Sunday School first thing Sunday mornings. Then, when these new believers they had gone through this they were baptized and became members of our church. We explained it was important for you to know the whole counsel of God and encouraged them to attend the Sunday School and complete the curriculum for all the doctrines of the Bible.

It took 2 years of going to SS to complete this. In our SS we regularly taught the discipleship class. We also had the continuation of doctrine class regularly. We also had in SS a ‘going through the Bible books’ class.

It would probably take 5-10 years to go through the Bible books. We also used regular Baptist Press SS material because its curriculum will take someone through the whole Bible in 7 years. We encouraged our people to get in to SS, but because some had difficulty to commit to SS due to shift work on Sunday, we would plan to have this doctrine and Bible book teaching done in homes during the week as well. God blesses a plan, I give God the glory. It was not because of Pastor Cooper. I did not teach all this. We taught our people to teach one another. We provided the curriculum. We accepted the fact: If you fail to plan, then you are planning to fail.

The Great Commission was given to the apostles, and in Ephesians 2:20 we see the church is built on the foundation of the apostles. In early church development this responsibility was absent. The great theologians such as Calvin and Luther missed this point. The church that Luther and Calvin developed never had missions. They were great theologians, but they missed the fact that the church is mission. We call the dark ages of the church the time when it seemed that the church was not growing.

We also know that even the big world denominations were not doing evangelism. Yet the small local churches in the village here and there were still doing the work. Jesus kept His promise: "I will build my church." He continued to do so. We know now from history; the church in the dark ages was still growing. It is similar to Communist China today. It has outlawed the church, designating it as illegal activity. Communism allows for only government-recognized church. The government recognized churches are not preaching the gospel. They must support the work of the Communist party. Nevertheless, the church has been for 100s of years thriving in what we call the underground church.

God has done amazing things in China. When China had the Olympics, it was inviting the world to come and see the success of Communism. Yet, they had a major problem; immorality had created an AIDS epidemic. There was little witness of God's Word to restrain immorality. However China learned of the success of a church in Africa to turn immorality around. I do not remember which country it was, that had very little aids after years of epidemic. But Communist Leaders in China went to the leaders of this African country to ask for help with the AIDS epidemic.

The leaders of this African country were born again believers. They knew their country was spared the epidemic as people came to Christ. They told the communist country: "We were spared because missionaries of the evangelical church taught us how to live properly." These com-

munist leaders went back to China and contacted a Christian Mission, inviting them to come to Africa and “do their work, at China’s expense.” They pleaded: “We want you to go to this area where aids is very bad and teach them what you teach.”

The mission accepted the invitation and many Chinese people come to Christ. Local churches were established to carry on God’s work, despite the fact that when the Olympics were over then the communism started to restrict the missions activity. Churches were already planted and they are still rowing. God will build his church. As people ministering in a country that is free to witness, free to build the church, teach your people that mission is not optional.

Not only did Jesus predict the building of the church and share the details of the message with the call of the Great Commission, but we see in Acts 1 and 2 the marriage union of the mission with the church.

Acts 1:8: *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

Here we see Christ promising that He will deliver power to execute the mission. When we read chapter 2 we see this is actually the Spirit of God falling on the church. We see that the promise of the power was evident in the Spirit of God coming upon them. There was a 40-day period between the resurrection of Christ here and Pentecost. Pentecost of course was 50 days after the Passover, but that was the day Christ was crucified, this time in Acts 1 is probably 10 days after his crucifixion and resurrection.

We see that He not only promises power, but He gives the program to exercise the power. He said, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you to be *witnesses to Me in Jerusalem*, to the in Jerusalem?. These people were their neighbours, the people they lived among, their friends, their acquaintance. God tells us that the responsibility begins where we are. Yet, He goes on to say share not just in Jerusalem but in all of Judea. They are the people with the same culture and the same language who live in their area. He is saying do not stop with your neighbours, you go beyond to the people who are of the same language and culture. But, He does not stop there, He says go to Samaria. They were ethnic groups living within their cultural area, but many had a different language and carried on their own practice and their own culture.

In essence, Jesus says do not overlook anyone. The stranger who lives among you needs to hear, even though the stranger is a barbarian. The Sa-

maritans were half-breeds, the Gentiles and Jews were joining in marriage. The Gentiles rejected them; the Jews rejected them. You remember the story of the woman at the well, no one was more surprised than the woman when Jesus, a Jew, spoke to her” ‘You, a Jew, are asking a Samaritan to give you a drink of water? Are you sick? Is there something wrong? This was not normal.

Jesus was telling the Apostles: “You go to these people groups as well.” However, Jesus does not even stop there; he says ‘go also to the end of the earth’. Now he is saying to every culture, to every language. That is why I love the passage in Revelation, where it says as they gather around the throne they were “*of every tribe and tongue and people and nation* (5:9). This is the church gathering before the throne. In this verse He includes everyone in the whole earth.

Prof. Question: *Did the Apostles do the work? Did they complete the task of the Great Commission?*

Student Response: *Yes. When Jesus said go in to Jerusalem, Judea and beyond, they did.*

Prof. Response: *The Bible itself does not give the details of the travels of all the Apostles, but we do see that at Pentecost “there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.” These Jewish people heard the apostles share the gospel message in their own languages. The text goes on to enumerate Jews from a dozen different regions. We see that everyone from practically every known part of the world was represented.*

Will the church complete the task.

Student Response: *Yes*

Prof. Response: *Why?*

Student Response: *Because of the power that God gave it in Acts 2.*

Prof. Response: *Yes, that is my next point in your notes.*

C. The Great Empowerment

1. The Purity of the Church

2 Cor. 11:2: *For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

The picture here is that of a loving father who has a daughter engaged to be married. He feels it is his privilege and duty to keep her pure, so

that he can present her to her husband with joy and not with sorrow. Paul saw the local church as a bride, engaged to be married to Jesus Christ (see Eph. 5:22ff and Rom. 7:4). That marriage will not take place until Jesus Christ has come for His bride (Rev. 19:1–9). Meanwhile, the church—and this means individual Christians—must keep herself pure as she prepares to meet her Beloved.³

Therefore, to enable the Great Commission to be carried out, God, by virtue of keeping His bride pure, indwelt every believer with His Spirit that their ‘walk in the Spirit’ would empower each to produce the Fruit of the Spirit:

Gal. 5:22-25: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

2. The Power of the Church

Acts 1:8: *“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

In this passage we see that Christ promise to provide the power for accomplishment of the Great Commission. In the following chapters of Acts we see the church obeying and the power being demonstrated.

Prof. Question: *What does this tell us about doing the work of the great commission?*

Student Response: *That mission is important. What else does it teach us? Whose power?*

Student Response: *God’s power.*

Do not rely on a plan to complete the work. You have to have a plan. However, no plan will work without the power of God. Should you expect to have the Spirit of God fall on you with tongues of fire? No. Nevertheless, there are some churches today that think this. They have come to believe that the gospel must come with works of miracles and wonders.

³ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (2 Co 11:1–15). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

When we see the end of the book of Acts, we see a different story. God definitely gave the visible and audible evidence of his power coming in the beginning of the church. However, as the church continues through the book of Acts, we see that the Spirit of God is on every believer at salvation. Paul, the greatest church planter in history, did not say in his epistles: Call upon the fire of the tongues of the Spirit of God. No, he said ‘walk in the Spirit.’ This is the key to successful evangelism: successful discipleship, successful teaching, and walking in the Spirit. This is the churches access to God’s power.

3. The Propagation of the Church

We have already evidenced in Scripture the spread of the Gospel in Acts 2. A complete reading of Acts further evidences the Gospel being carried out by others who were sent out by the church. Luke’s main purpose is to record *cases of conversion* to provide a model or pattern of how people became Christians wherever the gospel went. The book falls into six sections each of which ends with a progress report:

Jerusalem, Acts 1:1 to 6:7,

Judea, Galilee, Samaria, Acts 6:8 to 9:31,

Coastlands and Syria, Acts 9:32 to 12:24,

Cyprus and Galatia, Acts 12:25 to 16:5,

Macedonia, Achaia, Asia, Acts 16:6 to 19:20,

Rome, Acts 19:21 to 28:31⁴

You need to define your church’s mission statement. By that I mean you need to bring before your people a statement that declares that you are on a mission. For example, “We exist to reach the world for Christ.” Something like this will help your people understand the church’s purpose so when they leave the building they enter a mission field. If you keep that before your people, you will see God bless not only in the area of the Great Commission, but He will stir the hearts of your people that they will even give their hearts to serve Him. I praise God that in the 26 years I pastored in Canada, about 15 families committed to full-time Christian ministry.

In summary, missions are the nature of the church. The church without mission is a dying church. Why did the churches in Revelation die? It was because they stopped focusing on missions. The church without the Great Commission is just an ecclesiastical institution, as evidenced in Europe’s

⁴ <https://www.simplybible.com/f750-acts-spread-of-christianity.htm>

Europe “Christendom.” This has become a graveyard of historical monuments, having structure and without life.

From an evangelical perspective, if the church neglects the Great Commission, the ‘Mission’ becomes evangelism only, which does not complete Matt. 28:19-20 (to baptize, to teach all). This church is in danger of reducing ‘Mission’ to social action: the history of the liberal church. The local church is not an end in itself, it is the means to an end. Every church must be concerned about missions, Every church must have a basic mission plan. I encourage you to come up with a mission statement that is unique to your church.

In the church that I belong to, we have a unique statement that expressed our determination to reach the world for Christ as well as our determination to love and build one another up in the faith. I encourage you to have a basic mission statement so your people will know this is who we are. There are other statements in your notes to help reinforce the importance that church and mission are one. Nevertheless, I suggest that working out a mission statement with your church member’s participation will encourage them to take ownership of it.

Today in North America, many churches are shifting the responsibility of missions to agencies. The mission I belong to, ABWE Canada, recognizes this error. It is our policy to teach that ABWE does not send missionaries. We are the agency or the tool of the church to send missionaries. When people join our mission there is a ceremony of commissioning at which someone from our sending church is asked to attend to represent this church. We work for churches by serving with ABWE.

As a missionary within ABWE, I am sent by Riverside Baptist Church, the church I belong to and am sent by in Canada. My pastor understands this. I report to him. He calls me on the phone when I get home and says “How are things go in Africa this time?” Are there any things we can pray about? Our church has also provided much support not only for myself, but for this Cameroon Seminary. My wife and I represent Riverside Baptist church. They pray for me faithfully. I do not consider myself to be a professor at large. No, I am a professor from Riverside Baptist Church in Huntsville Canada.

The history of the church there has been a continual divorce of the mission from the people:

D. The Great Divorce

Local churches without a mission are without understanding: 1. of each member as a part of a collective labour force; 2. Are not committed to a clear statement of purpose directly from the corporate head, Jesus Christ; 3. Are without purpose and vision. The mission is the statement, of not only what we do, but who we are. The Full Mission determines the programs we introduce to complete our mission. Otherwise, the programs introduced become mere social actions, entertaining experiences, and poor stewardship of time.

The most damaging outcome of mission-less churches is they become insensitive to sins consequences. They become callused to the devastating damage and destiny of God's penetrating statement: The wages of sin is death. Mission-less churches lose the meaning and motive of mercy. As a result, the members become reduced to sitting, soaking, and becoming sour!

CLASS 6

II. NATURE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

A. Distinction of Terms

The title of this course on the Doctrine of the church is Ecclesiology. This English word comes from an alliteration of the NT term for church: ἐκκλησία (ekkleisia), combined with suffix 'ology' denoting a field of study. Recognize that although term 'ekkleisia' is itself derived from the Greek prefix 'ek' meaning 'out of' and the Greek word 'kalew' meaning 'to call.' The word "CHURCH" is used 114 times in the Greek New Testament and only twice does it refer to the Old Testament 'gathering together of people':

Acts 7:38 - "*the church in the wilderness*" (referring to Israel gathered as Moses received instructions from God on the mountain, Ex. 19:3ff.).

Heb. 2:12 - "*in the midst of the church will I sing praises unto thee*" (Greek translation of a quote from Ps. 22:22).

This word is used in the NT primarily referring to the local church. Nevertheless, there are two Bible references that refer to what is theologically called the Universal church:

Eph. 1:20-23: *He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put*

all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,

Col. 1: 18, 24: *And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. ...I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,*

For our consideration and study the concept of the “CHURCH” is used in two ways:

The UNIVERSAL CHURCH is the body of believers that existed from Pentecost until the Rapture. When this is referred to in the two references, it seems to do so from God’s perspective. He sees the church as the perfected body of Christ in the state of justification until our state of glorification at the church’s rapture.

The LOCAL CHURCH is the visible existence of the born-again people of the earth. I suggested that, although fully justified in the eyes of God, through the history of the church in the Scriptures and the history of the church in the ages, there has always been an evident challenge. The church has struggled with ‘progressive perfection’ or its ‘sanctification.’

1. WARNING

Definitions are based on models therefore weaknesses exist. For example, “Church” is often understood as the building where believers gather for worship services at a specific time. Such understanding can dismiss individual responsibility and behavior, and can erroneously embrace the unbeliever with false hope. Scripture makes distinction between the Church Universal as viewed by God in Christ’s perfection ‘imputed’ perfection, and the Local Church congregations, the reality of believer’s ‘progressive sanctification. Failure of recognizing the difference between God’s view by grace and Christian life by experience will undermine appreciation of God and dependence upon God. The fact that believers do sin and Christian life, vehemently opposed by Satan, goes from catastrophe to catastrophe is a reality demanding a moment-by-moment ‘Walk in the Spirit.’

Having acknowledged the distinction of Universal and Local church we must understand that God does not talk about the church as perfect then deal with churches as another entity. The truth to be grasped is this: THE BODY OF CHRIST IS UNIVERSAL, MANIFESTED IN LOCAL CHURCHES. Therefore, making distinction is dangerous.

2. DANGER

Church history has shown that by attempting to ‘universalize’ the local church through denominationalism unregenerate babies have been baptized into the church. This dismissed ‘salvation’ as the qualifier of real faith believers and true church membership. This has also resulted in many Christians being content part of ‘universal’ and not ‘local’ church. This denies the purpose of God in establishing local churches, it is sinful, denying the fullness Christian accountability and responsibility.

3. KEYS

i) The discipline of those who are not walking in truth or seeking to keep pure is the responsibility of the Local Church, the Universal Church.

ii) Teach the responsibility of each believer to come into membership because there is no true Christianity outside the local church.

iii) To distinguish between local and universal is to destroy the image of the Body of Christ on the earth.

4. Para-church organizations must be related to and responsible to local churches.

Proper Christian accountability is essential in the local churches.

C. Defining a Church

To summarize these two concepts, I offer this nine-part definition:

#1. The church is a community of converted sinners.

In Scripture the church is evidenced as universal & local indicating that the Universal church consists as all true local churches throughout the world. Although they may organize into groups as denominations with like doctrine and practice, each is led by its own leadership. The true universal church is without leadership structure but under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the risen Savior.

#2. Who are baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit.

Water baptism by immersion is a picture of Spirit Baptism whereby, at the moment of salvation, the new believer is placed the body of Christ. Water baptism is the public testimony of our salvation whereby the new believer is placed into the local assembly of Christ.

#3. Who are committed to Jesus Christ as Lord and head of the church.

We are reminded that this does not mean they are without sin, but they acknowledge the Lordship of Christ in their lives as a growing process. He is the vine. He is the shepherd.

#4. Who accept the authority of His Word.

The 66 Books of Scripture are the defining truth all doctrines (teaching) and practice (personal and corporate). God’s people cannot separate

Doctrines from the Word. The church must continually restate doctrines in order to keep abreast of language development to maintain doctrinal integrity. Christ is the Lord through the Word.

The church in recent history came to understand and define the fundamental doctrines. The term 'fundamentalist' has disappeared in America. It has taken on the idea of extremists and terrorists, but the church should be aware there are essential doctrines that unite the true church. The first attempt to arrive at these fundamentals was 1876 and the result was not good. In recent years the fundamentalist churches have determined there are 5 essentials that allow churches to unite together

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE FAITH

1. Verbal Inspiration of Scripture
2. Virgin Birth of Christ
3. Vicarious Death of Christ
4. Victorious bodily resurrection of Christ
5. Visible Return of Christ

#5. Who walk with and worship God together in the Word and practice.

Believers grow in relationship to God through listening to God by following Word and talking to God through prayer. Prayer is answered according to His will and promises, not according to volume of prayer or faith.

Believers grow in relationship to one another through corporate worship in song, in testimony, in praise, in observing baptism and communion.

#6. Who love, confess sin, edify and forgive one another.

Believers grow in relationship to one another through fellowship in forgiving one another, in serving one another, in caring for one another.

#7. Who are separated from sin and corruption in Holiness

Believers practice personal separation from the ungodly passions, practices, patterns, and persuasions of the flesh, the world, and the Devil through the power and persuasion of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

#8. Who witness Jesus Christ, to all people in love

The whole practice of a disciple of Jesus Christ involves sharing Him by life and by lips that the world may know that God is Lord of all, that God loves all, and God died for all.

#9. Who are eagerly expecting His return.

The promised return of Jesus to deliver the church into His presence, to establish His righteous kingdom on earth, and to usher in the eternal New Heaven and New Earth is the certain hope and anticipated delight of

God's people. The true church is as an anxious bride awaiting the wedding day.

There are many other things we can say about the church, nevertheless, these are the basic defining concepts found in Scripture.

Student Question: I would like to know what is the reference here to the universal church or the local church.

Prof. Response: I gave you Eph. 1:21-23, and Col. 1:18, and 24 where the term church must include all believers in every true local church. But I gave you these 9 definitions of the church so we would not divide local and universal in our minds. I see the church universal local as the same thing. The universal church is made up of the local churches that are on the planet. However, the distinction is just a grammatical perspective. What God sees from heaven is the total body of believers, but how we experience church in our lives is by the local church. The Bible distinctions are a true grammatical perspective even though the leadership, the commission, the worship, the ordinances, are all locally established.

Student Question: Is there any difference between being baptized in the Holy Spirit and being baptized by the Holy Spirit?

Prof. Response: Rather than answer your question, I will give you your homework for tomorrow. For tomorrow get a concordance and look up every reference to baptism in the book of Acts. I want you to write out the reference, and then write out whatever phrase is used. An exhaustive concordance will give you any reference to baptize or baptism in the book of Acts. After you have done citing the references for the entire book, read them over and write your conclusion about what Acts says regarding baptism. I want you to find all references both water baptism and baptism and make the proper conclusion. Therefore, you will end up stating something about Spirit baptism and water baptism and making a conclusion about the relationship if possible. When doing this exercise, consider the time span that the book of Acts includes. It is a historical book; it is a transitional book. This is something to think about as you draw your conclusions. This is a thinking assignment. Do your best. If you are wrong, do not worry about it. We will review this assignment together

Homework –Review: Baptism

Prof. Response: In our review of your homework assignment we concluded that the term baptize or baptism defines the union of the church; Spirit

Baptism, believers placed into the 'universal' Body of Christ on earth; Water Baptism, believers placed into the local churches on earth.

D. Pictures of the church

The NT pictures the church in four unique ways.

1. The church is a bride:

Eph. 5: 25-26: *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

The picture of a bride points to the purity of the body of Christ. Therefore the church must strive to be PURE and totally COMMITTED to Christ. The ultimate purpose of Christ's death is to present... to Himself the church as radiant [bride]... in all its perfection. Whereas human brides prepare themselves for their husbands, Christ prepares His own bride for Himself.⁵

2. The church is a body.

Rom. 12:4-5: For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. (See also 1 Cor.12:27; Eph.1:22-23; 5:23; Col.1:18, 2:19).

This suggests that each individual member is called and equipped to serve and ministry, according to spiritual gifts. We do not do the work of ministry in our own human power. Therefore, it is wise for a church to teach the doctrine of spiritual gifts, and to facilitate individual members in order to use their spiritual gifts. The church is a body, not a business. it is an organism, not an organization. This emphasizes 3 practical applications:

i) The church needs to have a simple structure so that we can maximize MINISTRY and minimize MAINTENANCE.

ii) The church need is to allow those God has gifted to be the "member" God empowered them to be. Therefore those with the gifts of:

⁵ Hoehner, H. W. (1985). Ephesians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Eph 5:26–27). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

LEADERSHIP need to LEAD

ADMINISTRATION need to ADMINISTER

TEACHING need to TEACH

HELPS need to HELP

iii) The church needs to serve one another to grow and grow up.

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

The people are the MINISTERS. The pastors are the EQUIPPERS.

I accepted Christ as my Saviour when I was 12. When I was 14 my pastor asked me to teach and I enjoyed it very much. However, I never heard of spiritual gifts until I was 27 when I first went to Bible College. I believe that the pastor had brought me to places of service that were using my spiritual gifts, but I still had no understanding of what spiritual gifts were. This is one reason I did my Master's Thesis on the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts. From this Thesis, I developed a way for pastors to teach about spiritual gifts and a way for people in the church to go through a study and learn their spiritual gifts. Teach your people the Spiritual gifts. You will be surprised at their new sense of purpose.

3. The church is a flock.

Jn. 10:7-11: *Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. "All who ever came before are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. "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. "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. (See also Matt. 26:31; 25:32).*

Christ used this more than the other pictures. The Lord Jesus Christ is the chief shepherd. Elders (pastors) are the local 'under' shepherds who are called to *"take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers"* (Acts 20:28).

Verses 14–18 form a kind of commentary on the statement of v 11. It begins with an emphasis on the mutual knowledge of the shepherd and the sheep, a knowledge like the mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son

(14–15). There can be no closer intimacy than this. It puts the hired hand entirely out of the picture.⁶

4. The church is a family

Gal. 6:10: *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

The pictures of the church teach us much about what God wants us to understand: The picture of the bride, of the body, of the flock. There is also the picture of the family. Christ is united to us, and we are united to Him: we are spiritually one. In fact, we are His “brethren” (Heb. 2:12). The writer quotes Psalm 22:22—a messianic psalm—in which Christ refers to His church as His brethren. This means we and the Son of God share the same nature and belong to the same family! What a marvel of God’s grace!⁷

This is my favourite picture. As a pastor, I sought to encourage the church to recognize we are a unique family together. As the Scriptures teach of about the physical family unit, I sought to encourage our church to relate to one another the same way. God teaches us that the family operates based on equality, mutual love, and mutual respect.

Student Question: How does the family operate equally when the father is the head of the family? Are you saying there is no equality between the father and the rest? It is a spiritual quality in the sense that the father is just the leader, and everybody is the same.

Prof. Response: This demonstrates the difficulty we have in our minds to understand equality because we think equality has to do with our roles, but it has nothing to do with our roles or our responsibilities.

The greatest example of how the family is equal and therefore how the church is equal, is God Himself. Is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit equal? Absolutely, and yet they have among themselves roles in which the Spirit does the will of the Son and the Son does the will of the Father. Role does not in any way suggest inferiority.

⁶ *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition.* 1994 (D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer & G. J. Wenham, Ed.) (4th ed.) (1047). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

⁷ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Heb 2:10–13). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

That is why there is neither husband or wife or bond or slave in the church. Although there is the role of the father and the role of the wife and the role of the children, there is complete equality. Therefore, we see that even though the father is the head of the home, they are told to submit to one another (Eph. 5:21).

So often we carry this idea of superiority into the church. We think that even as the father is the head and therefore superior, the pastor is the head and superior. This is not so. A pastor has the role of being the under-shepherd by the call of God. However, he is equal to everyone else and submits to the body even as the body is submits to him.

Student Question: I want to know if you have to understand equality in the sense of salvation. On the part of all Christians who are saved, are all equal before God?

Prof. Response: I think it goes beyond that. In what way do we think that members of the church are inferior to the pastor? In what ways do we consider the wife to be inferior to the husband? If we say it is only on a spiritual basis, is it legitimate for me to beat my wife? Does that mean that I should demand respect from her but give her no respect? Many homes run this way. It is very sad that many churches run this way as well. The pastor is put on a pedestal like an idol. The attitude is that the pastor can do no wrong. Where will that lead? That will lead to a pastor becoming a pope, outside any restrictions, but all the people are under him. This happens in Baptist churches.

I know of a pastor who did not pay his financial bills in town. He was also involved in sports on Sunday morning during the Sunday School hour. When the deacons began to be aware of this bad testimony they took him aside to be responsible and correct these things as good example to the flock. He refused and quoted an OT verse to the deacons: "Touch not the Lord's anointed." That is a true story. The deacons went to the church and dismissed him. He tried to sue the church for wrongful dismissal but failed. This man was on an ungodly power trip, he felt he had power over people.

The church is a family. A pastor must submit to Christ and the church body even as the church body must submit to Christ and the pastor. Any authority a pastor has, is not his own authority, it is Christ's authority. When you lead your church, determine not to exalt yourself in any way.

When I was the pastor, they wanted to have a place for me to park my car with my name on it. Sometimes it is necessary for a big church to provide a place for the pastor to park because he might have to park 10 blocks away. However, in our church that was not the case. I was usually the first one there and the last to leave. Nevertheless, I said: “No, I do not wish to be given special status.” That is why, in the evening service I would always sit with my family like anyone else, until I went to the pulpit to teach (I did go to the platform in the morning because there was a shortage of congregation seating).

There were times when our church had special services and I was not preaching. I would go into the nursery and encourage the nursery worker to go in and listen while I looked after the nursery. There were times when the janitor was working and had lots to do, I would pick up a broom and help him. It is just a way to show them I’m a servant just like you. Keep this in your mind as you see the church as a family. I was trying to show that I was just as everyone else, except that God called me to be the pastor. I would encourage you to help the church understand it is a family existing in equality, mutual love, and mutual respect. I am not magnify what I did, but seeking to give you ideas of promoting equality among all church people.

Student Question: Some church pastors say only they can baptizes and preach. Is that proper?

Prof. Response: In the church I was a pastor I did not do all the baptizing. After being in the church for about 6 years and teaching some men to serve the Lord, we ended up having 14 men who were able to get up and preach the Word of God.

I cannot speak for you in this matter because culture makes a big difference. For example, you live in an area that is predominately RC. It may be very difficult for new believers coming out of RC to accept anyone else but the pastor doing these things. To be able to say it is right or it is wrong, I cannot. It may be necessary to begin a ministry where there is only the pastor doing these things.

If the pastor has a good humble spirit, that will not be a problem, but if the Spirit of God encourages the pastor to help the church understand equality, and the pastor begins to teach the people so they will accept others to do this, then it is a good thing. But, you cannot accuse the church

that has never been taught, that they are wrong. God has given such flexibility in ministry. In all of it the Spirit of God must lead the body of Christ.

The book by Henry Blackaby called *Experiencing God Together* leads the church collectively, not just through the pastor. That is why it is so important to understand the autonomy of a local church. What God does in a local church is between that church and God, no one else.

We need to train people, and also set boundaries. You do not want people to do anything they wish to do. We need to train them and tell them what is appropriate and necessary to do, and guide them in how to do it properly. It is possible to do good things in a bad way and prevent God's blessing.

Remember, Dr. Simon gave us a sermon in chapel that a mature Christian does not judge others. When I say that in my church I taught people to preach and allow other elders to baptize, I am not saying I am right and everyone else is wrong. If a mission or a church determines only pastors will do certain things, I accept that they have good reasons to do this.

E. Explaining the Ordinances

1. Baptism

I want to go back to point 5 in our definition of a church and look at the ordinances of the church. There is a difference between an ordinance and a sacrament.

Prof. Question: What is the difference?

Student Question: For me a sacrifice adds grace in our lives, an ordinance is just a commandment or law which we have to obey.

Prof. Response: The denominations that teach sacraments teach there is a way to earn grace. Which I must say I do not understand because it is a contradiction of the word grace. If grace is something you do not earn, how can you do something to earn it?

I did say that sometimes we go too far and just look at the ordinances as a test of obedience. We almost look at it as Israel looked at the law. It was a burden on their shoulders. As if God said to the church, I want them to obey so I give them these two ordinances to make it inconvenient and test their loyalty. That is not true. The ordinances have specific and unique benefits even though they have nothing to do with salvation.

Baptism is the initial command because it is one of the first steps we can experience pleasing God. David seems to express this blessing as he understood that God took pleasure in righteousness:

1 Chron. 29:17: *I know also, my God, that You test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness.*

Christ tells us that as He came upon the earth, he did always those things that pleased the Father. Therefore, He *received from God the Father honour and glory*, because twice the Father spoke from heaven to him: “*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*” (Mat.3:17, 17:5)

I have in your notes there are 3 things to be keep in mind when thinking of baptism. In Scripture salvation is always comes before baptism. THE PRIME REOUIREMENT is salvation. The proper people to be subjects for this ordinance are only those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. Baptism means nothing until one has received the salvation provided for us by the death burial and resurrection of Christ.

Prof. Question: *Churches that hold to reform theology practice infant baptism. Can you tell me why? ‘Someone from the reform church please answer.*

Student Response: *It involves the argument of the covenant of Abraham transferring to the children.*

Prof. Response: *You see there is a logical reason to do this.*

If you believe that the church replaces Israel, and therefore, the covenant must have a sign, an expression, then it makes sense to understand that baptism replaces circumcision. In this situation they do not teach that baptism is regeneration, again I said that some denominations that make distinction between universal and local church have issues we would disagree with. I have great friends who preach the gospel and are reform theologians.

I have known Baptist pastors who are not saved. I make no judgments. I do not accept reform theology, but I respect it. The problem that I have is liberal churches that teach that baptism is regeneration, is new birth. They honestly believe that the child can be baptized and brought into the family of God for salvation. We hold to the fact that the church does not replace Israel. That baptism has nothing to do with circumcision. That baptism is new even as the baptism of the Holy Spirit is new in terms of

bringing people into the body of Christ. We say the prime requirement for baptism is salvation. We say that this is evident in the book of Acts.

The second thing to keep in mind is a proper request. The PROPER REQUEST for baptism is from a heart directed by the Holy Spirit. As one hears the Word or reads the Word, he is aware of the commandments laid down therein. Therefore because of the desire to do what God requires, we submit ourselves for baptism. Because baptism is an ordinance, it is a step of obedience. Obedience always has to come from the heart. To reduce baptism to a law of your church will do the same things as legalism. It will make it an artificial expectation: "Oh, everyone in the church wants me to be baptized, I should be baptized." This is teaching the wrong thing. Believers should be baptized because the Spirit of God is leading them in obedience. We need to create an environment where people request baptism because the Spirit of God is leading them in that direction, not because of parental pressure or church expectations.

I believe there is a spiritual privilege in the simple step of baptism, in which the Spirit of God conveys to the obedient believer the joy of the Father's approval. That is why the Scriptures speak of baptism as the answer of a good conscience to God. The PLEASURABLE RESULT of following the Lord in baptism is a good conscience toward God and an effective testimony to others. There is no securing of the gift of eternal life through baptism but we do have the satisfaction in knowing we have been obedient to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit

Prof. Question: When Cornelius was baptized with all his household, and when Lydia was baptized, and her household, was there infants involved? (Ac. 10:7; 16:15) Do your study in Acts and prepare your answers.

There are denominations that take their people through a catechism. They are taught and memorize the doctrine of the church. I am not opposed to this, it is a good tool for people to understand doctrine. Many evangelical churches have abandoned this idea. Some have the practice taking new believers through a church beliefs study at a predetermined time or age and then baptizing them. With this approach, with proper teaching, I have no problem, even though they say they will not baptize until a certain age. However, in my experience bringing this into a church puts pressure on a child when they reach that age.

In many evangelical congregational churches people have gone through this just like a catechism. They are taught the right answers and then are baptized, but are not truly saved. Every church must determine the best procedure for itself. When a parent in my church would come to me and say my child is 6 years old and he wants to be baptized. I would always say the same thing: "That is good, have your child come to me alone and tell me his desire." That way I know it is not the parents that are twisting the arm for the child. I can talk to the child and find out if they truly understand salvation. If they say they accepted Jesus when I was five, I ask "If you died today, would you go to heaven?" If they say yes, I ask; Why they want to be baptized. If they reply: "I want to obey Jesus." I baptize them.

If they have other answers, I would take the time to explain things and give them a booklet for children for them to study. I would say when you think you understand, come back and talk to me.' I would leave the door open for them to return but would delay because there is not full understanding. That is the way I thought was best to do in my church in Canada. I do not know about here.

Baptism is a first step of obedience. It is a picture of burial (placed under the water) and then resurrection with Christ (Raised up from the water). The candidate releases his body and he goes under the water, so that is a picture of death. He releases his own hold, it pictures his burial and when he comes back up it show his resurrection. That is one reason we believe in immersion (See Concluding Summary).

Baptism is also a sign of what transpired at our salvation. It is the visible expression of our spiritual union with Christ. Spirit baptism is something we do not experience in ourselves. We do not have a point in our Christian experience that we say "I have just experience the baptism of the spirit" despite what the charismatics falsely teach. It is a truth just as our justification is a truth. When God declared me 'to be righteous in Jesus,' I did not hear a voice, sense a change, experience an inflowing of euphoria (although I was glad). When the Spirit of God placed me in the body of Christ, I did not hear a voice, sense a change, feel the new closeness. It was the Spirit placing me into the body of Christ, a fact of truth calling upon faith and leading to sanctification, which changes life that is experienced in a progressive way. You are justified, declared righteous, you are baptized by the Spirit, you are part of the body of Christ.

Therefore, we see water baptism as this symbol. It is the public, visible testimony that I belong to Christ. The baptism of the Spirit does not take place when the water baptism takes place. The baptism of the spirit takes place the moment I am justified. All these things are instantaneous in our moment of salvation: justification, regeneration, Spirit Baptism or the placement in the body of Christ. One moment I'm not saved, the next moment I am saved, justified (declared righteous), regenerated (receive new life), placed into Christ's body (Baptized by the Spirit), indwelt (God dwelling in me).

Water Baptism is also the initial means of membership with a local church. It is the act of placement into a local assembly. You can see that water baptism is a logical step of following my placement into the body of Christ. If I am in the body of Christ at salvation by the baptism of the Spirit, then it is the will of God for me to be part of the local church. God uniquely used this public testimony for that purpose. If you do some studies in the history of the time of Christ and the apostles, you will discover that water baptism was used before the church began. It was understood in society of that day, to be the act or declaration of joining a group and denouncing everything in the past.

Prof. Question: What was John's baptism? What was significant about it?

Student Response: -In baptism by John people were identifying with his message to repent for the kingdom of God was at hand. -To be baptized by John was to agree with him and join with his message.

Prof. Question: Did the Pharisees agree with John's message?

Student Response: No.

Prof. Question: Did John baptize them when they requested?

Student Response: No, he refused some.

Prof. Response: Correct, when the Pharisees wanted to be baptrized to continue their popularity and authority, John said: "Show me that you agree with the message by true repentance, and I will baptize you, but there is no evidence. You see that baptism was identifying with what he was saying, not to just join the group. John's baptism was not the same as church baptism. I assume that most people who were baptized by John, were also baptized by the church when it began in Acts 2.

i) Examples in the book of Acts:

As was mentioned earlier “Baptism” is taught in the New Testament in word and example. In addition to our great Example, Jesus Christ, we would like to mention those examples found in the book of Acts.. We do so because we are dealing with a church ordinance and the church itself did not begin until we read of its inception in the Book of Acts. The example of Christ is still the most important of all, but just to show how His example was followed and how the Great Commission given by Him was carried out, we give these examples in Acts.

1. THE GROUP ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST -Acts 2:38. A great number were saved and followed their Lord by being baptized. Note the command.
2. THE EUNUCH - Acts 8:36-38. Philip was the one who baptized this man in water, because of his faith in Christ.
3. PAUL was baptized. The account of it is found in Acts 9:18. Then there is a reference to it in Acts 22:16.
4. LYDIA and her household were baptized in Acts 16:15.
5. THE JAILER and his household heard the Word, believed it and were baptized by either Paul or Silas (Acts 16:25-34).
6. CORNELIUS - Acts 10:47,48. This is one of the clearest passages to tell of the administering of water baptism after salvation.
7. CRISPUS - Acts 18:8. The one who baptized him was the Apostle Paul. See I Corinthians 1:13-15.
8. JOHN’S DISCIPLES - Acts 19:3,4,5. These men had been baptized into John’s baptism, but Paul instructs them to be re-baptized in the name of Christ.

These eight examples in this one book ought to be studied, taking special notice of the fact that they all heard the Word of God and believed it. Also the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15) was carried out to the letter on the Day of Pentecost. When you come to that passage in Acts when the people were saying “Have you been baptized by the Holy Spirit?”(Acts 19:2), yet they had never even heard of such a thing. Understand the culture, they were being asked: “Have you identified with the full teaching of the church of Jesus Christ. Remember, in your teaching be sure to put the doctrine of baptisms in the context of God revealing the history of the church.

ii) Baptism: a test

Baptism comes to us as a test of our love and obedience. Seeing there is no gift, such as eternal life involved, the question comes, “Why then be baptized?” John 14:15 is an important verse, and along with this verse the whole of-chapter 14 and 15 ought to be read. The emphasis on “love for the Lord” is seen. One of the best ways of showing our love for Him is through our obedience to His commandments. How much do I love Him?

Am I willing to obey Him in all things? This matter of baptism then is a test of those things.

Baptism is a visible testimony to the world of our allegiance to Christ, the Lord. Let us show to the world that we love Jesus Christ for what He is. So many will do something only if they themselves get something in return. Let's be able to affirm: "We love him because he first loved us."

iii) Concluding Summary

There are three words to remember which will summarize baptism in your mind.

a. A PICTURE - or symbol. Baptism is not salvation, nor a part of it. It is a picture of the salvation already experienced. In order to provide salvation, the gospel had to be brought into existence (I Corinthians 15:3,4). Christ had to die - when you stand in the water, it is a picture of Christ on the cross - the place of death for YOU. Christ was buried - when you go down under the water, it is a picture of Christ being buried for YOU. Christ arose - when you come up out of the water, it is a picture of Christ rising for YOU. You identify yourself with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection which He endured to save you.

b. A TESTIMONY - only those who profess to be saved are baptized in our church. Therefore, as soon as people see you in the water, they will know that you have been saved. It is the public declaration of your earlier acceptance of Christ as Saviour and Lord.

c. AN OBEDIENCE - it is an act of obedience. John 14:15 declares "If you love me, Keep my Commandments" (see Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 10:48). Baptism then becomes a test of your love for Christ!! This is a solemn thought (Read John 21:15-17). The question is answered in part in Baptism. It should be one of a series of experiences of obeying the Word of God.

To love the Lord is the greatest thing in your life that you can do. It is the greatest of all the commandments, and Baptism is one of the ways to declare your love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

iv) Why baptism by 'immersion

The Bible clearly teaches that eternal salvation is a free gift secured by one placing their personal faith and trust in the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ. Only His complete, once-for-all "sacrifice for sin" can 'wash away sin' and provide for the recipient a righteous standing before God (Acts 4:12. Acts 16:30-31. Romans 10:9-13, ETC.)

Why do the Scriptures emphasize that the 'mode' of baptism ought to

be immersion? Please consider the following four reasons:

#1. THE EXPLICITNESS OF THE WORD

Matt.3:13.14.16: Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.

14 And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"...16 When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water;

The word used is “βαπτίζω” (baptizo). Our translators have ‘transliterated’ the word (ie. They’ve taken the Greek letters and ‘transliterated’ them into the equivalent English letters). The word “βαπτίζω” translated means “to dip, to immerse, to plunge, to submerge, to plant, to place into.” There is a word for ‘sprinkling’ used in the New Testament. It is the word ῥαντίζω (rhantizo) but it is never once used in connection with baptism!

#2. THE ‘EXAMPLE OF JESUS CHRIST’

Matt. 3:13, 16: *Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him... When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water;*

vs. 13 “*to Jordan*” - it was a river!

vs. 13 “*to be baptized*” Jesus came to be, by definition of the word; immersed

vs. 16 “*went up straight way out of the water*” Jesus came out of the water. Why go into and come out of the water if it was only a sprinkling?

#3 THE EVIDENCE OF N.T. BELIEVERS’

John 3:23: *And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.*

Acts 8:38-39: *So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away,*

Acts 16:13, 14, 15: *And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side... Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God... And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house,*

#4. THE EMBLEM OF THE GOSPEL’

1 Cor. 15:3-4: *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

Baptism is the ‘public profession of the saved person that they have clearly received the Gospel. It is a ‘picture’ or ‘emblem’ of that which they have already believed. Christ had to die -when you stand in the water, it is a picture of Christ on the cross - the place of death for YOU. Christ was buried - when you go down under the water, it is a picture of Christ being buried for YOU. Christ arose - when you come up out of the water, it is a picture of Christ rising for YOU. You identify yourself with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection which He endured to save you.

Student Response: What do you think of those who baptize three times in the water? Do you say that is a picture of the burying and the resurrection? Prof. Response: the mode, the method of immersion is not important. I can understand why this is done because they are baptizing in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Grammatically it is proper to say you should be immersed for each name. But grammatically, it is also proper to understand it is one immersion in three names. I have said to Dr. Simon that the reason he favours the three, is because in Africa there is so little water and Africans like to be cooled in the water, therefore they all want to go under as much as possible! If you were in Canada baptizing people in the cold water of Canada, you would only want to be immersed one time, and very quickly!

2. The Lord’s Table

We have looked at baptism and now we will look at the ordinance of the Lord’s Table:

Matt. 26: 1-2: *Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, that He said to His disciples, "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."*

I want you to see the Lord’s Table in the context of the preparations that are involved for Passover.

Prof. Question: In this text, what is the time in relationship to the Jewish calendar? What is going to take place shortly?

Student Response: Passover.

Prof. Response: Yes! Here Christ gives the ordinance of the Lord’s Table which we call Communion.

Matt. 26:26-29: *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."*

I said at the beginning that these are more than just simple steps of obedience. These ordinances picture the true character of the church. They express the uniqueness the church. Baptism is an introduction to the family of God in which we are one together, united together. This is a repeated theme of the NT church: 'The one another church.' The NT term 'ἀλλήλων (allelon) meaning 'one another' is repeated thirty-nine times and worthy of studying and preaching.

When it comes to the 'Lord's Table' we have also a unique picture of the heartbeat of the church. In the early days of the church, there was the practice of preparing ahead of time for the Lord's Table. They used to call it the 'Old Covenant Service.' I acknowledge this term was used in the context of many Reform Churches. We can see how they would look back at Israel's preparation for the Passover and see this as a replacement for it. Although I would not agree that "Communion" replaces the Passover meal, I appreciated the conscious effort among the believers to be sure that they were walking properly with God and with one another.

This was a time in which people would come together to prepare for the Lords' Table and confess their sin to one another. It was a process for the church to prepare to give testimony of their unity by ensuring they were right in their relationships. Remember, our of the church is 'a group of forgiven and forgiving sinners.' The Lord's Table is the very heart of this expression of forgiveness and oneness. If you could imagine the Lord Jesus Christ at the table. He had before him one cup and one unleavened loaf. Christ taught with picture examples. When He took the one loaf, broke it and passed the pieces around, he was stating the bread represented his body broken for us. When He took the one cup and passed it around, He was stating that His blood was shed for us.

If you were sitting at that table you could not miss the expression of oneness, of unity. Receiving was the testimony of the broken body and the spilled blood personally accepted. In participating, believers proclaim not only oneness with Christ but also oneness together as a body of believers.

1 Cor. 11:23-28: *For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner, He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore, whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But, let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.*

Paul here says if we are not truly one, we are offending God and the body by participating in The Lord's Table. I want you to realize that communion is more than a step of obedience to remember Jesus' death. But by participating show or 'declare' the Lords' death. We claim the significance of his death and our unity as one body together. We participate as a testimony of our forgiveness before God, which is our present state, and our forgiveness toward another. You can see how important in the mind of God communion is in ensuring that the body of Christ, the local church continues to confess with one another and stay right with one another.

In most evangelical churches there is the requirement of to hold office or become a member. The requirement is baptism for membership. Yet, often we do not ask about people's relationship for participation in communion because we understand the spiritual exercises of communion is just that testimony. It was our church practice to observe communion service every 3 weeks, alternating with morning service and evening service. Communion was not something we added on to a regular service. Communion was the service. It was a unique and different service form the regular service. We took time to prepare our hearts in prayer and encourage people, if they knew there was something between them and a brother, to go and get it right.

When we actually took the bread and took the cup I explained the uniqueness of the one loaf and one cup even though we just had them as symbols on the table now, (due to hyena as well as the large numbers attending, passing pieces of one loaf, and one cup being very prolonged). I am not saying what our church did was the right way or the best way, but I am saying to you church leaders, raise the awareness of what communion is. Raise the significance of this in your church. Communion is no small

thing. We hold so strongly to baptism. I urge you to hold as strongly to communion.

Jesus did say, *'take eat, this is my body which is broken for you. This is my blood of the new testament.'* We need to recognize there are different views of what these words meant. The RC celebrates mass. The people participate in the body (the bread) and the priests participate in the blood (the wine). They teach what we call 'transubstantiation.' This is a belief that the bread actually becomes the body of Christ, and that the wine actually becomes the blood of Christ. I have never been able to understand why only the priests take the wine. Transubstantiation is the Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox position.

Luther taught that the body and blood of Christ do not become, but are joined with the bread and the wine of the Lord's Table. This is called 'consubstantiation.'

Student Response: Do you know if the Catholics think there is already blood in the bread/body?

Prof. Response: I do not know. But I can tell you this, in my experience with RC people, they themselves do not understand mass. I have had Roman Catholics tell me their mass is the same as our communion because they are not taught their own theology.

Lutheranism teaches that the body and blood join with the bread and the wine. The bread is the means by which the body joins the bread which they take in. The wine stays but it is joined with the blood, which they also take in. Thereby, the body and the blood are continuously by regularity, applied to themselves. Calvinism, which today is expressed in Reform Theology, teaches that there is a spiritual presence of the body and the blood when communion is taken. Then Zwingli shared the concept that the bread and the wine are just symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood. This is what I hold to, and what I believe the school holds to: The ordinance of Communion" is an observance of the symbols that represent the body and the blood of Christ. We accept the symbols of bread and wine as an opportunity to publicly declare our present 'oneness' or wholeness of relationship with Jesus Christ, and our unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

CLASS 7

I begin this class by asking you to read for yourself 1 Corinthians 1:17-34 which includes Paul's instructions for The Lord's Table. Do so now.

In this section of 1st Corinthians Paul is gives instructions and corrections for worship together. We know the Corinthian Church had a problem in terms of understanding the ministry and the message of Christ. We know that in some areas of their lives they were acting carnal, going the way of the world.

Prof. Question: What is the culture of Corinth in the time of Paul. What is the influence of the culture?

Student Response: Multi-cultural

Prof. Response: Yes, but there was an effort to unite the people under one culture. Any other answers?

Student Response: Hedonism.

Prof. Response: Yes, that was part of the philosophy within the culture.

We saw in the progress of Corinth that Alexander the Great made it a capital of his district and for hundreds of years it was the center of Greek culture. When Rome conquered and the Caesar destroyed the city to remove the threat to his rebellion, he rebuilt this city with the influence of Roman culture. The strong Roman culture and the strong multi-culturalism had clearly influenced the church. Because of the Roman culture's influence on their attitudes and actions. Paul addresses the problems the Corinthian church was having in their worship.

In this passage, Paul corrects their procedures regarding the conduct of men and women in worship, then he addresses the issues of breaking bread or celebrating the Lord's table. The churches in the early days celebrated the Lords' table with what was called a 'love feast' or 'agape meal' prior to breaking bread together. The Roman influence had led to the church viewing this meal as a feast of pleasure. Paul had to correct this misunderstanding and bring them back to celebrate the table the way the Lord intended. I said earlier that the communion elements were symbols: the broken body of Christ, the bread; the shed blood of Christ, the wine. However, because they had celebrated the meal with selfish indulgence, they missed the whole point of what this should be. I think it is very significant that God takes the opportunity to put in Scripture this passage to help the

church today, prone to self-indulgence, understand the importance of properly celebrating communion or the Lord's Table.

Paul teaches the church, not just of Corinth, but the church of today. He reminds us of what we should be focusing on. In this passage Paul does bring God's correction. In verses 20-22 he is correcting their ungodly self-ish behavior regarding the Lord's Table:

1 Cor. 1:20-22: *Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.*

When they were having the meal together, they were seeking to get the food for themselves; it was all self-centered and totally against what the Lord's Table should express. He corrects them using strong words. He says if you come to this meal to fill your stomachs, stay home, filling your stomachs is not the purpose. The purpose is to celebrate our union, our oneness of our family through the sacrifice of Christ. The highest expression is breaking bread around the table. As we teach our people, remind them that God took time in expressing the necessity of correction and restoring relationships.

In verses 23 and 25 there is a statement of transmission: "What I received, I am passing on to you." Paul received this from the Lord Himself. He is expressing the authority in exercising this remembrance. He is not saying: "I do not appreciate the way you are doing this." He is saying 'I am passing along what the Lord said to me, this is the His' meal. Then in verse 16 he makes an unique statement: "*As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death.*"

The word 'proclaim' is more than just to show visibly; the word is an actual proclamation, in public. We see that to properly break bread we make a statement to others. Breaking bread as a body of believers gathered together is more than just saying 'I remember Jesus died for me.' It is to celebrate the great salvation he secured for us on the cross. It is to go back and stand before the cross and see Christ's blood flowing and his body torn for us. It is a declaration of acceptance of the work of Christ on the cross to pay for my sin and a statement that we are one with God and one with one another in salvation.

Anything that is in our life that makes that proclamation ‘untrue’ is sin. Any unconfessed sin between myself and God, causes me to be a hypocrite. When I take the cup and bread with any unresolved issues between myself and my brothers and sisters, is an offence to God. This is why Paul insists a man examine himself. This is a call back to understanding the necessity of our walk with God in the Spirit. Not only does Paul by this statement say: ‘We do not judge one another,’ he also says that the proper walk of a believer in the Spirit is to commune with God in such way that we are always examining ourselves before God and man. The whole celebration of communion is to say: “Christ’s death for me united me with him and me with my brothers and sisters. We are one in Christ.”

Look at the words Paul uses when he talks about this examination. The danger of being ‘unworthy’ is a part of this. The possibly of being ‘guilty’ is a part of this. ‘Damnation’ is a part of this. Not ‘discerning’ is the potential danger. ‘Condemnation’ is part of this. Paul is using the strongest words to show the necessity of self-examination before we break bread together.

Here is your homework for today: I want you to look up these 5 words that are used in this passage and give a definition of each to grasp what Paul is saying for each word. It would be best if you can have the tools in the library to find the original Greek words. A person who does not know Greek can still do this using Vine’s Dictionary. I am not certain of what is available in French.

Student Question: Is it important to use unleavened bread when we celebrate communion?

Prof. Response: That is a question that it is not up to me to decide for you. Each church must make its own decision on this. Probably the bread that Jesus used was a small wafer because it was the Passover meal. For this reason, some churches decide the wafer must have no leaven in it because leaven symbolizes sin. Other churches feel the whole point was the symbol was unity whether it was leaven or not leaven. It is the same with the wine. Was the wine that Jesus used alcoholic or non-alcoholic. What happens if you are a church and there is no availability of wine? What happens if the only bread you have is made of rice? There are so many issues, my only instruction is that each church must reach its own conclusions.

One more thing I would say about the ordinances. I have tried to explain they were more than tests of obedience. They are truly significant in the spiritual life of a local church. They are focusing on a public demonstration within the body of Christ. We see only one exception and that is the Ethiopian eunuch baptized by Phillip without a church present. But, this was a transitional time. Paul reinforced the fact this was the privilege of the church because he said ‘I thank God I baptized only a few of you’. Paul baptized the people because he founded the church, yet, he left the responsibility to them when he left. The same was true with the Lords’ Table. Paul says when we break bread we are ‘proclaiming,’ and the word necessitates an audience.

I share with you my understanding that these ordinances are the expression of a local church gathered together. You will have to make the determination yourself whether the people should be baptize in a river with no one there, or whether it is appropriate to take a little cup and bread to a hospital to break bread with the pastor. I’m not saying these situations are right or wrong, I’m saying it is something you need to think about.

The worst thing a pastor can do is allow the people to go through the motions of communion as a routine or a tradition. You may begin a church and teach the first people of that church all the significance of baptism and communion. They come to understand the true importance of this in the Christian life. However, as the church grows and new people are added, it is easy to continue with communion, which for them becomes tradition by not teaching the new people. We can guilty of this omission by assuming too much.

I told you that in Canada, as I talk to RC people, many of them think mass is the same as our communion. Their church leaders assume they understand that the wafer becomes the body of Christ. But they do not. When I, a Baptist pastor, say no it is not the same, they mention they were never taught this. Perhaps they did not pay attention in catechism class. But, it is the same among evangelical Baptist churches. When asked: “Why do you break bread?” They reply: “Because it is a command.”

Keep the truth alive in your church and keep the focus on what Christ wants focused on. Teaching is the key. We are not doing a study on church leadership in this class but I can tell you that when you go to the Pastoral Epistles, and look for every command that is given to a church leaders, you will find that the great percentage of all have to do with teach, teach, teach, teach.

F. Fundamental Practices of the Church

I want to talk about the fundamental practices of the local church. I am not talking about the fundamental doctrines; I'm talking about the fundamental practices. We have to ask ourselves- what are the basic things that a church does. If we look at churches today they do many things. The Scriptures do give us the essential aspects or elements of the local church. To see this we have to go to the passage where the church began.

Actss 2:41-45: Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

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. 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.

Acts 2 records the birthday of the church. The first church was established in Jerusalem at Penrecost. In this passage we see the **5 aspects or essentials of a local church**. It is proper for a church to have more than these five, but I believe they must have these in order to fulfill the purposes of God.

1. EVANGELISM

In verse 41, *they gladly received the Word*. We see 'Evangelism.' We already concluded that your church cannot be separated from mission. We know the first aspect of the great commission is evangelism. Is the great commission complete when we only do evangelism? No. You need to bring them into the local body by baptism. It is important to realize that in that culture they did not have to be taught what baptism was, because every cult or pagan religion and even Judaism, practiced baptism to identify new 'converts.' This is why, when people received the Lord as Saviour, they were immediately baptized. For most cultures today, there is the necessity of teaching baptism's true meaning because of its universal misuse.

2. EDUCATION

In verse 42, *they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine*. Here we see the practice of teaching or 'Education.' I suggest that in most of the cultures, the discipleship necessary to complete the great commission requires education. Teaching is essential for spiritual maturity, church growth, and stability.

3. FELLOWSHIP

The next fundamental church practice is found in verse 42 where they also [*continued steadfastly in*] ‘Fellowship’. I know that in the French language you use the word ‘communion’ for ‘fellowship,’ the same word for the ‘Lord’s Table.’ Nevertheless, in this text we see there is a difference, there was ‘fellowship’ and then there was ‘breaking of bread’ and prayer. Here, ‘Fellowship’ is κοινωνία (koinonia): the joining together with things in common.

Fellowship could be meeting together for a meal. Fellowship could mean joining together with other believers and repairing a house. Fellowship could mean going on to a Saturday morning football (soccer) match. Fellowship is spending time together with a common interest and purpose. It is really a family acting like a family; a family working together, a family playing together, a family helping other people together.

4. WORSHIP

The text distinguishes between fellowship and breaking bread. I’m not certain what they did. They probably were in a house just enjoying one another in true fellowship. This fellowship included evangelism, education, fellowship and, in verse 42, they [*continued steadfastly in*] breaking of bread and prayers. I define these two last two practices as ‘Worship.’ God’s people in the OT and the NT were always called to gather to worship God, to come together as a family and lift up a voice of song and a voice of prayer to God, our Lord King.

It is different form fellowship because it is focused on the giving to God praise, worship and attention, as He communes with the local body corporately. It is different from personal devotions, which is private worship. All of God’s people have been encouraged to walk with God privately. Jesus Himself made the distinction between the Pharisees who prayed in public and those who went into their closets to pray. Coming together never replaces our personal walk with God every day. We know when we accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour, God enters into our lives.

Prof. Question: *Is this true?*

Student Response: *Yes.*

Prof. Question: *: Are you ever separated from God in your life? Is the presence of God in the believer’s life permanent and eternal?*

Student Response: *Yes.*

Prof. Response: *Then why did Jesus say that when 2 or 3 are gathered together, there am I in your midst?*

Student Response: No reply.

Jesus is saying that there is a unique sense of God's presence 'when God's people are gathered together.' I am not talking about the charismatic misunderstanding of an urge to run, or passion to speak ecstatic utterances. These are emotional outbursts, self-programmed 'motor-responses,' and in some cases demonic influences, the result of wrong teaching. Yet, we 'conservatives' often go too far the other way. I believe that God intends for His people, when gather in worship, to experience the presence of God.

Prof. Question: What happens in the Scriptures when people come into the presence of God? Do they laugh and roll around on the floor? Do they shout and speak all kinds of tongues and languages? What happens?

Student Response: They search Scripture or they pray to God.

Prof. Response: I do not know who you are thinking about in Scripture. Perhaps you misunderstood my question. What happened to John on the island of Patmos when Christ came before him and he saw Him as He was?

Student Response: He fell down as dead.

Prof. Question: What happened to Mary when even the angel Gabriel came to announce Messiah's birth? What did Gabriel say to her?

Student Response: 'Fear not'

Prof. Response: Yes, Fear Not! In Scripture when God presented Himself, or when one of his Spirit Messengers presented themselves, the human response was Fear, reverence, silence. I am convinced that when God reveals His presence in a corporate way the result is a sense of awe and wonder. I do not think it would result in shouting and running around. I think it would result in a holy silence before God in which we know our hearts are an open book to Him. We simply wait for Him to speak.

Let me ask you, have you been in worship services where you have really and truly sensed the presence of God? Where you know He is present and is speaking directly to your heart? That can happen in private devotion. A church that experiences the true presence of God in worship, will be a church that will say with Isaiah: 'Lord, here we are, send us'.

The first fundamental practice of the church is Evangelism. The second is Education. The third, Fellowship. Fourth is Worship, reflecting the words 'breaking bread and prayer.' There is one more: In Acts 2: 44-45: 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.

4. STEWARDSHIP

The fifth fundamental practice is 'Stewardship.' They dealt with their possessions according to God's purposes and plan. We have a study I have presented here on stewardship. It takes the principles throughout Scripture of what it means to deal with our possessions in a godly way. The early church, the first church in Acts 2 was primarily Jewish people. They already had a foundation of what the OT teaches regarding stewardship. However, as the Spirit of God entered their heart the law was transferred from their minds to the hearts. They started living godly stewardship.

In my book *God Supplies* there is a 30 day study on the principles of stewardship provided. One of the things I see everywhere I teach in America, Africa, and India, is a weakness in these fundamental practices. There are churches that have activities to keep people busy. There are churches that have so many ministries that people in the church could be busy doing 'church' every day of the week. However, many of these are nothing more than just spending time together: evangelism is forgotten, education only happens 20-30 minutes when the pastor preaches, worship is reduced to entertainers and song, and stewardship is never taught.

In Ghana, Togo and Cameroon, stewardship is really what must be taught. When Dr. Simon takes me to an African church to preach the same questions are asked: 'What will your mission give us?' 'We need Bibles, can you give them to us?' 'We need a church building, can you build it for us?' I understand the reason for this, it is true that the average person in America has more wealth than the average person in Africa. But, the real problem is African churches do not understand that God has all the resources and He promises to meet all of our needs. Yet, there is a condition! The condition is 'put His righteousness first.' That means many things personally, but it does mean 'give to God first.'

I have discovered that many of God's people in Africa or India or even America that have little, hold it all for themselves because they do not believe they have enough to give to God. Yet, God says 'You give to Me first'. That is our act of faith. The just shall live by faith. If you exercise this in faith, God will supply. I have 25 years of pastor experience seeing this in the churches. I was a pastor in a community that was one of the poorest community in our province. When I first went there, the average person in my church only worked ½ the year. I started to teach them the

principles of stewardship and they began to live by these principles. People who had so little compared to the rest of Canada, only had enough money for their food. They could not even buy clothes for their children.

They started to give their tithes ‘first to God.’ God started to supply for them. They started talking about this to other members of the church and encouraged others to do the same even though it was risky for them. When our church grew too big for the building I shared with them the principle of sacrifice, giving more than the ‘tithe first’ to God. Our people were prepared and gave sacrificially.

When this happened, we found God sending money to us from people who had never been in our church. We never asked for money but our people tithed and our people gave sacrificially. When that was still not enough for us to build a building, God brought people who gave supplies for the church. God moved people from different countries who had never been in our church, to send us money. I have no idea how they found out about our need but we ended with a new church that would hold 500 people. When I left the church 9 years later, to be a missionary teacher, the church was full. Why? God’s people practiced Biblical stewardship. God said, “Put me first and I will provide everything you need.” (Matt. 6:33).

G. Principles of Stewardship

The local church becomes quickly familiar with the fundamental practices of evangelism, education, and fellowship, nevertheless, it has been my experience to find the churches where I have pastored, and many of the pastoral students that I have taught, lacking in understanding of Biblical Stewardship. Therefore, I take time now to briefly teach these essential truths. A full examination of Biblical Stewardship can be found in my book: *God Supplies* (at amazon.com, or ca, or fr, ...search for: Earl Cooper Ph.D).

1. Principle of Ownership = “Who holds the Title Deed

Psm. 24:1: *The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;* → God owns all.

Ecc 5:19: *As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor — this is the gift of God.*

→ all we possess is a gift from God.

1 Cor. 6:19-20: *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your*

own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

→believer's are purchased with Christ's blood

Matt 25:14-15, 29: *For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. "And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey... 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.*

→Therefore our life is a call to stewardship of His gifted *talents*

- To acknowledge God's ownership of all –v.14 – His Goods
- To take faithful care of the possessions in our Trust –v.16-18
- To be held accountable for care of the poss... in our Trust –v. 20-24
- To receive commendation or rebuke for our stewardship –v.25-30

i) The Principle of Ownership begins with Practice of Stewardship:

1 Cor. 4:2: *Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*

God's children are responsible for their stewardship and will give account to God

ii) The Principle of Ownership Yields Peace of Mind:

Job 1: *Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"*

→Job was a believer, wealthy, faithful steward = blameless

Job 1:12: *And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person."*

→Job lost everything he possessed

Job 1:21-22: *"Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."*

→Job had peace about his loss

Job 23:10-12: *But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and not turned aside. I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth More than my necessary food*

→Job had peace about his future.

2. Principle of Firstfruits = “My First” is “My Faith!”

i) “The Just shall live by Faith” – 4x in Bible

→Widow’s last meal to Prophet (1Kings17)

→widow→First gave then provision (“Her First” = “Her

Faith!”

a. God’s Passion re -“Firstfruit Giving”

God desires His people to acknowledge their daily dependence upon Him.

O.T. Example – Manna experience

N.T. Example – Matt. 6: *daily bread*

→Firstfruit giving says “I depend upon you alone”

b. God’s Principle re Provision

→Trust in God = Firstfruit Tithing

Abraham’s Example – Gen 14:20 →tithe to Melchizedek

Jacob’s Promise –→a tithe promised to God Gen. 28:22

Israel’s Commands –the first-born sons, the firstborn livestock Ex.

22:29

Occupation Practice – Lev. 23:10 →the firstfruit of harvest

Wisdom’s Advice – Prov.3:9 →first of all your produce

Christian Duty – Matt.6:33 →seek first kingdom of God

c. God’s Pattern of “Firstfruit Giving”:

→tithe = proportion,

→firstfruit = priority

→Our first in giving is our faith in living dependant upon God.

- Elijah fed by raven,

- disciples feeding 4000, 5000 and having baskets left over

d. God’s Promise re Provision

→God obligates Himself when His children obey Him and practice Firstfruit Faith.

→O.T. Promise: Prov 3:9-10 = barns full

→N.T. Promise Matt 6:33 = all needs met

God is a rewarder of faith, even when it is slow in coming.

He blesses Trust even when delayed by disobedience.

His blessing is not miserly but bountiful:

Mal. 3: 10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it

One of the greatest joys and confirmations of salvation is to experience dependence upon God for all.

Where do you look for provision?

3. Principle of Sacrifice = "Finding the N.T. Altar"

John 6:9, 11: *There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"... And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.*

Jesus fed five thousand men with a boy's lunch. The lad was willing to sacrifice the small meal he had. He was blessed to see God multiply the meal to feed the multitude.

i) The Picture of Sacrifice

Ecc 11:1 – cast thy bread upon the waters for thou shalt find it after many days

GOING WITHOUT = AN EXPRESSION OF FAITH IN GOD

ii) The Pattern of Sacrifice

Luke 18:29-30 There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

→self denial is the essence of the principle of sacrifice

I WILL GO WITHOUT THAT THE WORK OF GOD MAY GO ON

Examples: widow – Lu. 21:3

Barnabas – Acts 4:36

Macedonia saints – 2 Cor. 8:1-2

Christ – Matt 8:20

iii) Plan of Sacrifice

Where is the New Testament Altar?

→the sacrifice of our person -Rom12:1-→the sacrifice of our praise - Heb 13:15,

→the sacrifice of our possessions - Hb13:16

- to the work of the Lord – 2 Cor. 8:1-2

- to the needs of our brothers – 1 Jn 3:17

- to the needs of the defenceless – Jm1:27

- to the needs of the poor – Prov. 22:9

I SACRIFICE TO GOD MYSELF, MY PRAISE, MY VERY POSSESSIONS

iv) The Paradox of Sacrifice

Prov. 19:17: *He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, And He will pay back what he has given*

Security of Obligated Prosperity

Mar. 10:29-30: *there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, "who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—and in the age to come, eternal life.*

Security of Material Prosperity

Mr 9:41: *For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my nam..., he shall not lose his reward.*

Security of Eternal Prosperity

2 Cor. 9:10-11: *He who supplies seed to the sower.. , increase the fruits of your righteousness, while*

Security of Spiritual Prosperity

SACRIFICE IS THE PATH TO THE SECURITY OF ABUNDANT LIFE: THE MORE I SACRIFICE FOR GOD, THE GREATER MY SENSE OF SECURITY IN HIM

CONCLUSION

My Dad's counsel regarding stewardship was simple: "Put God first, live within your means and He will take care of you." This was a great summary of the Biblical Principles of Stewardship:

The first principle is the principle of Ownership: God owns everything. The Practice of Stewardship provides the Security of God's Peace.

The second is the principle of First Fruits: Give to God the tithe first. The Practice of Tithing provides the Security of God's Provision

The third principle is the principle of Sacrifice: The Practice of Denial provides the Security of God's Prosperity which brings spiritual prosperity, and sometimes financial prosperity for continued sacrificial giving. When you teach those things, perhaps God will move a whole church to do something like this.

I encourage you to look at all of these aspects of the church and ensure that they all are part of the church that you are a leader of. If God opens the

doors for additional ministries, praise God. However, usually the ministries that people tell me they do, usually fit in one of these five categories.

Student Question: *I have a testimony on the stewardship. I started to give to God first because before that, I know you have to. I encouraged others to give. Then there was a ceremony of marriage in our church where the marriage family gave everything you can see in this chapel now. This confirmed to us that when you start to give to God first, He will provide.*

Student Response: *We do not see this in the churches here, are we missing something?*

Prof. Response: *I have no real answer for this. I believe that God can just overwhelmed people so much with the joy of salvation, that they are willing to share everything in common. It was a special work of the Spirit of God to demonstrate how He moves people to give and to share.*

I look at this as God showing them that their faith in Him should free them from the desire to cling to possessions. This meant for them an understanding in their heart that ‘all they need is God,’ therefore, they spontaneously gave.

Is it possible for God to do this in churches today?

Student Response: *Yes.*

Prof. Response: *But from my perspective, I am not going to teach this as a necessity. I am going to teach what the Bible says about stewardship.*

We looked at Acts 2: 44-45, where it is stated they *had everything in common* and shared it according to the needs of everyone. In the church I pastored, it is true, not everyone sold all their possessions and had all things in common. But, there were continuing expressions like this. I have an illustration of a family in our church who was very poor. They lived in a very old home that was a fire-trap. They had 4 children of their own, yet they adopted 3 more children because they were not being properly cared for. Another man in our church came to me and said ‘We must do something for this family!’ I said; “Yes, why don’t you go and do it?”

He went out and got Christians in our church to come together and we built the man a new home. When we gave the poor man the keys to the new house, it was so significant that the local Radio and TV stations came to the presentation. They wanted to interview me, the pastor and I said ‘No, I’m not the one who started this, talk to that man there, he’s the one

who did this.” When they talked to him, he said we were just loving our brother in Christ.

There was another man in our church who got cancer. He had been building his house and could not complete it. Men in our church went and completed the house for him. A woman who was a neighbour to this sick man, came to visit our church. When she came in she said “Is this the church that built my sick neighbour’s house?” I said, “Yes it is.” She said, “Then this is the church I will attend.” She came to know Christ as Saviour just because our church built the house.

Also, we had a room in our church where people put clothes that their children had grown out of. We announce in the community, if you have need of clothes for your children and have no money, come to our church. We had people who would cook meals for older people who could not cook for themselves. Not everybody did this, but our church definitely became a church that was giving to the community as God had built into their hearts the desire to trust Him for everything. I want to emphasize that this had nothing to do with Pastor Earl Cooper. It was people being taught and willing to live the way God wants them to.

Student Question: There is a problem with the tithe giving to the church. To whom is the tithe to be given to?

In some churches here the pastor receives the money. It is a problem in our area.

Prof. Response: I cannot turn this class into our stewardship class. This class does relate to ecclesiology because we see in Acts 6 when the apostles had a problem distributing the food, they asked the church to choose men to look after this administration

The word that describes these men is the very word we get ‘deacon’ from. It teaches me that it is the church and the leadership of the church to lead the people how to distribute and use their resources. I believe this is why the churches in the NT had the plurality of elders and had deacons. It was not one man who had all the decisions. There was a man who was a member of my church in Canada who is now starting a church. He has now maybe 20 people attending where he where he is beginning this church. My wife and I attended to encourage him about a month ago. He never took up an offering. I asked him afterwards “Tim, you did not take up an offering. Is there anything I can do to give you money?” He said, ‘no, we are not a church yet. We have not got elders or deacons, so I am not going

to take money and deal with this myself. All the expenses of renting the building, buying hymn books, all of this he was paying for himself. I was very happy this was his attitude. You see there is this idea that the church has to be the deciding factor about resources. Are there questions?

Student Question:. How do we give sacrificially?

Prof. Response: *The simple answer is: Sacrificial giving is me going without something so God can have all I have. Probably when our brother was giving to this, he decided I am not going to buy new shoes, not going on a holiday, I do not know but he probably sacrificed something. I encourage you to get a copy of the devotion study in God Supplies, go through it and teach it.*

Please change the heading in your notes to ‘the fusion of the church.’ Fusion is the melting down of something to bring it together with something else. It is the joining of two things. I Changed this heading in your notes because the things I want to talk about now is the church being involved in fusion.

H. Fusion of the Church

When we talked about missions, the idea of missions boils down to witnessing. To be a witness is more than just the words that we speak. It is the responsibility of the church to witness in life as well as by lips. Therefore, God as He establishes the church, establishes a whole new relationship principles for the church. This true and new lifestyle is the way in which God’s truth works in the world to bring the world to that truth. Nuclear fusion is caused by heat.

Church fusion is also caused by heat. It is the heat that is caused by the friction of a life that is totally opposite to life in the world. When I live the way God wants me to, it rubs against the man who lives an ungodly life. That friction is for the purpose of drawing that individual into the new life in Christ. Witness is being salt in life. Our role in the world is to demonstrate the grace and glory of God in our life. We know that most of the ungodly world when they see this, will be offended. They will do what man has always sought to do, destroy God. Try to reduce God. Witnessing is the process of living our lives that creates friction in the world. Paul said it this way- they that chose to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. That is what witness is. It is this that becomes an integral part of God in our church.

We are nuclear reactors that where we go create radiation and heat. Most people will try to destroy it or run from it. But occasionally, a woman will see a different lifestyle where men gather together to build a house for a sick man. They will be drawn to that because it is unique. Witness is more than just the truth of carrying the message to the world. It is living a life that is not only separated from the world, but rubs the worlds against the fur. It should not then surprise us that to live the way God wants us to live is unpopular.

If you are working for a man and many other people are doing the same job as you, if you do that job to the glory of God, you are going to do it with integrity, with honesty and the other people who are doing the same job will not like this. 'who do you think you are? Are you trying to get the favour of the boss? You are working too hard you do not have to work that hard'. They are not going to enjoy this.

Do you see how it works? Your children in the public school system, the world's school system, would not join in the way children treat other children; children picking on the weak. Therefore, they will become the ones everyone picks on because they are different. That is the way it is. My children would come home from school and say: 'It is not fair.' I would say: "God never said it would be fair. He said He would be your strength and be your peace. Do not look for 'fair' in an unsaved world, God never guaranteed this.

My father was an auto mechanic. In Canada the automobiles were brought into a big garage for repair. Usually the people who owned the vehicle never went in to this big repair room. This big room was the domain of the mechanics who were men. You know what happens when men get together in their own domain. They start putting pictures up of naked women on the walls. Their language is bad, with cursing and terrible language. They tell stories that are indecent.

Then my father, a Christian, comes to work in the garage. He does not swear the way these men swear, he does not tell bad jokes. In the spot where he works there are no pictures of naked women although they are everywhere else. He quietly does his job very well. When I was a boy and I played on an ice hockey team. My father would bring me to play ice hockey every Saturday morning. I would walk to the arena from where he worked and then return after the game. Therefore, every Saturday morning during hockey season I would be in the garage environment for several hours.

My father prepared me for this. He said: ‘Son, when you come to where I work, you are going to see things that are not good and hear things that are not good. This is the way it is in the world where people do not love God.’ Do you know what I noticed? As I continued to go to the garage over time, things changed. My father never preached to anyone, but when they asked: “Why are you acting this way? Why are you not like us?,” Dad would share how he accepted Christ as Saviour. In time all the pictures of naked women came down, in time I never heard any more bad language. One Christian man had an influence in all the other men.

I cannot imagine what torment they gave him when he first came there to work, but his life affected them. There was one time when his boss said to him: “Take the odometer and turn it back so it does not show as many miles on this car for sale.” That way when the man sells the car he can get more money because it has low mileage. My father said: “No I will not do that. It is dishonest.” The man said: “I’m the boss, you will do this.” My father said: “I am a Christian I will not do this.” He was dismissed. He came home very early this day when we were home after school. All us children said “Dad, what are you doing home so early?” He said: “I have no job anymore.” “How will we eat? How will get clothes with no job?” He said “God will provide.”

That night he received a phone call. Another garage asked Dad to come work for them. The owner said: “I will pay you more than you were paid before.” Dad had a better job with more pay and he also had an opportunity in another garage to share Christ. It started all over for him, persecution and ridicule, but also the joy of living the way God wanted him to live. Our life is a witness. It creates friction, but friction often fuses the unbelieving world to God by obedience.

Your homework is to go back to the words in 1 Corinthians 11 and re-define what they mean to you.

CLASS 8

We are working on understanding on what I termed as the fusion of the church. This is the combined impact that the church has in the community and within itself. We talked about the idea of a witness of our lives which creates friction against the world’s lifestyle. We see that witness is a way in which the lifestyle draws the world to itself. I would also suggest that we have not only witness, but holiness as an active part of our witness.

That again is a part of what offends the world. Along with witness which is the friction that goes out into the world, we have also worship.

Worship is the collective body of believers joining together. And as we gather together, our lives fire the flame of passion for God together. The function of worship is really to respond to God's truth. If we are to understand what worship truly is, we are to understand how God's people show the work of God in their lives. That work is always in response to the revelation of God in our lives. We see through Scripture that worship is many things. It is singing together, you are singing with joy words of our hearts expressing the wonder of God in our lives.

There is complete study that is good to understand the proper worship of music in the church. We have the book of Psalms in our Bible. This was the hymn book for Israel. We cannot comment on the style of the music because we do not know it, but we can truly see the reflection of the words as we study the Psalms. Some words are just simple praise and glory to God, some words are testimonial of God's work in their life historically, some words are cries for help from God. This is all songs that Israel sang to God. These songs reflected the response of God working in their lives and reflecting His truth.

We are told in the NT that in the church the Word of God should be read privately and corporately. We know that in the OT, many times when the people gathered, they listened to God's Word as it was read. We also see that part of worship is prayer, corporate prayer comes in many methods. One man can be praying with others joining with their minds his words. The whole church can be gathered together with each one praying in his mind in silence. In my church we often broke into small groups and people were praying together out loud in these small groups.

I particularly enjoyed this because I could sit and listen to 5 or 6 groups. I could not hear their words but their voices rising up together brought joy to my heart. There is a whole study in the idea of what prayer is. A man named Elmer Bounds wrote 5 volumes on prayer. When I was a pastor, for 25 years I preached on prayer as much as all else combined.

Worship is the coming together with God's people. It should not result in the friction when we are in the world, but it should result in flames of holiness being kindled among us. Worship should be so meaningful to the believer that they would not want to miss worship. We define worship as a response to God's truth. In Ecclesiastes 5 we see that God calls his people to 'prepare' before they come into worship. I used to often talk about this

in my church. Because we had our worship on Sunday morning at 11:00, it followed our Sunday School classes. Nevertheless, even at 11:00 people would be coming in late. I could tell that they were scrambling, their appearance was often un-kept, the clothes of the children were not on properly, they were scrambling. I reminded them if they were anxious and scrambling coming in to worship, they could not worship properly very well. I encouraged them as a family, to rise earlier in the morning, get everything prepared and settled, then pause and quieten their hearts before coming into church.

We have witness: the fusion of our lives against the lives of the world. We have worship: the flaming of our hearts together in a passion for God. Then we have edification: building one another up in the faith. Even this is an expression of fusion energy toward one another is as the energy of 'building a building' as we worship together. When we work together, especially in Africa, we sweat. It is a labour. It is also a labour of energy together with one another as we build one another up.

We have talked about fellowship, or 'koinonia'. We saw in the essentials of the church in Acts 2, 'fellowship' was different than the what 'breaking of bread together' was. There are many ways in which we build one another up: teaching the Word of God builds us up, sharing testimony also builds us up. Testimony can be a part of worship, but it can also be a part of fellowship as we have a coffee or meet casually together. Just talking about the blessings of God in our lives can build up one another. We have 'exhortation,' the gift of the Spirit. I interpret this as the spiritual ability to counsel and encourage one another.

I take this idea of 'fusion,' as the heat of energy that binds people together; the witness is our life in friction against the worlds' standard. There will be some drawn because of this life, who become fused to the church: the fusion from worship as we flame the passion of God in our lives together; the energy of building one another up; the labour of encouraging one another and strengthening one another. You will not go in the Bible and find the words 'fusion of the church,' but the concepts are certainly there.

Prof. Question: Who can tell me without looking in the notes what the functions 2 for the church are according to Acts? There are five.

Student Response: -evangelization, -fellowship, -worship, -stewardship, -teaching

I. Government of the Church

1. Historical Evidence

We want now to look in our notes at some general information. We have information about the government of the church. From a historical perspective there are 4 types of government. Your notes are there, so I will not go into detail about these.

The first is papal. The Roman Catholic Church embraced this. It was a system where the “Pope” (ie. Latin ‘papa,’ meaning ‘Father’) is recognized by the Church as “The Supreme Head.” Under this system the church is divided up into geographical areas.

The second is Episcopalian, embraced by the Anglican Church of England. This was a system which, while rejecting the authority of a POPE, appointed Bishops to supervise the activities of the Church. While rejecting a pope but they still appoint bishops in districts.

The third is Presbyterian, adopted of course by the Presbyterian Church. This incorporates a “representative form of government recognizing the authority of duly-appointed “ELDERS” of Local Churches.

The fourth is Congregational, adopted by Baptist Churches and other “congregational” local assemblies. There are various kinds of congregational churches; some having a pastor who has all leadership authority, others having a group of pastors/elders who share authority. The key to the congregational system of church government is that decision making and final authority is a process that involves the congregation members.

There is much flexibility in the Scriptures. The key is to have a balance where leadership and membership is accountable to one another. The key ingredient is that Christ is the head of the church.

When you look at the Scriptures and you see God calling people to do His work, it is important to understand the three elements of this labour. There is clear RESPONSIBILITY. We saw this when Jesus Christ said he gave the ‘keys to the kingdom’ to the apostles to bring the message. In Matthew 28 he made very clear the defined labour this meant. It meant a process of what I called ‘Insemination,’ where evangelism is a continuing process of bringing people into the membership of a church. This resulted in the necessity to baptize them and ‘Instruct” them. It was the responsibility of the church to teach the whole counsel of God. The labour of carrying out the mission involves clearly defined responsibilities.

Secondly there is clear COMMENSURATE AUTHORITY. This means that the person given the responsibility is also given the authority to carry out the responsibility. When Jesus said that the church must be involved in evangelism and education, He did not say that evangelism had to be Saturday morning, the members going out and knocking on the doors in the community. The church is given the authority to determine how they are going to achieve the goal. This is what we mean by commensurate authority; the authority to determine the means by which you will carry out the responsibilities.

This method of government involves an appointed authority operating within the standards of God. For example: someone receives Christ as Saviour through evangelism, but the church does not hold a gun out and say “Now you will be baptized.” That is not a method God would approve. Commensurate authority is within the standards and guidelines of God, but within that standard, there is flexibility.

The third element is PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY. The individuals with responsibility always have a direction in which to be held accountable. When you examine the evidence of Acts and the pastoral epistles, you see that government involves these three things. You see that apostolic authority in the book of Acts was replaced by elder authority, as time passed. At the beginning of Acts it is the apostles, apostles, apostles. Then it is apostles and elders, apostles and elders, apostles and elders and at the end of Acts it is always elders, elders, elders. There is a transfer of this responsibility and authority of leadership in a church from apostles to elders.

I’m only talking about the authority for local church leadership. I am not saying the elders became the apostles. All through Acts and the Pastoral Epistles you also find church membership accountability in which the congregation approved of the decisions the leadership was recommending. You see this very early in the church clearly in Acts 6. The apostles were struggling with distributing the food that was given for the poor. This drew them away from ministering the Word and prayer. They went to the church and said, “Now this is not good. We suggest you select 6 men to carry on the work so we can focus on our responsibility.” The idea seemed good within the church. There was interaction. All agreed. When the 6 men were selected, the apostles approvingly presented them to the church.

When you look at this, you see clearly the responsibility, the authority and the accountability, even among the apostles. This is important for you

to understand. Write these words down: **THE CHURCH IS NOT A DEMOCRACY**. Practicality, the church does not make the decisions by the majority. Rather, the church approves of the leadership's direction by majority.

There is a term that used that we do not fully understand. It is translated in English 'ordain.' There are two NT words translated ordain: διατάσσω (diatasso) meaning to arrange, appoint, ordain, prescribe, give order, and καθίστημι (kathistemi) meaning to set, place, to set one over a thing, to appoint one to administer an office. The aspect of affirmation is expressed in each term. It could mean raising hands or laying hands on someone. It could mean raising your hand in a vote saying 'I agree.'

This 'ordaining' involve gathering together in the exercise of it. If I understand these three Scriptural elements: responsibility, authority, and accountability, correctly, I must conclusion that the congregational method/model of government is the Biblically accurate method. That is my personal opinion. This prevents one man being involved in determining all the direction of the church as the Roman Catholic Church does. That would also be true with the Anglican church method of bishops. This prevents the danger of one elder being involved in leading a church as the Presbyterian style could.

More importantly, congregational government gives ownership of ministry to the people, not just to the leadership. When you come to the Scriptures, you will see that the organizational framework was simple so the focus could be on the ministry. We already talked about a church that has low maintenance, not regarding the building maintenance, but regarding the hierarchy or the leadership of the church.

A lengthy order of accountability makes for much complication: the pope, then the cardinals, then the archbishops, then the bishops, the priests. This is a long list involving much work to keep it in order. Congregation government is simple, you have elders, you have the congregation. I see the deacons as part of the congregational authority which we will talk about later.

Let me give you a practical illustration of what "the church is not a democracy" means. What it means for the church to "not make decisions, but approves decisions:"

A church is growing and need to build a church building. They have to find a piece of property to build on. The leadership says: "Ok, people, chose a piece of property. We are going to do this democratically."

Many people of the church live on the west side of the village and many live on the east side of the village and some live on the south and others the north side.

What will happen if the church is going to make the decision democratically?

Division will occur. Some will say: "We want this property over here."

Others will say: "No, no, we want the property near us purchased."

Making decisions like that are divisive. Yes, it is democratic, but it do not work.

Now God's way: The church is guided by the leadership who have been supported in their decision by the faithful prayers of the congregation, to discern God's will. The leadership talks to people, prays to know God's will, and reaches a decision. We have two pieces of property, we think this one is the best one, tell us what you think. They are interacting with individuals, not persuading them, but informing them. They say 'please pray about this because we are going to make a recommendation and we want unity.

The business meeting comes and they say we have prayed about this much, we have a recommendation to make to you that we believe is the best location for the church. We talked to you individually and have given you information. We understand there are differences of opinion but we believe this recommendation will be the best. They make a recommendation and ask for church approval.

This method has given the ministry of the Spirit of God to work in the lives of people so they will understand what is the will of God. There is a confidence that God will lead a church providing the people are walking with the Lord. Now you see why the function of communion (the Lord's Table) to give testimony to church unity on a continuing basis is very important. If a local church does not deal with bad relationships in the church on a continuing basis, then you are going to have many people in the church who are not walking in the Spirit. They will not be able to sense the Spirit direction and the decision will not be Spirit led.

2. Biblical Evidence

You see in Scripture the simplicity of the organization which allowed for the continuing of the work. There is a long list from Acts of the things that were continuing. All of these things continued with power and blessing from God:

They were preaching (Acts 2:14-36; 8:4)
 They were baptizing (Acts 2: 38,41)
 They were joining (Acts 2: 41, 47)
 They were teaching (Acts 2:42)
 They were fellowshiping (Acts 2:42}
 They were communing (Acts 2:42,46)
 They were praying (Acts 2:42; 4:31)
 They were sharing (Acts 2:44-45; 4: 32-37)
 They were worshipping (Acts 2:46)

I also have a list of activities in Scriptures other than Acts that give evidence of church organization:

Regular Meeting Times (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10)
 Membership Roles (Acts 2:47; I Cor. 5:12; I Tim. 5:9)
 Financial System (I Cor. 16:1-3; 2 Cor. 8-9)
 Church Officers (Phil. 1:1; I Timothy 3)
 Church Elections (Acts 6:5-6)
 Church Disciplinary Standards (I Cor. 5:1-8, I Timothy 1: 19-20)
 Church Ordinances (Acts 2; I Corinthians 11)
 Church Standards! Practices (I Cor. 7:17; 14:33)
 Church Letters Of ‘Commendation’ (Acts 18:24-28)

All these things suggest there is a structure of organization involved in local churches.

Student Question: How do you present to our churches the proper way of decision for church property.

Prof. Response: I cannot give you one Bible verse that talks about what is the exact right way of this kind of decision. Everywhere I look in NT Scripture you find leadership leading, not demanding. In my opinion, any other kind of approach is irresponsible for leadership. It creates the potential for division. There were some matters in the church I pastored that we dealt with a little differently. For example, we built a new church. There had to be a choice of what colour to paint the walls and what colour the carpet would be? The leaders recognized professional people in the church who were interior decorations. We made the recommendation that these people be put in charge of this task. The church agreed. We said: “If you want to talk to them about your ideas, go ahead, but they will make the decision. I am sure there were some that were not happy

with the choices they made, but we never voted on the approval of the carpet or the paint colours

I think it is dangerous to give more than one choice for a church to vote on. It does not mean they will always approve. That was not a threat to us as elders. We believed the Spirit of God was leading and sometimes the church members are wiser than the elders. We did not make an issue if a recommendation that was denied, although it rarely happened. But when it did, we would go back to the drawing board and make a better recommendation. In areas of doctrine and discipline, there was no church voting. The church did approve of a statement of faith, but it was something that was taught and no one rejected this.

3. Biblical Overview

a) Divine Headship

We have a brief overview of the organization of a church. We see it begins with Divine Headship. In other words, Christ is the head of the church. He exercises that headship through the word of God and the leading of the Spirit of God. That is why it is so important to have an assembly that is walking in the Lord. As leaders you are relying on the Spirit of God to lead through the congregation as you bring direction. That the input of the congregation in approval is a confirmation of the Spirit's leading. To the leadership and to the congregation this is a confirmation that Christ is the head of the church because the Spirit is leading all.

b. Human Leadership

When it comes to the Human Leadership responsibilities being carried out, the authority lies in three areas: Pastors or elders, Deacons, Congregation. The heart of this Human Leadership must be servanthood.

i) The Heart of Leadership Positions

Our model is Christ. Our Lord Himself expressed the very heart of leadership position as the very Son of God, wholly righteous, without sin, God in the flesh. Yet where did He spend His time? Among the sick, among the dead. He spent His time on earth among those base things that were completely contrary to everything that He as God was. He was identified with the poor and the homeless. He washed the disciples' feet as an expression of absolute surrender and humility to the will of God. He was a servant.

Mark 10:45: *For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."*

Phil. 2:3-4: *[Let] nothing [be done] through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

From the Pastoral Epistles it is clear that there are TWO Biblical positions commonly referred to as church offices. They are elders (bishops) and deacons

ii) The Distinctive of Leadership Positions

Elders

As I read and study and understand Scripture, I believe there are two biblical positions commonly referred to as church officers, two. The first one that I will talk about is elders. There are actually 3 terms used that reflect this one office. We have the term ‘elder’, ‘bishop/overseer’—I say those 2 words because that is the way they are translated in English, and then the word ‘pastor’. I suggest to you this is one office in which the terms reflect different ideas about the office.

Elder emphasizes the idea of maturity and dignity. I suggest that is the proper name for the office. The name was taken from the elders in the synagogues. It was a name reflected the position of leadership. In Ghana among the Ewe people, they have the word ‘Togby.’ In my class there was Togby Emmanuel, Togby Frank, and Togby Steven. I continued to call these people by ‘Togby.’

Then someone said to me: “Dr. Cooper, Togby means chief.” Each tribe had a ‘Togby’ position that I was calling these men by. In this society among the Jewish people in the time of the church, ‘elder’ was the name of this ‘chief’ position. Society always required the person in this position to be mature, dignified, and respected. That is exactly what Togby meant in Ewe, a mature man.

There is also in the NT, the word ἐπισκοπή (episcopē) translated in English ‘bishop or overseer.’ This term emphasizes the idea of the oversight of a superintending or ruling officer. I see this term as describing the job, or the responsibility of the elder. ‘Bishop’ certainly shows the job is to superintend or rule, but there is another word which is ‘pastor’. This is the word ‘shepherd’ in Greek. This emphasizes the relationships between the individual and the people. He’s the one who cares, he’s the one who leads, he’s the one who protects. I call this the name or the term of endearment. This reflects the position and not the job, what the person means to the church people. In the NT the term elder is the most used word for pastor or bishop of a local church

As a leader in the church in Canada, only one man called me ‘bishop’. He did this to tease me. I was ordained as a pastor, or an elder. Occasionally someone would call me reverend but I shuttered at that term, because reverent is to be holy, lifted up. I knew that this did not match me. Occasionally, because of my education, some would call me ‘Doctor.’ Nevertheless, the name that I enjoyed the most was ‘pastor.’ To me it said what I meant to our church members.

Your homework is to defend your position on the 3 terms: elder, bishop, pastor. If you believe these terms reflect distinct and different offices, I want you to prove this by Scripture. If you believe these terms reflect one office, I want you to prove this from Scripture. Your answer will not be judged as right or wrong, but I want you to be able to defend your position. I think there is enough different denominations represented here, there will be some difference.

Qualifications for an Elder

In the notes that follow we talk about the qualifications for an elder determined from Scripture: They are found in: 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4. I have not elaborated these because you will be taking a course on the Pastoral Epistles and you will be given details regarding the qualifications there. There are excellent books in the library that deal with the Pastoral Epistles. The best thing to do is to study the Scripture, get a dictionary out and study these passages yourself.

I have also gone to the Scriptures to determine the idea of the responsibility of the elder. I actually did this section that is next for our church when I was a pastor. As our church grew it became necessary for us to add staff to our church. It was therefore important for the leadership, the elders of our church to teach our people whose responsibility it was to do certain things as volunteer staff and paid staff. As indicated above, Elders are responsible to lead the church . They do this by directing, managing, shepherding, teaching, and modeling.

Elders are also responsible for equipping the church. They do this by preparing the people, by modeling, and again by teaching. They are also responsible to protect the church. They do this by watching over the church, by warning wayward individual of the church, by helping those who are weak, by teaching, by serving. You notice in every one of these areas there is teaching required. If I were to re-write these notes, I would put teaching at the top. God will not hold people responsible until they are taught, and understand. There is much more that could be said regarding

how to do these things; how to plan with goals in mind, how to establish responsibilities and job objectives, how to lead a meeting. These things are more practical however, we have no time to cover this in class. I encourage you to avail yourself of the “Pastoral” books in your library as well as those I have supplied to you.

Student Question: Can you share about ordaining pastors?

Prof. Response: This is one of those questions where I believe the local church has to make the decision. It really depends on your understanding of ordination. It is one of those things it is difficult to make clear because the word is vague in terms of how it is used. The word can just mean ‘raise their hands in agreement.’ It does not explain why they raised their hands. Was it a vote, was it laying on hands? I believe that God leaves unexplained these kinds of things to allow for flexibility. In our church, I’m not saying this is the right way, but we saw the ordination and appointment of elders as a confirmation of their call of God in their lives. I do believe, from 1 Tim 3, that elders are called to this position. It says: “If a man desire the office of a bishop.” I believe that desire is a God-given desire within oneself.

It is not a desire that is self-motivated for power, but a strong moving of the heart to be involved in teaching, leading, etc.. Perhaps this is my conviction because it was my experience. In our church, we taught that the recognition of an elder was a life-time appointment. That is not necessarily the right way and sometimes it is not the good way. There are dangers for this, but also blessings. How a church operates and organizes is part of the leadership and the congregation working together for God has for them.

I can say this, that because I believe I was called to be a pastor, I struggled to leave that position to become a professor. You call me pastor and I appreciate this, but technically I am not a pastor. I am not now appointed as a leader of a congregation. God had to use 2 Tim. 2:2 to move me into that position, I believe that calling is a life-time calling. However, God convinced me that he no longer wanted me to feed the flock, but feed the shepherds of the flock. Because I believe the gift God has given me is teaching, I know I am still exercising my spiritual gift.

Student Question: First, what is the difference between ‘reverend’ and ‘pastor’? Second, you say the calling of the pastor is a lifetime call, if I am tired, is it not possible to be replaced by a younger guy?

Prof. Response: The first question: 'reverend' in America is a leader of a church who has the right and authority to perform a marriage. This right is granted when a religious group officially recognizes by appointment its leadership. Among Baptist denominations, that official appointment is called 'ordination.' The government had to come up with some kind of name or term to identify the difference between those who are officially ordained and those who are just leaders of a group. Because it always dealt with in religious groups, they chose the term 'reverend' because it speaks of one who is holy, who is high. It is an entirely secular term giving identity to one who has the right to marry. So, if you go to America and open up the telephone book you will find many with the name "Reverend... and their name. Unfortunately, this has become a point of pride. However, it is totally unbiblical. When the government sends me mail, they send it to "Rev. Earl Cooper." I do not like this, even though it has nothing to do with the Bible.

The second question was 'what happens if a pastor's health fails?' The Bible says: "It is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment." Failing health is a part of life. To realize that we will never be able to carry on our job always is important. If you cannot physically carry on the task, it is a burden. But it does become necessary to resign, or be replaced from that position. At that point the church must decide what to do. In my opinion it is not up to him to appoint another pastor, the church will do this.

In America, the goal of many is to retire early and enjoy available pleasures. You can have all the time for yourself. People plan when they begin their job, to retire as early as 40 or 45 years of age. The legal age for retirement in Canada to receive a pension is 65. Nevertheless, you can legally retire at any age. My brother was a school teacher for years and retired at 55. When I'm asked 'When are you going to retire?' My answer is always the same: 'I have no plans to retire as long as God gives me health.'" To me the discontinuation of ministry is either lost health or sudden death.

Deacons

We want to talk about deacons. As I understand the office of deacon, it is distinct from elders. Elders are responsible to SERVE IN LEADERSHIP, whereas deacons are responsible to SERVE IN ADMINISTRATION. The English word deacon is a transliteration of the NT term διακονέω (diakoneo). The term means to serve, to minister, or to

be a helper. In 1 Timothy 3 we see elders or bishops being dealt with in the first part of the chapter, and then we see deacons being dealt with. Paul in that passage gives the qualifications for elders and deacons. They are similar but there are some distinct differences in the qualifications. Again, this is something for you to do a personal study on. I will tell you this that the first indication of the idea of a deacon comes from Acts 6. I do not think this is in your notes so you might want to put it down here.

Now because the word just means 'to serve' the Bible does not give specific job descriptions. There are hints about this. In Acts 6 as I explained, the church selected 6 men to distribute the food evenly and justly. You can see that their job was not one of leadership but one of administration. In the Scriptures it seems that the deacons are not defined by how they serve, by their job responsibility, they are just called 'ones who serve' but according to 1 Timothy 3, it is an official office.

Again I say it is entirely up to the local church to determine the function of the deacons. In my opinion anyone who serves the church could be called a deacon. But, there is the office of the deacon, which is an appointed administrator to carry out the administration of the church. There are differences of opinion regarding 1 Tim. 3 but I see room even for women to serve as deaconesses. I do not see deacons as the spiritual leaders of the church, that is for elders who, according to the text, must be male. However, deacons that carry out administrative responsibilities can be women because they are not spiritually over the church.

In America most Baptist churches have deacons as a 'board of authority.' Sometimes the pastor is in charge of this board, sometimes the board tells the pastor what to do. In my opinion there is no good model in America. It is the church that has to make this decision. In our my in Canada we changed the organizational structure from a deacon's led to an elder led church. I have not given you a lot of information about deacons because in the NT term 'deacon' there is very little 'job specific' information in the Scripture. Nevertheless, it is the second office in the local church according to 1 Timothy 3 and Philippians 1 which lists elders (bishop) and deacons..

1 Tim. 3:2: *A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach...*

1 Tim. 3:8: *Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money...*

Php. 1:1: *Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:*

We have looked then at the organizational structure with its flexibility from the Scriptures. Our overview defines that Christ is the head of the church. Whatever organizational structure that is chosen, this should always be the primary purpose: to create an environment in which the Spirit of God is leading the church on behalf of the Son of God. Where within the leading of the Spirit of God there is clear responsibility, commensurate authority, and personal accountability. This assuring that there is a leading, and a confirmation of leading.

We have not dealt with the issue of the role of women in the leadership of the church. This has become a controversial issue in many countries, especially among the evangelical, conservative churches. I have no struggle in understanding what the Scriptures say. I believe the spiritual leaders are elders according to what the Scriptures teach. It was the elders that replaced the apostles in the local church authority. In 1 Timothy 3 it says ‘If a man desires the office of bishop....’ Paul also said, “Let not a woman teach nor usurp authority over a man in the church.” (1 Tim. 2:12).

I have no problem with women carrying out administrative responsibilities. Our church with a large Sunday School organization had a woman superintendent who looked after this. She was a professional teacher and did an excellent job. God blessed her. She had no spiritual authority yet she was a mature believer who was respected by all.

Student Question: *If in the Bible the apostles were replaced by elders in the church, where are prophets now?*

Prof. Response: *It will depend on how you understand what a prophet is. There are those who say anyone who preaches or teaches, is a prophet. If that is how you understand what a prophet is, you could say prophets are the people who are preaching the Word.*

I do not believe that is the proper definition of a prophet. I believe in the OT and in the NT, the gift of prophet was to declare the ‘Revelation of God.’ As such, the OT Scriptures came to an end with the last word in the book of Malachi, so there are no OT prophets giving revelation after Malachi. In the NT, we have the gift of prophecy until we have the completion of the NT Scriptures. Therefore, when the Scriptures consisting of the 66 Books were completed, prophecy ceased. That is exactly what Paul says in 1 Corinthians:

1 Cor. 13:9-10: For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. The word καταργέω (katargeo) translated 'done away' means 'to render idle or unemployed, to cause to cease. Therefore, Paul tells us in Ephesians that the foundation of the church is apostles and prophets. (Eph. 2:20). We know there is only one foundation to a building and after the foundation is laid the building grows.

Student Response: I do not understand 1 Corinthians 13 when Paul said the prophecy will cease. Does it mean that prophecy is fulfilled or that prophecy no longer exists?

Prof. Response: Neither one of your alternatives are correct. 'Cease' means prophecy or revelation will be completed, that all the revelation of God that he chooses to give us as the inspired Scripture is ended. When John gave us the last words of the book of Revelation prophecy ceased. Because prophecy, according to the Scriptures as I understand it, is not predicting the future, it is giving us the Word of God directly from God through His chosen writers. Not all of spoken prophecy became inspired Scripture, but God completed His written revelation when He completed his inspired Scripture.

Student Response: I do not agree that prophecy does not mean to predict the future

Prof. Response: Yes, prophecy does contain predictions as revealed truth, but prophecy is not just prediction. Prophecy is all revealed truth including prediction, including teaching, including facts. Only about 25% of 'prophecy' or 'the written Word of God' is prediction.

CLASS 9

As church history continues there are always other issues to be dealt with. Sometimes these issues define the level of fellowship or cooperation between local churches. For example, as a pastor in Canada, there were churches in my town that held to all the fundamental doctrines, but we still did not work with them for reasons of practice. For example, there were churches that ordained women and we were uncomfortable to work with them because we did not see this as Biblical. There were churches that practiced a level of charismatic expression that we were uncomfortable with. Such situations teach us that no matter how the church works at defining doctrine, Satan always twists things and makes things more diffi-

cult. I suggest to you that every local church must determine its own principles and practices of cooperation or union with other churches. Following, I offer a suggested guideline in determining fellowship between local churches:

J. Levels of Fellowship between local churches

Each church must define and work out the practical implications of fellowship levels for itself with care:

Level 1: Friendship. This involves all who are born again. The criteria is Salvation.

Level 2: Fellowship. This involves all who are born again and hold to a separated life in godliness. The criteria is salvation and a common lifestyle of Godly values.

Level 3: Co-operation This involves all who are born again, hold to a separated life in godliness, and common social aids. The criteria is salvation and a common lifestyle of Godly values, with common Christian practices and humanitarian ministries.

Level 4: Union. This involves all who are born again, hold to a separated life in godliness, and common social aids and are united doctrinal unity. in the Bible Doctrines.. The criteria is salvation and a common lifestyle of Godly values, with common Christian practices, humanitarian ministries, and one in the Bible Doctrines.

III. THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

We want to look now at some of the issues relating to the church in terms of its beginning. I know we have in our class those who are reform and those who are dispensationalists. Therefore, we will deal with it in terms of how I see Scripture. I have the highest respect for my reform brethren but I do not agree with them in this area. If you go to the list of the books that I scanned for you, there is a book worth reading. The book is called *There Really is a Difference* by Showers. I recommended this to many people attending our church who were reform. It was very helpful for them to understand where our church stood. This book clearly demonstrates the difference between the Church and Israel even though most of church history has assumed that Israel and church are the same, the church being the ‘New Israel.’ The assumption has been the church started with Abraham. I deal with this issue because it has broader issues relate to it.

A. The time the church began

1. Covenant Theology declares that the Church began during Old Testament times.

2. Dispensational Theology declares that the Church did not begin until the Day of Pentecost of Acts 2. Thus the Church did not exist in Old Testament times.

The relationship between law and grace is one of the implications that arise, due to believing whether or not the church was in the OT. I have to tell you that in all of the body of Christendom, there are more reform churches than dispensational churches. We begin by looking at the time the church began. Covenant theology demands that the church began in the OT time. Whereas dispensational theology declares the church did not begin until Pentecost in Acts 2.

B. The major theological positions of the Church

1. Covenant Theology asserts that the Church is the continuing covenanted community of God's people throughout history.

i) It consists of all people who have had the Covenant of Grace relationship with God regardless of the period of history in which they have lived.

ii) Israel and the Church are the same.

iii) One general resurrection of dead saints at one time

2. Dispensational Theology asserts that the Church consists only of those saved people who live between the Day of Pentecost of Acts 2 and the Rapture of the Church from the earth.

i) It consists of a distinctive group of saints namely, those saints who are baptized with the Spirit

ii) Israel and the Church are not the same. There are distinctions between group of saints throughout history (Old Testament saints, Church saints, Tribulation saints, Millennial saints).

iii) There will be more than one resurrection of dead saints at different times of history, not just one general resurrection of saints.

Covenant theology asserts that the church is the continuation of God's people: Israel. In other words, Israel was the church of the OT, and now the church, defined as the body of Christ consisting of the born again believers, is now Israel continued. Whereas dispensational theology asserts that the church, the body of Christ consists of only the saved people between Pentecost and the Rapture of the church and Israel as a nation still has a future redemption and ministry.

C. Seven evidences that the Church did not exist in Old Testament times but began at Pentecost

1. The Church was not formed apart from the baptism with the Spirit,

and Spirit baptism did not begin until the Day of Pentecost.

i) Paul declared that the body of Christ is the Church.

There was a mystery presented to the church, a mystery that only God knows and reveals in His time. Paul was given this mystery to declare to NT people. Paul declares that the body of Christ is the church.

ii) In 1 Corinthians 12:13 he indicated that all believers in Christ (Jew and Gentile alike) are placed into the body of Christ through Spirit Baptism

1 Cor. 12:13: *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free...*

iii) The language of Jesus' statement implied that Spirit baptism had not yet begun historically and would not begin until a few days after His ascension.

If we go back to the resurrection of Christ before Pentecost, we see the language of Jesus pronouncing something unique is going to take place. That particular truth focused on the ministry of the Spirit of God that He promised. I can assure you that the people who heard him talk in Acts 1:8, they understood it would be Pentecost. It even fits to understand this is the pictures of the feasts that Israel had because after Passover was Pentecost.

Summary: First, since Spirit Baptism is necessary for the formation of the Church, and since Spirit Baptism did not begin until the Day of Pentecost, the Church did not begin historically until the Day of Pentecost. Second, on the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit began a new ministry to believers in Jesus Christ, which Old Testament believers did not have.

2. The Church did not begin until Pentecost is Peter's assertion that something new began when the believers were baptized with the Spirit on Pentecost

i) Jesus' promise concerning Spirit Baptism was fulfilled when the Spirit fell on the Jewish believers at Pentecost.

ii) The Baptism of the Spirit on Pentecost took inaugurated something new.

Passover was the celebration of redemption in the blood. Pentecost was a celebration of new life. Even the OT feasts anticipated Pentecost to be a unique day. Since Spirit Baptism is necessary for the foundation of the body and the body defines the church, and the Holy Spirit did not come upon the church in a new way until Pentecost, we assert that the Pentecost of Acts 2 is when the church began.

3. The Church beginning in Acts 2 is Paul's teaching concerning "the

mystery.”

i) The specific body of divine knowledge which Paul called “the mystery” in Ephesians 3, was the revelation that there would be a period of time in which believing Gentiles would be heirs of God’s blessings, equal members of the same body, and equal partakers of God’s promise in Christ with believing Jews.

ii) This teaching of Paul concerning the Ephesians 3 mystery leads to several conclusions:

#1 Man knew nothing about the Church until the time of the apostles and new Testament prophets.

#2 The Church did not exist before that time

#3 The Old Testament contained no revelation concerning the Church.

#4 The Church was not formed until the time of the apostles and New Testament prophets.

In summary, Man knew nothing about the church until the time when the apostles and the NT prophets. Therefore, the OT prophets knew nothing, the church did not exist back then. The OT has no revelation, no prophecy that concerns the church. If this is only NT truth, then it is only for NT time.

4. The Church could not exist until after the death of Christ.

Eph. 2:4-6: *But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*

i) They clearly indicate that the uniting of Jew and Gentile together as equals to form one new man, one body, was the result of Jesus shedding His blood or dying on the cross.

ii) A comparison of these statements with Paul’s statements in Ephesians 3:6 and Colossians 1:18,24 makes it obvious that the one body of Ephesians 2:16 is the Church.

iii) The Church was formed as a result of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection.

iv) In the statements of Ephesians 2:12-16 Paul was emphasizing the situation of Gentiles after the death of Christ in contrast with their situa-

tion before His death:

Eph. 2:12-16: *being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise... now in Christ ...have been brought near by the blood of Christ... that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.*

v) Paul described the union of Jew and Gentile as “one new man.

Eph. 2:15: *so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,*

5. The Church could not exist before the apostles and New Testament prophets,

i) Ephesians 2: The metaphor of a building

Eph. 2:19-22: *having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

ii) Four things should be noted concerning this metaphor

#1 Since the Church consists of its members, and since the members are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, then Paul was indicating that the Church itself is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets

#2 Paul pointed out that just as a building has a foundation and superstructure, so the Church has a foundation and superstructure. The Church’s foundation consists of the apostles and prophets, and its superstructure consists of other Church saints.

#3 The prophets who together with the apostles, make up the foundation of the Church are New Testament prophets, not Old Testament prophets.

#4 Since a building cannot be built without a foundation, and since the Church’s foundation consists of the apostles and New Testament prophets, then the Church could not have been built before the time of the apostles and New Testament prophets.

By summary, the metaphor as we look at that passage looks at the building, Paul made it clear that Christ is the cornerstone and the prophets are the foundation. Then he says ‘be careful how you build upon the foundation’. We see that the metaphor necessitates the building being built on the apostles and prophets and that means it must be NT.

6. At Pentecost the Church began as Jesus promised in Matthew 16:18 “I will build my church.”

This text takes us back to what we talked about regarding the key of Peter's statement. That statement is '*thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God*'. That necessitated a declaration after Christ had come. The other thing that Paul emphasizes in his text is the word 'new'. When I teach my course on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the first half talks about all the things we have new by the Spirit.

7. The Church could not exist until after Christ's ascension.

i) Paul taught that God gave Christ the position of Head to the Church in conjunction with Christ's being seated at God's right hand after His ascension to Heaven.

Eph. 1:20-23: *which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

ii) Paul indicated that with Jesus' ascension to Heaven, He gave spiritual gifts to the church so that the body of Christ

Eph. 4:8, 11-12: *Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." ... 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,*

We are taught in Ephesians that it was on his resurrection that Jesus Christ was made the head of the church. I give you these texts to indicate why I see the church not in the OT. These are basically facts about the church as revealed in the NT.

D. Seven evidences that Israel and the Church are not the same

1. Old Testament Israel was a nation in the technical sense of that term, but the New Testament Church is not a nation in the technical sense

Now I want to share that Israel could not be the church, facts about Israel in the OT. The first is the nature of Israel in the OT as being a nation as opposed to being a body of believers. In this regard Israel had a different purpose although it was a light to the Gentile nations. Israel truly was the model to the world of a theocracy, a national theocracy in which an entire nation is guided and overseen by God Himself. Although the church is part of a kingdom, I suggest the church is the first people of the coming

kingdom. However, there's no way anyone can say the church is a true nation.

2. Old Testament Israel was the people of God through its Mosaic Covenant

relationship with Him, it rejected Christ, just as God has forewarned the nation that it

would. By contrast the New Testament Church received Christ

It was Israel that rejected Christ in his fulfillment of that covenant in being the Messiah. There is a distinction between the believers within Israel called the 'remnant' and the nation of Israeli unbelievers who, under the body of Israel's leadership, rejected Christ. John would not even baptize them because they would not repent. In the context of Israel rejecting Christ, there was a demarcation; a separation between what God was doing, and what God intended to do, because they rejected. It is hard to imagine the NT church as the continuation of an OT church because the house was divided. Jesus stated that a house divided cannot stand.

3. Old Testament Israel was the original persecutor of the New Testament Church

Even a casual reading of the book of Acts reveals the deep animosity and consequential persecution of the believers in Christ by the Jewish religious leaders.

4. As long as a Gentile remained a Gentile, he was excluded from membership in Israel.

Within the Jewish mindset and practiced religion, if a Gentile proselyte remained a Gentile, he could not be part of the OT Israeli worship. Whereas, in the NT church a Gentile not only could continue to be Gentile, but was encouraged to do so. Therefore, this division involved not just doctrine, but persecution.

5. Old Testament Israel as a nation had both believers and unbelievers under the Mosaic Covenant

We mentioned this before, in the OT Israeli system there was definitely believers and unbelievers together. There was a time when Elijah thought he was the only believer. God said to him, there are 6000 who have not bowed the knee. We use the word 'a remnant' within Israel who were truly believers. Everything in the NT speaks of the true church being a regenerate church, the New Testament Church consists only of saved or regenerated members. In the OT whether saved or lost, the law was binding if you were an Israelite. However, in the NT church we see the contrast between

the true believer and the ‘tares’ or ‘leaven’ of false believers who were not a part of the true church.

6. The Scriptures never called the saved Jews of Old Testament Israel the Church of God.

When we talk about the term ‘church,’ the Scriptures never called the ‘saved Jews’ of the OT the church of God. The word ‘assembly’ is used, but it was just the gathering of the nation Israel, it had nothing to do with the church of God. However, in the NT we see that both Jews and Gentiles who were saved are called the church of God.

7. In Romans, the Apostle Paul teaches that God temporarily removed Israel from the place of blessing because of their unbelief and disobedience.

The discourse that Paul gives us in Romans is an excellent defense of grace. As much as Paul teaches that the OT people were blessed by Him, we see he teaches that God removed it temporarily from the place of blessing because of their own belief. In the same context he says that Israel will be restored to belief.

Rom. 11:25-26: *blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved,*

This is one of the strongest reasons that I cannot see Israel as the church. Even in the OT, especially the Minor Prophets, the promise of restored Israel is repeated over and over again. That puts it outside of the term ‘church,’ Israel is not the NT church of God. Those that are Jewish believers now become a part of the body of Christ, distinct from unbelieving Israel. We are taught in the NT that 7 years of tribulation will take place before Israel repents and acknowledges as a nation that Christ is their Saviour Messiah.

I have given seven reasons why the church is not a continuation of Israel, and I’ve given seven reasons why Israel is not continued in the church. Do you have any questions?

Student Question: With this issue of what is taught when Christ will come, what about unbelievers that are said to be waiting to accept Christ because they know this information.

Prof. Response: Well, the term ‘waiting’ in Scriptures is for believers. Believers wait upon the Lord, for He is our strength, He is our hope. I cannot think of a passage with the word ‘waiting’ relating to unbelievers who are waiting. Nowhere in Scripture does it say: “If I wait long enough then it

will happen, he will come and I will believe.’ God says ‘today is the day of salvation’.

Student Response: *For my Jewish friends to be restored I am just saying that after the 7 years of tribulation they will be restored. That is what I am asking...*

Prof. Response: *Yes, that is true, they will be restored. Those who believe at that time, not those who are not believing. You must respect ‘today is the day of salvation.’*

Student Question: *I want to know if Israel continue to worship God according to the sacrifices?*

Prof. Response: *As far as I know, there are orthodox Jews today who do. There are also very liberal Jewish people. Where I live, I have a neighbor who is a liberal Jewish believer. When I say ‘believer’ I mean he says there’s a God and Israel is God’s people.’ However, he does not worship, he has no contact with the synagogue, he probably does not believe in a coming Messiah because most Jewish Liberals think the Isaiah and other OT passages of Messiah’s suffering spoke of the nation Israel’s suffering. He is Jewish by name only. I have other Jewish neighbors who is very orthodox. They go to the synagogue, go to all the ceremonies, they believe that Israel is still the people of God. They are still waiting for the Messiah.*

Student Question: *If they do not repent now, what will happen to them at the coming of Jesus Christ?*

Prof. Response: *The same as any unsaved person: eternal damnation!*

Translator: *They somehow have the idea that “restoring” means ‘second chance’*

Prof. Response: *This is why the NT church is so specific. Jesus said there is no other name given among men whereby you must be saved. Jesus said “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no man comes to the father but by me.”*

There really is no difference between the unbelieving in the OT and the unbelieving today. Paul distinguished the NT church by saying we are the true circumcised. Physical circumcision, which was the sign of the covenant in the OT meant nothing toward salvation, unless it was a personal ‘sign of belief’ in the provision of God through His covenant. Nevertheless, Israel just made it sign for being an Israelite. Paul says we are the true circumcised because we have been circumcised in our heart.

Unbelieving Israel in the OT was no different from the pagan nations. They did not believe. From the Bible perspective, there are only two kinds of people since Adam: the unbelieving line of Cain and the believing line of Seth. In our dispensational understanding we see that God deals with people in different times and in different ways according to His divine purposes.

The challenge within these two theological positions: Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology, is to understand where law and grace fit. Please understand that there are elements of both Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology that preach the true gospel and there are elements in both Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology that do not preach the true gospel. We are not necessarily talking about the difference between the truth of the gospel and liberalism's works salvation. I'm trying to be honest about what the Scriptures teach. We have to deal with the church being a new entity and the role of the church in terms of law. Because believing Israel had a relationship through the law, we are told that Christ came to fulfill the law. We have to look at this and ask: "What does the law mean to us now and today?"

E. The Relationship of the Christian to Law and Grace

1. Although the Mosaic Law had three aspects (civil, ceremonial, and moral), it functioned as an indivisible unit.

The first thing we must realize is that the Mosaic Law had three aspects. The CIVIL LAW, remember it is a nation. They had to establish civil law to establish how a nation acts toward its people? Second was THE CEREMONIAL LAW that dealt with its worship; the sacrifices and the role of the priests. This was a very detailed expression of law as you will see when you read Leviticus. Third what we call THE MORAL LAW. Which included the 10 commandments, giving the moral standards of God. The thing to see is that in OT Scripture, these three aspects are never separated. The understanding of the mind of the Jewish people did not make a distinction between the Ten Commandments, the moral law, and the ceremonial law or the civil law. Paul uses this understanding to help illustrate the role of the law and grace in our lives.

2 Three evidences that the Mosaic Law was an indivisible unit
Gal. 3:10: *For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."*

Paul says ‘cursed is anyone who does not continue *all things that are written in the law*’. He says ‘all things’ and he says ‘the book of the law.’ In this statement there can be no separation between civil, ceremonial and moral.

Gal. 5:3: *And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.*

Again Paul says ‘if you are circumcised, (in other words, if you become a Jew), you are a debtor to the whole Law’. There is an obligation even for the Gentile, who became by choice a Jew, to accept the whole law; civil, moral, ceremonial.

Jam. 2:10: *For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.*

James declares if you break one part of the law, you break the whole law, there is no division. You must get this in your mind. This is foundational to understanding how grace works in our life. It is wrong to teach that we are just under the moral law of God, because you cannot separate that from the civil law of God.

3. Evidence that Christians are not under the Mosaic Law.

Several Scriptures indicate that Christians are not under the Mosaic Law : Rom. 6.14-15, Rom. 7:4, 6, Gal.2:19, 3:19; 5:18, Rom.8:3-4,14; Gal. 5:18, 22-23, Gal. 3.19, Eph. 2:15-16, Heb. 7:12.

Rom. 8:3-4: *For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

That is why Paul, in Romans, spoke of salvation’s deliverance apart from the law. Can you imagine the believers who were Jewish and all of a sudden realize the law is nothing anymore? Remember the pendulum we used in Corinthians where we had the legalists and the licensees? The legalists were under the law, the licensees denied all restraints: no law means I can do anything! We have to understand, we are not under the law. Nevertheless, do not run out and say ‘I can steal now.’

In understanding the relationship between the law and grace, we have two conclusions: Our first conclusion so clear in Scripture: the law cannot be divided. It is wrong to say the church no longer holds to the civil law and the ceremonial law but we do hold to the moral law. The second truth is: It is all or nothing, under the Mosaic Law or free from it. Therefore, the

Christian is not under any aspect of the Mosaic Law. I know what you are thinking. All those sermons I preached on the 10 commandments: “You shall not steal, You shall not commit adultery,” Was I wrong? The answer is: No! If you taught how the law relates to the believer through God’s grace.

F. The Grace Administration of God’s Moral Absolutes

The new way of God administering law in our lives can be summarized with the promise from Jeremiah, the promise to Israel when they do receive Christ as their Saviour. It is called the New Covenant in which God promises Israel to “Write the law in your heart.”

1. Three key passages that Christ established grace as the new way of God’s administering His moral absolutes.

i) John was teaching that during His first coming Jesus brought into being a new form of divine grace which had not existed in Old Testament times

Jn. 1:17: *For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

ii) Paul declared to Christians were free from the law by the grace of God

Rom. 6:14: *For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*

iii) Paul again stated that Jesus established grace as the new way of God’s administering Titus 2:11-12, 14: *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ...who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

2. The manner of the grace administration of God’s moral absolutes

i) The manner contrasted and described

Through the Mosaic Law, God administered His eternal, moral absolutes in an external manner. By contrast, through grace, God administers His eternal moral absolutes in an internal manner

ii) The manner promised

Through Old Testament prophets, God 'promised' both law and grace which, when combined, constitute the manner of the grace administration of God’s moral absolutes for future Israel.

iii) The manner applied to Church saints

The promises of Jeremiah 3 1:31-34 and Ezekiel 36~25-27 were specifically to Israel -- the law of God in the heart and the indwelling Holy Spirit, but Church saints have both of these promises NOW for the grace administration of God's moral absolutes.

Summary: In the OT the law was above God's people and they had an obligation to keep it. Yet no man could keep it. That is why the ceremonial law taught how sin is part of everyone's life. Therefore, the necessity for atonement, or the covering of sin by faith, was required. It never took the Law away, it was always pressing down on God's people, that was the old way. Now God says the new law is in your heart because I am changing you. By God's grace the Spirit of God is in our lives, by God's grace we have a deeper understanding of what right and wrong is. Jesus taught us there is even in the law, there is a shallowness. It was shallow.

Jesus gave this illustration: You have heard it said: 'You should not kill, that is the law, but I say 'If you hate in your heart, you've broken that commandment.' Jesus' words reminded them no one could keep God's moral standards for they are deeper than actions, reaching even to the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Now we have the Spirit of God in our lives that gives us discernment. Hate is wrong and He convicts us of this. Now the moral law is internalized. Our desire is to live for Christ. Grace gives us the desire that is higher than the Law. Also grace gives the power within us to live out our new desires.

Rom. 6:11, 13: *Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. ...And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.*

This is clearly the statement of Paul when he said the old man is dead in Christ. The new man is alive in Christ. Therefore, yield yourselves as slaves to righteousness. Those 'in Christ' do have a power within us to live out the Law. This is a growing expression in our lives. We are not perfect yet. The Bible teaches us this is a progressive sanctification. Think of your own life. If you remember before you were saved, you probably cursed God and man regularly. Even though I grew up in a Christian home, I went to a public school where I was influenced by my peers. For a while before I got saved, I was bilingual: I spoke English and I spoke profanity.

However, when my father found out, it was painful discipline for me. Unfortunately, my father's spankings never changed my heart. Christ did

when I accepted Him as my Saviour. Habit would cause me to take the Lord's name in vain but the Spirit of God would immediately convict me, I would feel so much shame, I would confess my sin and ask Him to forgive me. In time, God gave me victory over this sinful habit. This is God's grace administering His moral law in my life.

3. There are four things in the NT that demonstrate that the church saints have the law of God in our hearts.

i) Paul taught that Church saints have been regenerated.

As noted in Jeremiah 31, it is the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit which places the law of God in the heart

Titus 3:5: *not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,*

ii) Paul declares that Christ wrote something through the Holy Spirit on the hearts of the church saints.

2 Cor. 3:3: *clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.*

iii) Paul indicated that something within him gave him a deep seated moral sympathy with God.

Rom. 7:22: *For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.*

iv) Peter says believers are partakers in the nature of God.

2 Pet. 1:4: *by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

There is so much to rejoice in. The Spirit of God has written the law of God in our hearts. As leaders we must teach a moral standard. However, if you teach the moral standard of the 10 commandments implying that we are still under the law, you are not teaching the truth. You may discover a good way of doing this that I have not discovered yet, but as a pastor I taught our people that the moral law and even the civil law represents a standard of God that are principles to understand that the grace of God, through the Word and the Holy Spirit produce in the believer's heart. Once again it is the believer's growing relationship to Jesus Christ that ensures this transformation.

We must teach the practical implications of blessing. If we use the example of 'thou shalt not kill,' along with Christ's 'if you hate in your heart you have broken this commandment,' we are able to use the moral law

principles to enable Christians to evaluate their lives by God's truth, and respond accordingly. Christians should not hold evil thoughts against anyone. It is not a law, it is a principle of how God wants me to live. I can teach principles so people will be able to grasp an understanding of how we are called to live for God in the world.

The OT law says, 6 days of work and on the 7th worship. It is a Sabbath written in God's Law. We are not under the law however, there is a principle here. It is reflected in Hebrews. **Heb. 10:25:** *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.*

We are not to forsake gathering together to worship. God gave the principle: set it aside one day in seven for corporate worship. Are we under the law to keep Saturday as the day of worship? No, the church actually began worshipping on the first day of the week. The Principle is: gather together at least once a week. If you have a job that requires that you have to work of the day everyone worships, have you broken the law? No. My father was a hospital maintenance man. There always had to be a maintenance man at the hospital 24 hours a day in case of mechanical breakdown during emergencies. My father occasionally had to work on Sunday so he could not go to church.

He had no problem with this. However, his boss kept asking the men to do work on Sunday like paint the walls, and other non-essential tasks. My father went to him and said, as a Christian I accept the fact I have to be here in case of an emergency, but my heart is back where my church is worshipping. Is it necessary for us to do this non-essential work like painting on Sunday? Would you object if we spent the time reading the Bible until an emergency took place? His boss responded positively and said, that is what we all will do from now on.

Next Sunday is vote day in Cameroon, it is my understanding you cannot travel to church, you can only travel to vote and back. If God's people cannot go to church this coming Sunday because of voting, are they breaking God's Law. I do not think so, if possible could they worship on Saturday or Monday instead? You see the difference between a principle and a law? It is a good thing to study through Leviticus and understand even the ceremonial law because there are principles there of how live God's way in a depraved world.

Prof. Question: Any questions about the relationship of the law and grace?

Student Question: I have a question about what you meant regarding the civil law?

Prof. Response: The Civil law is basically the law that deals with if I steal from you what is my punishment? If I kill, what is my punishment?

Student Question: So it is relational.

Prof. Response: Yes, it deals with how the government deals with you. Most modern civil law, government established law, is founded on Roman law, and Roman law is founded upon the Bible law. Even in this, we see that God has had a great impact upon governments that are even unbelieving governments.

We talked about the 'lawless one' ruling in the tribulation period. He will establish his own set of laws. The result will be anarchy and chaos.

Student Question: If you have a member in the church and another member comes to him telling him that I have a job and I am not allowed to come to church in the morning but to walk to go in the afternoon. What can I tell him?

Prof. Response: What do you think he should tell him?

I cannot give you an answer, it is something you have to discover. I have said this many times in the class. One of the principles in Scriptures is individual soul liberty. I can tell you how I would understand things in my church because I know what they believe and what I have taught in the past, but I cannot tell you what to do in your church. You have to seek the Lord's direction and understand the cultural implications. Because the man asked the question, that man's background and history has implications that must be taken into consideration, especially where your own church is corporately in its growth toward God. For me, in Canada, when people have time to study the Bible themselves, and when everybody could read, and when everyone had one or two Bibles, I spent most of my time teaching the Word of God, teaching the principles. Then I prayed that people would study the Word themselves and come to their own conclusions as the Holy Spirit led them. For example, when people come to know Christ as Saviour and still smoke the cigarettes. I do not beat them over the head with my bible and say you are wrong, I prayed they would come to realize their body is a temple of God. Some people, like my mother, stopped smoking as soon as she was saved, because she had the influence of my father. But someone who has no influence at all probably will take

time for the Spirit to convict. At the same time, if they did something morally wrong involving public sin, such as living in adultery, I would go to them immediately, I would show them their sin from the Scriptures, and plead with them to repent. You see there is so many issues that you have to think through. My advice is to 'walk in the Spirit, saturate your mind with the Word of God, and He will give you wisdom.

4. Five things in the New Testament indicate that in addition to having new, favorable disposition toward God, Church saints also have the indwelling Holy Spirit.

i) Jesus promised that in the future the Holy Spirit, in greater fullness, would send forth great blessings from within His believers.

Act. 1:8: *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

ii) Jesus drew a distinction between the relationships of the Holy Spirit to believers before the Church and during the Church.

Joh. 14:16: *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

iii) Paul talked-about the Spirit's indwelling the saints

Romans 8:9,11: *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. ... he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you.*

iv) Paul declared in that the Church saint's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and that the Spirit is in him.

I Cor. 6:19: *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?*

v) Paul prayed that God would grant Church saints to be strengthened with power internally by His Spirit.

Eph. 3:16: *that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,*

G. Implications for equating the Church with Israel.

1. To start the church with Abraham would leave out regenerate man before Abraham's time.

In Scripture God was family oriented before Abraham and salvation was found through the family teaching. Then God was nationally oriented and provided salvation through the covenant of Israel. In other words, if the church is the saved people, it means there could be no one saved be-

fore Abraham. This ignores the dispensations or the other ways God dealt with man and the fact that now God is working with a new entity called 'the church'. There is always provision for salvation.

2. To equate church with Israel does not take seriously the events at Pentecost.

Covenant theology focuses on what God does by decrees in the OT through creation and the OT covenants, and consequently dismisses the uniqueness of Acts 2 Pentecost. I did my Master's Thesis study on the Spirit of God in the NT and discovered seven "New" blessings by the Holy Spirit for Christians since Pentecost: New Covenant, New Revelation, New Union, New Empowerment, New Relationship, New Sanctification, and New Assurance.

3. To equate the church with Israel could result in serious practical consequences.

This can lead to the belief that being baptized into the church is the same thing as being circumcised in Israel, resulting in the false understanding of being the means of salvation. There are some churches that do believe in baptismal regeneration. Reform theology understands the church as incorporating families, where church statistics count by families, hence the requirement for infant baptism. Where I grew up there was a Reform Church with a membership of 250 families. The true gospel message was minimized if not omitted entirely in its teaching.

4. The church and the state become closely related.

History has taught us that when the church and the state is not separated, the church eventually loses its mission. When Constantine made Christianity the official religion, it was the worst thing he could do. It encouraged people to join the church who never had the experience of salvation. They joined the church to become a good citizen. Roman Catholicism became the greatest 'State Religion' and continues in its heresy to this day. "The Massachusetts government was almost a theocracy," said John Barry, author of "Roger Williams and the Birth of the America Soul." "Everybody in it believed that the goal of Massachusetts's government was to fulfill God's will."⁸

5. Ordinance are called sacraments

The problem of equating the church to Israel can be calling the ordinances, sacraments. This results in believing the 'sacraments' convey

⁸ <https://www.wgbh.org/news/post/banned-17th-century-boston-religious-tolerance>

grace and accomplish many things of spiritual value. This has also results in unregenerate people participating and falling into ‘presumptive regeneration’ such as is held by some Presbyterian churches who believe only the ‘elect’ can be assured of salvation. I say this because within the church it would mean there are unsaved people. Without the truth, they can easily default to ‘earning’ grace.

6. Relationship to society is different

Equating the church with Israel can have problems in society. If you believe that the church will bring in a righteous state, then you can become militant to achieve this end. This is exactly what Francis Schaeffer proposed on his work of *How Should we then Live?* Although he is a great thinker, his covenant theology causes him to say we need to take action to force righteousness upon the state. He suggests that the church should be involved in politics where they are making demonstrations against state and country.

A good example of this is what happened in America with the abortion clinics. When the U.S.A. legalized abortion, some Christians picketed and circled the abortion clinics and prevented access. The opposition of some of these clinics led to their destruction with bombs, both illegal and harmful actions Francis Schaeffer never promoted war or militancy. He promoted rebellion and demonstration and that always leads to militancy.

In contrast to such action the true church is a new society within world focusing on purity, obedience, and respect for authority. Believers are forward units of God’s Children who will one day rule with Jesus Christ in a righteous realm.

7. There is no future for Israel as a nation at all

If Israel and the church are the same, there is no future for the nation Israel. If you study the minor prophets and the book of Romans Israel’s future is as certain as heaven itself. The past reformer Berkoff stated: “Some people say God is still interested in Israel, He is not; some say Israel will become a nation, they won’t” Yet one month later, at midnight on May 14, 1948, the Provisional Government of Israel proclaimed a new State of Israel. On that same date, the United States, in the person of President Truman, recognized the provisional Jewish government as the de facto authority of the Jewish state.

8. Whole difference in leadership

When you equate Israel with the church you have a real problem with understanding church leadership. If Israel is the model, then the idea of

laity and clergy is greatly divided. The priesthood of OT Israel could never fit into the NT church doctrine of the priesthood of believer (1 Pet. 2:5,9), where anyone can lead in anything (according to God's call and gifts). The Biblical Truth shows that real pastors only help the church be the church.

9. Discipline would be a problem.

When you equate Israel with the church you would have a problem with discipline. The distinction between Israel's discipline and the church's discipline is great. In the OT if a child rebelled against a father and abused a parent, he was to be stoned. That was possible because they were a nation with their own rules. I think if you took a child who was rebellious and stoned that child, your church would have a problem with the civil law. Discipline in Israel was to keep Israel pure for the line of Messiah, but discipline in the church is to restore individuals not eliminate them.

10. Different Church & World Concepts

We have already mentioned that equating the church and Israel would create a problem with the state and church concepts. Nevertheless, a state church where all society is a member would drastically change the 'world' concept of the church. The commission of the church in Matthew 28, to 'go into all the world' would be reduced to the concept and effort to politically expand Israel as a nation rather than to deliver the unsaved of every nation from spiritual death.

11. Worship would be different.

If Israel and the church were the same, all citizens of a country whether regenerated or not, God's definition of worship would be lost: "*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*" (Jn. 4:25). True worship can only be offered by the redeemed of the Lord who are indwelt and led by the Holy Spirit.

To say that we must worship God "in spirit" means, among other things, that it must originate from within, from the heart; it must be sincere, motivated by our love for God and gratitude for all he is and has done. Worship cannot be mechanical or formalistic. That does not necessarily rule out certain rituals or liturgy. But it does demand that all physical postures or symbolic actions must be infused with heartfelt commitment and faith and love and zeal. ...t's the Holy Spirit who awakens in us an understanding of God's beauty and splendor and power. It's the Holy Spirit who stirs us to celebrate and rejoice and give thanks. It's the Holy Spirit who opens our eyes to see and savor

all that God is for us in Jesus. It's the Holy Spirit who, I hope and pray, orchestrates our services and leads us in corporate praise of God.⁹

12. Theological Emphasis

There are theological implications in equating Israel to the church and denying the significance of Acts 2 Pentecost. For example, we see the historical trend of covenant theological where churches focus on teaching catechisms rather making 'disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; (Matt. 28:19-20). I believe there is room in dispensational churches to teach truth by memorization, which could be called a catechism, one strength that covenant theology has in its education practice. However, in the context of having within the church saved and lost where the mission of evangelism is often overlooked is truly a weakness.

H. Conclusion

Does a commitment to covenant theology or dispensational theology make a difference? The answer is yes. My summary conclusions come from R.E. Showers' book "There Really is a Difference:"¹⁰

1. It does not make a difference relative to the issue of whether or not a person is a Christian.

2. A commitment to either of these theological positions does make a difference, however, relative to several other issues, some of which are quite significant.

i) How God fulfills His ultimate purpose for history

ii) How prophetic passages of the Scriptures are to be interpreted

iii) The nature and significance of some of the biblical covenants

iv) God's program for the nation Israel

v) The nature of the Kingdom of God

vi) The beginning, nature, and distinctiveness of the Church

v) The means through which the Christian is to live a godly life in this present world.

3. The disagreements of these two doctrinal systems relative to several of these issues have a significance.

⁹ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/what-does-it-mean-to-worship-god-in-spirit-and-truth/>

¹⁰ Showers, R.S. (1990). *There Really is a Difference*. Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry Inc.

This significance goes beyond the realm of theological theory. Some have very practical ramifications.

4. Doctrine determines attitudes and practice; therefore, the system of doctrine to which a person is committed does make a difference.

The last 2 statements are really one supporting the other. The difference between covenant theology and dispensational theology determines attitudes and practices.

That is my discussion on the differences between covenant theology and dispensational theology. Both of these theologies can preach the true gospel; both have elements or denominations within them that do not preach the gospel. However, to look at the issues from a biblical perspective helps us understand there is a difference. With this in mind, I remind you of the Levels of Fellowship between local churches found on page 80.

CLASS 10

VI. THE CORRECTION OF THE CHURCH

I want to conclude our class by talking about a very important issue in the church. When we were discussing the ordinances of the church, we focused on the Lords' Table as an expression of unity. If you were in my Corinthians class, you know that Paul challenged the church of Corinth because of their divisions. Paul emphasized that the local church is a family, and a family is one unit in society. Actually, it was the 'original' institution for society in creation. A family, when it functions together, faces issues that involve discipline, especially regarding children. It is the same with the church. I went through many years of Bible College but was never taught what the Bible says about church discipline. Nevertheless, it is an important part of the church, I have included it in this course.

A. Kinds of Correction

There are certain obligations God's people have which, if accepted and practiced, can prevent an ultimate call for CHURCH DISCIPLINE in the life of a sinning saint. This could involve the following:

1. PARENTAL CORRECTION (Prov. 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13; I Tim. 3:4-5, 12)

We have in the Scriptures, parental correction toward their disobedient children.

2. PRIVATE CORRECTION (Prov. 25:12; 27:5; Ecc. 7:5; Prov. 10:17; Gal. 6:1)

There is also private correction between friends. Proverbs tells us that friends sharpen one another, like flint on an axe.

3. PASTORAL CORRECTION (1 Tim. 15:19; 2 Tim. 4:2; Tit. 1:13, 2:15)

In the pastoral epistles of Timothy and Titus, we have pastoral correction with its careful execution: *Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.*

4. PROVIDENTIAL CORRECTION (Rom. 8:14–18; Gal. 4:1–7; Heb. 12:5–6)

God deals with us as *adult* sons because we have been adopted and given an adult standing in His family. The fact that the Father chastens us is proof that we are maturing, and it is the means by which we can mature even more. Chastening is the evidence of the Father’s love.¹¹

5. PERSONAL CORRECTION (I Cor. 11:31–32)

Paul here is referring to participating in the Lord’s Table. If we are to participate in a worthy manner, we must examine our own hearts, judge our sins, and confess them to the Lord. To come to the table with unconfessed sin in our lives is to be guilty of Christ’s body and blood, for it was sin that nailed Him to the cross. If we will not judge our own sins, then God will judge us and chasten us until we do confess and forsake our sins.¹²

The question may be asked, what happens if these 5 areas of correction fail? If an individual in the body of Christ is in sin, and by the appropriately applied discipline, nothing seems to restore him, then church discipline will have to be carried out, even to the degree of expulsion.

As a body of believers who are a family, the church cares for itself. If a parent has a troublesome and rebellious child, the place to find help is the church. If a man has a rebellious wife or a wife has a drunken husband, and nothing is happening, the place to find help is the church. It is because we are a body. The local church must care for one another. There is in Scripture instructions regarding church discipline. We have to ask ourselves “Who introduced church discipline? The answer is JESUS

¹¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Heb 12:5–6). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹² Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (1 Co 11:27–32). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

CHRIST, THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH, introduced discipline. I give you Matthew 18 as an example:

Matt. 18:15-17: Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

Church discipline is a common function and aspect of the local church. Just as disciplining our children is a common practice in our families. I was in a conference with about 400 other pastors, the speaker asked the question to all the pastors- how many have exercised church discipline in your church? He asked those who have done this to stand. Out of 400 pastors, there were no more than 30 pastors standing. You can see that it is something God calls for, but the church is reluctant to carry it out.

B. Grounds for Correction

The first thing we have to think about is the grounds for correction. What are the reasons for church discipline to be carried out.

I Cor. 5:1: *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles — that a man has his father's wife!*

In 1 Corinthians 5 we see a man who is living immorally with his step-mother. This is a ground for correction. Paul told the church to deal with this man in verse 5: *deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

I Tim. 1:18-20: *This charge I commit to you, son Timothy ...wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

Here Paul urges Pastor Timothy to follow through with the discipline of Hymenaeus and Alexander. Paul's prescription for these two blasphemers was that they be handed over to Satan, a phrase which perhaps refers to excommunication from the congregation (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1-5) and abandonment to realms controlled by Satan (2 Cor. 4:4). Paul viewed the congregation as a haven and protection for believers without which they would suf-

fer painful disadvantage. Thus excommunication was designed to chasten the two.¹³

Titus 3: 10-11: *Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.*

As to the people who are advocating these useless things and thereby exerting a divisive and otherwise destructive influence in the church (cf. 1:11), Paul's instructions to Titus were direct and specific. He was to give such a person two warnings. If that did not work, he was to have nothing to do with him. The assumption is that a failure to respond to two warnings is a clear sign that the offender is warped and sinful, and self-condemned. Paul's thought here is similar to the Lord's instructions (Matt. 18:15–17), when He taught that after giving an offender three chances to repent, he is then to be cut off¹⁴

In the pastoral epistles of 1 Tim and Titus we see the necessity to deal with those who are teaching the wrong doctrine. Doctrinal impurity is grounds. Certainly in these two areas; immorality and impurity, the church must also act.

C. Reasons for Correction

1. To Preserve the 'Honor' of Christ's Name

There are other reasons that we see in Scripture by principle regarding the necessity for correction. For example, we see the necessity to honour God's name in Leviticus as well as Timothy. 2 Timothy 2:19 says: "let everyone....depart from iniquity." Another reason by principle for correction is to preserve the honour of Christ's name:

2 Tim. 2:19: *Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."*

2. To Benefit the sinning Believer

Also we see in many texts of Scripture there is the necessity or reason because we want to restore a sinning believer. We are talking about the

¹³ Litfin, A. D. (1985). 1 Timothy. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (1 Ti 1:20). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁴ Litfin, A. D. (1985). Titus. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Tt 3:10–11). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

benefit of a sinning Christian to be reconciled to God and to the church, as evident in I Corinthians 5:5, I Timothy 1:20, and 2 Corinthians 2:6-8.

Luke 17:3,4: *Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him.*

Christ is saying there is no limit to forgiveness as long as there is repentance. God is interested in people being restored and reconciled to one another and to Himself. The reason is for the benefit of the sinner. We have to remember that as people are saved, we are not under condemnation.

Romans 8:1: *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

Please understand that church discipline is not punishment. Our punishment for sin has been taken by Christ. Believers will never be punished for sin. Discipline is never punishment. Discipline is the means to bring people to restoration. The reason for correction is to honour the name of Christ, and therefore to obey Him, and to honour His name. The purpose of discipline is to restore the sinning believer to fellowship with God and the church.

3. To Enhance the purity of the Church

The last reason is to keep the purity of the church. Christians are called to live holy before God and before the world.

1 Cor. 5:6-7: *Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.*

Eph. 5:27: *that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

We talked about the fusion of the church: our lives impacting with the life of the world. However, if we live in sin, obviously we are not impacting the world in the right way. We must keep the church as holy as possible. Will Christians sin? Yes. 1 John tells us if we say we do not sin, we are liars. The issue is the lifestyle that should never be the pattern for sin. When there is a recurring and continuing sin, that is when there has to be some discipline to restore this individual.

We learn in 1 Corinthians 11 that the church did not discipline sinful behaviour. They did not deal with the man in immorality; they did not deal with church divisions. Therefore, Paul said: *'for this reason some of you are sick and some of you have died'*. They continue to celebrate and remember the Lords' death and falsely 'declare' they are walking in unity. They were wearing the mask of hypocrisy and did not deal with sin, so God did discipline them, not punish them, discipline them. The difference between discipline and punishment is only the purpose. Yet, it can still be the same hand and the same circumstance.

The purpose for the church discipline is not punishment. Rather, it is in love, to provoke repentance and bring restoration. The Scripture teaches us that church discipline includes 4 steps.

D. Method of Correction

In the words of Jesus Christ in Matthew 18 we see the method of disciplining a fellow believer.

Matt. 18: 15-17: *Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16 "But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' 17 "And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.*

1. Matthew 18:15 - Go PRIVATELY

The first step in discipline is to go privately to the offender: *tell him his fault between you and him alone*. Paul states the same to the church in Galatia.

Gal. 6:1: *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

If a man is taken in a trespass, you who are spiritual restore him. In the passage, the one who goes, goes with the attitude that he is susceptible, he is weak as well, so he goes humbly as we restore. Private correction is never: "You are sinning, brother!" Rather, it is a loving concern: "I see something that is not right in your life." What happens if he does not hear? The next step is taken.

2. Matthew 18:16 - Go WITH ONE OR TWO

Now it is you and one or two, so two or three people are now expressing their concern. It is not three people to beat the one man. It is 3 people

with the same heartache and concern that will impress an individual. We live in a world where so many people feel no one cares for them. When three people come to a sinning brother or sister in tears themselves for concern, that has an impact on life. But if there is still rebellion the third step is taken.

3. Matthew 18: 17(a) - Go TO THE CHURCH

If the offender does not listen, then the whole church brings their concern to him/her. This is such an overwhelming thought. When a whole church brings an individual in and in love, are pleading with him to repent and turn back to God, such corporate concern has strong impact. This is not the final step; it is the final plea of love. In each of these first three steps there is the necessity to give time for the individual to contemplate. When I was a pastor, the church leadership had to exercise church discipline. Unfortunately, in my own zeal, I insisted we remove the offender immediately. I was wrong. We have to allow the Spirit of God to work in the offenders life. I do not know how much time is right. Nevertheless, the Spirit will give understanding to the leaders and the church to know what is the right time.

4. Matthew 18: 17(b) - Remove THE PERSON

Now, after an appropriate time for a man or woman to repent and there is no repentance, then we do the last step. This is the step of removing the person from the church membership. I want you to understand that in each step there is the call for the church to be involved in prayer for this individual. The first man that goes privately should be in prayer always for this individual. Then when 2 or 3 are brought, they should be involved in prayer for this individual. Then, when the church is completely involved, the church should be involved in prayer. This is a spiritual exercise and must be completed in the power and the leading of the Spirit.

Student Question: Why is it that in the Corinthian situation it is not good for all the church to be involved in the discipline.

Prof. Response: We are not told all the details. Perhaps it was because they have left it for so long. Whatever the reason we can assume that the Lord led Paul to direct the church in this way as part of God's written revelation. We know that as such, the words were inspired and therefore without error.

In Corinth it was not just the problem of the offender, it was the problem of the whole church. According to 1 Corinthians 3:1 their whole attitude and conduct was carnal. I believe what the Lord was trying to indicate was that a man or woman who lived perpetually in this manner must be treated as an unbeliever. Remember, it is not a punishment, it is an act that shows how serious this matter is. It is the responsibility of the church leadership to explain this to the individual:

“Brother, we have done everything to plead with you to repent and be reconciled to Christ. In doing this we were treating you like a brother in Christ. However, your refusal to repent and your pattern of life indicates to us that you are not truly saved. Now our concern is not to a brother in Christ, but to one whom we love who does not know Christ. Because everything in your life indicates you are not saved, we cannot give you the privileges of membership. We love you, and urge you to come to Christ.”

He has now been denied the privilege of participating in The Lord’s Table, and depending on what the church determines, perhaps he is also denied even coming into church worship. It is my understanding that this individual has already stopped coming to church. Perhaps the church would decide it was inappropriate to have fellowship with this individual in private matters as well.

Student Response: If I look at this, it is excommunication. To deliver such a person to Satan, I cannot understand what this means.

Prof. Response: It is using different words to say the same thing. It is treating him like an unbeliever, let Satan have his way in his life so he might come to repentance.

Student Question: How far does confession go?

Prof. Response: When we are talking about an individual who is repentant, there is the necessity for restitution or reconciliation. In this situation when an individual has sinned and he is repentant, he only confesses and restores as far as the offence has gone. So, if the offence is toward one other believer, that is the one he seeks forgiveness from and restoration to. If however the offence is public knowledge, as adultery would be, the confession and restoration is before the church, which is the spiritual public aspect of the offence. Confession therefore goes only as far as the offence. Let me illustrate with a couple of true stories from my pastoral experience:

In the church that I pastored a teenager stole from his employer. His parents, members of our church, realized that the employer knew the family attended our church so they asked me what should be done. I said the teenager should return what was stolen and apologize to the employer and his family, and accept the consequences. This was not brought before the church.

Another single teenage church member committed adultery and became pregnant. Because this would become public knowledge (you cannot hide pregnancy), I met with the offender and her parents. At this meeting the offender expressed regret and repentance, she asked the Lord to forgive her, and for his will to be done.. I explained the principle of “confession as far as the offense.” Although the teenager’s father was an unsaved man, he agreed with his wife and daughter to allow church discipline to take place.

A church members meeting was called. The offender stood before the members and confessed her sin and asked the church to forgive her. The church response was amazing. The church unanimously expressed forgiveness. Then a member stood and said: “Folks, we now have a single mom as member of our church. This is not an easy thing to face. What are we going to do to help her. Spontaneously the members began to promise help, one committed to buy all the baby cloths, another promised to supply a baby buggy, another baby food, another a cradle. At he end of the meeting all the members gathered around this single mom with a loving “full congregation’ group hug. We were all in tears of joy. The second great thing that occurred is the father’s response. He was also amazed, and began attending church with his daughter and wife. By God’s grace he also accepted Christ as his savior.

When you do things God’s way, He does amazing things!

Student Question: I want to know in the parable of the tares and the wheat Jesus asked not to take away the tares. But now you say you have to take the tare away in the church.

Prof. Response: The parable of the tares is talking about the kingdom. The truth that God is giving in the parables is that there will be in the kingdom, those who are false Christians. We have to be careful when we study parables not to make every statement a point of doctrine. Parables usually have one main truth they are focusing on. As much as the local church is part of the kingdom, the parables are the general principles for the universal church, the whole body of Christ on earth. And if you want to get

technical you would have to say that the one that is removing, or not removing the tares, are angels not people. I do not know if you agree, this is how I understand it. I know the Bible does not contradict itself, but I see a distinction between Christ teaching about the kingdom and the principles of the kingdom, and Christ's instructions about the local church.

Student Question: The Bible says about we must not treat the brother like an enemy but Paul says we should not fellowship with him or not eat with such a person. If I go to someone who was discipline and I eat with him, I have a problem.

Prof. Response: That is the position of many.

Student Response: So what would happen now? That is his problem.

Prof. Response: If the local church has determined that eating with this individual is inappropriate, then you do not go. However, at the same time, if he is an unbeliever, the Scriptures also tell us we live in the world and must rub shoulders with the unbelievers, that is how we reach them.

As a pastor, I would help people make the distinction based on the levels of fellowship we looked at earlier. If this individual, who has been removed because of no repentance, is a friend, and as friends they would go to soccer games together, go fishing together, have this kind of friendship. Then I would have a problem if it continues after this church discipline.

But, if as a friend this man says, "I want you to come to my house and have dinner with us so I can talk about the Lord to you," that would be a loving friend. In our church in Canada, a disciplined person was still allowed to come into worship. We wanted them to be under the sound of the Word of God. Nevertheless, they could not participate in any responsibility in the church and they could not break bread. Most never came.

Student Question: If the sinning person repents from that act is he allowed to take communion.

Prof. Response: The answer to the first question is, of course if they repent they are restored to Christ and therefore, they are restored to their church fellowship and perhaps their church position, depending on the sin. Now there are conditions: They are restored to the privilege of breaking bread and responsibilities such as singing in the choir and taking up the offering, but, in 1 Tim 3 we see that elders and deacons have a higher standard because they are spiritual leaders. For elders especially, they are to be above reproach. This my position, not necessarily the Scriptures: I believe a person in spiritual leadership who had been disciplined by the church, has to earn back the respect again. Therefore, there was a time when they

were not leaders but they were living godly so they could have the confidence of the people. However, a pastor who has done something like committed adultery, I personally have a problem with allowing that person to be a pastor again because they are never without reproach. Anything before salvation, that does not count, but a spiritual leader, a pastor in church, he is no longer above reproach.

Because all of this church discipline is for the purpose of reconciliation, I have defined seven Scriptural principles of reconciliation:

VII BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF RECONCILIATION

This is what our life should be like in the church. We cannot help but offend and we will sin. There is always the necessity to restore ourselves to our brothers and sisters whom we have offended. Here are the Biblical principles of reconciliation:

A. The Principle of Conscience

Matt. 5:22-24: *I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment ... Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*

The first principle is the principle of conscience. The context of Matthew 5 is speaking angry words. The key here is to *remember that your brother has something against you*. We all have this problem. For example, when I get angry, I get very angry. There are many times when I have spoken the wrong thing. The Principle is: If God moves me in conscience (conviction) to recognize that I have treated another brother wrongly (particularly in anger), I must go to that brother and seek reconciliation (be forgiven), even before I go to worship.

B. The Principle of Confrontation.

Matt. 18:15-17: *Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.*

This Matthew 18 passage teaches what to do if someone sins against us. The context of speaks of sin's offences against us and the consequences thereof. For example, in the parable of leading children astray (Matt.

18:6), it is better to have a stone around your neck and be thrown in the river than to offend. In the parable of the lost sheep, the shepherd's priority is to go and restore the lost sheep (Matt. 18:12-14).

In Matthew 18:15 when a *brother* 'sins' against me, the term for sin is ἁμαρτάνω (hamartano) meaning "a clear, recognizable sin, a crime, a curse, malicious intent, overt wrong, a sin in such a nature that it cannot pass as weakness, or fault. This excludes what a sensitive brother may deem a sin without due warrant that it is such."¹⁵ I am not talking about someone who has hurt me because he has neglected me. For example: a church family had a dinner and they invited everybody, but they did not invite me. I am hurt. Has the family sinned against me? No, they had every right to choose their dinner guests. That is not the situation in the text. We are talking about a known, clear sin.

Perhaps at the meal the family spoke angry words toward me and cursed me. Perhaps they lied about me or about my family. Such things are known and clear sin requiring rebuke, correction and reconciliation. In other words, if this family does not make such activity right with those present at the meal and with me, an attendee and myself must go in love to the family and say: "We are estranged and here is why we are estranged... This is the principle of confrontation. It is not easy. Nevertheless, if it is clearly known sin, it must be confronted. You go in love to be restored. Of course if he rejects that, that is when the passage says you bring in the church.

The Principle is: "If a brother has obviously sinned against me, I am first to go to that brother and "rebuke so as to bring conviction" to be reconciled. If reconciliation is not accomplished, I must call for the mediation of others.

Student Question: I want to come back to the forgiveness. You say there is no extent. If someone sins against you, he repents and you forgive him, another day he sins against you, he asks forgiveness and he start to play with you like that. What are you going to do?

Prof. Response: What does Christ say?

Student Response: (Some untranslated comments, probably a very human response and totally unscriptural causing much laughter.)

¹⁵ Lenski, p.698

Prof. Response: In Matthew 18:22 Jesus answered Peter's very same question: "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."

Christ says as long as there is an expression of repentance, continue to forgive. What more can I say, that is what Jesus said. Remember the role of the believer is to accept the difficulties we are called to live with. In the Corinthian church, who was the one who dealt with hypocrisy? Who brought sickness and death? God did. We cannot play Holy Spirit. I cannot look into the heart and know if someone is truly repentant or not. All my children did this, they would lie to me. I knew they were lying. Yet, sooner or later God convicted them and they returned and confessed. You asked me to forgive you and I forgive you, but God knows if you are true or not. As much as you fear me, you must fear God more. My son was in a situation like this. He was doing something that I was sure was not good. But, when I confronted him, he said no, that is not true. So I said, son you can deceive me, but you cannot deceive God. A month later he was in a very serious car accident, two people were injured but not severely. All three had to be in the hospital for one day. My car was totally destroyed. When I visited my son in the hospital, I knew God had been dealing with him. I said, what have you learned, son? He looked at me and said, "I need to pray more." God dealt with him and changed his heart.

Student Question: My concern is about the category of sin, you said if a pastor commit adultery, you do not think he should be pastor in a church, but some sins like lying might be forgiven without dismissal. Do you make a distinction between the sin or the person?

Prof. Response: I make the distinction between the role in the church. I had a man in my church come to me and say 'you teach that there are two standards, one for the members and a higher standard for church leaders. I said no I do not teach that, Jesus teaches that and I do not argue with God.

You cannot go through the pastoral epistles and not see a higher standard for leaders. All God's people should aspire to that level of maturity, but the NT itself says: "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. (Jas 3:1). The other issue is how public is this issue of sin? A pastor who commits immorality has already involved someone else. Satan himself will ensure that the public knows this. The reproach is more than just within the church, it is also within the community.

There was a pastor in America who was on TV every week. Millions of people watched him. It was discovered that he was living in immorality. He had a prostitute regularly visit him. This man before the TV said: "Oh I'm so sorry, I repent." And he continued on TV. That man brought more shame to the church than 1000 sinners. Even in Canada, I met people who mock the church because of this man. That potential to bring shame to the church is why I stand by my position.

Student Question: My question is to know if it is so, that a pastor must be removed from his position, what can we see about David the king who committed adultery yet remained the king.

Prof. Response: We are talking about the pastor and the church, you are talking about the king and the nation. Acts says in time past God winked, but now requires all men to come to repentance. Because we have the fullness of a new ministry of the Spirit of God in our lives, we are without excuse. It is not that they did not have the Spirit, but they did not have the fullness of the ministry of the Holy Spirit until after Christ was crucified. To understand more about that, come to my pneumatology class.

I want to continue and work through these principles. The next is The Principle of Care

C. The Principle of Care

Gal. 6:1-2: *Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

Here the context is walking in the flesh verses walking in the spirit. The Scriptures simply say 'bear one another's burdens'. The Principle is: When a brother sins, we should love him enough to reconcile him to God.

D. The Principle of Caution

1 Tim. 5:19-20: *Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.*

The context here is the treatment of older men and older women and widows. The word 'elder' is used, it can refer to older men or to the office of the church. The key is a charge of sin against an elder. The caution is to not receive an accusation unless there are 2 or 3 witnesses to verify the sin. The Principle is: Before you rebuke or go to a mature believer or pastor, you need to be very certain of what you are doing. You never go alone to

accuse an elder, but with two or three credible witnesses. A mistaken accusation could destroy their ministry and impact un-mature believers.

E. The Principle of the Cross

Luke 23:34: *Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."*

1 Peter 3:17-18: *For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.*

Observe what Peter declares: it is better to suffer for well-doing than evil. My thought regarding the man who continually comes before me and repents, or constantly abuses me and pretends to be sorry, is this conviction: I would rather suffer wrong by others than not forgive when God commands me to forgive. Even Jesus on the cross said 'Forgive them for they know not what they do.' The burden is for us to suffer with Christ in humiliation. To be wronged for righteousness sake. The Principle is: As Christ submitted to the Father in taking upon himself the sins of the world, and cried "Forgive them for they know not what they do", so we are to willingly accept the burden of suffering the sins of others with an attitude of forgiveness.

F. The Principle of Communication

Eph. 4:25-32: *Therefore, putting away lying, Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another... Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. ... And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.*

Here Paul points to the need of unity and the provision for unity. The key here is *Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth.*

There will always be a different of opinion. Sometimes it creates a measure of disharmony. John wants the church service at 9:00; he's such a crazy man, does not he know the difficulty this is causing? I wish he would get his head right. These are not encouraging words.

The Principle is: When disharmony is evident, rather than talking to tear down, talk it out to build up. The principle supports the environment of reconciliation where there is diversity, yet ultimate unity through God's leading.

G. The Principle of Charity

1 Cor. 13:4-8: *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.*

Here in the Corinthian church context of divisions and disorders: the differences of about eating foods, the struggle of submission and subordination. God says: ‘There is faith and there is hope and charity, but the greatest of them all is Charity or love. When preference has been expressed and hurts experienced, love is the greatest choice. Love gives the benefit of the doubt. God said this, and His children must believe it and act upon it.

The Principle is: Where preference has been expressed or hurts have been experienced, the choice of love is the responsibility, the choice of love gives the benefit of the doubt to others.

VIII THE LANGUAGE OF RECONCILIATION

As reconciliation within the Body of Christ is critical, I want to address the language of reconciliation. First, because the need for reconciliation is often preceded by anger, the following texts from the wisdom book of Proverbs express God’s warning and acknowledged causes for anger. To heed the warnings and avoid the causes will enable meaningful reconciliation

A. Thoughts about Anger

Pr. 15:1: *A soft answer turns away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.*

A gentle (lit., “soft”) answer can dispel a potentially tense situation by dissolving a person’s wrath (*ḥēmâh*, “rage”). Being conciliatory in such a situation requires forethought, patience, self-control, and kindness, virtues commonly lauded in Proverbs. A harsh (lit., “hurtful”) word, by contrast, arouses rather than dissolves anger.¹⁶

Pr. 15:18: *A wrathful man stirs up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeases strife.*

A hot-tempered man (lit., “a man of rage”) stirs up dissension. This

¹⁶ Buzzell, S. S. (1985). Proverbs. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Pr 15:1). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

may be one reason for the turmoil and hatred mentioned in 15:16–17. Patience however, can quiet quarrels. A patient man is, literally, a man “slow to anger” (cf. James 1:19).¹⁷

Pr. 10:12: *Hatred stirs up strife: but love covers all sins.*

Hatred stirs up strife: Hatred refers to extreme dislike or hostility toward others. Stirs up translates a verb meaning to arouse, awaken, or incite. Strife is plural in the Hebrew and refers to discord, conflict, disharmony, quarrels, and fighting between people. But love covers all offenses: Love, the opposite of Hatred, refers to harmonious and affectionate relations with positive feelings toward others.¹⁸

Pr. 25:15: *By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaks the bone.*

“Patience and gentle talk can convince a ruler and overcome any problem.” The saying may also be expressed, for example, “If you speak softly and don’t get cross, you can change the inside [mind] of people who don’t want to listen to you. And you can change the thinking of headmen too.”¹⁹

Pr. 28:25: *He that is of a proud heart stirs up strife: but he that puts his trust in the LORD shall be made fat.*

The ‘proud heart’ is literally a “puffed up of soul” being self-confident, and hence overbearing and litigious.²⁰ The one who trusts in the Lord rather than in riches gained by greed will prosper²¹

Pr. 29:22: An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression.

The effects of a volatile temperament warn against losing control of

¹⁷ Buzzell, S. S. (1985). Proverbs. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Pr 15:18). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁸ Reyburn, W. D., & Fry, E. M. (2000). *A handbook on Proverbs*. UBS Handbook Series (225). New York: United Bible Societies.

¹⁹ Reyburn, W. D., & Fry, E. M. (2000). *A handbook on Proverbs*. UBS Handbook Series (548). New York: United Bible Societies.

²⁰ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Pr 28:25). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

²¹ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1985). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Pr 28:25). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

oneself. An angry ... hot-tempered (lit., “owner of wrath”; see comments on 22:24) person causes strife (cf. 26:21; 30:33) and commits many sins, perhaps including cursing or insulting others, misusing God’s name, being rude, lacking kindness, being cruel or oppressive, and being proud.²²

I suggest the key to avoiding the dire consequences of anger evident in the above verses is found in Proverbs 25:

Pr. 25:11: A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

Solomon states that words can also be lovely fruit (“apples of gold” are citrons or oranges), beautiful ornaments, and refreshing cold water from the mountain snows. In dealing with a matter, we must use the right words and present them in the right way. Our words must be “fitly spoken,” arranged like lovely fruit in a silver basket.²³

The Principle is: Approaching a meeting of reconciliation with anger will never be blessed of God. The words spoken must be carefully expressed with kindness and humility. The goal is to allow the Holy Spirit to lead each party to His truth.

B. The Example of Christ

I believe Jesus gives us instruction in the matter of reconciliation in John 8.

John 8: 3-11: *Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. ...So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."*

We know the story well. The Pharisees were seeking to discredit Christ. Jesus is in the synagogue, perhaps he is teaching. The Pharisees

²² Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1985). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Pr 29:22). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

²³ Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Pr 25:11–14). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

bring a woman in who has been found in adultery. Their purpose of course, is to cause Christ to be in a position where He might compromise the law. Because everything about His life has expressed love toward people who were sick or needy or were sinners. We know of course that Christ knew their hearts. I want us to look at the language Jesus used. When they brought this woman in, he did not say: “You are not interested in this woman at all. You are as much a sinner as she.” They were wrong, and she was wrong. But, His words and methods were unique.

He listened to what they said. When they gave the accusation, He takes time to respond, writing on the sand. The issue is not what He wrote; the issue is that in this confrontation situation, He was allowing the Spirit of God to work in hearts; work in her heart as she stood before the people condemned and possibly stoned; to work in the accusers’ hearts, who were unrepentant and did not care about the woman. They only wanted to discredit Christ. Jesus does not accuse her, nor does Christ accuse the Pharisees, He just takes time for the Spirit of God to work, then He honours the law yet puts the responsibility toward their guilt. “Whoever is without sin, cast the stone” to apply the judgment of the law.

The result was the accusers, sensing their own guilt, walked away. However, the adulteress did not run, she allowed God to confront her. God forgave her because He saw a repentant heart. In all that we have been talking about concerning church discipline and reconciliation, there will be points of confrontation. There are times when a believer will have to go to another believer to be reconciled. The difficulty we have is although saved, we still operate in the flesh. Most of the time anger is present. Holding on to anger while going into a meeting for the purpose of reconciliation will always have the wrong result.

I use this John 8 text to help us realize that in these confrontations, we have to use the right language. It does not matter who is right and who is wrong. The key is not to present personal accusations. If you are confronting an individual, your challenge is to speak and address the sin without accusation. Which is the best language to use: “Brother I am coming to you because it is obvious you are a sinner and God will judge you.” or, “My brother, I am very concerned about you. From my perspective it seems like your life is not what God wants it to be. Perhaps I am mistake but it seems to me that you have lied about ... and I am concerned. Tell me if I am wrong.” Which is the proper reconciliation language?

If you are called to be a mediator, and this is part of the reconciliation process. When two brothers in the Lord have a conflict of interest, they must be reconciled. However, their understanding is so far apart, that they end up trying to convince the other that they are right. Many times this results in angry words: “How can you be so stupid to want the church service at 9:00?”

A mediator is required to bring people together. The two believers must, in God’s wisdom, ask for this assistance. Then it becomes the responsibility of the mediator to ensure the right language is used. Every time the mediator hears accusation, the meeting is stopped, and the accuser is corrected. This is not the time to accuse; it is the time to explain how you see things. There is a difference in the language.

If this kind of language cannot be adhered to, then there needs to be a person who acts as a mediator in the reconciliation process that will hold the parties to such language. The Principle is:: TO BE RECONCILED. This does not necessarily mean that one party will come away ‘winning’ the disagreement, but that each party will be allowed to express their opinions openly, without being accused, thus allowing the Spirit to work His will and Truth into every heart. It is the Spirit that should prompt the parties to make apologies where necessary, make restitution where applicable. The goal in reconciliation is to bring hearts to peace within the context of truth so that each party can continue to work in unity, even though some disagreements or differences of opinion might exist. The mediator must refrain from making judgement calls (other than insisting upon the language of reconciliation) but allow the Spirit to work

Prof. Response: For example, you class students are the mediator. My brother and I have an issue and now you are mediating our meeting. As soon as you hear an accusation, you must shout, top.” Are you ready? “Brother, you lied to me and as a result of that lie I am very angry with you.”

Wait a minute, there is no one saying ‘stop.’ I said “You lied to me.’ That is when you should say ‘stop.’

Let’s try this again.

“Brother, I feel very hurt because you lied to me about

Student Response: STOP!

Prof. Response: Good, I accused my brother. Lets continue.

Brother, I am very hurt, because I think you have misunderstood me.

Student Response: Stop.

Prof. Response: No! That was not an accusation because I said, 'I think you have misunderstood me.' Do you see the difference? In this statement I am expressing my opinion, not making an accusation.

Prof. Response: We will have one more go at this.

"Brother, I feel very hurt because in the way I look at this situation you have wronged me." Student Response: STOP.

Prof. Response: This is more difficult, however I have again claimed the problem by saying "in the way I look at this situation." There is a difference between accusation "You lied," and "the way I see this I feel you lied." Therefore this was not a direct accusation, I'm saying this is how I feel, how I understand this. That allows the person not to get on the defensive, but try to put himself in my shoes. If the accused does see this as a direct accusation and becomes offensive, the mediator must explain why it was not. "Stop there, our brother did not accuse you, he is saying he himself thought you lied." In this language the Spirit of God can work.

I have been in many situations of reconciliation. I learned very quickly that angry words and accusations will destroy the work of the Spirit of God. I actually had a man struggle with me. We asked one of the elders to be the mediator. The meeting started with this man shouting at me and screaming at me and accusing me. Unfortunately, the elder sat there and said nothing. So I got up and I left.

The elder could not understand why I left. I had to explain to him, "Brother, I am sorry I put you in this situation without sharing with you that, as a mediator, the ministry of reconciliation is not to listen to accusations. It is to create an environment where people are free to express how they view things and how they understand things. But, not to accuse. Jesus did not accuse when He could have accused. An accusation cuts off communication, reconciliation requires expressing from one's own perspective why they are hurt and why they think this unreconciled situation exists. Reconciliation requires gentle words that allow the Spirit of God to work. I left because, with the conduct of our brother, God's Spirit could not minister, and I myself would have ended up screaming.

CONCLUSION

The church has been our topic. We have looked at many things regarding the church. We left out many things. There is far more to understand regarding the Doctrine of Ecclesiology. In the short time of our 10 classes,

I have sought to present the keys to understanding God's purposes for the church reflected in Acts 2. We are a mission, to understand there is a measure of flexibility in the organizational structure with the elders/pastors and deacons as the officers. That whatever that structure is there would be responsibility, authority and accountability. In more than anything else, the blood of Christ has united us as a family if we are in the church. The strength of our testimony will be the strength of our unity. We must passionately pray for this and continually work on this until the Lord raptures us and we are in His presence.

GOD'S APPEAL TO HIS CHILDREN

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! (Psalms 133)

IX. THE PRIORITY OF RECONCILIATION

Text

1 Cor. 11:23-33: *For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;*

24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. 27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. 33 Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

Context: Conduct when the church gathers to worship focusing on The Lord's Table as the centre of that worship. The practice of the early church to have a meal together prior to The Lord's Table gave opportunity for the

hearts of the people to to become obvious. There was selfishness, greed, and disharmony evident. Paul shared that 'breaking bread together' was 'proclaiming' the Lord's death. The NT word καταγγέλλω (kataggēllō) means to preach, to declare. The term is used here when Breaking bread together as the means by which the local church collectively 'proclaims' the saving meaning of Christ's death: the making of one people as Christ's body united (John 17:20-21; Eph. 4:13-16) before God.

The Principle is: To participate in The Lord's Table is to declare the unity of the body, to do so when not reconciled to God (confessing sin) or not reconciled to our brothers and sisters in Christ (forgiving each other) is participating 'unworthily'. This results in the removal of God's blessing and brings His discipline even to the point of sickness and death (sleep) of Christians.

X. THE PRIORITY OF SEPARATION

A. The principles separation:

1. We are to separate from moral unbelief

Eph. 5:3-7: *3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becomes saints; 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.*

2. We are to separate from doctrinal unbelief

Rom. 16:17: Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

3. We are to separate from believer unbelief

2 Thess. 3:6: *But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.*

B. The Parameters of Separation vs. 14-16

2 Cor. 6:14-17: *14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?*

15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." 17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."

1. Incompatibility of Life Potential: "what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness?"
2. Incompatibility of Life Purpose: "what communion has light with darkness?"
3. Incompatibility of Life Power: "what concord has Christ with Belial?"
4. Incompatibility of Life Principle: " *Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?* "
5. Incompatibility of Life Privilege: " *And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. "*

C. The Practice of Separation v. 17

1. "Come out"- The Christian Action
2. "Be Separate" - The Christian Position "Touch not" - The Christian Testimony

D. A Proposed Manner of Separation

1. We must not stand on our own opinions, but on what the Scriptures teach.
2. We must develop and maintain the proper spirit.
3. We must not become over occupied with the issues to the neglect of the whole counsel of God.
4. We must not be controlled by suspicion.
5. We must seek to be loving and consistent ourselves.

E. A Proposed Method of Separation

Biblical Foundation for Personal Relationship Levels:

1. AQUAINTENCE

Purpose: to live Christ before the lost by example Focus: "Showing"

Texts: Jn. 1:18, 1 Jn. 4:12, Ac. 2:45

2. CASUAL

Purpose: to share the gospel to the lost

Focus: "Sharing"

Texts: Matt. 28:19,20, 1 Pet. 3:15, Ac. 16:25-31,

3. CLOSE

Purpose: to encourage believers to follow God and grow in the faith

Focus: "Encouraging"

Texts: Heb. 10:25, Ac. 18:2-3 , Eph. 4:29

4. INTIMATE

Purpose: to support each other's in burdens and trials through love, Godly counsel, and prayer

Focus: "Bearing"

Texts: Gal. 6:1, Ruth 1:16, Philemon

F. Suggested Foundation for Church Relationship Levels

Each church should define and practice its own relationship with other churches with care.

1. FELLOWSHIP– Freedom to pray and share informally with all saved people.
2. PARTICIPATION – Freedom to fellowship informally with all saved people who share life style commitments.
3. CO-OPERATION – Freedom to cooperate socially with other true churches who share standards of Godliness and practice.
4. UNION: - Freedom to unite in ministry with other true churches who share standards of Godliness, practice, and doctrinal unity.

G. Principles of Personal Separation

1. The Principle of Expediency

All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: (1 Cor 6:12a) QUESTION: With this be of spiritual benefit?

2. The Principle of Enslavement

...all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. (1 Cor. 6:12b) QUESTION: Can this overpower me?

3. The Principle of Enrichment

...all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. (1 Cor. 10:23b) QUESTION: Does this build others spiritually?

4. The Principle of Exaltation

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Cor. 10:31) QUESTION: Does this exalt God?

5. The Principle of Endangerment

Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend. (1 Cor. 8:13)

QUESTION:: Can this misdirect a younger Christian?

6. The Principle of Entanglement

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. (2 Timothy 2:4)

QUESTION: Does this model the disciplined life of a soldier of the

cross?

7. The Principle of Equivocation (Evil. t 100 14-6 p G I N e9 km 61',u
And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith:
for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. (Romans 14:23)

QUESTION: Is there any doubt about it?

H. PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

Romans 14:1 - 15:13 (1 Cor.8)

1. The Principle of Purpose

Rom. 14:8: *For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.*

KEY: True liberty acknowledges the Lordship of Christ

QUESTION: Who does this serve?

2. The Principle of Perspective

Rom. 14:14: *I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.*

KEY: True liberty assesses the implications of this in light of cultural attitudes.

QUESTION: How does society express this?

3. The Principle of Persuasion

Rom. 14:15: *Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.*

KEY: True liberty accepts that my life example sways others.

QUESTION: Will this sway others toward good or toward evil?

4. The Principle of Preference

Rom. 15:2: *Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.*

KEY: True liberty assures that self-sacrifice (love) is first choice.

QUESTION: Does this demonstrate the self-sacrificing love of Christ?

5. The Principle of Pursuit

Rom. 14:18: *For he who serves Christ in these things {NU-Text reads this. } is acceptable to God and approved by men.*

KEY: True liberty assumes eternal values are greater than temporal.

QUESTION: Does this lead others and myself closer to God.

6. The Principle of Peace

Rom.14: 20: *Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All*

things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense.

KEY: True liberty admits that offense and doubtful activity is sin and avoids breaking peace with God and men by it.

QUESTION: Is there offense to others or doubt in my mind about it?

7. The Principle of Promise

Rom. 15:8: *Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers,*

KEY: True liberty awaits the unique promises of God.

QUESTION: Has God given a special promise in this?

APPLICATION

Rom.12:1,2: *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

-your entertainment, test it

-your goals, test them

-your habits, test them

-your speech, test it

-your work ethic, test it

2 Cor 7:1: *Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God."*

I. SUGGESTED CHURCH STATEMENT

ARTICLE I - Concerning Separation

SECTION A

The Church

We believe in the separation of the church from

*combined meetings with any and all organizations or groups who deny any of the great fundamentals of our faith: the verbal inspiration of scripture, the virgin birth of Christ, the substitutional death of Christ, the bodily resurrection of Christ, and the visible return of Christ; *or who are sympathetic to the modern ecumenical movement which is exemplified in ecclesiastical organizations such as the National and World Council of Churches.

SECTION B

The Believer

We believe the Bible clearly teaches non-conformity to the world for every believer; that it is commanded of the Lord that all believers live lives of separation:

- (a) from worldly, sinful and doubtful practices,
- (b) unto Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, the place of worship, prayer, personal godliness, personal witness and the ministries of the church.



Earl has 25 years of pastoral experience in Ontario, Canada. He received a Ph.D. degree in Biblical Studies from Pensacola Christian College. During his 25 years of pastoral ministry Earl was involved as a chaplain at the

Muskoka Centre, was an administrator and instructor for the London Baptist Bible College Satellite Campus, and became the founding president of A Word in Season Ministries, a devotional newspaper column and radio ministry. In 2003 Earl joined ABWE Canada as a missionary professor of theology where his responsibilities include writing college and seminary curriculum, and teaching these courses in developing countries throughout the world.

Along with serving the Lord and enjoying his family, Earl's favourite pastime is canoeing and fishing the lakes of beautiful Muskoka, Ontario, Canada, where he and his wife Kathi reside.

