

## Restoration Teachings – Series I

# The HEART of the MATTER

The Call to follow Jesus  
The Power of the Resurrection  
The Church that Jesus is Building  
The Seven ONES  
Biblical House Church  
The Church that meets in the House  
The Third Day Church  
Restoration of all Things  
The Man Child Company  
Nature of an Overcoming People  
The Apostolic Company

This Manual of Restoration Teachings is Series I [of a two-part series] and is a compilation and editing of our monthly newsletters from March 2005 to October 2007. Such an idea had been suggested in the past but we believe the Lord crystallised this project in our minds recently as we sought Him for curriculum material for the third year discipleship course [Year I and Year II are already in print and being taught in discipleship courses in a number of countries].

**Paul Galligan**  
**REVIVAL MINISTRIES AUSTRALIA**

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**Making known the revelation of the mystery, Eph.3:2-11**  
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## **Contents**

- 1. The Call to Follow Jesus**
- 2. Walking in the Power of His Resurrection**
- 3. The Church that Jesus is Building**
- 4. There is One ... the seven ones**
- 5. Biblical House Church**
- 6. The Church that meets in Houses**
- 7. The Third Day Church**
- 8. Restoration of all Things**
- 9. The Man Child Company**
- 10. The Nature of an Overcoming People**
- 11. The Apostolic Company**

## INTRODUCTION

In this day the Spirit of Jesus is calling us to stop and consider our ways. Are we truly following Jesus or are we simply doing things that we think are right but have scant Scriptural basis?

In **Luke 6:46** Jesus said *“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord’ and not do the things that I say?”* He then goes on to talk about two men who built houses; the one wise and the other foolish. The wise heard what Jesus said and in hearing he obeyed. He put into action Jesus’ words and commands and the house stood. The foolish one heard what Jesus had to say but did not combine the hearing with faith that would have led to obedience. The house of the wise stood firm; the house of the foolish crumbled.

Jesus is calling to us today through this same word He spoke close to 2000 years ago. He is calling us to **‘forsake all’** and be His disciples; to **‘count all things loss’** in order to **‘know Him’**; to consider Him as the *“Pearl of great price”* and be willing to give up everything in order to have such a treasure.

He is calling us to consider our ways! If we find we have been building on sand in our individual lives and if we find that we have been trying to build Jesus’ church our way, on the sand, we need to consider our ways. We need to *“remember from where you have fallen”* and to *“repent and do the first works”* (**Rev.2:5**).

Jesus is calling us to get back to **‘the heart of the matter’** and begin building our own lives and His church in His way, according to the pattern He has given us in His word.

It is time to **‘count the cost’** and *“seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”* (**Matt.6:33**) and to go after *“the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”* (**Phil.3:14**).

Nicholas Jackson, 2007

## THE CALL TO FOLLOW JESUS

Jesus called Peter and Andrew when they were casting a net into the sea. He said to them *“follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men ... They immediately left their nets and followed Him.”* Similarly James and John responded immediately and followed Jesus (Matt.4:18-22). We know from the book of **John** that Jesus had previously met Andrew, Peter and John in the company of John the Baptist. From this we can deduce that these young men, including Philip and Nathanael, were looking for *“the Hope of Israel”*. They were all from the same fishing village, Bethsaida, and were involved in the fishing industry, and yet they were also involved in the revival that was happening through the ministry of John.

It is interesting to ponder **‘what was in the hearts of these young men?’** They were predestined by God to be called and chosen to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **we are predestined by God to be called and chosen to be disciples of Jesus Christ**
- **the goal of discipleship is to be able to send out trained ministers into the work of the harvest**
- **the Lord is challenging us to revisit and reinstate basic discipleship and ministry training in order to raise up workers for the harvest**

### Jesus the Discipler

Jesus began to call men to follow Him and be His disciples after He returned from the wilderness experience. Both **Matthew 4** and **Luke 4** tell us that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Having **overcome** the devil and temptations, Jesus was now fully qualified to begin His ministry and a key part of His ministry was to make disciples. Then He trained and equipped some of those disciples to be the ministry leaders of His church.

**1 John 2:13-14** tell us that *“young men”* are those who *“have overcome the wicked one”*; that young men are those who *“are strong and the word of God abides in them”*. Jesus had grown to maturity, the final test being His victory over the devil.

**A disciple is ready to begin ministry when they have come into a measure of victory over temptation and over the devil. It is out of this victory that we minister to others.**

Sometimes in the church an individual is seen to have a gift and they are encouraged to minister. However often that person has not been disciplined in the word nor actually trained in ministry and so the ministry that goes forth does not produce the fruit of the kingdom.

### Who disciplined Jesus?

What had happened in Jesus' life to make Him ready? Jesus being the Son of God is a totally unique person. However, in becoming man, Jesus took upon Himself fully our humanity. When His parents found Him in the temple at the age of twelve, He said to His mother *“did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?”* (Lu.2:49) After that Jesus *“went down with them to Nazareth and was subject to them ... And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men”* v.51-52. The only other scriptural insight we have of Jesus before His baptism is from **Luke 4:16**, which tells us it was Jesus' custom to go into the synagogue.

**There were eighteen years of preparation for the man Jesus to take up the ministry as the Messiah.**

Through these eighteen years

- Jesus **walked in obedience** – He was **subject to His parents**;
- Jesus **walked in grace** - His dependency upon God
- Jesus **grew in stature**, speaking of His upright lifestyle;
- Jesus **learned patience**, waiting for the time to come when He would fully know the Father's will.

He was prepared and ready by the age of thirty to step into the ministry as Messiah and then as Saviour/Redeemer. We could say that **Jesus was directly disciplined by His Father through the Spirit**, even as John the Baptist was trained and raised up by God Himself.

### **Jesus as the Son begins His ministry**

In **Matthew 3** Jesus came to John for baptism. He was fulfilling *“all righteousness”* (v.15). It was at His baptism that God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and declared His Sonship. Jesus was at the age of thirty. This was the age of a male becoming a mature man, a mature son able to receive the father's inheritance. Jesus was then led into the wilderness and after His forty day fast and confrontation with the devil *“angels came and ministered to Him”* (Matt.4:11). Then Jesus began His ministry. He began to preach *“repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”* (v.17).

The **beginning of ministry for Jesus was to preach the kingdom of God**. Very few of us in coming to Christ and then stepping into ministry at some point actually realise that the message is **the gospel of the kingdom of God or the gospel of Jesus the Messiah**. Because of this many things that are said and done in ministry miss the vital reality of preaching the kingdom of God and bringing people into the kingdom through the new birth, (Jn.3:3-6). The result is that the church is largely a powerless institution in society and not **the embassy of the kingdom of God in every town and city on the globe**.

### **The First Disciples**

We have already said that six of the disciples came from the same town and that at least five of them had met Jesus when they were in the company of John the Baptist. These young men, having been brought up as faithful Jews, practising the religion of their fathers, were **searching for something more** and had an ear to hear what the Spirit was doing and saying in their generation. While they were still employed with their fathers in the fishing business they had time to be part of the revival that was gripping the nation at the time. Because of their heart to hunger and thirst for 'the more', **they were able to recognise Jesus** when they were introduced to Him. Therefore they were **able to respond immediately to His very demanding call to discipleship**. How many of us have been willing up until now to respond immediately and whole-heartedly to the call to discipleship by Jesus Christ?

### **These Men Left All to Follow Jesus**

- they left **family**;
- they left **jobs** and therefore **income**;
- they probably sacrificed their future **inheritance** in the family business;
- they left **home** and for Peter we know that meant leaving his wife, being absent more than he was at home and when he came home he had twelve other men with him looking for a meal!

Many in our life-time have come into a relationship with Jesus through the word and the Spirit. Many have had a heart for what God has been doing and so there have been strong movements and revivals; new churches have been planted; Bible schools have opened. In Australia some of the big successful Pentecostal churches are known throughout the nation. And yet how many over the decades and today are really disciples of Jesus Christ?

**How many have truly responded to the call of Jesus and have ‘forsaken all’ to follow Him, to be discipled and to be sent out as workers in the harvest?**

How many of the churches and Bible schools are preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the name of Jesus?

How many contemporary ministries, churches and schools are actually training “*ministers of reconciliation*” who go out into the world as **ambassadors of the kingdom of God**, exercising His authority as ambassadors?

### **Our Response to the Call to Follow Jesus**

- we are **calling newer believers to discipleship**
- offering a set discipline of **Scripture reading, study and prayer**
- helping the disciples to receive, recognise and **respond to the ‘rhema’** [quickened, spoken into the heart] word of God
- directing the disciples into **witnessing to their faith** on a regular basis, trusting God for opportunities and for the power to witness.
- forming **mentoring groups** and individual relationships with those disciples who are ready to minister or who are already ministering
- **recognising the need to equip workers for ministry**
- having some **practical training sessions** in the following areas of ministry:
  - a) how to lead a person to Christ
  - b) immersing in water for believers’ baptism
  - c) how to minister the baptism of the Holy Spirit
  - d) instruction in exercising the gifts of the Holy Spirit, **1Cor.12:4-11**
  - e) how to worship – learning to flow with the anointing of the Spirit
  - f) practical training and involvement in prayer and intercession
  - g) how to minister healing and deliverance
  - h) how to be involved in outreach and evangelism.

All that we do is to be **in the context of the kingdom of God**, not in the context of some inherited form of church. The church is a body not an institution! The church is not meant to have developed its own life – its own organisational structure, government etc - separate to the kingdom. **All power and authority is with Jesus Christ**. He does not give that power and authority to church institutions.

**He releases His power and authority through His disciples  
who have been trained and sent out in ministry**

# WALKING IN THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION

## The Power of His Resurrection

*“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead” Phil.3:10-11.*

Paul lists four things that he desperately wants to know – believes he needs to know – **to attain to, to arrive at, the resurrection from the dead.** Previously Paul has said that he counts *“all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord”*; that he had already *“suffered the loss of all things”*, no longer valuing those things which were once his security and identity – the things listed in **v.5-6.**

## The Fourfold Revelation Required to Walk in Resurrection Power

### 1) “To know Him”

Paul strives and yearns *“to know Him”*, Jesus Christ. One could easily say, *‘surely Paul already knew Him better than most’*; Paul was quite mature by now, in prison after many years of successful and fruitful ministry, and yet he desperately wanted to know Him more deeply and intimately.

The crux of eternal life is to know God. Jesus in praying to the Father for His disciples said, *“That they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” Jn.17:3.*

### 2) “The power of His resurrection”

Paul wanted to know *“the power of His resurrection”*. The defining fact about Jesus Christ and the Christian faith is the resurrection of Jesus Christ, literally – He rose from the grave after three days. *“If Christ is not risen then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty” (1Cor.15:14).* In **Ephesians 1:19**, Paul is praying for us to know *“what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe.”* He goes on to say, it is the same *“mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies” v.20.*

To know this power, we need *“the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him” v17*, and we need *“the eyes of our understanding enlightened” v18.* In other words such knowledge and experience of the risen Christ in His eternal power and glory can only be known by revelation: the Lord revealing Himself to the God-seeking, sanctified and prepared heart.

How can we come to the place where God can give us such personal and life changing revelation? **Ephesians 5:26** gives us some insight, *“Christ Himself is sanctifying and cleansing the church by the washing of the water by the word”*, and in **1 Thessalonians 5:23**, it is the God of peace who will *“sanctify you entirely”*, while in **1 Peter 5:10**, it is the God of all grace who will *“perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you”*.

The point is, God is doing this work in us. *“For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified” Heb.10:14.* It is the work of sanctification in us that releases us into the power of His resurrection.

**Thank you Jesus, for your unlimited supply of grace and peace to bring us to maturity, to the experience and knowledge of Your mighty resurrection power.**

### 3) “The fellowship of His sufferings”

This striving to know Christ in His resurrection power can only be attained by *“the fellowship of His sufferings”*. Early in his ministry as an apostle in **Acts 14:21**, Paul had exhorted the new believers saying *“we must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”* How different is this to the ‘easy believism’ of ‘getting saved to go to heaven’; how

different to the ‘prosperity doctrine’; how different to the ‘escape via rapture’ mentality of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The sufferings of Christ are presented as a ticket to our immediate and eternal future with Him in salvation. While this is true, rarely have we told those we are leading to Christ, **‘welcome to the crucified life’**.

The call of Jesus into salvation is the call to suffer, to lay your life down for Him and for others, even unto death. It is Paul who said in **Colossians 1:24** *“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.”* It was Jesus who said, *“in the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”* **Jn.16:33**. How did Jesus overcome the tribulation and the suffering of life in this world – through the cross, and then through the resurrection!!

#### 4) **“Conformed to His death”**

To come to resurrection life Paul declares that he must be *“conformed to His death”*, the death of Christ. **Romans 8:29** says we are *“predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.”* This includes death, not primarily or necessarily physical death, but death to the ego: the ‘I want’, ‘I desire’, ‘I think’; death to the strongholds and mindsets and prison houses that many of us are locked into because of pride and resistance in our souls to the Christ-life within.

Being conformed to His death comes about by our recognition of the power of God working within us to reveal to us and to make know through us the glorious power of His resurrection. We are to *“always carry about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you”* **2Cor.4:10-12**. As we come to *“know (and) pursue the knowledge of YAHWEH”* (**Hos.6:3**) the reality of Jesus’ death in us will be revealed.

#### **A Foundational Doctrine**

The doctrine of *“the resurrection of the dead”* is the fifth foundation listed in **Hebrews 6:1-2**. There are six foundations that must be properly laid before the church can go on to perfection. God will not give the *‘permit’* to go on to perfection before the foundations are set in place (v.3). The church has some working knowledge of the first four foundations: **repentance from dead works** and **faith toward God** – the first two foundations are linked together and in reality equal the born again experience, the full coming to God of a new convert, i.e., being saved; **the doctrine of baptisms** and **the laying on of hands** are also linked together – the apostle Peter said in **Acts 2:38** *“...be baptised ... and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”*. In **Acts 8:12-17** those who believed Philip were baptised and then through the laying on of hands of the apostles they received the Holy Spirit. Likewise in **Acts 19:4-6** the disciples of John received Christian baptism and then Paul laid his hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

#### **The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead**

However when we come to the fifth and sixth foundations there generally is a lack of reality in the church concerning **the resurrection of the dead** and **eternal judgement**. While we all can know some things about these doctrines, it is the revelation and spiritual experience of these doctrines in practice that is lacking. God is restoring the reality of these foundational doctrines to the church today.

### **Eternal Life is Resurrection Life**

- our first experience of being born again
- our experience of water baptism
- our experience of receiving the empowering of the Holy Spirit,

are all manifestations of the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. The eternal life we receive when we are born again is the life Jesus was able to release through the power of His resurrection. In **Jn.20:22** Jesus came up to His disciples in His resurrected body, ***“He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”*** Because Jesus had been to the cross and dealt with the sin of man, He now was able to give the Spirit to those who believed in Him.

For the first time since the fall of Adam, human beings were able to receive the Spirit of God into their lives. **John.3:16** says that when we believe in Jesus we receive eternal life. This eternal life is specifically sharing in the resurrection life that Jesus releases by having become a man, dying vicariously [as atonement for our sin] and overcoming human death – the result of sin – by rising again.

In **John.11:25-26** Jesus declared ***“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.”*** While in the context Jesus was helping Martha believe that her brother could be raised from physical death, He was looking forward and teaching us that the day was coming when eternal life would be given to those who believed in Him to be ***“the resurrection and the life”***.

### **Baptised into the Resurrection of Jesus Christ**

It is in Christian baptism by immersion in water that a new believer in Jesus Christ comes more fully into the power of His resurrection. Christian baptism is powerful and real because of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and baptism is our identification with Christ firstly in His death, then in His burial, then in rising in newness of life in Him (**Rom.6:3-4**). It is through baptism that we ***“have been united together in the likeness of His death”*** and ***“certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection”*** v5. The apostle Peter also teaches us that ***“baptism now saves us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ”*** **1 Pet.3:21**. The normal Christian life is based on this foundation: that through baptism we have been placed into ***‘the resurrection of Jesus Christ’***.

### **The Message of the Resurrection Brings Life and Opposition**

The message of the first apostles in the book of **Acts** that brought forth much fruit, but also caused much opposition to rise against them, was the message of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It was the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead that declared Jesus ***“to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness”*** (**Rom.1:4**). It was the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead that released eternal life to those who believed in Him. It was the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and His ascension into heaven that released the Holy Spirit to come and fill the believers with resurrection power.

**At this time God is restoring the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith to His church so that we will walk in the power of His resurrection and so that true judgement will be restored to the church in these last days.**

# THE CHURCH THAT JESUS IS BUILDING

***“I will build My church” Matthew 16:18***

## **Biblical foundations**

The church is the household of God and it is built on the **foundations of apostles and prophets**. (Eph.2:20) There is no other foundation on which to build the church other than the ministries of the apostle and prophet that God has given through Christ to the church for the building of the church. For 1800 years **the church in general has not had Biblical foundations**. Soon after the close of the New Testament writing time, the church began to replace the ministry of the apostle with the man-made office of a bishop. The bishop was raised up to rule over the church of a city in contradiction to the clear teaching of Scripture, which says that the church of each city is pastored [shepherded] and given oversight by elders. These elders were ordained by the apostles. **This is the Biblical pattern**. (Acts 14:23, 20:28 & Titus 1:5)

## **Restoring proper foundations**

In Scripture, elders and bishops refer to the same office or ministry (Acts20:28; 1Tim.3:1-7; Tit.1:5-9). There is no situation in the Scripture where a single elder was given rulership over other elders or over the church of a city; rather eldership was meant to be a plurality. Now at the end of the age, **God is restoring apostles and prophets** so that the last days church can be built upon proper foundations. Jesus is coming back for His church, built His way, not for some conglomeration that man has mixed up and is now trying to put together, without due regard to the Scriptures and the pattern revealed therein.

## **The cornerstone**

The Scripture says **Jesus Christ is the Cornerstone** (Eph.2:20). A cornerstone in a building is set in place after the foundations have been laid. Once the cornerstone is in place, then the walls of the building can be erected. In the Scripture there is only one church and that church is built upon non-denominational apostles and prophets who have been appointed in the church by God Himself (1 Cor.12:28). The church that has emerged historically has not been built upon the foundations of apostles and prophets and so we have numerous denominational divisions in the church as people have followed the leadership and traditions of men.

**The church of Jesus Christ is not the coming together of various divided denominations but rather a church re-formed according to the Scripture.**

Once Biblical foundations are restored and Jesus Christ is recognised and received again as the cornerstone, ***“the whole building, being fitted 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”*** (Eph. 2:21-22). The **‘holy temple’** can be seen to be the entire worldwide church that God is raising. However in every place, a local church is being raised, made up of many fellowships. It is in the local fellowship that the individual saints find their spiritual home, and are **‘perfected’**, that is, adjusted or fully equipped, set in place to fully function and thus to experience God in the midst.

## **The revelation of the mystery**

### **All things gathered together in Christ**

God will grant us ***“wisdom and revelation to know the mystery”*** (Eph.1:17). This mystery is outworked in the gathering of all things in Christ, things in heaven and on earth (Eph.1:10). This refers to the coming of Christ in **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**, when God will bring with Jesus those who sleep, that is, the dead in Christ (v14). When the Lord descends

from heaven *“the dead in Christ will rise first”* (v16). *“Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air”* (v17). This is the gathering together of all things in Christ to usher in the new age of Christ ruling and reigning with and through His saints.

### **Revealed by the Spirit**

The revelation of the mystery is *“revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets”* (Eph.3:5), so that now *“the unsearchable riches of Christ”* can be preached (Eph.3:8), leading to *“the revelation of the manifold wisdom of God to principalities and powers in the heavenly realm through the church”* (Eph.3:10). God’s goal is to fully displace the principalities and powers in the heavenly realm and replace them with His church. This church understands the mystery because **the unsearchable riches of Christ are being preached by apostles and prophets whom God appoints, enabling the saints to understand and walk in the knowledge of the mystery.**

### **The revelation of the true church**

**It is as the church comes into the revelation knowledge of the mystery of God’s will being outworked through the church in the earth that the glory of God will be revealed.** This revelation is the revelation of the **true church as revealed by the Holy Spirit.** The Spirit gives the revelation firstly to apostles and prophets who then through *“the dispensation of the grace of God which was given”* (Eph.3:2), preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, enabling all the saints to *“see what is the fellowship of the mystery”* (v 9). There is much more for the saints to enter into; God wants to make known *“the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints”* (Eph.1:18). Until now most saints have never heard the preaching of Christ in such a way as to reveal the mystery.

### **The knowledge of the mystery was hidden**

This mystery *“has been hidden in God from the beginning of the ages”* (Eph.3:9). When God created all things through Jesus Christ, this mystery, called *“the hidden wisdom”* (1 Cor.2:7), was present in creation but not known or understood. Paul says in **1 Corinthians 2:6** that this wisdom is not understood by the demonic rulers of this present age but is to be understood by the saints who have come to a place of maturity in their Christian understanding, knowing the mind of Christ (1 Cor.2:16). Throughout history men in their civilizations and tribal communities have searched for this wisdom outside of Christ. This deeper wisdom can only be known through the gospel, revealed by the Holy Spirit.

### **Displacing of demonic powers**

As the church comes into the revelation knowledge of ‘who Christ is’, and that the church is *“the body of Him who fills the all in all”*, then this revelation will be made known to the demonic rulers through the church (Eph.3:10). A great change has taken place because Jesus died on the cross. The fruit of His death and resurrection is the formation of His body, the church. As His church is truly joined to Christ the Head, then the manifold wisdom of God, understood by the church through the prophetic preaching of the word, fills the heavenly realm, displacing the rule and reign of demonic powers. These powers currently rule through deception and false religion. When the church comes to know the revelation of the mystery, the demonic kingdoms become fully subject to the kingdom of Christ. They will *“bow the knee and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”* (Phil.2:10-11).

### **The revelation of the mystery releases glory**

- this wisdom is not for babes - babes need the *'milk of the word'*
- this wisdom is not for children - children need the *'meat of the word'*
- this wisdom is *'the hidden manna'*, for those growing into maturity
- *"God ordained this wisdom before the ages for our glory"*, and now the Spirit is revealing this wisdom to us (1 Cor.2:10)
- this wisdom is never understood by man's intellect; it is by revelation to the spirit of man
- to ensure that His saints understand the revelation of His will, God has actually given to us *"the mind of Christ"* (1 Cor.2:16).

This means that the saints who have grown up into maturity, and even young ones in Christ, can comprehend the word of God; can actually think the thoughts of God. God is always working to fulfil His *"eternal purpose"*; He has already accomplished His eternal purpose *"in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Eph.3:11), and now it is through the church that the outworking of God's eternal purpose will be seen.

### **It is time to understand the mystery**

Amazingly, God has now entrusted the revelation of this mystery of His eternal purpose to the foolishness of preaching.

**In these last days God is again dispensing His grace to apostles and prophets  
to make known the revelation of His mystery.**

It was to Paul the apostle that Jesus chose to reveal much more and deeper truth of the mystery of His church. Even today, well-meaning, gifted ministers are opposing what God is doing. Many are consciously refusing to receive the apostles Jesus is raising in these days. Many are defending institutional Christianity, unnecessarily, against the clear dictates and teaching of Scripture. In his day Paul called such preachers Judaizers. They were attempting to bind the new Christian church into the institutions and practices of Judaism. Religious teachers of any age and those who hear them, miss out on the revelation of the mystery, which is essential for the glorification of the church. Such ones have no vision for the church other than what they already know.

## THERE IS ONE – the Seven Ones

***“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” Eph.4:4-6.***

There are seven ones clearly presented in these verses and these seven ones are the only reliable and enduring basis for our continuing walk with God in the unfolding of His purposes at the end of this age. For many hundreds of years that which is called church and those who are Christian have been confused and in disagreement and division about many of the aspects of oneness mentioned in these verses.

The time has come when our Lord’s prayer in **John 17** is being answered by the Lord Himself as He brings His church to maturity through the restoration of apostles and all the five-fold ministry gifts of **Ephesians 4:11**. These gifts are given for ***“the perfecting [equipping] of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up [edifying] of the body of Christ” Eph.4:12***. The perfecting or equipping of the saints actually means ‘setting the body in order so that every member can function properly and fully’. This will only happen if the five-fold ministers, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, are doing ***“the work of the ministry”*** that Christ the Head of the church, who is building His own church, gives each minister to do.

### **There is ONE BODY**

The body is the church and Christ ***“is the head of the body, the church” (Col.1:18)***. The body of Christ is made up of many members and each member is joined to the body through baptism (**1Cor.12:12-13**). We are set as members in the body by God, according to His good pleasure (v18).

The body cannot be divided. The whole body is to be ***“joined and knit together”*** to the head – Christ (**Eph.4:15-16**). As in a natural body, members receive life and consequently function properly only when they are ‘joined and knit together’ in the body. The apostle Paul expressed great concern and brought reproof to the church at Corinth when he heard that they were dividing the church by following after various men [leaders such as Apollos and Cephas and Paul himself] (**1 Cor.1:10-13**).

### **There is ONE SPIRIT**

We have received ***“not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit who is from God” (1 Cor.2:12)***. The Spirit of God is referred to with many appellations [names] in the Scriptures. He first appears in **Genesis 1:2**, being called ***“the Spirit of God”***, and in the last chapter of the Bible (**Rev.22.17**) with the bride church, ***“the Spirit and the bride say, Come!”***

### **The Spirit is:**

- the Spirit of the Father (**Matt.10:20**)
- the Spirit of the Lord (**Lu.4:18**)
- the Holy Spirit (**Lu.11:13**)
- ‘the Spirit’ [many times He is simply called ‘the Spirit’]
- Jesus said ***“God is a Spirit” (Jn.4:24)***
- the ***“Spirit of truth” (Jn.14:17)***
- the ***“Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (Rom.8:2)***
- the ***“Spirit of God” (Rom.8:9)***
- the ***“Spirit of Christ” (Rom.8:9)***
- the Spirit of Jesus Christ (**Phil.1:19**)
- ***“the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead” (Rom.8:11)***

- *“the Spirit of adoption”* (Rom.8:15)
- the Spirit of grace (Heb.10:29)
- the Spirit is the *“same Spirit”* who manifests through the spiritual gifts to build up the body (1 Cor.12:7-11)
- it is *“by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body”* (1 Cor.12:13)
- we are to live and walk in the Spirit (Gal.5:15)
- the church is to be *“the habitation of God through the Spirit”* (Eph.2:22)
- *“Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty”*(2 Cor.3:17)

### There is ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING

What is the one hope? What is our calling? We need to be able to answer both questions adequately from the Scripture so that by grace we may *“lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of us”* (Phil.3:12), and to *“press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”* (v14). The call is an *‘upward call’* or a *“high call”*. The hope is that as we are *“found in Him, not having our own righteousness, ..., but that which is through faith in Christ”* (v9), we actually have a wonderful goal [future] in pursuing Christ.

The ultimate expression of the hope is found in **Colossians 1:27**. As we come to know the riches of the glory of the mystery of the Word of God, then Christ is revealed in us. The Scripture says *“Christ in you the hope of glory”*.

**Romans 8:29-30** teach us that God has *“predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren.”* This is the hope: to be conformed to the image of His Son. To this end, God called us. Having called us He had already justified us and He has in fact already provided fully in Christ for our glorification.

In **Ephesians 1:17-19**, Paul prays that we may come to know through revelation *“the hope of His calling”*. This hope is a *“blessed hope”* in that we are looking for and expecting the *“glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ”* (Titus 2:13). This hope anchors our soul *“within the veil”* always calling us on (Heb.6:19).

We all have the same hope and that is that we are called to be glorified with and in Christ.

### There is ONE LORD

*“Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one!”* (Deut.6:4). Jesus quoted these words exactly in **Mark 12:29**. Peter declared on the day of Pentecost, again addressing Israel, *“Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ”* (Acts 2:36). There is no doubt that Peter was declaring to Israel that Jesus is the LORD of the Old Testament. This is what cut them to the heart! *“God has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven and of those on earth, and of those under the earth and every tongue should confess Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father”* Phil.2:9-11.

The name of the Lord is a mystery to many in the Old Testament and the English translators have mostly failed to adequately translate the name of God as revealed to Moses in **Exodus 3:14** and then used over 6,500 times in the Old Testament. When the English word ‘lord’ is written ‘LORD’ in the Old Testament it is actually referring to the name of God. The English translation ‘Yahweh’ or ‘Jehovah’ [older transliteration but probably less correct] is a much truer rendition of the Hebrew. In the New Testament there is no doubt that Jesus is the Lord and that His name is Jesus.

### **There is ONE FAITH**

The one faith refers to *“our common salvation”* and **Jude** exhorts us *“to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints”* v3. Paul says that the first mark of maturity is *“the unity of the faith”* (**Eph.4:13**).

The faith refers to that which we believe: it concerns our attitude to the Bible – whether we truly believe *“all Scripture is given by inspiration of God”* (**2 Tim.3:16**). The one faith is the authoritative teaching of the apostles, which became holy Scripture.

It is the *“apostles’ doctrine”* that the first church continued steadfastly in (**Acts2:42**).

It includes *“the first principles of the oracles of God”* which are the foundational principles of *“repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgement”* (**Heb.5:12-6:2**).

The church world-wide is being called back to fully establish the basic doctrines of the faith to give full understanding to all the saints of ‘our common salvation’, because there is only ONE FAITH.

### **There is ONE BAPTISM**

Jesus gave the Great Commission after His resurrection, just prior to His ascension. In both **Matthew 28:18-20** and **Mark 16:15-16**, Jesus commands baptism as vital and essential in the salvation of souls. Jesus Himself had already set the example by being baptised *“to fulfil all righteousness”* (**Matt.3:15**). Jesus was being baptised in obedience to the Father according to His word.

New believers in Jesus Christ are to be baptised in obedience to the word of Jesus. The very word ‘baptism’ means ‘immersion’, that is, to be dipped in water. In the Scripture water is not sprinkled but rather the blood is sprinkled.

Water baptism follows repentance and faith (**Acts 2:38; Mk.16:16**).

The one baptism of the Scripture is **in water, by the Spirit, into Christ**; into His death, burial and resurrection (**1 Cor.12:13 & Rom.6:4-5**).

### **There is ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL, who is above all, and through all, and in you all**

This verse is awesome in showing the omnipresence of God, His ‘every-where-ness’! This great God has fully revealed Himself in His Son Jesus Christ. **John 1:18** says *“No one has seen God at anytime. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”* God is intimately aware of all that happens in His creation. Jesus said *“not one sparrow falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered”* (**Matt.10:29-30**).

Jesus revealed God to us as ‘Father’. In the Gospels Jesus refers to God as Father over 170 times and in the rest of the New Testament the ‘Fatherhood’ of God is attested to continually. Paul says *“For this cause I bow my knee unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named”* **Eph.3:14-15**.

Even non-believers are covered by God’s omnipresence: *“In Him we live and move and have our being”* (**Acts 17:28**).

**It is time for us all who believe in Jesus Christ,  
having been baptised into His body,  
to give our attention to, and to receive the spirit of wisdom  
and revelation in the knowledge of, these seven ONES  
so that we may become ONE as Jesus desires and has prayed.**

## BIBLICAL HOUSECHURCH

### Why House Churches?

As the apostolic church is restored we need to teach from the Scriptures concerning the house church or the church that meets in the house. The model and practice of 'local church' in recent times is not biblically valid, except if we were to see the local church meeting as simply the house church meeting in a hired hall; but this is not the case. The idea of dedicated buildings that are not used as part of every day Christian life is not scripturally sound. We do not need to build a sanctuary for God on the earth as there is only one sanctuary and that is the one mentioned in **Hebrews 9:11-12,24**. In **Matthew 18:20** Jesus says *"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."* This is a sanctuary, two or three gathered with Jesus present in the midst.

### The church of a city

In the Scripture the apostles wrote to **the church of a city**. In Jerusalem that church was led by apostles and elders [which included prophets, **Acts 15:22,32**]. In Antioch the church was led by prophets and teachers (**Acts 13:1**), and from **Acts 14:23**, the practice was for apostles to ordain elders in every place. There was the church of the city with either apostolic leadership or apostolically ordained elders in leadership.

### Meeting in homes

In the Scripture **the church of the city met in various houses**. The apostles attended the house meetings and taught the apostles doctrine, (**Acts 2:42,20:20**). The development of local churches numbering hundreds and thousands of saints is not a biblical development. A church that meets in the home is by definition limited in number. This means that **every person who is saved is automatically included in the life of the church**. The church of the city will in time number hundreds and even thousands of saints but they meet in house churches with a common eldership overseeing the church of the city.

### Where did the Church meet?

#### The Church met in Houses

There is no evidence of large single congregations in the New Testament except in the precincts of the temple of Jerusalem in the very early days of the church's life. The indisputable evidence of the New Testament is that **the church met in houses**. **Acts 2:46-47** tells us they met daily, from house to house; everyone's needs were met in the fellowship; they broke bread together, sang praises to God and people were getting saved every day.

### Establishing the Church in Friendly Houses

As the church spread to other towns and cities the disciples followed the instructions Jesus had given them in **Matthew 10:6-15** and **Luke 10:1-12**, **establishing the church in friendly houses**. Throughout the book of **Acts** and Paul's epistles there are many instances of the church meeting in the house.

### Paul greets the various fellowships in Rome

For example in **Romans 16:5** there was a church in Priscilla and Aquila's house; in **verse 10** Paul greets the household of Aristobulus; in **verse 11** he greets the household of Narcissus; in **verse 14** he greets a number of brethren who are together; in **verse 15** he greets the saints who are with the five brethren mentioned. There are five churches mentioned, and these fellowships are part of the church of Rome to whom Paul is writing.

## **The Myanmar experience**

In the Union of Myanmar [formerly known as Burma] the indigenous church is generally not allowed by the authorities to construct dedicated church buildings. This is a blessing in disguise – there has been some resentment among believers over this law.

The church meets from house to house. Some of the house meetings that gather to receive the visiting apostle number over one hundred, but it is normally 20-40 people who gather. In such gatherings there can be as many as half of them coming for salvation. Here we see the biblical example working, the lost are being added.

It has been an absolute delight to minister in the outlying areas of Myanmar going from town to town into house churches. It is a very biblical experience. On one occasion in a very isolated place the Holy Spirit came as on the day of Pentecost to a crowded house meeting of approximately 60 people, the majority of them being school students. Students and adults were speaking in new tongues [including English which they did not naturally know], prophesying, singing new songs in the Spirit and weeping in deep intercession. Some were drawn from the street to come up to see what was happening.

## **The First House Church**

It could be said that the first house church in the Bible met in the Garden of Eden, in the cool of the evening at Adam and Eve's place. This is where they met with the LORD. Jesus said in **Matthew 18:20**, when two or three come together in his Name, He will be there in the midst. In Jesus our fellowship with God is restored, and that fellowship is with the Lord whenever we gather in His name. We are blessed to enjoy our Lord's fellowship "in the cool of the evening."

## **What happened in Adam and Eve's house church?**

We assume that the LORD God taught the word, making it clear to Adam and Eve what the Divine purpose was and warning them to beware of the wiles of the devil, that is, to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Jesus said that if you receive the apostle you receive me (**Matt.10:40**). Jesus still comes into the midst where there are people gathered together in His name.

One can imagine that life in Adam's household after they had been expelled from the garden, included **Adam training up his sons to walk with God**. In the account of **Genesis 4** we find that both Cain and Abel had a personal relationship with God and had obviously been taught the doctrine of redemption through the offering of a lamb.

**The godly line from Seth through to Noah** suggests the ongoing training from generation to generation in their fathers' households. Each first born son was prophetically named and trained up in the knowledge of God's redemptive purposes. Finally in Noah's family, his wife and his three sons and their wives, were all involved in building the ark of salvation in that generation. **The house church, consisting of the four families, worked together under the apostolic leadership of Noah**. This was a mighty work they were called to, but the work we are called to is of equal significance as we prepare an ark of salvation in our generation through the biblical ministry of **planting the church in every place, in friendly houses**.

## **Abraham a very successful House Church Leader**

*"For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him"* **Gen.18:19**. God says He chose Abraham because He foresaw that he would manage his own household well and thus be qualified to become the father of many nations, releasing the blessing of faith to every family (**Gen.12:3**). This blessing is through Christ and is for every family.

**The church is primarily to be planted in the home: it is a family church.**

Long before Abraham had his own son Isaac, he had **many spiritual sons**. **Genesis 14:14** tells us that he had 318 trained men [servants] in his own house, who were able to go to war with him. If most of these men were married imagine how many souls were under Abraham's care. This house church was really a travelling village: hundreds of families living in tents, caring for their flocks and herds. And this was in the early years of Abraham's ministry.

In **Genesis 18:1-15** the **LORD Himself actually visited Abraham and Sarah in their own tent**. This was when the LORD prophesied the conception and birth of Isaac. The word of the LORD is to be released in the house church. **Whenever two or three gather together in His name, 'I AM' is present. HALLELUJAH!** As we share in the faith of Abraham we receive the blessing.

**God will visit us in our fellowships and His word will be precious and powerful.**

**A Lamb for a Household**

Reading from **Exodus 12** reveals to us that the Israelites living in Egypt, lived in households that included more than the immediate family. God instructed Moses that each household was to prepare a lamb (**Ex.12:3**). If the household was too small to consume in total the lamb, they were to join with another smaller household (v4). There was an optimum number of people to make up a household and in the context it appears the average household was of that optimum size. This is exciting teaching:

**God has provided a lamb for every household. For every fellowship of God's people who come together there is a lamb. In the new covenant house church, God has provided a lamb, His own Son. Each household [house church] has been provided for and is authorised to break bread in the home (Acts 2:46).**

**Jesus Christ is the Lamb for every household**

There is a wonderful example of this in **Acts 10** when Peter was invited to go to the house of Cornelius to share the good news of Jesus Christ with Cornelius together with his relatives and close friends. **The household that gathered received Jesus the Lamb of God, through the preaching of the apostle.** Even as God provided deliverance for His people from Egypt through Moses, household by household, so now He has provided salvation for all people through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has appointed apostles and other ministers to establish the church in every house that will receive them.

**Moses' Instruction for House Church**

Moses taught how the house church is to function daily (**Deut.6:4-9**). The people of God in loving God with their whole heart and soul and strength must function in their houses as believers from day to day.

***"You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the door-posts of your house and on your gates"** Deut.6:7-9.*

## Establishing the House Church

The church is established in ‘friendly houses’ by preachers [apostles, evangelists, pastors or disciples as in **Acts 11**] being sent out in the will of the Lord.

In **Luke 10:1-24** Jesus gives us clear instructions to establish house churches in every place.

**Going to every place before the Lord comes.** The Lord appointed seventy others; sent them out two by two, before His face, to every place where He would go. We are to prepare every place for the coming of the Lord (v1).

**Labourers for the Harvest.** Why do we need to establish a church in every place? Because Jesus said, *“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest”* (v2)

**Plenty of Opposition.** Jesus said He was sending them out as lambs among wolves (v3). There will be wolves, beware! You will not be popular going out to plant a church in every place. You may meet with opposition from other established churches, if they are already there, and from the evil spirits in areas controlled by sorcery and false religions.

**Walking in the Obedience of Faith.** We are not to take anything with us but trust that God will supply; we are not to get off focus [no missionary tourism]. Jesus said *“greet no one along the road”* (v4). Do not allow distractions to take you off focus.

**Led by Peace.** Enter the house where a man of peace resides; in other words, where you are received (v5).

**Find a Friendly House.** Have discernment: is this a ‘friendly’ house? If it is not a friendly house don’t remain in it (v6).

**Minister from that House.** Remain in the friendly house; receive their hospitality; minister from that house (v7). We are not meant to go knocking on every door; remain in the place where you are received.

**A city is judged by their hospitality.** A city will be judged by the way they receive the preachers that the Lord sends (v8).

**Heal the Sick and Preach the Word.** In the friendly house offer to pray for the sick (v9). Jesus instructs us to heal the sick and to preach the kingdom of God. Others may be brought to the house to receive prayer for healing as the news spreads. The power of God is present to heal in that house! This opens up the opportunity to testify about Jesus.

**Judgement comes to people and cities who do not receive preachers.** Wipe the dust of that city off your feet [a prophetic act of judgment because they did not receive the Word], but in so doing warn the city of the judgement to come (v11-12).

**Receiving the Lord.** *“He who hears you hears me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me”* v16. It is as people receive Jesus, believing on His name that they are born again (**Jn.1:12**). If people reject the preaching they are rejecting the Lord. We receive Jesus by believing on this Name. People will only know His name if we preach about Him.

**Authority over the devil.** The devil and demons are subject to us. Satan has been defeated, Jesus said *“I saw satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means harm you”* (v18-19). Our lives are hidden with Christ in God (**Col.3:3**).

**Salvation.** Jesus emphasises that the greatest miracle is the new birth, bringing people into salvation. The goal is to see people saved (v20).

**Salvation comes by revelation from God.** The Lord sends us so He can save people through our preaching (v21-22). Jesus reveals the Father to those that He wills (Matt.16:17). People are saved through revelation.

**The Mystery Revealed.** This gospel we have received is the revelation of the mystery which was hidden from the Old Testament saints (v23-24).

### Functioning in the House Church

In the Book of Acts we see the church planted and functioning from house to house. In this study we are looking at aspects of the church functioning in the house.

### Foundations Being Laid

- the coming of the Holy Spirit; giving power for ministry and witness as Jesus had promised in Acts 1:8 (Acts 2:1-13)
- Peter preaches Jesus, the Lord and Christ (v14-40)
- The listeners were cut to the heart by the preaching of Jesus crucified, dead and risen. (v37)
- Peter tells them how to be saved; repent and believe the word, and “*they received the word gladly*”; be baptised; receive the Holy Spirit (v38-41)

**The foundations of the new church are being laid by the apostles.**

### Five fundamental functions of church life

Acts 2:42 reveals the five vital components of church life

1. They **continued steadfastly** – this means what it says: the early believers continued devotedly or steadfastly in the other four components. Without a regular, full-on commitment to the things of faith, the church will not fulfill its purpose.
2. **Apostles doctrine:** the revelational teaching brought by apostles
3. **Fellowship:** the committed sharing together of the first church so that the needs of every person were met
4. **Breaking of Bread:** the Communion Table
5. **Prayer:** daily prayer meetings

### The results of continuing steadfastly in these vital components of church life

- a) v. 43 Great fear came upon all the believers. This ‘fear’ is the fear of the Lord, which in the Old Testament is the equivalent of faith. Mighty signs and wonders were done by the apostles. The fear [faith] released the miraculous.
- b) v. 44 The believers were all together and shared all things in common. A true community emerged.
- c) v. 45 Possessions and goods were sold, and the proceeds used to meet needs in the community.
- d) v. 46 Daily – continuing daily
  - in one accord – in agreement, no private agendas [Chap. 5:1-11]
  - in the temple – they presented as a coherent, committed body of believers
  - in the church fellowship of their day
  - in the houses.

**They broke bread from house to house, “a lamb for a house”.**

**The communion is fundamentally essential in the house church.**

**They shared meals together with gladness and simplicity.**

Many churches authorise home meetings, but never authorise the breaking of bread. Until all control (doctrine of the Nicolaitans) is taken off the believers, and Christians meet daily in homes, fulfilling the five fundamental functions of church, we will not experience “our first love” for Jesus and fulfill His good acceptable and perfect will.

e) v. 47 ***“Praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”*** The Lord added to the church, daily, those who needed salvation.

### **Practices of the book of Acts church in the houses**

- i. **They were praying late in the night.** *“And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them”* Acts 4:23. Peter and John went to their companions and reported to them. They found their companions meeting together in a house.
- ii. **In one accord** *“So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord”* Acts 4:24. They prayed together.
- iii. **Renewed boldness** *“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness”* Acts 4:31. The place [house] where they were meeting together was shaken and they were again filled with the Holy Spirit. They went out from the house prayer meeting preaching boldly.
- iv. **All things in common** *“Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common”* Acts 4:32. The result was revival broke out!  
**True community releases revival; many others want to belong.**
- v. **Preaching with great power** Acts 4:33 *“And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all”* ‘Great power’ and ‘great grace’ was upon the apostles. The apostles were preaching Christ. **Jesus is the DOOR to the community.**
- vi. **At the apostles feet** Acts 4:34 – 37 reveal the level of giving and sacrificial generosity of these disciples. The people were prepared to lay their money *“at the apostles feet”* and allow them to distribute it. This is a principle of God’s word.

### **Daily – They Did Not Cease!**

***“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ”*** Acts 5:42. AMEN!

Until we return to the biblical model and practice of preaching and teaching Jesus as the Christ in every house that will receive us and in public places such as the temple, we will not see the life and witness of the glory of Christ Jesus that we long for. We still only give partial approval to church in the home. Most churches forbid the breaking of bread in the home and yet this is the right place for the breaking of bread. It is neither biblical nor practical to break bread in large congregations.

**The work of the Gospel is continuous, publicly and from house to house, daily.**

The elders of the church in the city work in unity to plant the church in every friendly house. There needs to be a real soul-winning, apostolic house church in the midst of every locality, in every city, town and rural area, so that every soul is contacted and impacted by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

**A testimony**

In early 2003 I was in a city overseas and on the Sunday I preached in four Sunday meetings. The first was in a suburban area, which was quite poor. It was a humble house church meeting which included the breaking of bread. Three souls were saved in that meeting. I led them to the Lord before I ministered communion. Then they were able to receive the communion.

The next meeting was held in the upstairs of a large house which has been set apart for meetings of the church. There was a regular Sunday meeting in this place with communion. No one came for salvation. The third meeting was held in a small church building. It was packed. There was no communion and no one for salvation. The fourth was an evening meeting in a pentecostal church building, with 3-400 present. Again there was no communion and no one for salvation.

The first meeting was held in a humble house in a humble street and unsaved folks were drawn into the meeting. The breaking of bread in such a meeting is easy, natural, intimate and powerful to save as we experienced. This is the biblical breaking of bread in the house, with the apostle present to teach the word in the house.

**Multiplication**

Those pastors who lead congregations which meet on Sundays in dedicated buildings have the potential to plant multiple house churches. This means training leaders and then dividing the congregation to meet in smaller meetings – from house to house. I am not referring to cell-groups or home-groups here but to the actual planting and establishment of the church in the house. Such a work is truly apostolic and must be done for the effective witness of the Gospel to every creature. This is the Biblical way to go:

**the planting of churches in every friendly house.**

## THE CHURCH THAT MEETS IN HOUSES

The church of the New Testament is the church that meets in houses. The apostles taught the doctrines of Christ in the house meetings as believers gathered daily. There were public ministries but they were mainly for evangelism. There is the use of a public hall as in the case of Paul in Ephesus where he gathered the disciples for training, but **there is no ‘dedicated church building’**.

**According to the New Testament Scriptures the church in the house is the church in its primary and ongoing expression.**

The actual house to house meetings of the saints (believers) is the only expression of church found in the New Testament except for public preaching and testimony in places like Solomon’s porch (**Acts 5:12**), and apostolic teaching schools such as the school of Tyrannus in Ephesus (**Acts 19:9-10**).

### The Purpose of Ministry in the House

Stated clearly and simply: the purpose of ministry in the house is to plant the Biblical church and to release it to function. This is the way of ministry that Jesus instructed the seventy witnesses in **Luke 10**; they were to stay in the house of the man of peace [a friendly house, a house where they were received], heal the sick and preach the kingdom of God. They were not to go from house to house but rather Jesus’ expectation was that the sick and the lost would be drawn to the house where the ministers of the gospel were (**Lu.10:1-9**).

### The Church in the House in the Book of Acts

There are clear references in the book of **Acts** to the church in the house.

In **Acts 1:12-26** the hundred and twenty were waiting in the upper room, continuing in prayer until the Holy Spirit came – **they were in a house**.

In **Acts 2:42-47** after the public preaching in the street on the day of Pentecost, three thousand souls were baptised and added to the one hundred and twenty believers. Where did the 3120 meet? **Verse 46 “they continued daily with one accord, breaking bread from house to house.” They met in multiple houses.** One can imagine that the upper room of **Acts 1** probably held few more than 120. Many other believers opened their houses, inviting numbers of the new converts, who were already baptised and had received the Holy Spirit on the day they believed, to come to the house meetings where the apostles were teaching daily. As well, there were daily prayer meetings in the temple precincts, specifically Solomon’s porch (**Acts 5:12**).

**Acts 4:23, 31:** after Peter and John were released by the Sanhedrin **“they went to their own companions”**, [we can assume they went to a house] and prayed to the Lord about their situation and asking the Lord for boldness and for signs and wonders.

**Acts 5:42 “And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus the Christ.” Acts 9:11-19** Saul was **“in the house of Judas in a street called Straight”**. Paul was healed, filled with the Holy Spirit and baptised by Ananias in a house.

**Acts 9:33-34:** Peter raised the paralysed man **from his bed** – we assume he was in a house.

**Acts 10:24-48:** Cornelius gathered all his relatives and friends together in his house to hear Peter share the message of Jesus Christ. **“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word” v44.** Peter then commanded them to be baptised [they must have had some water in the house – maybe a Roman bath!] and he stayed with them in the house for a few days to minister.

**Acts 12:12** when the angel delivered Peter from the prison he went to **the house of John Mark “where many were gathered together praying”**.

**Acts 16:15-40** Lydia came to salvation through the preaching of Paul and as soon as she was baptised she persuaded Paul and his team to **“come to my house and stay”**. The **church in Philippi was planted in Lydia’s house**. That is where the church met. When Paul and Silas were released from the prison they went back to Lydia’s house where they saw the brethren (v.40).

In **Acts 16:33-34**, the Philippian jailer and his family were all saved and immediately baptised; he then brought the apostles into his house and set food before them. Again the function or conduct of church life was in the house.

**Acts 18:7-8** in Corinth, Paul initially testified in the Jewish synagogue but when opposition arose, **“he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man named Justus, who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household.”** Often in the New Testament evangelism reached whole households; this was because the ministry of the gospel came into the house!

**Acts 20:20** Paul testifies that in Ephesus he **“taught publicly and from house to house”**. He was speaking to the elders from the church in Ephesus. When Paul was in Ephesus he taught publicly, daily, in the school of Tyrannus. But the church met in houses and so in the evenings Paul ministered from house to house. The school of Tyrannus is the model for apostolic training schools.

**Acts 21:8** when Paul and his company came to Caesarea, he **“entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him”**. House meetings happened automatically and after many days Agabus the prophet arrived from Judea and ministered in the house (v.10-14).

**Acts 28:30-31** **“Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.”** Paul had spent two years teaching in the apostolic school in Ephesus, but he is just as committed to teaching the apostles’ doctrine in his own rented house for two years. This is the last picture we have of the great apostle Paul in the Scripture and he is practicing church in the house.

We have looked at all the direct references to the church meeting and functioning in the house in the book of Acts. There are many other indirect references because

**all the normal meetings and conduct of church life from salvation including baptism to the deeper wisdom of the word of God being taught by the apostles happened from house to house.**

### **Ministry in the Houses in the Epistles**

**Romans 16:5** **“Likewise the church in their house [Priscilla and Aquila’s house]”**

v.10 **“Greet those of the household of Aristobulus”**.

v.11 **“Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.”**

v.14 **“Greet Asyncritus ... and the brethren who are with them.”**

v.15 another group of saints are together with some brethren Paul knows by name. Paul had not been to Rome at the time he wrote the letter but he knows **‘brethren in a number of households’, ‘church in the house’, ‘brethren together’**. There are five of these groups mentioned and it is reasonable to believe that they were five house-based fellowships that were part of the church in Rome.

**1 Corinthians 16:15** refers to the **household of Stephanus** who **“devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints”**. Stephanus is referred to as a minister and a co-worker with Paul. He ministered through the church that was based in his house as well as travelling in ministry. In v.19 Priscilla and Aquila had a **church in their house** in Ephesus, as well as in Rome later and in Corinth earlier.

In **Colossians 4:15** the church is in the **house of Nymphas** [or Nympha].

**Philemon (1-2) hosted and led the church in his house.** He was known for his love and faith and his refreshing ministry to the saints (4-6) and to Paul the apostle (20-22).

As in the book of **Acts** there are only some specific references to the churches being in the houses. However there are no references in either the book of **Acts** or the **Epistles** to the church meeting customarily anywhere else. **It is time to return to New Testament Christianity, to follow the apostolic pattern clearly set in the Scriptures.**

### **As it is Written**

**The apostles in the Bible minister publicly and from house to house.** The public ministry was generally evangelism, but included speaking in the synagogues regularly in the early years of the church and also in the Temple precincts. Prayer meetings were held in the Temple area. However **the normal life of the church was lived out [conducted] in the homes, from house to house.** The new converts that came from public evangelism were received into the church; that church met in many homes. The three thousand saved on the day of Pentecost were added to the hundred and twenty, and met in many homes daily, and were growing daily *“the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved”* **Acts 2:47.**

The only mention of the venue of church meetings as such in the Scriptures is in houses. Yes, public witness happened in a variety of places, but never does the Bible suggest that the church met in these places for the conduct of normal church life. **Normal church life, which is the ‘conduct’ or function of the church was undisputedly in the houses.** So why is there such confusion today? Often when I tell another minister about the development of ministry in the house and the formation of house churches, the comment is, *‘Oh, when the group grows they will be able to get a building.’* No, that is not our goal. **The goal is the multiplication of disciples who meet in houses to hear the apostles doctrine, to fellowship together** including the meeting of each others needs, to break **bread regularly** – at least weekly but preferably daily and to **pray together** to discover God’s purpose day by day; to nurture the new converts and to disciple the believers.

### **The Conduct of Ministry in the House**

In the church that meets in the house there is

- **prayer, enabling the lost to find Jesus, praise and worship,**
- **fellowship and sharing,**
- **apostolic doctrine – leading to sound doctrine practiced, revelation understood and grace received.**
- **many opportunities for ministry – signs and wonders, preaching and teaching.**

All of these are illustrated in **Acts 2:42-47:**

**Acts 2:42** *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”* Five-fold ministry happened in the house. The apostles came to the meetings and taught the doctrine; the saints shared fellowship, broke bread and prayed together. These four aspects are the key works of the church functioning in the house. Even quite mature believers are continually made dependent on the staff of the local church – never delegated to function in ministry at home breaking bread, praying together and studying the Word.

**v.43** *“Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.”* There was evidence of the kingdom of God in the midst. The sick were healed; miracles were happening in the houses.

v.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.”* The fellowship that develops out of house-based ministry leads to a deep level of sharing. Every member in the group is known and valued; individual needs are shared openly and prayed about; help, support and provision flows as the Lord leads.

v.46 *“So continuing daily with one accord ... breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.”* There was the opportunity for believers to meet daily in open friendly ways, to share meals together and to share opportunities of experiencing the Lord through the breaking of bread. The breaking of bread in the Scripture from its inception at the Last Supper was always in the context of the meal. Today as the church returns to the house meeting the breaking of bread can once again be part of the fellowship meal and take on greater meaning.

v.47 *“Praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”* The place of praise and worship is in the house meeting. The house-based church is in ‘natural’ contact with neighbours and all who live in the vicinity of the house church. The early Christians had *‘favour with all the people’* – this means they were popular and well thought of. Neighbours are easily included into house church.

### The Testimony of Scripture is Clear

The New Testament church met in houses. The church was planted in every friendly house. **Acts 5:42** *“And daily in the temple and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus the Christ.”* In **Luke 10**, Jesus sent the witnesses out two by two into every city and place where He was about to go. He instructed them to find a friendly house and minister there, healing the sick and preaching the kingdom of God.

#### The Goal is

- multiple church plants: a church in the home of every Christian family; a church in the house of every Christian household; a church on every floor of every apartment block & every office block; a church in every street; a church in every farming district.
- for the gospel to be fully preached; for the Great Commission to be fulfilled; for the church to be prepared for the Lord’s return.
- **Therefore** there needs to be a Bible based, soul winning, Holy Spirit empowered church, in the midst of every group of people, so that every soul is contacted and impacted by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

### Ministering from House to House

For some years now the Lord has given us a focus of **planting the church “in every friendly house”**. The Lord’s instructions to the seventy that He sent out in **Luke 10** was to find a house where they were received and to heal the sick and preach the gospel in that house. In the book of **Acts** and in various places in the **Epistles** we find references to the church meeting in the house. In fact **houses were the main and even the only meeting place of the church**. Dedicated church buildings did not appear until well after the New Testament writing time. It is difficult for us in the modern era to comprehend how the church operated initially because the general format of church meetings of today is so different. However **there has been an ongoing restoration of the church in the house**.

In late 2005, a team of us were taken by an apostolic pastor who is based in a small country town to a total of six localities [one city, four towns and a farming property]. The meetings were with one person on the farm and a gathering of 15 was the largest meeting. However in every place the Lord released His word specifically and there was an anointing of revelation and understanding. We were amazed to see the Lord working as we went **‘from house to house’ sharing the word of God and ministering to the needs of God’s people.**

We see **the outworking of revival** in our day, not at this time with lots of people being saved, but rather the saints having **life-changing experiences** as we speak of the apostolic revelation and the spirit of sonship. God is enabling us to minister to individuals and small groups, who are **learning to ‘be the church’**, who are no longer dependent upon a structure or a hierarchy or a set order of service, but who are experiencing the leading of the Holy Spirit, who are taking responsibility to be disciples, to grow in the knowledge of the word. **In all of this, God is preparing a people for the influx of many in the future.**

At SHILOH a typical weekend sees teams from SHILOH going out to minister in various house settings. For example on one weekend two of our pastors visited house churches in Tamworth and Dorrigo [both of these towns are over 6hrs from our base] and visited saints in another town – they were away for five days. Another family drove over 200 kms, and ministered on a property in an isolated area. Another pastoral couple ministered in house churches in separate towns on consecutive weekends. God continues to open doors for apostolic ministry from house to house and the church is being planted in the house and functioning in a scriptural way.

### **Growing In Christian Community**

In late 2005 a team of four from SHILOH Apostolic Company spent two and a half weeks living in a Christian community in a nation where the population are nearly all Muslim and the three percent Christian minority are mostly nominal Christians belonging to a traditional denomination. All the ‘Christian’ cults are present in this nation, as well as cults we have not heard of before.

In the midst of such an environment God is raising a last days church. Pentecostals have been preaching the gospel and effectively planting some few churches. However now there are **a band of younger leaders among the Pentecostals who have a heart for the full apostolic restoration and reformation of the church.** Already their work on the ground is uniquely effective as they come out of a community base where other family members and relatives are fully committed to the work of the ministry that these pastors are doing. We had the privilege of living in this community!

### **Every Member Contributing**

We stayed in a Christian compound of an extended family including married sons and their families and other close relatives. **This extended family are all fully committed to the establishment of the kingdom of God: some go out to work, one of the brothers is a successful businessman, and all contribute financially to the work of the ministry.** The son who is a pastor is honoured by the whole family as the man of God and all are involved in the work of the ministry. As well, other co-workers, who do not live in the particular compound, are fully involved in the ministry.

This Christian compound is in the midst of a Muslim district but this family are well regarded. They find favour in business with Muslim businessmen often coming to the home to consult. As well neighbours came with prayer needs and came back to testify that God had answered the prayers. Through Muslim business contacts we were provided with transport and on one occasion hosted in a restaurant for a lovely meal.

## **The Church in the House**

This extended family with so many of them living together and working together for the extension of ministry, was obviously ready to **become the church in the house**, and **the core of an emerging apostolic company**. On the second Sunday afternoon, relatives and others supporting our brother's ministry, gathered with the household and we had the most wonderful 'house church' meeting, with over 60 sitting on the floor of the compound courtyard.

This was a new experience for these brethren as they had formerly associated 'church' with a set meeting in a dedicated building, even though their church plants are in house compounds. One of the highlights of the house church was **the Breaking of Bread and including the whole family in this celebration with our Lord Jesus Christ**. In many ways this house meeting was the highlight as it demonstrated the **restoration of the apostolic church, reforming to meet in the house**.

## **A Practical Observation**

Since we began Revival Ministries in 1998 we have been committed to planting the church in the house. We knew from the beginning that **'we are the church'** and the Lord showed us to practice the **'first works'** according to **Acts 2:42**. This we did everywhere we went, even in the car as we travelled and even on the aeroplane when we went internationally. We encouraged meetings in the house wherever we went and for some years as we have travelled in Australia, we have been received in many houses and not so many church buildings.

Early in 2007, we asked our folk who were meeting in a congregational meeting at SHILOH Centre on Sundays to break up as a congregation and meet in smaller house churches. We already had two house churches meeting on Sundays in localities outside of the city of Toowoomba, but since January three more house churches meet in the city. One of these groups continues to meet in the SHILOH Centre but sitting in a circle in a downstairs area.

On one Sunday each month the five house churches come together for a **Community Sunday celebration**. On that weekend we also have a special Friday night meeting with worship and time to wait upon the Lord and on the Saturday a **training day** from 10am to 4pm. Brethren from regional house churches, even from far distances, gather with us on those special weekends and they have become very significant times in our church life.

The reasons why we made the change in home base from a congregational meeting to house churches were as follows:

- to enhance the **accountability of each individual saint to be a contributing member** in the church meeting (**1Cor.14:26**)
- to encourage each individual saint or family to **take responsibility for the well-being of the other members** of the house church.
- to give to each member **a sense of ownership**: 'this is my church and I am responsible and accountable for its success'.

## **Meeting in the smaller groups:**

- a) enables individuals to function in giftings and contribute in the meeting
- b) encourages the brethren to begin to care for each other as the whole group operates more like a family
- c) facilitates the raising and training of new leadership, giving apprentices ministry experience.

## THE THIRD DAY CHURCH

In August 2005, a prophet shared a message at SHILOH entitled, ‘**the third day church**’. This was the first time we had heard teaching on the third day church. Within nine months we had heard two more teachings on the third day church from visiting ministers at SHILOH.

The Scripture texts primarily used are **Hosea 6:2** “*After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight*” and **Luke 13:32** “*and He said to them ‘Go tell that fox, Behold I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow and the third day I shall be perfected [I shall reach My goal NIV].’*” This is prophetically understood as referring to millennial days which equal 1000 years each. From Adam to Christ is approximately 4000 years and from the time of Christ [His death] until now is nearly 2000 years and so the church is now in the transitional time of millennial change, bringing us to the time of His coming and the subsequent rule and reign of Christ on the earth with His saints for 1000 years. God is quickening his work in our day because there will be a kingdom people, priests of the order of Melchizedek, walking in maturity, becoming the glorious church Jesus is preparing for Himself.

### The Tripartite Nature of His Unfolding Revelation

For years God has been unfolding the tripartite nature of His unfolding revelation in His dealings with man, bringing us to the walk in maturity whereby we enter in and experience the third stage. This is illustrated in the revelational teaching of the Tabernacle of Moses.

#### The Tabernacle of Moses

- Outer Court, which can be said to be the first day church experience; **Jesus** has saved us out of the world, in the fulfilment of the ministry of the Outer Court [the altar of blood sacrifice and the water laver = salvation including water baptism].
- the Holy Place, which can be said to be the second day church experience; **Jesus** has **baptised us in the Holy Spirit** bringing us into the experience of the Holy Place where we learn to minister to God
- entering within the veil to the Holy of Holies which is the revelation of the third day church; finally **Jesus** brings us within the veil entering into the fullness of the Father’s glory. This is where we are destined to come!

**Hebrews 9:1-5** briefly describes the Tabernacle of Moses, but in doing so makes known to us a major revelation. **Verse 2** says that in the first room of the Tabernacle, called the Sanctuary or the Holy Place, there is the lampstand and the table of shewbread but does not mention the third piece of furniture that was in the Holy Place, the Golden Altar of Incense. Then the Scripture says that along with the Ark of the Covenant the Golden ‘**censer**’ was in the Holy of Holies (**v.3-4**). However the Greek word **SC#2369** is ‘*thumiasterion*’ and means literally ‘*a place of fumigation in the sense of smoking, that is, the altar of incense*’ but has been translated ‘censer’. This is clearly a misinterpretation.

#### The Altar of Incense

The **altar of incense** was an essential piece of God-given furniture in the Tabernacle. Originally it was placed outside of the veil directly aligned with the Ark of the Covenant. In the New Testament it is now said to be in the Holiest of Holies. How can this be, and what deep truth is the Holy Spirit revealing to us? Through the death of Jesus the veil has been

removed and we enter the Holiest boldly **“through His flesh” (Heb10:20)**. The veil is now no longer there to separate one part of God’s house from the other part, meaning that we have access to the very seat of His **throne of grace! (Heb.4:16)**

### The Three Feasts of Israel

A revelational understanding of the Feasts of Israel enables us to enter into the experience of the third feast and the walk in maturity unto perfection.

- **Passover** in its three parts: Day of Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread and Day of First fruits, is fulfilled by **Jesus** dying on the cross and rising again and is fulfilled in the life of the believer through **salvation including water baptism**.
- **Pentecost**, the Greek name of the Feast of Weeks, a single one day Feast, 50 days after Passover, is fulfilled by **Jesus** sending the **Holy Spirit, enabling the saints to minister as priests and servants**.
- The Feast of **Tabernacles** beginning with the memorial blowing of Trumpets – calling the church to walk in maturity – followed by the Day of Atonement which is fulfilled by the saints forsaking all sin, brings us to the time of Tabernacles which is **fulfilled by the fullness of the Godhead indwelling the saints (Jn.14:23, Col.2:9-10)**.

### The Revelation of the Godhead

Each of the feasts and each compartment of the Tabernacle reveal to us and in us the Persons of the Godhead;

- firstly **Jesus** who saves us and we say we have come to know Jesus and we become His disciples, His children
- secondly the Holy Spirit; **Jesus** fills us with the **Holy Spirit** and we come to know the life in the Spirit, becoming His ministers;
- thirdly the Father; the final goal is for **Jesus** to bring us in the fullness of the Spirit to the **Father**, being **‘adopted as sons’**.

We have already seen that the presentation of the Tabernacle of Moses in the New Testament is no longer presented as two distinct rooms but one because the veil is now removed through Jesus. Therefore finally the revelation of God which John says is the revelation that the fathers have **“they know Him who is from the beginning” (1Jn.2:12,14)**, is the revelation of the ONENESS of God.

### Inheriting the Promises of God

The other clear Old Testament type that typifies our walk is **the Exodus of Israel from Egypt**, the **journeying through the wilderness** [of the world], then reaching and **inheriting the Promised Land**. We are saved out of the world, but like the children of Israel it takes the dealings of God by His Spirit to get the world out of us – the restoration of our souls, **“He restoreth my soul”** – so that we are ready as overcomers to enter into the inheritance and walk with God in the fulfilment of His precious and magnificent promises (**2 Pet.1:2-4**).

Many have taught that the inheritance or ‘Promised Land’ is heaven. However this is a serious misunderstanding of God’s eternal purpose as clearly taught in the Scriptures. Paul teaches us in **Ephesians 3:2-11** that it is the revelation of the mystery of Christ and His church that brings the fulfilment of God’s eternal purpose; in **1Corinthians 2:6-7** Paul tells us

that it is this mystery, the ‘wisdom for the mature’, the ‘hidden wisdom’, which God ordained before the ages **for our glory**.

The inheritance is not heaven but **it is the kingdom of heaven revealed in the earth through the church**, bringing to fulfilment the promise of God that *“the earth will be filled with God’s glory”* (Num.14:21) and *“that knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea”* (Hab.2:14). This is outworked by the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom.8:19) which is the *“bringing of many sons to glory”* (Heb.2:10). Heaven is already filled with God’s glory, but His clear intention is to fill the earth with His glory.

### **Little Children, Young Men and Fathers**

The apostle John (1Jn.2:12-14), clearly describes three generations, or age groups, based on maturity that should exist in the church at all times: little children, young men, and fathers.

#### **Little Children**

Little children represent the newly saved who need to be founded in the faith through the nurture of the pastoral ministry, feeding them the milk of the word. Jesus said to Peter *“Feed My lambs”* (Jn.21:15).

Then these same children need to be discipled in the word, that is, taught the word of God - the doctrines of the faith – by the teacher. Jesus has commanded us to *“make disciples of all the nations, baptising them ..., teaching them to observe all things”* (Matt.28:19-20).

Unfortunately most churches are not being obedient to make disciples but are content to get ‘more church members’. It was a great shock to a brother apostle of mine that when he began a discipleship group in a local church, he found some members of the church were not even saved, others were not baptised in water and most had never spoken in tongues. There has been a negligent attitude towards basic discipleship.

#### **Young Men**

The ‘young men’ are the ones *“who are strong, and the word of God abides in them and they have overcome the wicked one”* (1Jn.2:14). The ‘young men’ represent the believers who having received some basic discipleship [training in the word] and now have a testimony; the word is abiding in them and they have victory over the devil. Therefore they are able to minister to others. Such ones need specific training and equipping for ministry to become servants in the house of God, preaching the kingdom of God.

#### **Fathers**

The ‘fathers’ are the mature ones. [Remember *“in Christ Jesus, there is neither male nor female”* (Gal.3:28)] Fathers by definition have children. The normal expectation of God in the Scripture is for there to be ‘fathers’ in the church, that is, spiritual fathers and mothers to bring up the little children to become the young men who then need fathering to bring them to the place of maturity. When the young men have come to that place of maturity they will receive the *“predestined adoption as sons”* (Eph.1:5). It is at the time of maturity [a ‘kairos’ time, not a specific ‘chronos’ time] that the young man is ready to receive *“the adoption”* which is ‘the placing as a son’, the time to receive the promised inheritance.

### **God has Restored Fathers**

Because there has been a dearth of fathers in the church of Jesus Christ, God has provided the answer through the sending of ***“Elijah the prophet, and he will turn [is turning] the hearts of the fathers to the children”*** (Mal.4:5-6). To this end God has raised apostles at the end of the age who, coming in the spirit and power of Elijah, are fathers and through the apostolic fathers that He has raised, God is releasing the truth and reality of sonship. However in this awesome restoration there has been some misunderstanding and misapplication.

**Some apostolic fathers have concentrated on raising sons unto themselves** and have overemphasised the reality of ‘having fathers’ in an unscriptural way. In the natural it is children who need a father not mature sons. So it is in the spiritual: it is the children in Christ who need the fathers to raise them and train them to become servants in the kingdom of God. As those servants mature they come to the place of being ready to receive the adoption. Some have not seen the revelation of ‘sonship’ that is clearly taught in Scripture and that the experience and reality of sonship is actually an experience of the Holy Spirit Himself bringing to pass the promised ***‘adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace’*** Eph.1:5-6.

### **God alone can ‘beget’ sons**

Those who have just become sons need some fathering to become successful fathers. However God alone can **‘beget’** sons. It is a spiritual operation so powerful that mature ministers have said ‘it is like being born again, again!’ The role of the apostle as a father is to father sons, thus becoming a father to fathers. The sons then who have been fathered by the apostle are able to father the ‘young men’ who are growing up in the ministry to bring them into sonship and they in turn become fathers. God wants all of His children fathered and God is ***“bringing many sons to glory”*** through Jesus Christ who has already been made perfect through His sufferings for us (Heb.2:10).

## ELIJAH IS COMING FIRST AND WILL RESTORE ALL THINGS

*“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things’”* Matt.17:11. ‘Elijah came’ through the ministry of John the Baptist, in preparation for the first coming of our Lord Jesus (v.12-13). But Elijah is to come again and restore all things before the *“great and dreadful day of the Lord”* (Mal.4:5) – the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus.

### The Dreadful Day of the Lord

We are blessed to be living in the time of preparation for the Second Coming, although it is a **‘dreadful day’**. The ‘dread’ is because of the increasing judgments of our Lord in the earth. A team of us had been in Pakistan until a few days before the earthquake in late 2005.

It was a shock to us to realise that at least to the ones we went to, I was the first real apostle they had received in Pakistan, and to realise that much prayer was being offered for Pakistan by saints in Australia, Mauritius, Africa, Myanmar and probably other places. We experienced heavy oppression in that nation of poverty, confusion and hostility, suspicion and unfriendliness. Then we witnessed a judgment [natural disaster] that effected millions, over 70,000 losing their lives. God clearly says in His word that the purpose of judgments in the earth is that the people *“shall know that I am the LORD”* (Ezek.30:19).

### Judgement at His Coming

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is in a large measure for judgment: He will be *“revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe”* 2 Thess.1:7b-10.

### The Spirit of Adoption

Integral to the restoration being brought about by **‘Elijah to restore all things’** is the restoration of the hearts of the fathers and the restoration of the hearts of the children (Mal.4:6). The great grace that Jesus Christ is releasing to us all in these days is **the grace of sonship**; He is releasing the **spirit of adoption**, which is **the release of His grace and power to enable us to walk in sonship, to walk in a mature relationship with God as our Father**. We become *“heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ”* (Rom. 8:17) the day we are born again, but we must grow up in Christ from babyhood, through childhood, through adolescence and young adulthood to the age of maturity, which is the age of adoption as a son, now grown up, now ready to receive the inheritance that God has laid up for us.

The receiving of this great grace and enabling power is available for all whose hearts are for Christ in these last days; to those who will forsake all to *“seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”* Matt.6:33; to those who will *“come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty”* 2 Cor.6:17-18.

**We are to be separated unto God and His purpose: no mixture! No unequal yoke!  
No idols in the heart, drawing us away. No longer excusing ourselves as to why  
we cannot be wholehearted and single-minded for Christ and His purposes.**

### **Grace and Apostleship**

*“Through Him [Jesus Christ] we have received grace and apostleship for the obedience to the faith among all nations for His name” Rom.1:5.* This is such a powerful verse revealing to us the means whereby the gospel will triumph in all nations. God has given us **grace through Jesus Christ** and it is through the ‘**apostleship**’ that the nations will be reached; it is through the reality of this special, peculiar, New Testament gift given first by God in sending Jesus Christ the apostle of our confession (**Heb.3:1**). Then this gift was given by Jesus Christ in faithfully raising the twelve apostles: a New Testament ministry for a **new covenant, for the founding, establishing and building of the church of Jesus Christ**; and then given by Jesus in His ascension through the Holy Spirit. Therefore this grace of apostleship is available today and is exactly what the church needs today to fulfil our God-given task.

### **Obedience = ‘to Hear Under’**

A key word in **Romans 1:5** is the word OBEDIENCE. It literally means to ‘*hear under*’. The same word is used in **2 Corinthians 10:5** *“bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”* It is crucial **how we hear** and **what we hear**; it has to do with the preparation of the heart and a deep desire and conviction to believe in and seek God (**Heb.11:6**). It is *“obedience to the faith”*. How does faith come? *“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” Rom. 10:17.*

**What are you hearing? Does what you hear lead to the obedience of faith?**

Unless you position yourself to hear the apostles doctrine and position yourself to receive the revelation of the mystery from His holy apostles and prophets (**Eph.3:4-5 & 8-10**), you will not be able to receive the grace of apostleship that God has given in and through Jesus Christ. It is this apostolic grace that brings the church in every nation to *“the obedience to the faith”*. This is the faith that we are to contend for, *“the faith once and for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3)*. That faith has been watered down or taught incompletely up until this time but now God has restored apostles and prophets to do the work of the ministry, completing the five-fold ministry that Christ gave in His ascension, *“for the perfecting of the saints, ..., building up the body of Christ till we all come to the unity of the faith, to the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man” (Eph.4:12-13)*.

### **From Foundations to Perfection**

**Foundations in the house of God are apostles and prophets (Eph.2:20).** These two ministries found the church properly in the grace and truth of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only foundation (**1 Cor.3:11**) upon which to build. Then the evangelist effectively preaches the gospel, bringing new converts into a properly founded church where the pastor and the teacher function in ministry, to nurture and disciple the believers.

However the ministries of pastor and teacher can only bring the saints so far in terms of their maturity. Then the prophets and apostles need to provide training and equipping to bring the saints to full maturity, being able to perceive, understand and teach the deeper wisdom of God, the revelation of the mystery.

Jesus Christ is the foundation of the church. There is no other foundation on which to build. The apostles are the first foundation ministry: *“you are Peter”* a foundation stone. *“To you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt.16:18-19)*. How powerful is that!

Jesus Christ has given New Testament prophets, **the seers, the eyes of the five-fold ministry** to work alongside of the apostles, to point the way, to warn of pitfalls, to discern opposition, to declare present truth, to speak life into people and churches. In these days God is providing for every fellowship, every local church, every house church to receive the Biblical foundations of the ministries of apostles and prophets.

**Then the church can be built into Christ, the chief cornerstone and the church can grow up in all aspects into the head who is Christ.** For this to happen the prophets and apostles are also needed to provide equipping [perfecting] for the saints to enable the whole body to grow up, coming *“to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”* (Eph.4:12-13). The same ministries that provide the foundational link to the Rock, Christ, now bring about the completion of the building of the church by preaching Christ, *“warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus”* (Col.1:28).

## THE MAN CHILD COMPANY!

### A woman clothed with the sun

Revelation 12 introduces *“a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and on her head a garland of twelve stars”* (v1). Who is the woman? Before we answer this question, let us remind ourselves that **Revelation 1:1** tells us the Book of Revelation is revealing things *“which must shortly take place”*, that is, telling us of things yet to come. This woman is described in cosmic proportions: she is *“clothed with the sun”*. At His transfiguration Jesus’ face *“shone like the sun”* (Matt.17:2). The church is said to be the ‘bride of Christ’; the church is the woman. The woman has taken on the characteristics of the Son of God, the husbandman.

### A fiery red dragon

This woman is ready to give birth and at that point *“another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns and seven diadems on his heads”*v3. There is no doubt as to who is the dragon. The devil is the implacable enemy of the church, always intent on stealing, killing and destroying (**Jn.10:10**).

### A child is to be born

*“The dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her child as soon as it was born”*v4. There is a birthing prophesied and this birthing is referred to many times in the Scripture. **Zion is giving birth to her sons!** Many Scriptures in the **Prophets** speak of Zion in labour, travailing to give birth. **Isaiah 66:7-10** is such a passage: *“Before she was in labour, she gave birth; before her pain came she delivered a male child. ... For as soon as Zion travailed, she gave birth to her children.”* Zion prophetically represents the Bride of Christ; she delivers a male child [singular]; she gave birth to children [plural]. We can say from this that **the male child represents a corporate entity**.

### To become the sons of God

In **Romans 8** Paul speaks of *“the creation eagerly waiting for the revealing of the sons of God”* v19. Then he says *“the whole creation groans and labours with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption ... The Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”* v22,23,26. There is a birthing! It is to bring forth the sons of God! The Spirit is at work in the bride church to bring something to birth: to bring **to birth the sons of God for whom all of creation waits**.

### To rule all nations with a rod of iron

*“She bore a male child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron”* (Rev.12:5). This reference is taken from **Psalm 2:7-9** where the Son is promised the nations as His inheritance and He *“shall break them with a rod of iron; shall dash them to pieces as a potter’s vessel.”* Because of this, some have said that the woman is Mary or the woman is the Old Covenant community that brought forth Messiah. However, if the Book of Revelation is concerning things to come then we must look further to understand the church and the bringing forth of a man child company in these last days. The true church is made up of Spirit-born, Spirit-baptised believers who are baptised members of the body (**1Cor.12:13**).

### Overcoming Jezebel

**Revelation 2:18-29** is Jesus’ letter to the church at Thyatira. This is the church that is called to overcome Jezebel. This is the only New Testament reference to Jezebel but it is a very important one. Jesus promises that those who overcome Jezebel and *“keep My works*

*until the end, to him I will give power over the nations – ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’ – as I also have received from My Father.”* It is this promise to the church overcoming the power of Jezebel that gives us understanding of whom the male child can be.

### **To rule is to shepherd**

The woman in **Revelation 12** is giving birth to a male child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. The promise to Messiah in **Psalm 2** is given by Messiah to His church in **Revelation 2:26-27**. The word ‘*rule*’ in **Revelation 2:27, 12:5, 19:15**, is the Greek ‘*poimaino*’, meaning ‘to tend as a shepherd’. Christ rules as a shepherd king and His people will rule with Him with a shepherd’s heart but ‘**with a rod of iron**’.

### **By the uncompromising word of God**

How does a shepherd rule with a rod of iron? The rod is the rod of discipline or instruction and iron is very strong and unbreakable. The rod of iron is the uncompromising word of God! It is every word of Scripture “*given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*” **2Tim.3:16**.

### **Who or what shall be dashed to pieces?**

The nations will be dashed to pieces! In what way? The antichrist systems and laws imposed on people that make it illegal for the gospel to be preached; that puts pastors in jail for making converts; that put people to death who convert to Christianity etc. It is these systems of government and law that oppose the LORD and His Christ that will be dashed to pieces (**Ps.2:1-12**).

### **The spirit of Elijah**

Some have said that the power of Jezebel is the specific enemy of the ministry of the prophet and the prophetic restoration of recent decades. However in the original context of the Book of Kings, Elijah represents more than the prophetic ministry. In reality Elijah is a type of the King/Priest.

In the nation of Israel at that time, **Elijah had the ministry of priest** in that he was authorised to offer sacrifices but **he also had the ministry of king** in that the real authority in the nation was with him and king Ahab was subject to the word of the LORD through Elijah. Then in **Revelation 2** Jezebel is to be overcome by the church in Thyatira, not overcome by a prophet as such, but overcome by the church. It is the church that is endowed with the spirit of Elijah that is being raised in these last days to overcome Jezebel.

Our experience in the apostolic restoration is that of persistent and continual attacks from the Jezebel spirit. The power of Jezebel is the power of Satan trying to stop the church ruling and reigning in the earth. Even as Jezebel was totally destroyed by the word of the Lord so the Jezebel spirit will be destroyed by the word of the Lord.

### **The overcoming company**

“*And her child was caught up to God and to His throne*”(Rev.12:5). This child is a **corporate entity** even as the woman giving birth is a corporate entity. The male child [man child] can refer to ‘the sons of God’; it can refer to the apostolic company; it can refer to the company of overcomers. These are all ways of describing or pointing to the remnant church that is being birthed and raised in these last days. Being “*caught up to God and to His throne*” is not referring to a catching away [rapture] of the church out of the earth realm, but is referring to the nature of the relationship that this elect group [man child] has with God: **they are walking with God in a transforming way even as Enoch walked with God, and they are an overcoming body of saints who know the authority of the Lord of lords and**

**the King of kings [His throne], who are preaching and representing His kingdom on the earth.** Such a company will rule the nations!

### **How are we caught up to God and to His throne?**

It is by being born from above (**Jn.3:3**); we must be born of the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God (**Jn.3:6**). Since the day I was born again I have known that I am a part of the kingdom of God. God is my Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is the King. If there is a kingdom there must be a throne.

The nature of the Christian walk is such that we are meant to grow from being babes in Christ to ruling and reigning with Christ in His kingdom. The sons of God company has to come to birth; then **there is a time of growth before the sons come to maturity and walk with God in such a way that His kingdom is manifest through them.**

The Son of God Himself was in His mother's womb for the normal time; then He had to grow to maturity over 30 years. He then ministered for three and a half years, manifesting the kingdom of God, completing the work the Father had given Him to do. We are being prepared now for a time of awesome manifestation of **Christ in us**, the result being that all the nations will be disciplined by the word of God and finally Babylon will fall.

### **War in the heavens**

The result of this male child being birthed, who is now walking with God in such an awesome relationship, is that **"war broke out in heaven"** (**Rev.12:7**). Notice that the war in the heavenlies is between **"Michael and his angels and the dragon and his angels."** The war in the heavenlies is the LORD's! The church is not called to war in the heavenlies.

As a result of the war, the devil **"who deceives the whole world, was cast to the earth and his angels were cast out with him"** v9. The church is called to overcome in the earth! Our battle is with the accuser of the brethren who has been cast down from heaven. Our victory is on the basis that **"Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come"** v10.

### **The church is giving birth to sons**

Out of the true church made up of born again believers, sons are now being birthed world-wide. The message of sonship was heralded forth in earlier decades by some pioneers but now is the time for the fulfilment of this message. There is the bringing forth of the sons of God! These sons are representatively known as the **man child**, as the **overcoming company**, a **mature body** of believers. In the apostolic company it is easy to have this seed of sonship birthed in you. Then there is a time of growth to come to maturity and to learn to walk in maturity. We can be part of this man child!

**The church is giving birth to sons.  
These sons will be a militant, witnessing group of people  
who will be unstoppable, indestructible;  
the apostolic company who will rule the nations with a rod of iron.**

# THE NATURE OF AN OVERCOMING PEOPLE

## **An understanding and practice of apostolic company**

The Lord is revealing the corporate nature of the church by bringing an understanding and practice of apostolic company. In the days of Noah the ark of salvation was a boat, but **in these last days the ark of salvation is the church of Jesus Christ**. This demands a full and deep understanding of the true church as revealed in the New Testament.

## **The 120 in the upper room**

The understanding of apostolic company comes firstly from the example of the 120 disciples including the apostles and their leadership, who continued in the upper room in obedience to Jesus in **Acts 1**. These brethren continued in prayer and supplication and were **“in one accord”**. The main task given to Peter by the Holy Spirit was to set the twelfth apostle in place so that the foundations upon which the church was to be built, would be complete.

## **Company is Scriptural**

Later in the Book of **Acts** we find reference to **“companions” (Acts 4:23, 21:8)** and **“company” (Acts 15:22)**. The concept of company as an understanding of how the New Testament church functions in committed fellowship is found in the Scripture and it is a God idea. For some years now we have been obediently developing the practice of company at SHILOH as the Lord instructed us to do. This company includes not only locally based people but related brethren in house churches and small groups even thousands of kilometres away.

## **Authority and protection in the company**

When an apostolic company begins to function properly there is **tremendous authority and protection released for the work of the ministry**. In September/October 2007, a team went out from SHILOH apostolic company to minister in West Africa, London and the USA. In preparation for this trip there was much corporate prayer in the company based at SHILOH. This prayer experience became so strong that we saw that the team going out was not being sent out from the company but rather the company [as expressed in the corporate prayer meeting] was extending overseas through the team that was going out. We spoke of this prophetically before we went and then we experienced the reality of it while we were overseas.

## **One in the apostolic mission**

It was not only the team overseas that experienced this new level of being joined to an apostolic company and feeling the effect of that even in a far country, but also the brethren back home, even in isolated house churches up and down the East coast of Australia, also experienced a new level of being joined and being one in the apostolic mission that was being spearheaded by the team ministering overseas. There were victories at home and abroad because we are beginning to become **an overcoming company**

## **By the Blood of the Lamb**

**Revelation 12:11** teaches us that victory over Satan, the accuser of the brethren, is only possible as a corporate [plural] body of believers, properly joined together. The Scripture says ***‘they overcame him’***. It is as the saints are joined together in apostolic company - a pattern people - who are committed to walking in maturity, that ***“the blood of the Lamb”*** works to give the saints the victory.

### How does the blood of the Lamb work?

*"If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."* (1Jn.1:7) Brethren, it is essential that we walk together in the light of Jesus Christ, being led by His Spirit in the light of His word, being in open, respectful and loving fellowship and submitting to one another in the fear of Christ. A submitted life to the brethren in the fear of God, is a sign of a Spirit filled life (Eph.5:18-21).

Therefore whenever difficulties, disagreements, misunderstandings or any other problem arise between brethren, we must keep very short accounts and be reconciled quickly to one another in the fear of Christ. This is how the *"blood of Jesus Christ"* works in the body: whenever a problem [sin] arises, it is to be dealt with immediately by repentance and confession, allowing the blood of Christ to cleanse. Thus the relationships in the body are restored in the short term, allowing true fellowship and enabling the saints to walk in the light together.

While there is vital need for each individual saint to walk in the light of Jesus Christ, it is the corporate experience and expression that God is looking for – the church walking in maturity – and it is the corporate expression that will overcome the accuser of the brethren, providing for all the members in the fellowship to be walking in victory.

### The body functioning together

Colossians 3:12-17 is a powerful and commanding guide to life together in the body of Christ. God expects the body to function in this way, *"bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another, even as Christ forgave you, so you also."* We can too easily overlook the clear teaching and guidance of God through the Scripture in which He is instructing us as to how we should walk and conduct ourselves in relationships in the body.

The apostolic company is referred to as *'the elect of God'* and *"the elect"* are to *"put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness and long suffering."* All of these are relationship words, governing our attitudes and our actions in relationship to other members of the body. Then the Scripture says *"put on love ... and let the peace of God rule in your hearts."* This is all in the context of the body.

### By the Word of Their Testimony

Secondly they overcame the accuser of the brethren *"by the word of their testimony"*. Notice again it is a corporate confession, *'their testimony'*. This takes us again to Philippians 3:15-17 *"as many as are mature, have this mind ... Let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind."* Let us *"be a pattern people"*!

### The apostolic confession

*The word of their testimony* is the apostolic confession of *"the faith once and for all delivered to the saints"* Jude 3. This is the testimony: the **knowledge of the mystery**; the **fellowship of the mystery** (Eph.3:2-11); the reality of **adoption as sons** (Eph.1:5). It is to the company, the church corporate, that God gives *"the mind of Christ"* (1 Cor.2:16).

One of the historic documents of the Reformation is the Westminster Confession. Our fathers in the faith of that period understood the importance of **'confession'**. The word 'confess' Greek *'Homologeō'* literally means 'to speak the same word'. It is used powerfully in **Romans 10:8** wherein we **'confess our salvation'**, believing in our hearts.

This word 'confession' has the connotation of *'a binding public declaration by which a legal relation is contractually established'* (SFLBible p.1566). Remember we are to have a confession of Jesus our Apostle (**Heb.3:1**). Such a confession has been missing from the church for 1800 years. It has been the absence of the testimony of the **apostolic nature of the church** that has led to a great lack of victory in recent history for the church.

### **Who we are**

The word of our testimony is our understanding and confession of who we are: **the body of Christ, the elect of God, the saints**, and our **high calling** [attaining to the resurrection of the dead, (**Phil 3:11**)] into the **purpose of God** which He has already accomplished in Christ Jesus (**Eph.3:11**) and is now bringing to pass in the last days church.

This testimony includes the knowledge of the mystery, *"the fellowship of the mystery"* (**Eph.3:9**), whereby God now intends *"that the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenlies"* **Eph.3:10**.

Can you now see how the corporate church walks in victory, overcoming the accuser of the brethren?

### **Loving not their own Lives to the Death**

Thirdly they overcame him *"loving not their own lives to the death"*. This is the outworking of **1 John 3:16** *"by this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."* Loving not our lives to the death speaks of our commitment to the fellowship, to the apostolic company and our appreciation of our placement in the body of Christ, *"we were bought with a price"* (**1Cor.7:23**).

The ultimate price is martyrdom, and martyrdom is not only 'dying for the faith' but it is also laying our lives down for our friends. In recent times the Lord has made it clear to us that He wants us **'to give our heart to Him and to one another'**. This is the nature of apostolic company. I have given my heart to my brethren. My brethren have given their hearts. As the reality of **'loving not our own lives to the death'** becomes known to us, the committed relationships that we enjoy become a powerful bulwark against the enemy's attack, which mostly comes through accusations.

**When we begin to walk in the revelation of apostolic company, of true Christian fellowship and community, we will experience corporately enormous victory over the evil one and the glory of Christ will be more and more manifest in and through the saints.**

## THE APOSTOLIC COMPANY

### The first apostolic company

As we read the first chapters of the Book of **Acts** we see the formation of the first apostolic company. This company included the apostles who had been with Jesus, *“the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brothers” Acts 1:14*, as well as other believers, *“about one hundred and twenty” Acts 1:15b*. They were men and women who were in unity and in one accord (**Acts 1:14&2:1**); they were of *“one heart and one soul” Acts 4:32*. This apostolic company was committed to prayer. It was through prayer that Peter was led by the Holy Spirit to appoint Matthias to replace Judas as the twelfth apostle.

### An elect group of disciples

This first example of an apostolic company was an elect group of disciples in one accord, continuing in prayer and supplication; it was to this company that God sent His Spirit, fulfilling the Feast of Pentecost and releasing the apostolic ministry to raise the church of Jesus Christ.

### Able to receive 3000 converts

Peter was able to stand up on behalf of the eleven and preach a powerful message concerning the Messiah-ship of Jesus, leading to the call for people to *“repent be baptised, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” Acts 2:38*. This apostolic company was prepared and ready to receive 3000 new converts on one day! And together *“they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” Acts 2:42*.

### The Spirit of Sonship

The apostles that Jesus had trained were ready and prepared to receive the fullness of the Spirit of sonship and were able to minister on a level comparable to Jesus. The experience of **Acts 2** for the apostolic company in the Upper Room was vastly different to the experience of the new converts [3000] who were baptised that day and received the gift of the Holy Spirit. The experience of the 120 was far different to the infilling of the Spirit that the Gentiles received in the house of Cornelius (**Acts 10**) or any of the other infillings [baptisms] of the Holy Spirit in the book of **Acts**.

### The Pentecostal Experience

The Pentecostal revival that began in the early twentieth century and has continued since was the restoration of the infilling or baptism of the Holy Spirit. It was not the restoration of the fullness of the Spirit of sonship. The Spirit of sonship is being restored today!

It is time for maturity, not time for Pentecost. Finally Pentecost is one of the foundations but sonship is the means by which the mature church reaches the destination, which is the glory of Christ revealed in His saints in the earth.

### Called to be an apostolic person

- called out of the world to follow Jesus,
- forsaking all to seek first for the kingdom of God,
- taking up the cross of personal self-denial and embracing suffering for His sake,
- going forth to witness and minister wherever the Lord sends.

**Obedience to this call requires a total reorientation of one's lifestyle and a prioritising of all of life's goals and practical involvements to fit in with the call of God.**

The call of God is not to be a good Christian only; is not to be successful in family life as an end in itself; is not to be successful in business pursuits, except it be the will of God. The call of God is to fulfil the purpose of God: *"we are called according to His purpose"*. The purpose of God is made known to us through the knowledge of the mystery (**Eph. 3:1-11**).

**God is raising apostolic companies**

We are called to be part of an apostolic company: to be joined together **'in one accord'**, **'of one heart and one soul'** as the body of believers in **Acts 1-4**.

In these days the Lord is raising up apostolic companies, led by apostles, with all the five-fold ministries in place, to fully function as a body. Each part of the body is *"joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causing growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love"* **Eph.4:16**.

God is looking for apostolic companies to whom He can add 3000 souls in one day! In other words He is forming companies today who can receive the Holy Spirit in fullness to become the fully functioning body of Christ in the earth.

**Apostolic companies are the vanguard**

Apostolic companies are the vanguard that God is raising up in these days to demonstrate to His people the victory He has given us over the devil and Satan. As apostolic companies begin to function in the fullness of Messiah's authority in the earth, then a multitude of believers will flock to embrace the apostolic and the church will finally come to her destination: to rule and reign with Jesus the Messiah in Zion.

In the times of restoration in which we are privileged to live, God has ordained the formation of apostolic companies around the world.

**An apostolic company is:**

- a body of saints who have been called together in commitment
- to see the kingdom of God established on earth among the nations.
- these saints have been called out of institutions and organisations into a walk of clear obedience to Christ and the word of God.
- in these companies all the ministries and gifts that God has given in the New Testament find their place and full expression.
- these companies stretch across nations; are led by an apostle[s];
- are characterised by all the company members having a clear understanding of the call of God and a powerful revelation of sonship.

**The apostolic company is a pattern for the church**

In mid 2001 the Lord instructed us to form an apostolic company and over the years He has enlightened us as to the understanding and practice of apostolic company. The apostolic company is raised up by the Lord to become a *"pattern"* people.

Paul refers to this in **Philippians 3:15-17** where he speaks of those who *"are mature"* as having the *"same mind"* and walking *"by the same rule"*. Earlier in **1 Corinthians 2:6-16**, Paul refers to the *"wisdom of God in a mystery"* which is for the mature to receive and this wisdom *"God ordained before the ages for our glory"*.

God has always intended for the church to come to maturity and it is essential for the church to come to maturity to be able to receive the revelation of the mystery and begin to experience and walk in the glory of the Lord.

In these last days the concept of ‘**church**’ has become very confused with many referring to a building or a denomination or an institution as the church. Therefore God is specifically raising apostolic companies to model New Testament church.

Notice that Paul says “*we have the mind of Christ*” (1Cor.2:16)! It is a plural reality! No one member of the body will ever have “*the mind of Christ*” on their own but it is a corporate reality. It is as a company [corporate body] that the church will overcome Satan and demonstrate the victory of Christ in the midst of His people.

### **Called to be an apostolic church**

The apostolic church of the New Testament was not denominational nor institutional and neither is the apostolic church of the last days. Everywhere around us believers and Christian leaders are settling for compromise, apparently not comprehending the call of God as clearly set out by Jesus and the apostles in the Bible or simply ignoring what the Bible clearly says. Such Christians prefer the ways and traditions of men above obedience to the word of God, mistaking loyalty to a denomination or tradition for faithfulness to the word of God. The first apostles were challenged by the religious authorities of their day and told “*not to teach in this name. But Peter and the apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men’*” Acts 5:28-29. Likewise Jesus expects His church today to obey God rather than men.

### **Jesus is to have pre-eminence**

So often if a person testifies to their faith in Jesus, the immediate question is, ‘what church do you go to?’ Man’s idea and practice of church historically has been lifted up above Jesus and yet Jesus is always to have the pre-eminence in all things (Col.1:18). Christians generally talk more about their church and what is happening in their church [programs] than about Jesus and what is happening in their walk with God. This is because we have made the church ‘ours’ rather than being the church of Jesus Christ according to the New Testament.

### **Reaching nations through grace and apostleship**

In Romans 1:5, Paul says that he and the church of his day, the body of Christ, “*have received grace and apostleship through Christ for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name.*” The Bible says it is through grace and apostleship received from the Father through Christ that leads to the obedience of faith among all nations.

Jesus trained and appointed twelve apostles: to them He entrusted the birthing and formation of the church; to them He gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven. At the end of the age Jesus is again raising apostles to provide a proper foundation for His church and to call forth all the ministries and gifts that have been given and are needed for the building of the church. The church that Jesus is building today will withstand the gates of hell.

### **From Pentecost to Tabernacles**

It was through that first apostolic company that God brought the fulfilment of the Feast of Pentecost and it is through the apostolic companies that God is raising in the last days that He will bring the fulfilment of the Feast of Tabernacles. This is the church entering into the fullness of all that God has done in Christ, “*the fullness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in Him*” (Col.2:9). It is God’s intention for the fullness of the Godhead to now dwell in the body of Christ. This is the Feast of Tabernacles in fulfilment: God indwelling His people; the fullness of Christ revealed in His church.

“*John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.*” He heard “*a loud voice from heaven saying ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God’*” Rev.21:2-3. This is the fulfilment of all things! This is the fulfilment that

comes after God has sent Jesus Christ from heaven (**Acts 3:20**); this is the fulfilment that comes after *“the times of the restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began”* Acts 3:21.

### **Oversight and Covering of the Apostolic Company**

The nature of an apostolic company is as follows: the Lord has raised up the apostolic company, restoring the apostolic ministry and gathering around the apostolic leadership ministers and saints who are becoming of one heart and mind to serve the purposes of God together in this day.

The Lord is gathering a growing number of other apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, helpers and administrators, gifted saints, disciples and new believers into the company.

Every leadership ministry including apostles are accountable to each other in an eldership that is submitted to the word of God, recognizing that everyone of us needs teaching, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness (**2 Tim.3:16**).

The leadership ministries that the Lord has given, specifically apostles, prophets and teachers (**1 Cor.12:28**) but often including pastors and evangelists who are functioning as elders, exercise oversight according to the appointment of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 20:28**)

### **Jesus is the Head**

**The Lord Jesus Christ is the only head of the church, “He is the head of the body the church” (Col.1:18) and He provides a full covering of His anointing by the Spirit and the authority of His word. The church is to “grow up into all things into Him who is the Head – Christ – from whom the whole body joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” Eph.4:15-16.**

The whole body relates to the head, Christ. No man is ever accredited with headship of the church in the Scripture. Every believer is a member of His body and Christ is the Head of every member and every part of His church. Therefore the covering does not come through a man but comes directly from the Lord when the church is set in apostolic order.

## **Discipleship Course** **for Christian Ministers and Serious Disciples**

This course has been prepared for brethren who are serious disciples of the word of God. The first year's modules and seminars will constitute the coursework for **Certificate I**. There are three years of course work altogether. Therefore year two will be **Certificate II**, and year three will be **Certificate III**.

### **Three Seminars**

If possible there needs to be three seminars arranged during the course: one at the beginning to introduce apostolic teaching to the disciples, one in the middle to consolidate the apostolic teaching in their understanding; one at the end to complete the teaching and graduate the successful students. Seminars to be presented by an apostle or apostolic teacher.

### **Curriculum - based on manuals and books**

The manuals and books that are to be studied will be made available to the acting principal of the course and copies can be made for all participants if that is possible.

**Certificates** will be issued at the end of each year's course to those who successfully complete the course.

**Each module** is based on a manual [written by Paul Galligan or one of the team at Revival Ministries Australia] or a book. Each manual has between four and eleven sessions.

We recommend that the school meets at least **one full day per week** and that at least two sessions are presented each day. Please note that some of the sessions in some of the manuals have recommended workshops that the students are expected to participate in.

Each year's course is the equivalent of nine modules. Normally a module is one manual and the books in the course are equal to 2 modules each. Some of the sessions are longer and an individual session may take a full day. Some of the sessions are shorter and three or four may be covered in one day. Most of the sessions are average length and we suggest two sessions per day.

In the third year course there are two modules that are devoted to developing practical ministry skills – preaching set biblical topics & memorizing Scriptures in particular subject areas.

The course should be successfully completed in **nine months**, following the above schedule.

**Practical Ministry:** there are two areas of practical ministry required for the three years of the course:

- the regular celebration of the Lord's Supper
- disciplined reading of the Scripture – the whole Bible in one year.

**For further information contact Revival Ministries Australia.** There may be an apostolic leader in your area who is able to present the seminars and also have access to the Curriculum materials.

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Books by Paul Galligan

## **WALKING IN OUR INHERITANCE**

This book will challenge your concepts and ideas  
of what church is and your place in it  
Jesus said “In vain they worship Me, teaching as  
doctrines the commandments of men” Mark 7:7

### **Read this book to understand:**

- becoming a son
- being part of an apostolic company
- the mystery of the church
- relating to Jesus as the apostle
- walking in our inheritance
- the day of the saints
- ruling and reigning with Jesus Christ

Read how the church becomes the glorious church  
Jesus is coming back for

## **APOSTLES TODAY**

“Apostles today” brings together various aspects and understandings of the ‘grace and apostleship’ (Rom.1:5) that God has given through Christ for the redemption and discipleship of the nations.

There is a remnant church in every nation being raised by the LORD to bear witness to His power and glory in these last days. A final key to the raising of these saints is the full restoration of apostles by grace, releasing to the

saints the unlimited grace bestowed upon us as sons by adoption.

These books are available on the website:  
[www.revivalministries.org.au](http://www.revivalministries.org.au)  
or by request from Revival Ministries Australia