
F A I T H i n P R A C T I C E

Blow the trumpet in Zion!

**** Baptism**

**** The Breaking of Bread**

**** Tithing**

**** Ministry in the House**

**** Proclaiming apostolic doctrine
Raising apostolic companies**

**** Building the Church**

*"They continued steadfastly . . .
daily . . .
from house to house"*

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Paul Galligan
REVIVAL MINISTRIES AUSTRALIA

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FAITH in PRACTICE

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This manual is presented to equip the saints for effective participation in the church of the Scripture, which is house based. It brings together the apostles, apostolic companies and local churches to function properly, enabling us all to grow into maturity.

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Introduction

According to the Scriptures

In these days God is bringing to pass **the restoration of the church of Jesus Christ**. This is being done **according to the Scriptures**. When our Lord came the first time and was manifest in Israel, many of the prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament were fulfilled in His life, ministry and death. The apostle Matthew is very particular to point out in his Gospel, the many fulfillments of Scripture in Jesus. **This is the pattern. The Word of God is the only authority we have for faith and practice.** As we are approaching the Second Coming of our Lord, God is raising **apostles and prophets who are able to competently and clearly proclaim the Word of God**, preparing the church for, and warning the world of, this awesome event.

Apostolic companies

In these days **God is raising apostles**. Around the apostles, companies of believers are gathering who are fully committed to the apostles' doctrine. In due course, **apostolic companies** are forming, that include members functioning in all the gifts and ministries. So there is a practical outworking of New Testament Christianity. Apostles do not represent a particular church group, movement or denomination. Therefore they are unfettered by traditions, and free from man's doctrines and practices. As a result it is through the apostolic companies, that **God is raising up working models of New Testament Christianity**, giving leadership to the church at large, leading a return to Biblical Christian practice and preparing the church to be glorious, holy, without blemish, ready for His return.

How things work!

In this manual we will be talking about **how things work** in a New Testament Christian community: such things as baptism, the Lord's Table, finances, apostolic covering, ordination of elders, house to house ministry and planting new churches. We have some teaching on most of these areas of Christian life and doctrine in other manuals but in this manual we seek to show how sound doctrine works in practice. Hence the title **"FAITH IN PRACTICE"**.

Chapter One

BAPTISM

Repent and be baptised

REPENT AND BE BAPTISED

Have you noticed that in evangelical Christian circles, the way we bring people to Christ is very different to the clear pattern in the Scripture? Have you ever heard an evangelist, having preached the Word of God, to then command the hearers who have been convicted, *“Repent and let everyone of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,”* Acts 2:38?

Jesus Himself said in **Mk.16:15-16a** *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptised will be saved.”* Again in **Matt.28:18-20**, Jesus authorised the apostles to make disciples by firstly baptising the new believers and then teaching them.

Notice that you teach after you have baptised!

Many churches insist on teaching new Christian classes before they baptise and they make attendance at that class a prerequisite for baptism. This is clearly in contradiction to Jesus’ command. Every occurrence of baptism in the book of **Acts** immediately follows faith. **The Biblical pattern is to baptise first and to teach second.** This is because no amount of teaching can do what baptism does by the operative power of God in a new believer’s life.

RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The clear Scriptural practice is for those who believe in the Lord to be baptised. People are saved by *“believing and being baptised”* (**Mk.16:16**). On the day of Pentecost, it was the men who were convicted by the preaching of the word that Peter commanded to repent and be baptised. He told them if they did this, **they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** Some churches follow the Scriptural pattern as far as baptising new believers, but have no expectation that the new believers will receive the promised Holy Spirit.

Receiving the Holy Spirit is an experience

Throughout the book of Acts, baptism followed immediately after people believed in the Lord, and there was always the expectation that the person being baptised would **receive the Holy Spirit in a clearly recognisable way**. For example in **Acts 8:12**, men and women believed the preaching of Philip and were baptised. However they did not receive the Holy Spirit, so when the apostles Peter and John came down from Jerusalem, *“they laid their hands on the new believers and they received the Holy Spirit” v17*. Simon, the sorcerer, saw the power being imparted through the laying on of hands – **something happens when a person receives the Holy Spirit of God**. Jesus said, *“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you” Acts 1:8*.

Did you receive the Holy Spirit?

There are too many baptised believers in the church today who have not received the ‘power’ of the Holy Spirit. This is not a theological issue nor a doctrinal proposition but a reality which you have or have not experienced. So Paul asked the disciples at Ephesus, *“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you first believed?” Acts 19:2*. They answered, *“We have not even heard of the Holy Spirit,” v.2*. Paul then asked about their baptism, because **Paul expected that a baptised believer would have received the Holy Spirit at baptism**. It was these disciples that Paul re-baptised after he had preached Jesus to them and they believed in Jesus.

Many people have received a church baptism based on their membership of the church, but have never *“believed on the Lord Jesus Christ” Acts 16:31*, to be saved. Therefore their baptism lacked power – they did not receive the Holy Spirit.

THE COMMAND TO BAPTISE

The command to baptise was given by Jesus after He rose from the dead, specifically in **Mt.28:19** *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”*

Mk 16:16a *“He who believes and is baptised will be saved.”*

Peter obeys the command

The book of **Acts** shows us the obedience of the apostles to baptise, once people had come to faith in Jesus Christ. **Acts 2:38** and **41** record the first baptism. Those who were convicted by Peter’s preaching asked what they should do. Peter commanded them to repent, to be baptised; he then told them they would receive the Holy Spirit.

He said three important things about baptism:

- 1** *“be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ”*
- 2** be baptised *“for the remission of your sins”*
- 3** the baptised believer would receive the Holy Spirit.

PETER SAID BE BAPTISED IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

Peter is the same apostle who was with the eleven when Jesus gave them the command of **Matt.28:19**. Herein lies a mystery! The majority of the church today and throughout history has used the words of **Matt.28:19** in baptism, whereas **Peter clearly said to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ**. By the way, this tradition came from the Roman Catholic Church; it did not come from the Scriptures or from the early apostles.

Was Peter being disobedient? Or **did Peter have a revelation as to the revealed name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit?** Clearly all agree that **the name of the Son is Jesus, (Matt.1:21).**

What is the name of the Father?

Father of itself is not a personal name, but rather describes the place or function of a person in relationship. Jesus revealed God to us as 'father'. In the gospels, God is referred to over 170 times by Jesus as 'father'!

Likewise 'Son' is not a name, but the name of the Son is Jesus. The angel told Joseph that Mary ***"will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins"*** Matt.1:21.

In **Ex.3:14** God revealed His name to Moses as ***"I AM"*** and that name is written in the English Bible mostly as ***"LORD"***, but sometimes as ***Jehovah*** or ***Yahweh***. The Hebrew names Jehovah and Yahweh are attempts to translate or express the revealed name of God which is written YHWH. The name of God is the basis of the name of Jesus in the Hebrew.

Jesus identified Himself as the ***"I AM"*** in **John 8:58**. The revelation of 'who Jesus is', is being restored to the church in our day. For a long time people have been confused about who God is and the church in general has lost the revelation that Jesus is God.

The Holy Spirit has many descriptive titles

Nowhere in Scripture is there a revealed name for the Holy Spirit. Christ does mean ***'anointed one'***, and can be a reference to the empowering of the Holy Spirit that came upon Jesus to enable Him to function in ministry and fulfil His Messiahship (**Acts 10:38**). Jesus is the Christ; the Holy Spirit is not the Christ. Therefore Christ is not a name for the Holy Spirit, nor even a direct reference to Him, as Christ refers to the long-awaited and prophesied Messiah who would be the King.

The revealed name of the Father is in the name YAHWEH, not LORD as written in many English Bibles. According to Strong's Concordance, the name YAHWEH means *the Eternal One* or *the Self Existent One*. This revealed name of God was given to the Son: Jesus is *Yeshua* in Hebrew and *Yeshua* means *Yahweh/Yehovah saves*.

God is the Lord – Adonai in Hebrew, and **God has made Jesus, the Son, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).**

The name of Jesus is the name above every name!

The fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in Christ (Col.2:9). This means that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are fully expressed in Jesus the Messiah. **Phil.2:11 *"That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*** **The name of Jesus is the name given Him by God which is above every name, v.9.** That is why Peter baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul had the same revelation, baptising the new believers in **Acts 19:5 *"in the name of the Lord Jesus"***.

FOR THE REMISSION OF YOUR SINS

Peter said to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ, ***"for the remission of your sins"***, **Acts 2:38**. Remission literally means *'a sending away'*; it means *'a cancelling out'*. Peter said that through baptism sins would be remitted. This understanding is explained more fully by Paul in **Rom. 6** where Paul says, ***"we were baptised into Christ Jesus, into His death," v.3. "We were buried with Him through baptism into death" v.4,*** and we are raised in the likeness of His resurrection (**v.5**). **V.6 *"Our old***

man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." This is how our sins are remitted in baptism. Through baptism we go through a death, burial and resurrection in Christ Jesus and in the process the old man of sin is crucified. **V.7-8 "For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him."** This dying with Christ happens spiritually according to the Word of God in baptism:

truly our sins are remitted.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

Christian baptism is different to any other baptism. It is different to John's baptism and so in **Acts 19** Paul **rebaptised** the disciples who came to faith in Jesus, as they had previously received John's baptism. How is Christian baptism different to John's baptism? John's baptism was immersion in water but **it was a sign baptism only**. The people were baptised as an outward acknowledgment of their inner preparedness to change and receive the Messiah. Christian baptism is more than an outward experience of immersion in water. The Scriptures clearly teach that **baptism is a spiritual experience with Christ in death, burial and resurrection**. The key to Christian baptism is the cross and the resurrection. **Because Jesus died and rose again baptism is literally a dying with Christ, being buried with Him [the old man is buried] and rising in newness of life through the power of His resurrection, (Rom.6:3-10).**

Christian baptism is for believers only, that is, those who have been cleansed of their sin by the blood of Jesus Christ through faith in Him, having heard the gospel. Christian baptism is baptism into Christ, into His resurrection and therefore church baptisms may need to be re-evaluated in the light of **Acts 19**.

Were you baptised into Christ?

Were you baptised into a particular church?

Were you baptised on the basis of repentance and faith?

Did you receive the Holy Spirit at your baptism?

THE PATTERN OF JESUS' BAPTISM

The baptism of Jesus Christ is unique and specific to Him. He was not submitting to **John's baptism of repentance** [Jesus had no sin to repent of, and John's baptism was preparing the people to receive Him]; rather He was offering Himself to **"fulfil all righteousness"** **Matt.3:15**. **This righteousness was the righteousness according to the law of Moses whereby the candidate for the high priesthood needed to be washed** by a priest [in tradition this would have been the previous high priest, but God appointed John to baptise His Son]. The candidate was then anointed and **God Himself anointed Jesus Christ to be the eternal High Priest**.

However there is a clear pattern in the baptism of Jesus Christ that we follow and expect fulfilment in our lives.

1. Jesus was baptised in obedience to His Father;

we are baptised in obedience to Jesus' command.

When Jesus came up from the waters of baptism,

2. He received the Holy Spirit;

we are promised the Holy Spirit when we submit to baptism, having repented and believing in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit comes to people in a variety of ways, such as: speaking in a new tongue, seeing a vision, receiving an impartation of His power.

3. The Father God spoke audibly concerning Jesus, showing approval, identifying Him to be the Son of God.

We can expect prophetic utterance at our baptism, affirming and confirming us in this new salvation. To this end we always try to have witnesses present, including those gifted in prophecy, who pray over the new believers as they come out of the waters of baptism.

The pattern in summary:

- be water baptised in obedience to Jesus' command;
- expect to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit – He will give you a clear sign that you have received Him;
- expect a word from the Lord over your life to encourage and affirm you.

FURTHER DOCTRINES OF BAPTISM

1. Clothed with Christ

Gal.3:27-29 *“For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on [been clothed with] Christ.*

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” We are baptised into Christ; we are clothed with Christ; we are now in Christ, no longer separate to Him. In Christ, the barriers of race, economic status and gender are removed and we are one in Him. Through baptism we become heirs according to the promise given to Abraham because we are now in Christ who is Abraham's seed, (v.16).

2. Baptism does not equal circumcision

Col 2:11-12 *“In Him you also were circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”*

Some wrongly teach that Christian baptism for New Testament believers is as circumcision for the people of God under the Old Covenant. On this basis they try to argue for, and practice, infant baptism. The circumcision spoken of in these verses is not a natural circumcision but it is a *“putting off the body of the sins of the flesh”*; this happens through Christian baptism and can only happen to a person who has repented and believed. Infants cannot receive baptism because they are unable to repent and believe. Infants are to be dedicated to the Lord through prayer. The christening of babies through the sprinkling of water is not equal to baptism. When churches teach that infant sprinkling is a real baptism, they rob new believers by denying them the very necessary foundation of Christian baptism.

3. Baptism saves us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ

1 Pet.3:20b-22 *“In the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us – baptism [not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God], through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.”*

Peter's teaching reinforces Paul's teaching in **Rom.6**. Paul has taught us that we are raised to *‘newness of life’* (v.4), that we are *‘united with Christ in His resurrection’* (v.5). Peter shows that through baptism we enter into the resurrection of Jesus Christ

in a saving way even as Noah and his family entered into the ark to be saved ***“through water” 1Pet.3:20.***

Further Peter is teaching us that through baptism into Christ we are raised with Him to ***“the right hand of God”***, above angels, authorities and powers. This confirms Paul’s teaching in **Ephesians** that we have been ***“raised up together and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” Eph.2:6.*** In **Ephesians 1:20-23**, Paul shows us that Christ has been raised ***“far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named”***; that Christ is head of the Church and therefore as His body we are raised with Him.

It is through baptism that we are raised and seated with Christ in the heavenly places.

4. Baptism: the key to victory

Baptism gives us the key to overcoming the devil. At baptism our **‘old man’**, that is, the ‘old creation man’, the one who naturally lived in the devil’s realm, **is buried with Christ and we are raised** a ‘new creation person’, a **‘new man’ in Christ**. Therefore the things that troubled us in the ‘old creation man’ no longer have any hold over us. The devil likes to remind us of the weaknesses and the sins of that ‘old creation man’, but all that was buried in baptism. There is **a cutting off from the ‘old man’ at baptism so we are no longer subject to those former things**. When the enemy comes to accuse us, we can say *‘No, devil, I am no longer that person; that person died in baptism, I am now a new creation in Christ Jesus’*.

Just as we go back to the cross when we sin after we are saved and claim the cleansing of the blood of Jesus to wash away our sin, we can go back to our baptism when the devil tries to make us guilty or ashamed of things we have done, and remind him that we have been cut off from that ‘old man’ and he no longer has anything he can accuse us of.

THE PRACTICS OF BAPTISM WHO BAPTISES?

Jesus commanded the **apostles** to baptise in **Matt.28:19**; He was speaking to the eleven apostles. In **Mark 16:15-16** Jesus was also speaking to the eleven but He did not make baptism their exclusive task. In **Acts 8** Philip who was an **ordained deacon**, but functioning in Samaria as an **evangelist**, automatically baptised the new believers. However in that instance, Philip did not have the authority to release the Holy Spirit to the new believers, but there were mighty signs and wonders in healing and deliverance.

In **Acts 9**, Ananias, a **disciple**, baptised Saul [later Paul] and laid his hands on him so Saul could be healed and filled with the Holy Spirit. He also spoke a prophetic word to Saul from the Lord.

In the Scriptures, apostles, an ordained deacon, an evangelist and a disciple all baptised. In many churches only the ‘ordained minister’ is authorised to baptise and baptisms done outside of that church authority are regarded as illegitimate. This is partly because an emphasis is placed upon baptising people into the church denomination [or institution] rather than into Christ.

We are not proposing that anyone should baptise. **Normal practice is that the ordained elder with help from disciples does the baptisms of new believers**

coming under his oversight. However, it is Scriptural for ordained deacons and disciples to baptise, when it is appropriate.

WHO IS BAPTISED?

Acts 2:41 *“Those who gladly received His word were baptised.”*

Acts 8:12 *“When they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptised.”*

Acts 8:37 *“Then Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart you may.’”*

Acts 9:17-18 Saul, having met the Lord Jesus on the road, after Ananias had ministered to him, arose and was baptised.

Acts 10:47 *“Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptised who have received the Holy Spirit just as we.”* V 48a *“And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord.”*

Acts 16:14b-15a *“The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul and when she ... was baptised.”*

Acts 16:31-33 *“They said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved ... they spoke the word of the Lord to him ... immediately he was baptised.”*

What about children?

The key question to be asked is: how old is the child when he/she can be saved? Or if that is not a certain gauge, what about when a child has received the Holy Spirit with the release of tongues? Can such a child be denied baptism? Why do some want to deny full salvation to children who desire it?

WHEN DO WE BAPTISE?

The same day

Acts 2:41 The three thousand who received the word were baptised **‘that day’**.

Immediately

Acts 8:38 *“He commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and he baptised him.”*

Acts 10:44-48 Peter commanded the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius to be baptised as soon as he saw that they had received the Holy Spirit.

Three days later

Acts 9:9-18 Saul was for three days without sight after his awesome encounter with the Lord Jesus and as soon as Ananias came to him and healed him, he was filled with the Holy Spirit and was baptised.

The same hour

Acts 16:33 The Philippian jailer and all his family were baptised the same hour.

HOW TO PROCEED

Because tradition dies slowly and ministers are nervous about the name to be used in baptism [some groups who baptise in the name of Jesus have been accused of being anti-trinitarian] a suggested way forward to help all come into a fuller revelation of the name of the Lord is as follows.

At the baptism service teach briefly on baptism from the Scriptures.

It is always good to read of Jesus’ baptism and build an expectation that the baptismal candidate will receive the Holy Spirit. This expectation of the Holy Spirit is further confirmed by Peter in **Acts 2:38**.

Make reference to the clear command of the Lord in **Matt. 28:19**

and reference to the clear examples of baptism into the Name in the book of Acts.

[The two clearest references are: **Acts 2:38, Acts 19:5**].

If there are many for baptism, the minister teaches and explains and speaks of baptism into Christ. When it comes to the individual immersion, one only needs to say “I

baptise you in the name of Jesus Christ”, having already explained that in the name of Jesus all the authority and glory of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are revealed.

Every baptism is unique. There is no set service and I suggest you are already practising religion if you have a ‘set service’! The most baptisms I have done at one time were 69. That was in Kenya, East Africa. I have on occasions baptised a single new believer. A normal average in recent times is from two to eight. When numbers are fewer, individual time can be taken with each new convert.

However, a general guide is as follows:

1) Share some Scriptures concerning baptism

The command

Jesus’ baptism

The practise in Acts

The key doctrine from Romans

- 2) Baptise into the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus, or Lord Jesus Christ, giving glory and honour to the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Baptism is into the Name, into Christ the anointed One.**
- 3) Expect the Holy Spirit to come and be manifest in each life, “*you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*”** Take time (even with larger numbers) to impart the Holy Spirit after each person comes out of the water.
- 4) Have witnesses (gifted brethren) to lay hands on each one as they come out of the water.** The Holy Spirit may release a prophetic word to the person at this time.

IT IS TIME FOR CHANGE

The word of God is clear: **baptise new believers immediately they clearly receive Jesus.** It is normal Biblical practice to baptise **on the same day that the new converts have turned to Christ.** Baptism is the first real step of faith once a person has believed in Jesus. Because church practice has moved away from obedience to the scriptural pattern, baptism is not properly taught or properly ministered. As a result the foundations of the faith are not properly laid and many Christians are continually weak and struggling because they do not have strong foundations. Many ministers are foolish, having read the biblical testimony, they disobey and disregard the commands of the Lord Jesus and the example of the first apostles.

REPENT AND BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

BE BAPTISED AND RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Chapter two

THE BREAKING OF BREAD

- a non-religious service

THE BREAKING OF BREAD

A NON-RELIGIOUS SERVICE

In these days God is restoring the 'Breaking of Bread' to the saints. The breaking of bread is also called the Lord's Supper or the Lord's Table and in high churches, Holy Communion or Communion, or Eucharist. In many churches, even including Pentecostal churches, the Lord's Table has become enshrouded in religious ceremony and various rules, which have robbed the people of God of **the joy, simplicity and intimacy of the Table**. The practice has been to have communion on a monthly basis only in many churches. In most churches communion cannot be shared unless an ordained minister of that particular denomination is present. Children are often denied access to the Table and 'unbaptised' believers are also excluded in some churches.

In this study we will look at the Breaking of Bread in Scripture, clarifying who can receive the Table and who can minister the Table. We will present a simple practice that we enjoy as a people of God, which we believe is based on the Scripture.

COMMUNION EQUALS FELLOWSHIP

1 Cor.10:16 *"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ. The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"*

The word 'communion' in this verse is the Greek word '*Koinonia*' which is the same word as fellowship.

SC # 2842: Sharing, unity, close association, partnership, participation, a society, a communion, a fellowship, contributory help, the brotherhood. '*Koinonia*' is a unity brought about by the Holy Spirit. In '*Koinonia*' the individual shares in common an intimate bond of fellowship with the rest of the Christian society. '*Koinonia*' cements the believers to the Lord Jesus and to each other.

[Word Wealth SFLB page 1628]

Paul the apostle develops this aspect of fellowship in **1 Cor.11** when he emphasises discerning the Body of Christ when we come to the Table. Paul encourages us to wait for one another and to examine ourselves to make sure there is no division in our heart attitudes toward one another.

WE ARE ALL ONE BODY

1 Cor.10:17 *"For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread."* Even as the children of Israel *"all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink,"* [which was Christ] **v.3-4**, so we all are partakers of one bread. We, many, are one bread and one body. **This is speaking of our identity as the people of God.** There is only one bread and one body so whenever we break bread we need to be conscious that we belong to the people of God, there being only one bread, that is, one Christ in whom we share. **There is no such thing as an exclusive table to any one group of believers.**

SEPARATED UNTO GOD

1 Cor.10:21 *"You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons."* We are to be a separated people to eat of the Lord's table. **The Lord's table is for believers only.** So what do you do when there are unbelievers present in the meeting where you are breaking bread together? The best thing to do is to **share openly about the death of Jesus on the cross, why He died and how we can be saved from sin through faith**

in Him. Then **have a call to salvation:** give the unbelievers an opportunity to come to faith and be saved. **Then they can share the table!** Hallelujah!! But you say, *'they are not baptised!'* Where in the Scripture does Jesus or Paul say that a person must be baptised to receive the Table? Jesus told the repentant thief on the cross that He would see him in Paradise – there was no opportunity for him to be baptised. We thoroughly teach and practise water baptism for believers immediately they are saved but there is no Scriptural rule preventing new believers from receiving the Table before they are baptised.

THERE IS NO DIVISION IN CHRIST'S BODY

1 Cor.11:17-19 *"Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognised among you."* There are divisions and factions in the Body. **The Christian churches have institutionalised divisions in the Body and many 'communions' are exclusive to the members of that particular institution.** There needs to be significant reform and restoration of the Lord's Supper according to the Word of God.

v20 *"Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper."* The eating of the Lord's supper is meant to be the place of unity, **the focus of our gathering together.**

v.21-22 *"For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you."* The Lord's supper was in the context of eating the shared meal together, but this had broken down into groups of people eating separately and no one waiting for another. This separation into different groups appears to have been based on economic grounds – some had a full meal to eat, some had nothing and the wealthy did not share with the poor. People were satisfying their fleshly hunger and thirst and not giving proper regard to the Lord's Supper.

So there was no real Lord's supper.

THE REVELATION OF THE TABLE

The bread

1Cor.11:23 *"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the night in which He was betrayed broke bread."* Paul received by revelation an understanding and practice of the Lord's Table. His account confirms and clarifies that which Jesus gave us in the Gospels.

My body

v.24 *"And when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.'"* When we partake of the bread, the Scripture tells us two important things: **the bread is the body of Jesus broken on the cross and we take the bread to remember Jesus, both His suffering and death on our behalf and also the present reality of the risen ascended Lord.**

The cup

v.25 *"In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink, in remembrance of Me.'"* This Scripture tells us three important things:

1. **there is a new covenant**, that is, a new agreement between God and us;
2. **this agreement is sealed in the blood of Jesus** which Jesus gave us in the cup;
3. **we are to remember Jesus**, both the **shedding of His blood to cleanse sin and to seal the covenant**, and the **present reality of His presence with us**.

A prophetic act

1 Cor.11:26 *"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."* The act of participation in the Lord's table is a **powerful prophetic act**. Paul says *'as often'*; this means that we can participate in this prophetic act 'often'. When we eat and drink we proclaim two important fundamental truths:

the LORD died on the cross for all of mankind; He has done this awesome thing for us;

and **the LORD is returning soon** so the people of God and the world need to be reminded continually. The church has faithfully remembered the death of Jesus but generally has not preached **the second coming** in the communion.

JESUS REVEALS HIMSELF IN THE BREAKING OF BREAD

In **Luke's** account of the walk to Emmaus, we see how the eyes of the two disciples were opened when Jesus broke bread with them. **Lu.24:30-31** *"Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it, to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight,"* and v.35 *"And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread."*

Even so, we can expect to *'know'* Jesus in the breaking of bread. It is a time of intimacy with the risen Lord.

THE LORD'S TABLE: THE NEW COVENANT PASSOVER MEAL

The revelation of the Lord's Supper is in the context of the Passover meal. It was while the disciples were with Jesus at the Passover meal that Jesus, *"took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat, this is My body,'"* and then took the cup *"and gave it to them, saying 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'"* **Matt.26:26-28**. **Mark, Luke** and **John** all confirm and make clear mention that the first communion table was the traditional Passover meal. This confirms two things:

the communion is most aptly celebrated in the context of a fellowship meal
and the communion is the fulfilment of the Passover by Jesus.

The first Passover was the event through which God delivered His people, Israel, from the destroyer in Egypt. The Israelites were **protected in their homes by the blood of the Lamb (Ex.12)**. They were to **eat the flesh of the lamb in readiness for their journey out of Egypt**.

They were delivered by the body and the blood of the lamb.

Ever since that time, the Israelites remembered the Passover each year by the commandment of the Lord. Jesus expressed a strong desire to share the Passover meal with His disciples (**Lu.22:15-16**). **He knew the significance of this feast was about to come to fruition through His own death upon the cross.** The bread and the wine were already significant components of the Passover meal, representing the mysteries that this Feast pointed to. **Jesus took the bread and the wine and revealed their interpretative fulfilment in His own vicarious [atoning] death upon the cross.**

The betrayer was present at the Supper

In **Mk. 14:22-26**, Mark gives his account of the Lord's Supper, and Luke gives his account in **Lu.22:14-23** revealing that Judas, the betrayer, was present at the Passover meal. John provides more detail regarding the Passover meal. In **Jn.13:18-30** Jesus identifies His betrayer, ***"It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it," v.26.*** Does this fact caution us against making rules as to who can and who cannot take the Table?

So much happens at the Table!

The teachings of Jesus in Jn. 13-17 were all given in the context of the Passover meal. Jesus took the opportunity of this final meal, which was the Passover, **to give many final instructions and teachings to His disciples.** It is in these chapters of John that Jesus **speaks openly about the Holy Spirit coming and the nature of His person and ministry.** Jesus **washed His disciples feet, (Jn.13:1-17):** in the context of the Lord's Table this speaks of us **waiting for each other, discerning the Lord's Body and receiving each person** present at the Table, as a vital member of the Body.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO 'EXAMINE' ONESELF?

A study of 1 Cor.11:27-34

v.27 ***"Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."*** Paul has told us in the previous verse of the profound prophetic significance of eating and drinking. So we are not to approach the Lord's Table lightly or else we will be judged.

v.28 ***"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup."*** When we come to the Lord's Table we are to **"examine"** ourselves before partaking of the bread and of the cup. That is, look into our own heart, but what are we examining? In **2Cor.13:5** Paul says that there is an examination and yes we are to look into our hearts, not to see whether we have sinned, but to see if Jesus Christ is in us. If Jesus Christ is in us by faith, we qualify, which means we are worthy to eat and drink. The examination is not to disqualify us because of our sin, but to show us that through faith in Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven and we qualify.

What is 'discerning' the Lord's Body?

v.29 ***"For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgement to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."***

What brings this judgment? The answer is: ***"not discerning the Lord's body"*** (v.29). This word 'discerning' is translated elsewhere in Scripture as 'doubting'.

Examples of this Greek word being translated 'doubting':

- 1) ***"Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing"*** Acts 11:12.
Peter was being led by the Spirit into unfamiliar territory; he was to go and

preach Jesus in a Gentile house. He had to go, fully believing in the vision that God had shown him, doubting nothing. If he doubted, he would have failed.

- 2) ***“But let him ask in faith, with no doubting; for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind” James 1:6.*** The person who prays to God with doubt in his heart will not have his prayers answered. We are to pray in faith.
- 3) Through the cursing of the fig tree, Jesus was teaching powerfully on faith. He said, ***“Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ it will be done” Matt.21:21.*** Jesus said, ***“Whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive” v.22.***

Not doubting

Because we do not discern the Lord’s body, judgment comes upon us and ***“for this reason many are weak and sick among you and many sleep” (1Cor.11:30).*** Not discerning the Lord’s body [from the Greek] can be read as **not doubting**. The problem that the church has is that generally we neglect the celebration of the Lord’s Table, and even when we take it irregularly, we have not discerned the Lord’s body; in other words we have doubted the full and complete redemption that God gives us in Christ and through Christ.

In giving us the bread and the cup to remember Him by, Jesus is giving us an awesome key to receiving and living in the kingdom, rightly understanding the completeness of what He did by becoming the sacrificial Lamb and giving His life on the cross.

Eat and drink in faith

Every time we come to the Lord’s Table we are to **come in faith, not doubting the body of the Lord**; not underestimating the central significance of what Jesus has done through the cross. As we repent and come obediently to remember Jesus, ***“as often as you drink”***, we will enter into a greater dimension of faith and the reality of Christ dwelling in our hearts and releasing His grace and enablement into our lives, to do His will, and to be prepared for His coming.

Strength, Health and Life

If we participate in a Table that is exclusive and thereby divisive, we are not recognising that there is only one body, and that body is the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because the church in general has for generations practised a legislated, divided communion table that is the right of official church members only, the church as a result is weak and sickly and even dead.

v.30-31 ***“For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.”*** If we are not believing in the body and blood of Jesus Christ, but doubting the Lord’s body, we will be eating and drinking judgement on ourselves.

v.32 ***“But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.”*** The judgment is the Lord’s chastening, and is designed to bring forth change and righteousness in our lives.

v.33 ***“Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.”*** The instruction here is to ***“wait for one another”***. This is a time for unity, based on forgiveness, sharing and love for the body.

BREAKING BREAD IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

In **Acts 2:42** we find that *“the breaking of bread”* was one of the *“first works”* that the early church *“continued steadfastly”* in. This was a daily practice and happened in the houses, v.46 *“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.”* The **first Christians met daily in houses and broke bread daily in the houses**. Even though there is some evidence that the churches later adopted the first day of the week [Sunday] as a special time to gather for the breaking of bread, it is indisputable that the first church broke bread daily in the homes.

Vital to the restoration of apostolic Christianity is the restoration of the breaking of bread in the homes among believers whenever they meet.

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

The context of **verses 42-47** reflects **apostolic Christianity in action**. They were in *‘one accord’*; they were experiencing *‘signs and wonders’* in their midst; they *‘shared what they had’* with one another; they *‘praised God’* and *‘had favour with all the people’*. *“And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved,”* v.47.

Breaking bread daily in the houses was a vital part in the life of the church

The Breaking of Bread is one of the first works that the first church did. The first works are listed for us in **Acts 2:42**:

the **apostles doctrine** – the apostles ministered from house to house, even as Paul did later in Ephesus, (**Acts 20:20**);

the **fellowship** – this was outworked in the deep level of sharing so that there was no lack among them;

the **breaking of bread** – this is unmistakably the Lord’s Table;

and **prayers** – shared prayer happened in the houses on a daily basis.

In **Rev.2:1-7**, Jesus is rebuking the Ephesian church because they have *“lost their first love”*. He commands them to *“repent and do the first works”*.

The way to return to intimacy with Jesus, truly loving Him, is to do the first works. This means meeting daily, *“continuing steadfastly in the apostles doctrine, the fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayers.”*

The first day of the week

Acts 20:7 *“Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread ...”* The disciples *“came together”* to *“break bread”*. It appears that this was a common practice of the disciples. This passage mentions that they met *“on the first day of the week”*. The *“first day of the week”* is also mentioned in **1 Cor.16:2** as being a time for giving, *“On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”* Perhaps Sunday was emerging as a special day to gather to remember Jesus. Such gatherings included an opportunity to give and a time for a message from the word of God.

Resurrection Life experienced in the Table

Here in **Acts 20** Paul is giving a farewell address to the disciples at Troas. During the course of his preaching a young man was raised from the dead after he had fallen from a window; the Scripture goes on to say, *“Now when he [Paul] had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak”* v.11.

Breaking Bread in the face of adversity

Acts 27:35-36 The ship in which Paul was travelling had experienced two weeks of severe storms at sea and was now facing ship wreck on rocks. But God had spoken to Paul in the night season through an angel and Paul knew there was deliverance for all aboard the ship. After sharing his revelation with the crew ***“he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it he began to eat. Then they were all encouraged and also took food themselves”***. This breaking of bread was a prophetic act, testifying to all [mostly unsaved men] of the faithfulness of God.

**Have you ever been lead to break bread in such a way
to testify to the lost of the saving power of God?**

THE FIRST MENTION OF BREAD AND WINE IN SCRIPTURE

The first mention of bread and wine being ministered is in **Gen.14:18-20**. Melchizedek met Abraham and ministered bread and wine to him as a priest of the Most High God. In this context of bread and wine there is

a revelation of the King/Priest;

there is blessing in the name of God Most High for the man of faith;

there is the first tithe in the Bible.

From this context we learn **the pattern of giving to the King/Priest after we have received the bread and the wine**. It is very powerful to bring our tithes and offerings to Jesus after we have remembered Him at the Table.

THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD

The table in the Tabernacle, known as the table of Shewbread, was set with both bread and wine (**Ex.37:16**). This points to the Lord's Table in the New Covenant. It is significant that the bread and the wine held an important place within the House of God, not in the Outer Court, but in the Holy Place. Furthermore the shewbread is literally ***‘facebread’***; **the face of the Lord was revealed at the Table**.

Even so our Lord Jesus is known intimately in the Table of the Lord.

WHO CAN RECEIVE COMMUNION?

Every believer can receive communion

In **Acts 2**, all the new believers who were baptised ***“continued steadfastly ... in the breaking of bread”*** v42. Clearly new believers were baptised immediately [on the same day] they believed. Because the historic and contemporary churches have failed to baptise new believers immediately, they have had the problem of ‘unbaptised believers’ and have forbidden such ones the Lord's table. The problem is with the ministry of the church not baptising according to the Scripture. To cover their unscriptural practice, they have made a rule concerning Communion. If they baptised according to Scripture there would be no need for the rule and the rule is unscriptural anyway.

What about children?

In the Gospels children were brought to the Lord to be blessed, but the disciples tried to prevent this happening. Jesus rebuked the disciples and said, ***“suffer the little children to come to me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God.”*** **Lu.18.15-16**. **Do you think that Jesus is happy for us to prevent children from coming to the Lord's Table?** What is the difference? Are we not being like the disciples? Do we not deserve the Lord's rebuke? **How old must a child be to be saved?** Jesus went on to say, ***“Assuredly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it,”*** **Lu.18:17**. If you believe

a child can be saved at a young age, and they can, then why do you set age limits to the Table? I have witnessed children as young as four and five having amazing experiences in the Spirit, including speaking with other tongues, seeing angels, communing with Jesus, having visions of heaven!

**Surely Jesus wants us to include children and to become
as little children ourselves to receive Jesus and His kingdom.**

WHO CAN MINISTER COMMUNION?

The ministry at the altar in the Old Covenant was restricted to the priests who were consecrated and anointed for the task. **In the New Testament all true believers** [those who have repented and believed in Jesus Christ, having been baptised into Jesus Christ and having received the Holy Spirit] **are priests**. **Rev.1:5-6** tells us clearly that **Jesus Christ has made us to be priests**. Peter also calls us priests in **1 Pet.2:9**. Under the Old Covenant **it was the priests who ministered at the altar** and in the New Covenant **it is the priests who minister at the Table of the Lord**. Under the Old Covenant it was **the priests who ministered at the altar who had the right to eat of the sacrifices**. No one else had this right. Under the New Covenant **it is the priests [the true believers] who minister the Lord's table, who also have the right to eat of it**.

The same ones who eat also minister! Praise the Lord!

OUR PRACTICE

Since the Lord called us out of denominational church at the beginning of 1998, He gave us **the freedom to break bread in the fellowship of believers, daily, from house to house and even when we were travelling, in the car or on the aeroplane**. We have experienced the **restoration of this awesome ordinance that the Lord Jesus instituted for His church**. Jesus gave the Table freely to all who would come to faith in Him. Remember He said that *'His blood was shed for many'*. We are of the many who have come to faith in Jesus Christ.

The Breaking of Bread is important and fundamental to church life. In fact it is **when believers break bread together that the church is established** because **Jesus is present in the breaking of bread in a manifestly unique way**. This is an application of His promise in **Matt.18:20** *"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."*

Breaking bread from house to house

As we have ministered from house to house, we have always sought to break bread in the home as part of our meeting together. This has often been a first time experience for the believers as they have been subject to the religious rules of denominational Christianity that has forbidden breaking of bread away from the dedicated church building or without the ordained minister.

The freedom to break bread in the simple fellowship of believers is an experience of grace. We encourage Christian couples and families and Christian households to break bread together in their homes regularly, daily if they choose, not only when other brethren join them for a home meeting but in the normal conduct of daily life as Christians.

Chapter three

TITHING

- a revelation of faith

TITHING – A REVELATION OF FAITH

INTRODUCTION

I occasionally meet a Christian, even ministers, who claim tithing is not New Testament and therefore not to be practised. Such ones go on to tell me that they follow Paul's instructions to give, and that is the pathway to blessing. The suggestion is that tithing is legalistic and giving is freeing. I notice that such brethren are not actually free and do not have a testimony of God's provision. In this study we seek to release faith and grace from God to you, releasing you into God's word re tithes and offerings to receive the bountiful rewards He promises.

TITHING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE FIRST TITHE IN SCRIPTURE

Gen.14:18-20 gives an account of Abram meeting with Melchizedek. Melchizedek was '*king of Salem*' and '*the priest of God Most High*'. He '*brought out bread and wine*' and offered it to Abram. He then pronounced a blessing over Abram, "*Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.*" Abram's response was to give to Melchizedek a tithe of all he had. This is the first recorded tithe in the Bible,

Melchizedek the king/priest, blessed Abraham who is the '*father of the faith*', **Heb.7:1-3** "*For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated '*king of righteousness*', then also king of Salem, meaning '*king of peace*', without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.*"

Abraham had the revelation of tithing long before the law was given through Moses, and Abraham's tithing is specifically talked about in the New Testament.

JACOB, A TITHING MAN

In **Gen. 28:10-22** Jacob has an encounter with the LORD. The LORD spoke to him in a vision and blessed him, promising him the same blessing He had given to his grandfather, Abraham and to his father, Issac. Jacob had a revelation of who God was, v.16 "*Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.'*" v.17 "*How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!*" This was Jacob's salvation experience. Jacob's response was to build an altar to the LORD. He named the place '*Bethel*' which means '*House of God*', and made a commitment to the LORD. "*If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You,*" v.20-22.

Jacob's commitment to the LORD involved giving a tithe of all that he had. Jacob had this revelation of tithing long before Moses gave the law. For a child of God, tithing is not of law but of faith.

Tithing is a response of faith to a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Both Abraham and Jacob tithed to the Lord in response to a personal revelation of the Lord. For Jacob it was equivalent to his salvation experience. Therefore there is a

clear pattern for any new believer to follow: once a person has had a revelation of Jesus Christ it is Scriptural to give to the Lord a tithe of all that one receives from that time on. Some people say, 'I am waiting for a revelation on tithing!' The revelation is already clearly in the Word of God and **it is the obedience of faith that leads to tithing.**

TITHING UNDER THE LAW

Tithing under the law is mentioned in **Lev.27:30** *"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's. It is holy to the LORD."* This was one of the commandments of the LORD given to Moses on Mount Sinai, **v.34.**

Primarily **the tithe is holy to the LORD**, that is, kept separate for God's designated purpose. It was used for the Levite who had no inheritance. **Num.18:21** *"Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform ...".* The Levites as a tribe were **set apart to be the ministers, the priests, the teachers of the law** for all of Israel and so they were to live on the tithes given by all the other tribes.

Some of the tithes were used practically to help widows, orphans, and strangers, **Deut.14:28-29** *"At the end of every third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store it up within your gates. And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do."*

THE CHALLENGE, THE CORRECTION AND THE PROMISE

In **Malachi 3:5-7** God through the prophet is speaking to His people, telling them that they have gone away from Him and because of that bad things have been happening to them. Judgement had been coming on them. God challenges His people to return to Him. The people are asking, *"In what way shall we return?"*

Robbing God

In **verse 8** God challenges His people again saying, *"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me!"* How were they robbing God? They were robbing Him by not bringing their tithes and offerings to Him. The result of this was, **v.9** *"You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me ...".* By not paying our tithes we are robbing God of an opportunity to bless us and to show Himself to the world through us.

Bring all the tithe

Verse 10 promises a blessing, *"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows [flood gates] of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it."*

A tithe is a tenth

God is saying that the people were to bring the tithe, a tenth of everything they had received, into the storehouse.

What is the storehouse?

Literally in this context it was a storehouse for grain. This was an agricultural community and the tithe was often in grain. These were natural tithes so that there would be literal food in God's house. Even today in some of the developing countries when tithes are taken up, people bring grain or eggs or fruit as their tithe unto the Lord.

The principle is that the tithe provided a storehouse of food, to feed God's people. Today we do not come to God's house for natural food but for spiritual food. Our 'storehouse' is the fellowship we belong to, or the ministry we receive our spiritual food from. **The ministers that God has raised up to feed us spiritually are to live off the tithes**, so that they can devote themselves to prayer and study of the word, ensuring that there will be a continual flow of spiritual food available for the people (Acts 6:4).

Believe what God says

God says an amazing thing in v.10. He says that we can 'try' Him or 'test' Him in this. This is the only time in Scripture where God says we can test Him. He wants us to give our tithe to Him and to see Him fulfil His promise, which is to *"open the windows of heaven"* and to *"pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it."*

God rebukes the devil

God also promises to rebuke the devourer on our behalf. *"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field, says the LORD of hosts,"* v.11. The 'devourer' is our enemy the devil, (1 Pet.5:8).

God promises fruitfulness

When we give our tithe unto the Lord we can expect blessing. He has promised us fruitfulness. *"The fruit of your ground"* will not be destroyed. *"Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field."* These blessings are in agricultural terms which still apply to primary producers today, but the blessings are also applicable to everyone who tithes: blessings upon business, upon work, upon the family.

Give with expectancy

God wants us to have a faith expectation every time we give. In the past, many have given out of a sense of duty. Tithing has been taught more as a legal requirement than a response of faith. When we tithe we are to expect [test God] God to bless us. The result will be that we will be known as a blessed people, *"'And all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land', says the LORD of hosts,"* v12.

God's Word changes not! If one tithes in faith, one will get the reward!

TITHING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus expects tithing

Jesus expected that people would tithe. In Matt.23:23, Jesus was speaking to the scribes and Pharisees, *"You pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matter of the law; justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone."* Jesus says 'this you should do.' There is a clear expectation from the Lord Jesus that tithing *'ought to be done,'* Lu.11:42.

The father of the faith tithed

Abraham tithed to Melchizedek by faith, (**Heb.7:1-3**). When we come to faith in Christ we tithe to Jesus. **Heb.7:5-10** goes on to tell us that the sons of Levi, the priesthood, received tithes according to the law, but also paid tithes through Abraham. ***“Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him,” v.9-10.***

Melchizedek as the revelation of Jesus, received tithes

Melchizedek was like an eternal man, he was ***“without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God,” Heb.7:3.*** Jesus is ***“a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek,” Heb.7:17.*** As the King/Priest Jesus receives our tithes as we respond to Him in faith.

**Abraham tithing to Melchizedek was of faith; it was before the law.
We do not tithe according to the law of Moses,
but according to the promises of God.**

The ***“lesser is blessed by the better” (v.7).***

Melchizedek blessed Abraham and likewise when we as ministers receive tithes that are given to us as unto Jesus, we bless. It is very powerful and appropriate to pray the blessings mentioned in **Malachi 3**, following the example of Melchizedek in **Gen.14**.

WHAT IS OUR RESPONSE TO THE WORD ON TITHING?

The Scripture is clear: **The first tenth of all I receive is the Lord’s.** Whenever we receive income as wages, as a pension, as a bonus, really any form of income, we are able to set the first tenth apart and give it to the Lord as a tithe. In other words **we tithe on the ‘increase’ God gives us**, and in the modern world, this is based on money and finance, no longer agricultural products and livestock.

The tithe is on the ‘increase’

Some say that inheritances received after the death of a forebear are not to be tithed on as they are not ‘increase’, but rather are **the means for future increase**. Likewise if a father passes on a business to one of his children during his lifetime, the inheritor is not expected to tithe on the value of the business received but rather **to tithe on what the business produces**. However if the inheritance received is simply in cash or an asset that can be liquidated then my attitude would be to tithe on that ‘increase’ received.

WHOM DO WE TITHE TO?

We follow the example of our father, Abraham – he tithed to Melchizedek, who was a revelation of Jesus Christ the Son of God. So **we tithe to the Lord Jesus Christ**. You ask? How can you tithe to Jesus when we cannot see Him? This is where revelation is necessary. Abraham could not normally see Melchizedek! Melchizedek according to **Heb.7** is an eternal being. Likewise Jacob committed himself to being a tithing man, but how did he give his tithe to God?

Tithing is the key to living in the economy of the kingdom of God. His kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, governed by spiritual laws that are reliable and fruitful beyond natural boundaries. **We give our tithe to our spiritual mentors, to pastors and teachers who feed us spiritually**, so that they can continue to do the work of the ministry that the Lord has called them to do.

WHAT ARE TITHES USED FOR?

Under the old covenant, the tithes were the income/livelihood for the Levites who as a tribe had no inheritance in land. By application the tithes are used **to support the ministers who minister, teach, oversee and feed the flock of God spiritually.** Those who minister spiritually, should be supported materially. **1Tim.5:18** *“For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it tread out the grain,’ and ‘the laborer is worthy of his wages.’”*

1 Cor.9:11 *“If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?”* v. 14 *“Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.”*

MAKE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SAINTS TO GIVE

As the church in the house begins to function properly, and even in regular meetings, **there should be opportunity for giving.** The biblical house church is not an independent, unrelated small group but rather it is a part of the church of the city governed and ministered to by the elders of the city. The ministry in biblical house churches is the ministry of the pastor/elders and of other five-fold ministers when they come to the city. In the Scriptures the apostles and other ministers, ministered from house to house. Therefore **the primary place of giving is in the church meeting whether it be in the house, in the hall or in a dedicated church meeting place.**

Meeting the expenses of hosting church

Incidental expenses that are incurred by hosting the church meetings and maybe giving hospitality to the visiting ministry can be covered from the offerings. But generally the contributions received should be laid at the apostle’s feet, or given to the local elders when they are in place.

Employing pastors

When it is time for a pastor [ordained elder] to be paid part-time and then full-time, that can be administrated by the office of the apostle until there is enough house churches for them to operate autonomously with their own elder(s), and controlling their own finances.

TESTIMONIES

Personal testimony by Paul Galligan: when I was a baby Christian, I was unemployed, but I had received an income of \$400, which was a late payment for work done previously. I had put that money in the bank, then I was born again. Within a few days **I had a conviction that ten percent of that money belonged to God.** I had heard no teaching on tithing; I had not as yet read of it in the Scripture; my Catholic background had not familiarised me with tithing. **It was a revelation from God.** I set off to the bank to get \$40 for the Lord but I did not belong to a church so I did not know how to actually give the tithe to God. On the way to the bank I picked up a piece of paper on the street and it was telling me about ‘Underground Evangelism’ in Eastern Europe. This was 1974. I went into the bank and had a cheque made out to ‘Underground Evangelism’.

The tithe and the drought

Toward the end of 2002 we heard a teaching on ‘the tithe and the drought’. The teaching **linked the drought in the natural to the failure of God’s people to bring in their tithes.** God promised in **Mal.3:10b** that if the full tithe was brought into the ‘storehouse’ then He would open the **‘flood gates’ of heaven, [“windows of heaven”]** that is, send the needed rains, in the natural. We were challenged by this teaching to **ensure all our own tithing was up to date.**

As a ministry we tithe on all the income that is given to us. We had some money in our tithe account and wrote a cheque for that amount to give as the Lord led us. After making out the cheque and determining in our hearts where to send it, those of us who were in the office **prayed to the Lord asking Him to reward us according to His word and believing that He would send the much needed rain on our land.** As we prayed a powerful sense of God's presence came into the office and God gave **a vision of Melchizedek, the king/priest,** standing in the office **receiving our tithe.** We all knelt before Him and were humbled by this incredible confirmation of our obedience to His Word. For many months after that day people would come to us and present their tithe asking us to specifically pray for the breaking of the drought in their area. In every case we know of **the rains came** within two weeks, sometimes within two days; some places receiving between 6 – 9 inches [150-225mm], filling dams and replenishing the land.

ACTUAL PRACTICE

In our community there is an opportunity every Sunday for people **to put their tithe in the offering bag.** We are now making envelopes available so that people can differentiate their tithes from offerings in the general collection. This is so we can be more responsible in the use of the tithes. Some people choose to come into the office through the week and **hand their tithes personally** into the office. Whenever people do this we take time to pray a blessing over them according to **Mal.3:10-12.** We also **receive tithes through the mail** from people who live some distance from us. When we **visit regional house churches** the **saints often give us their tithe.** We receipt and acknowledge all tithes given personally. When they are given in a general offering we simply receipt them in general.

We pray specifically for all people who tithe and give to our ministry in any way.

We encourage people to give tithes and offerings intentionally.

We encourage people to plan their giving, making it a conscious family venture.

We need to know the Scriptures concerning tithing and believe God for His promised responses.

TITHE OF THE TITHE

The Levites tithed the tithes to the high priest's family

In **Num.18:25-28** we read of God's instruction to the Levites. Of the tithes they received they were to set aside a tithe [tenth], as a special offering to the Lord. ***"Speak thus to the Levites, and say to them: 'When you take from the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them as your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave offering of it to the LORD, a tenth of the tithe ...'" v.26.*** The tithe of the tithe was actually to be given to Aaron, the high priest, and his family.

"Thus you shall also offer a heave offering to the LORD from all your tithes which you receive from the children of Israel, and you shall give the LORD's heave offering from it to Aaron the priest." V.28. The Levites received tithes, but also tithed to Aaron, the high priest. The tithe of the tithe was sent from the regions to the temple in Jerusalem, **Neh.10:38-39** ***"... and the Levites shall bring up a tenth of the tithes to the house of our God, to the rooms of the storehouse. ... and we will not neglect the house of our God."***

Ministries and churches are to tithe on their income today

Revival Ministries Australia since its inception in January 1998, has always tithed on income received. We set the 'tithe of the tithes' aside when we do our banking and

we do not use this money for anything else. **Out of the 'tithe of the tithe' account we then support other ministries as the Lord directs.** Over the years this has mostly been indigenous pastors and apostles in developing countries but also to bless ministries within Australia that have not been based in a local church and receiving income from tithes and offerings. As well we release a part of the tithe of tithe to our spiritual oversight, mentor and father in the Lord as he co-ordinates an international communion of apostles.

The Lord honours those who faithfully tithe

The Lord has honoured us as we have faithfully tithed on all our income. We prayerfully consider each month the use of the tithe and the Lord has clearly directed us in allocating these funds. He has kept us accountable to be a tithing ministry. Our ministry income has slowly grown and we always are able to meet the financial commitments that we feel to make.

TITHES ARE SEPARATE FROM OFFERINGS

Offering are sowing, what you give out of what you have left after tithing.

Give as sowers expecting to reap a harvest.

Be specific concerning the seed you sow, knowing what harvest that seed will bring forth.

Then prepare for the harvest!

Sowing is one thing, reaping is another thing!

Both require prayer and preparation and action!

The blessing of giving and receiving go hand in hand with developing a more intimate relationship with God. Remember He is the Lord of the harvest! We don't give offerings away, because **offerings are seed**. A farmer does not give away his seed; he plants it. When we make an offering we are not giving our money away; we are sowing it, expecting a harvest.

What are offerings used for?

Tithes are for ministry! Offerings are for all other things, such as rent and electricity and all other building costs. Churches make a big mistake when they go into debt for buildings and then use tithe income to pay for buildings, thus reducing the **ministry of the Word**. The result is: people feel that the church is only after money. They are not seeking first the kingdom of God.

God tells us clearly in His Word **to tithe**. The Word of God also speaks of **various offerings**. One of the clearest offerings was commanded by the Lord for the building of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Eventually the people gave so generously that Moses had to ask them to stop. The provision for the building of the Temple was largely provided by King David out of his wealth as king. This sets **the pattern for offerings for buildings**. In the New Testament the church in Jerusalem asked for special help for the poor. Paul the apostle oversaw a large collection from all the churches that he ministered to. This was **a special offering for the poor**.

OFFERINGS ARE FREE-WILL OFFERINGS, THAT IS, VOLUNTARY

Sometimes in church meetings, **a lot of pressure is put on the saints to give**. This is always out of order.

The saints should be taught to tithe and instructed concerning offerings.

The biblical pattern is to announce the offering and take it up later.

Hudson Taylor of China Inland Mission, who personally paid the stipends of over 100 missionary couples in China, never allowed host churches in England to take up

offerings after he had spoken. Instead he instructed people that if God was putting it on their heart to give to his mission, go home and send a cheque the next day. George Mueller who raised up many orphanages in England lived a life of faith regarding finance. He never told his needs except to a small prayer group who then believed God. The practice of pressuring people to give in meetings is ungodly.

VARIOUS OFFERINGS

Some people say, 'I cannot afford to tithe!' They are speaking in contradiction to the Word of God. In fact, **when we tithe then God looks after all of our needs**. Tithing is a very practical way of *"seeking first the kingdom of God"* in the context of **Matt.6:25-34**. However offerings are 'free-will', that is, **it is the decision of each saint what to offer God**. Some saints regularly give an offering above their tithe to their local church. Other times, saints give offerings to **bless a visiting minister, to support a mission initiative, to pay the rent or to meet a welfare need**. On occasion a person may desire to give but have no freedom in their budget to give an offering. This is an opportunity to **exercise faith and ask God for an offering**. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills and is well able to supply an offering for you to give. Beware of giving away your family's food budget! Your children may not appreciate a 'bread and dripping' diet for the week. **We suggest that each family plan their giving**. We have already said that pressure should not be put on the saints to give in meetings; rather **the Biblical pattern is to announce the offering and receive it at a later date**. Then if the whole family is in agreement to give beyond their ability because God has spoken to them, **they will see the glory of God**.

CONCLUSION

Teaching on tithes and offerings is foundational. When a church is functioning properly, that is according to the Scriptural pattern, in areas of giving, that church will be blessed. Our testimony is one of continual blessing that causes the giving of thanks to God on a daily basis. We are saying these days that **before we ask God has heard and while we are still speaking God has already sent the answer (Isa.65:24)**.

Praise be to His Holy Name!

Tithe in faith with expectation that God will fulfill His promise!
There is a blessing for all who tithe!
Sow offerings expecting a harvest!

Chapter four

The Purpose and Conduct of MINISTRY IN THE HOUSE

- Restoration of church in
the house**

THE PURPOSE AND CONDUCT OF MINISTRY IN THE 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 and 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' (**Acts 19:9-10**). In recent decades there has been a restoration of ministry in the house, from the cell groups of the 1970's to the cell churches even unto this present time. Along the way there have been many experiments and experiences of genuine New Testament church in the house.

In church history the ways of religion overtook much of the spiritual and apostolic nature of the true church. Church buildings did not exist as dedicated places of Christian worship until the second century. From the time of Constantine in the fourth century, the Roman Catholic Church developed more and more the idea of a dedicated church building. That building became the only place where God could be worshiped; where the liturgy took place and of course where the Holy Communion was ministered. The Breaking of the Bread in the Catholic tradition, became the Catholic Mass.

Other denominational churches in history adopted the idea that the sacred building and the ordained priesthood were necessary for the proper worship of God and the breaking of Bread was only allowed in the 'holy' building.

The Lord's Supper, a key component of house church

There are many aspects to "church in the house", but a key component is the Lord's Table. Historically, denominational 'communion' have been established that are exclusive and enshrouded in man-made mystery, and authorised according to strict denominational control.

It is a major breakthrough for believers to take communion in a simple house fellowship that mirrors New Testament practice. In a very real way, **the breaking of bread signifies the establishment of the church.**

Worldwide, home churches of whatever persuasion, if they are part of a denomination or movement are not allowed to break bread in the homes. The breaking of Bread is restricted to public meetings of the church. Thus there is not a true recognition of the church in the house, as basic biblical practice is not allowed.

Cell churches

In recent years, there has been the establishment of cell churches and various groupings have sprung up, following very set formulas for the conduct of meetings. There is no clear apostolic vision for how each cell church is to grow into the mature church of Jesus Christ. There are many rules and prescribed ways of doing things. So one asks, 'Is this just another system of church?' and I fear that it is, even though it can be a successful way of keeping a growing local church together.

However the Biblical vision is not for large local churches, but for many church plants in the houses of believers. In fact, church planting will cause church growth much more than establishing cells.

RESTORATION OF CHURCH IN THE HOUSE

By and large, **most small group expressions** whether they be cell groups, home groups, households or cell churches **are effective in providing close pastoral care and fellowship for the saints**, but generally **fail to bring the saints into the full expression of their giftings and ministries to fully function in the Body of Christ**. This is because there is still **an important foundational understanding of church in the house** that is missing!

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

The model of local congregations propped up and strengthened by small groups operating in the houses is not New Testament. **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**), but the church still met from house to house.

The purpose of ministry in the house

Stated clearly and simply: **the purpose of ministry in the house is**

- 1. to plant the Biblical church**
- 2. 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, the expectation of Jesus 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:

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**. It was in this extended time of **prayer and supplication**, that the twelfth apostle to replace Judas the betrayer, was chosen. Clearly the **Scriptures were open** in this house meeting and the **Holy Spirit spoke** to Peter through the Scripture.

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. **Verse 42** ***“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”***

Where did the 3120 continue? Where did they meet? This is a crucial question which most do not ask or else ignore the answer. **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.

“And when they had prayed the place where they were assembled together was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoke the word of God with boldness.”

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. Verse 44 ***“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word”***. 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 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.”***

v.8 ***“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

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 and it is reasonable to believe that they were five house-based fellowships that were part of the church in Rome.

Rom.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 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.

1 Cor.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.

v.19 Priscilla and Aquila had a **church in their house** in Ephesus, as well as in Rome later (**Rom.16:5**), and in Corinth earlier, Paul launched his ministry in Corinth from their house.

Col. 4:15 here the church is in the **house of Nymphas**.

Philemon verses 1-2 Philemon hosted and **led the church in his house.**

Philemon verses 4-6 He was known for his love and faith and his refreshing ministry to the saints and to Paul the apostle, **20-22**, again ministering in the context of his own house.

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.**

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.

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.

THE GOAL

- is the multiplication of disciples who meet in houses
- to hear the apostles doctrine,
- to fellowship together including the meeting of each other's 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.

Where did the Thousands of New Converts meet?

Have you ever asked: *‘What happened to the 3000 converts of Acts 2:41?’ ‘What happened to the 5000 in Acts 4:4?’ ‘What happened to the ones being added daily to the house churches? Acts 2:47’.* The ones from Acts 2:47 joined the house churches; but what about the 3000 and the 5000? Where did they experience church? The only answer is: **in the houses of believers or maybe even in their own houses.**

Certainly we can assume that the church continued to meet in Cornelius’ house in Acts 10. We can easily imagine a church meeting regularly in the house of the Philippian jailer after he and his household had been dramatically saved. It is clear that Lydia invited Paul and the brothers to her house to meet as the new church in Philippi.

Stop going to Church!

It is not a step forward for a group of believers meeting in homes to grow in number and then to go and rent a hall or construct a dedicated church building for their assembly. In fact as soon as that happens the church has actually taken a backward step and will stop growing in the way God has ordained. The experience of church in an assembly that meets on Sundays predominantly is not a true example of Biblical church, nor is it a true experience of Biblical discipleship.

Start being the Church!

It is a life-changing experience for Christians to realise that we are ‘to stop going to church’ and to start ‘being the church’; that Christianity is a life-style, much more than an outward practice. Once we are discipled, we realise that we are the church! That we represent Jesus Christ wherever we are! If we follow the life-style of being a disciple, we will experience a fruitful and rewarding walk and ministry.

THE CONDUCT OF MINISTRY IN THE HOUSE

1. Through prayer, enabling the lost to find Jesus

2. Praise and worship
3. Fellowship and sharing
4. Apostolic doctrine – leading to sound doctrine practiced, revelation understood and grace received.
5. Many opportunities for ministry – signs and wonders, preaching and teaching.

The conduct of house ministry in the early church:

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 [see **Acts 21:10** Agabus the prophet came to the house. Paul and his team were already in the house of Philip the evangelist (v.8).]

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.

In the Cell Church model, even quite mature believers are continually made dependent on the staff of the local church – never delegated to function in ministry at home, daily, breaking of bread, prayer, study 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, and this expression of ministry is not limited to apostles [see **Mark 16:17-18**].

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.

It is to these groups of people, meeting together with the evidence of God’s presence manifest in the midst that the Lord will bring the lost.

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.

**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,**

**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.**

Chapter five

BLOW THE TRUMPET **IN ZION**

- **Proclamation of apostolic**
doctrine
- **Formation of apostolic**
companies

BLOW THE TRUMPET IN ZION

THE PROCLAMATION OF APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE

ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURAL PATTERN

The proclamation of apostolic doctrine is calling for **the reformation of church according to the Scriptural pattern and practice and calling for a return to apostolic Christianity**. A reformed church is **a church that operates in New Testament order and function**, for example, **1Cor.12:28** says that *“God has set in the church first apostles, second prophets and third teachers; after that ...”* other ministries. Therefore we need apostles raised up today to lead the church and bring biblical order and function into being. A second powerful example is in **Eph.4:7-16** where we learn that the church cannot come to maturity in function without the five fold ministry gifts operating. A reformed church is one **where all the gifts and ministries of the New Testament are functioning fully**, not having been replaced by some man-made alternative.

A RETURN TO SCRIPTURE

The challenge of **apostolic Christianity, which in simple terms is a return to Scripture**, can appear daunting and appear to negate what many regard as fine works of Christian endeavour in contemporary churches and down through the ages. And yet the members of the church of Moses felt the same way about Jesus. His doctrine and practice were so radical that instead of receiving the revelation He brought, the leaders of the church of Moses saw Him as a threat to their established, historically proven institutions and ways of serving God. They failed to see that

**Jesus had come to fulfil the law and the prophets;
Jesus was the substance that brought to reality the shadows;
in Jesus all that God ever revealed was now being fulfilled
and would be manifest in the church of Jesus Christ.**

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Today many committed Christians are resisting the restoration of the apostolic ministry. Leaders are speaking against the apostolic teaching without even carefully searching the Scriptures to *“see whether these things are so”* **Acts17:11**. However God is continuing to raise apostles and prophets who are speaking of the reformation of the church – a return to New Testament Christianity, a return to *“first love”* by *“doing the first works”* **Rev.2:5**. God is raising apostles who know the *“hidden wisdom which God ordained [predetermined] before the ages for our glory”* **1Cor.2:7**; apostles and prophets who *“understand ... the mystery, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets”* **Eph.3:4-5**. As the unfolding revelation of the Word of God is preached and taught, unhindered and unfettered by denominational precepts, teachings and practices and not dependent on man or man’s approval, **the Word of God is increasing and prevailing (Acts19:20)**. This is what happened in Ephesus when the apostle Paul stayed there for over two years, teaching daily in the School of Tyrannus (**Acts19:9-10**) and ministering from house to house (**Acts20:20**), and the result was that all of Asia heard the word. Also many ministers, that is, workers, were raised up by Paul.

LUKE RECEIVED PERFECT UNDERSTANDING

Luke, who wrote the Gospel and the Acts, was a disciple and coworker of Paul. He also had the opportunity to meet some of the other apostles who had been with Jesus. Luke declares in **Lu.1:1-4**, that he is able *“to write an orderly account (v.3) of those*

things which have been fulfilled among us” (v.1) [the story of Jesus coming] that Theophilus “may know the certainty of those things in which he was instructed” v.4. Luke says he has “perfect understanding of all things from the very first” v.3, that is, he fully understands the mystery of Christ coming! He has received this understanding from “eyewitnesses and ministers of the word” v.2. This is the apostolic doctrine! The first church was ‘weaned’ on the apostles doctrine (Acts 2:42).

REVELATION KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD

Do you realise it is possible for you to have a perfect understanding of the purposes of God? Do you know that this is God’s declared intention for you? Paul prays for us in **Eph.1:17-19**, that we may receive *“the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus Christ”* and that our understanding will be enlightened. God did not intend for His people to be locked away in denominational churches, being taught only part of the truth. Rather **He descended into the lower parts of the earth, to take captivity captive, and ascend into heavenly places, releasing gifts to men (Eph.4:8-9).** *“He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers” Eph.4:11.* All of these ministry gifts must function *“till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” v.12.* Brethren this will happen! God’s Word declares it. The church can never come to unity of the faith any other way!

WHAT IS ‘THE UNITY OF THE FAITH’?

It is *“the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” Ju.3.* I have heard senior ministers question fundamental teachings of the Word of God. Today we have outright challenges and public denials of the *‘faith’*. **Jude** exhorts us to *“contend earnestly”* for the **faith**. In other words **the faith is the apostles doctrine that was the founding word of revelation concerning the kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

TRUTH WITHSTANDS ERROR

We must not compromise the clear teaching of Scripture in any way. I see senior leaders comforting and standing with member churches of the Uniting Church of Australia after that denomination has clearly declared themselves to be apostate by deciding to ordain homosexuals and lesbians to the ministry. **We are not to stand with apostasy but withstand it strongly. It is the lack of knowledge of apostolic doctrine that leaves ministers and saints bereft of the truth** at crucial times such as now. Those who know the truth must uncompromisingly declare it. This will be costly and will meet with all kinds of opposition and persecution.

RECEIVE THE APOSTLES JESUS SENDS

Paul declares in **Eph.3** that **God has given the revelation of the mystery of His grace to “His holy apostles and prophets” v.5.** The church has been bereft of this *“deeper wisdom”* of the Word of God but now with the restoration of apostles and prophets the *“mystery, ... which God ordained before the ages for our glory” 1Cor.2:6-7,* is being revealed once again. The fivefold ministry of **Ephesians 4** is given by Jesus to do the work of the ministry, to perfect [equip] the saints and to build up the body of Christ until we all come to maturity. That maturity is detailed for us in **verses 13-16.** It is as apostles are raised and then received by the church that the church will receive the teaching and revelation that is essential for us to grow into maturity. Much truth has already been restored over recent years, with many anointed ministries being raised and functioning.

But now is the time to actually receive the apostles that Jesus appoints and sends.

SONSHIP AND THE INHERITANCE

An integral part of apostolic doctrine is the understanding of sonship, of father/son relationships, and the receiving of the inheritance of God's grace that has been stored up for us. It is the revelation that the church is not institutional but a body that is intimately related together and functioning in love (**Eph.4:16**). God has given grace to restore the spirit and power of Elijah to the last days church. God promised in **Mal.4:5-6** to raise **fathers [apostles] who have a heart for the saints, a heart for the church of Jesus Christ**, and out of this grace **the saints discover spiritual fatherhood**, coming into the reality of sonship, experiencing the love of God in a way that brings real security and release to function.

THE FORMATION OF APOSTOLIC COMPANIES

THE 120 in ACTS 1-2, AN APOSTOLIC COMPANY

An apostolic company was raised up in **Acts 1**. Jesus had trained the apostles and after His resurrection had appeared to them many times teaching them concerning the kingdom of God. He told them to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came. After His ascension the eleven apostles with the women and the mother of Jesus and also His brothers, altogether 120, came **together in the upper room in one accord for prayer and supplication, waiting for that which Jesus had promised. This company was made up of apostles who had been appointed by Jesus** [but one was missing], other male and female **disciples and including Jesus' family members who were very new believers**. But they were together in one accord – of one heart and one mind to serve the purpose of God, to obey Jesus Christ. In the midst of their time of waiting, the Lord spoke to Peter from the Scripture about the essential need of replacing Judas, the betrayer, as there needed to be twelve apostles of the Lamb (**Rev.21:14**).

THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME TO THE APOSTOLIC COMPANY

It was to **this company of people, set in apostolic order, of one heart and one mind – in one accord**, that God sent the Holy Spirit enabling the church to be **fully born**:

**to such a company the Holy Spirit came
through such a company the purposes of God were outworked.**

In these days God has impressed upon us His desire to raise apostolic companies as in **Acts 1**. He has already raised apostles and has gathered teams together with them. But for over two years now God has been revealing His desire and purpose to form companies of saints with the apostles such as He did in **Acts 1**.

THE PURPOSE OF APOSTOLIC COMPANIES: to receive the Holy Spirit

In 2001, I was seeking the Lord for revelation concerning the fulfilment of the Feast of Tabernacles in the life of the church and the experience of the believer. Revelation came from the Lord out of **John 7:37-39** ***"On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. v.38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' v.39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."***

The last day, the great day of the Feast

Verse 37 says that Jesus made this awesome prophetic promise on *'the last day'*, the *'great day of the Feast'*. This was the **Feast of Tabernacles**. Earlier in **Chap.7** Jesus' brothers had urged Him to go up publicly to the Feast but He refused. However He went up secretly and began to preach in the Temple area. The Scripture is clear *'on the last day'*, which is the eighth day (**Lev.23:36**); this was when Jesus stood in the midst and cried out.

The eighth day came after seven days of keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. Traditionally and Scripturally this meant the people of God had dwelt in temporary booths made of tree branches and leafy boughs. The eighth day was a special **'convocation', a coming together, a 'sacred assembly', a special Sabbath day**. **All the people** who were in Jerusalem for the Feast would have **gathered** at the Temple for the 'sacrifice by fire'. [See **Lev. 23** for a full description of the Feasts.] At that time they gathered for the special sacrifice; **at the end of the age it will be the true believers gathering unto Jesus!** Jesus will release the Holy Spirit to the believers in such a way that all who are thirsty will be given drink.

Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles

Israel was given **three specific Feasts** by the Lord: **Passover, Pentecost** [Feast of Weeks], and **Tabernacles**.

Passover consisted of three parts: **Passover Day**, seven days of **Unleavened Bread** and the following day, the day of **First Fruits**.

Pentecost was one day only.

Tabernacles also had three parts: the first day of the seventh month was the **'Blowing of Trumpets'**, the **Day of Atonement**, and the **Feast of Tabernacles** itself which went for eight days. The first day was a special Sabbath and the eighth day was a special Sabbath.

All the Feasts have a fulfilment

All of the Feasts are prophetic and are **fulfilled in Christ**. There is also a **fulfilment in the church** of Jesus Christ and thus **a fulfilment in the life of every believer**.

Fulfilment of Passover

Jesus Christ actually died on the cross on the day of Passover; He being the fulfilment. The Passover lamb was pointing to the Lamb of God, Jesus. We experience the Feast of Passover by coming to faith in Jesus Christ, knowing that He *"was delivered up because of our offences and was raised because of our justification"* **Rom.4:25**. The Unleavened Bread was representative of the taking out of all sin from our lives. This happens when we are saved. Water baptism is an essential part of our salvation and we are baptised into the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (**1Pet.3:21-22**). This is the fulfilment of First Fruits: Jesus was the first to rise from the dead – He was the 'first fruit' of them who would rise from the dead.

Fulfilment of Pentecost

The Feast of Weeks [Pentecost] was simply named because it was to be observed exactly seven weeks and one day after the day of First Fruits. Pentecost was fulfilled when the Holy Spirit came to the 120 disciples, including the apostles, in **Acts 2:2-4**. This Feast is fulfilled in the life of the believer when we receive the Holy Spirit, with the accompanying signs such as tongues.

Day of Atonement and Trumpets

The book of **Hebrews** makes it clear that Jesus Christ has fulfilled the Day of Atonement fully by being the '*scapegoat*' – He went outside the city to die, carrying all of our sins; and by being the '*sacrificial goat*' – He entered the Holy of Holies in heaven above with His own blood. The blowing of Trumpets is not so easily interpreted. However a reasonable explanation is that the trumpets represent the prophetic word of God being proclaimed, calling the church on to perfection, preparing the church for the coming of the Lord.

Fulfilment of Feast of Tabernacles

Concerning the fulfilment of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus gives us prophetic insight in **John 7**. He specifically made His announcement on the last day of the Feast – the eighth day. **He was speaking of a fulfilment to come of this Feast. The coming of the Holy Spirit** on the day of Pentecost was the fulfilment of the Feast of Weeks. Jesus was not referring specifically to the fulfilment of the Feast of Pentecost; He referred to that fulfilment in **Acts 1:4-8**. In **John 7**, I believe Jesus is referring to the fulfilment of the Feast of Tabernacles at the end of the age. But even as the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was **to a prepared people** – the 120 disciples, including the twelve apostles, so the coming of the Holy Spirit to release "rivers of living water" out of the believers to give drink to the 'thirsty' will be to a prepared people. To this end **God is forming apostolic companies** all over the globe **who will be prepared by God to receive an awesome outpouring of the Holy Spirit to fulfil John 7:37-39** and

**to bring to pass the celebration [fulfilment] of the Feast of Tabernacles
in the life of the church just prior to the return of Jesus.**

The Holy Spirit will be released

Jesus will appear in the midst of believers who have fully accepted Jesus Christ, have grown up in Him "*in all things*" (**Eph.4:15**), and are that perfect, glorious church for which He is coming (**Eph.5:27**). **But before he comes there will be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to give drink to the thirsty, so that multitudes will be saved.** The Feast of Tabernacles is also known as the Feast of **the great Ingathering**.

THE PURPOSE OF APOSTOLIC COMPANIES: to demonstrate Scriptural church practice and serve the purpose of God in these days

The church in general is in great need of reformation. The confessing church in the society is hardly recognisable from the Scripture. So much of what the church stands for and does is simply not according to the Scripture. Church practice throughout the world is largely based upon the traditions of men and so the word of God has been made of no effect. God is raising apostolic companies today to demonstrate Scriptural church practice so that true believers, including ministers, will see a demonstration, a manifestation of the glory of Jesus Christ in the midst of a people who are totally committed to being the church. Such a people are set in order, are in one accord, with each member fully functioning in the gifts and ministries that Christ has given.

HOW ARE APOSTOLIC COMPANIES BEING FORMED TODAY?

Apostles need to be in place so that apostolic companies can form once again. Wherever the Lord raises an apostle, **He raises others to be with the apostle**. In our experience a team of committed people agreed together to launch the ministry we are working in today in obedience to the revelation we had then. We knew God was calling us to the apostolic ministry but what this meant was not clear. What was clear

was a commitment to prayer and revival and the confidence that God would lead us. For nearly five years we laboured together with various saints added to us over the years who began to function and play a key role in this ministry. Initially we saw ourselves as **an apostolic team with a support base of pray-ers and helpers**. As already shared, it was in June 2001 that the Lord showed us to teach on **the formation of an apostolic company** and we invited **the saints who were in agreement with us** concerning the will of God for today, to join such a company.

Result of joining an apostolic company

In joining an apostolic company the saints are **coming into order** as laid out in the book of Acts. Being joined to an apostolic company brings **release to the saints to function more effectively in their gifts and ministries**. People who live in areas where they have no apostle to relate to can link into an apostolic company and so receive all the oversight, covering, support and necessary feeding they need **to grow and develop in ministry areas**. There was a sense of belonging and security that people otherwise lacked – not the security of a well-pastored local fellowship but **the security of belonging to a company of believers where one was accepted and received** as a worthwhile and integral part of the body.

The new wineskin

It was after five years of growing and developing in the apostolic ministry and after two years of seeking to form the apostolic company, that **we came into relationship with another apostle and the grace of sonship was released to us**. The **understanding and reality of sonship and fatherhood relationships being the new wine skin of the church** has increased and added to the preciousness of being part of an apostolic company. **There is a greater reality of family, an increase of love and trust, wherein the brethren are much more secure, bold, disciplined and know their place and function in the body**. We are blessed to be a blessing! We have a revelation that the grace of God is all sufficient and that the apostolic restoration that is happening worldwide in the church of Jesus Christ is unstoppable!

THE APOSTOLIC COMPANY FUNCTIONING

Once the apostolic company is functioning, that is, training and equipping workers for the harvest, and demonstrating New Testament church, we will see workers sent out into the harvest and many churches planted. Once the churches are planted then the apostle or members of the apostolic company will oversee the raising up of leaders, that is the elders, to give oversight and shepherd the flock of God who are meeting in local house churches.

Chapter six

BUILDING THE **CHURCH**

- **the Apostolic Training**

Centre

- **Planting of Multiple**

House Churches

BUILDING THE CHURCH

- the apostolic training centre**
- planting multiple churches**

RAISE UP WORKERS FOR THE HARVEST

The key to building the church is to raise up many workers for the harvest. Jesus in both **Matt.9:37-38** and **Lu.10:2**, spoke of the harvest being plentiful and the need for workers to be raised up by the Lord. After saying this in **Matthew**, Jesus then **appointed the twelve apostles** and sent them out in the harvest, giving them authority to preach and power to heal. Likewise in **Luke**, Jesus **raised another seventy to go out into the harvest** to heal and to preach. Jesus said in **Matt.16:18**, *"I will build My church"* and in raising the twelve and the seventy Jesus is showing us how to build the church:

**train workers and send them out with power to heal and to cast out demons,
authority to preach the kingdom of God.**

After His ascension, Jesus gave the fivefold ministries to the church (**Eph.4:11**) and we are **to follow the pattern established by Him**: train workers and send them out into the harvest to plant churches. **Paul the apostle followed the pattern and effectively established many churches, having trained many workers and then ordaining elders in every place.**

THE APOSTOLIC TRAINING CENTRE

Jesus' training school for apostles and other workers was itinerant - He trained them as they followed Him. Remember when He first called some of the disciples, He said *"Come follow Me and I will make you fishers of men."* He trained the disciples as they lived with Him, travelled with Him, learnt to pray like Him, saw Him ministering in the power of the Spirit, and heard Him preaching and teaching the Word of God. He also sent them out with power to preach and to heal. The apostles were with Jesus in this very 'hands-on' form of training for approximately three and a half years. How different this is to most Bible schools and seminaries in church history and in contemporary practice. And yet in church history we find some evidence of the apostolic practice.

APOSTLES IN HISTORY

In the Twelfth century there was an apostle named Peter Waldo who was one of many apostles who at that time **oversaw the planting and growth of many churches of New Testament style and practice** in parts of Europe. The apostles at that time were itinerant ministers who travelled from place to place, **'planting and watering'**, and always with **a younger assistant who was being trained in apostolic ministry, travelling with the older apostle**. The local churches, mostly meeting in homes, were pastored by elders who were appointed by the apostles. It is sad to realise that these brethren were strongly opposed and severely persecuted by the public confessing church of the time, which was the Roman Catholic church. In fact throughout church history there has been a thread of apostolic Christianity that at times flourished making a very fruitful impact on towns and cities and rural areas. However the ruling state churches of the time always sought to suppress, silence and in many instances put to death the apostolic leaders and many of the brethren.

THE SCHOOL OF TYRANNUS - AN APOSTOLIC TRAINING SCHOOL

Later Paul established a training school in Ephesus and he was there for at least two years. He taught daily in the school as well as ministering from house to house. He did not leave the city. **The result was many trained workers for the harvest.** Even during the two year period *"all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus"* **Acts 19:10**. Workers had gone out from the school of Tyrannus empowered to preach and to heal! **This is the model for apostolic schools today.** Paul expected Timothy to do as he had done: *"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses [the training school in Ephesus] commit these to faithful men, who will be able to teach others"* **2 Tim. 2:2**. Paul as an apostle did the work of the ministry of an apostle, that is, to train many ministers of the Gospel. He then charged Timothy, who had become an apostle himself, to do the work of the apostle: impart the teaching to *'faithful men who will be able to teach others.'* Today one of the main ministry works of apostles is to train others for the ministry. To this end apostolic training schools need to be established.

SIGNS AND WONDERS ARE PART OF THE TRAINING

Note that *"God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul"* **Acts 19:11-17**. This is in the context of the apostolic training school! Again how different to many Bible schools and training seminaries today where the emphasis is on scholastic work and assessment. The trainees in the apostolic training school are taught the word, even the deeper mysteries of the word, **1 Cor. 2:6-7**, and are equipped to minister in the power of God. One of the marks of an apostle is that the ministry is accomplished with *"signs and wonders and mighty deeds"* **2 Cor. 12:12**.

TRAINEES TRAVELED WITH PAUL

Various ones that Paul was training for ministry also **traveled with him on team as he was mostly an itinerant apostle**, his stay in Ephesus for over two years being one of his longer sojourns in one place. As with Jesus so with Paul the apostle. Future ministers including apostles are trained on the job, in the company of the experienced apostle and the apostolic team.

THE APOSTLE IS A ROLE MODEL

Paul expected both the ministers he was training and the saints in the various churches whom he had fathered in the Gospel, to follow his example (**Phil. 3:17**), to imitate Paul. He assured the Corinthians that Timothy would *"remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every place"* **1 Cor. 4:17**. Both the apostles that Jesus had trained plus Paul, followed the pattern of apostolic training that Jesus established. This has always been the way of building the church.

FOLLOWING THE PATTERN TODAY

The burden of the Lord on my heart since we established Revival Ministries Australia has been **to train workers for the harvest**. This was confirmed to me by reading Rick Joyner's book, *'World Aflame'* in early 1998. Rick pointed out that one of the main reasons that the Welsh revival ceased so quickly was **the lack of trained workers to look after and disciple the thousands of new converts**. These ones were often saved in revival meetings that had no association with a functioning local church. When we launched RMA we were committed to revival in Australia and we still are. But over the years the Lord has brought us into apostolic ministry. **We have been purposefully praying to the Lord of the harvest to give us workers.** As the Lord gives us workers, **we train them or retrain them, as the need is, and send them out into the harvest.** When we first wrote some basic plans in early 1998 that

were the foundation of the direction of the ministry, we always envisaged an apostolic training school mirrored on Paul's example in **Acts 19** in Ephesus.

THE MYANMAR EXPERIENCE

In February 1999, I visited the Union of Myanmar [formerly Burma] and served a friend of mine who is an apostle in that nation. For many years he has been training disciples and sending them out to minister. The result has been much effective evangelism and the planting of many churches in the houses. Short-term training schools have operated at least twice yearly in different parts of the nation. I was privileged to share in one of the training schools for a few days [approx.120 disciples had been in training for 6 weeks] and then to travel in a northern state visiting the brethren in many towns. They came together in house meetings where I could teach and the power of the Holy Spirit was evident. I experienced

**New Testament church in action:
the apostolic training school and the church meeting in the house in every town**

THE PATTERN IN ACTION

God showed me clearly through our brother apostle in Burma the pattern in action. **We held our first short-term training school** in June/July that year in Australia, **and began planting the church in the house**. Since that time we have held schools twice yearly in Toowoomba. Currently the schools are for two weeks full-time; as well, one-week schools have been held in other cities and overseas. The schools are open but specifically aimed at pastors and other ministers and leaders, and committed disciples, who want to be trained and equipped. **Some have been ordained** to the ministry of one of the fivefold gifts of **Eph.4** at the end of a school. **All who attend the schools are commissioned** with the laying on of hands. **Other ministries are received to teach and train** in the schools. We have had apostles, prophets, teachers as well as evangelists come to share and as we receive each ministry as sent by Christ, we are blessed.

SHILOH APOSTOLIC TRAINING SCHOOL

The schools include teaching from **manuals*** already written; teaching that is fresh revelation and understanding from the Scriptures that will make up a new manual; training in prayer, in evangelism, in ministry, in Bible research and preaching practice. We often train children in a separate ministry training school running conjointly with the adult school. The schools are an awesome opportunity to be in the fellowship of the apostolic company and to experience first hand the work of God manifest in the midst.

*[the **manuals** are written for training and study purposes; they include teaching the milk of the word for new Christians, thorough teaching on the foundations of the faith, and the deeper wisdom of the Word to take the saints on to maturity]

SEVEN STEPS OF FRUITFUL MINISTRY IN FULFILLING THE GREAT COMMISSION BY PLANTING NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES.

We are training workers for the harvest. Workers in the harvest are not only evangelists and soul winners, although we do emphasise evangelism. However our ministry is apostolic so our focus is to plant multiple churches. There is a clear pattern in Scripture for us to follow in planting the church.

The seven steps are:

- 1. PRAYER** and
- 2. EVANGELISM** > by which **the church is planted**

3. **NURTURE** and
4. **DISCIPLESHIP** > by which **the church grows and flourishes**
5. **TRAINING and EQUIPPING for MINISTRY**, and
6. **PLANTING the CHURCH** and
7. **EMERGENCE of NEW MINISTRIES** > by which **the church is brought maturity.**

[For further teaching and application of these steps, see manuals: 'Strategy to Reach a Nation', and 'Planting the Church']

PRAYER AND EVANGELISM

The church is planted firstly through prayer: two or three believers coming together in agreement in prayer for the lost, in the very area where they live, or where the Lord has sent them to plant the church. **Out of prayer the Lord moves and souls are contacted and saved.** There are sovereign testimonies of people being drawn to be saved but more often, **neighbours simply accept an invitation to come into the home** for a meal and they begin to hear the Gospel. In one of the country towns where we minister regularly in a house church, many saints from various local churches used to gather to hear the apostles' doctrine. However in recent times, those ones have generally ceased coming and instead the house is full with mothers and children from the very street.

The near neighbours have been contacted and impacted by the faith of the host couple and now they come with their children, including teenagers.

Genuine house churches

We have testimonies of other house churches that are also functioning according to the pattern of Scripture and bearing fruit.

These are genuine examples of ministry in the house as per Acts 2:42-47: the apostle comes to teach; there are regularly signs and wonders; the believers are together, helping each other, taking meals together, breaking bread and the host couples have favour with all in their town or district. So the Lord adds to the church those who are being saved.

CHURCH IN THE HOUSE

We need to be clear:

the New Testament church was exclusively planted in the house.

All that is part of church in the New Testament is clearly

authorised by the word of God to function in the house churches.

Salvation happens in the house, **including water baptism.** If there is no backyard pool or nearby waterway, bath tubs are a reasonable alternative. Baptism is not powerful because it is held in a dedicated church building or because it an official baptism service arranged every few months by the institutional church with an ordained minister present. Baptism, according to the word of God, is powerful because **it is baptism into Christ, into the triune name of God, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.** Prayer is the key to planting the church, winning the lost in any given area.

EVANGELISTS AND APOSTLES

Evangelists can be sent into an area where prayer preparation has 'broken open the ground'. Sending the evangelist into an area where there is no church base can be unfruitful in the longer term. However if **the evangelist goes before the apostolic**

team, then, as in Samaria in **Acts 8**, the apostles can properly found the new church. Currently in some African nations, mass crusades are held and tens of thousands of decisions are recorded for Christ but not many of the ‘converts’ are baptised and even less are nurtured and disciplined in a local church [i.e. the house church].

**The evangelists need to work with the apostles
so that the church can be properly formed.**

FOUNDING THE CHURCH PROPERLY

However where the apostolic church has already established house churches and has trained workers not just for ‘**salvation counseling**’ but for **nurturing and discipling new believers**, the church can multiply as many are saved. Evangelists need to preach the **Gospel of the kingdom of God**, and not a gospel of ‘salvation’, which does not **include water baptism** nor the **receiving of the Holy Spirit**. Evangelists need to work in conjunction with the apostles who are responsible for building the church; then the church can spring up in every place, with strong biblical foundations.

NURTURE AND DISCIPLESHIP TO GROW THE CHURCH

Growing the church is all about nurturing and discipling the new believers, so they can then grow into maturity, enabled to function and minister in the wider body of Christ. The pastor/teacher ministry oversees the house churches, shepherding the flock of God, as according to Paul in **Acts 20:28** and Peter in **1Pet.5:2-4**. New believers often have deep needs and they require healing and restoration ministry. To meet these needs, various house churches can come together every few months and host a healing ministry to come to minister to the newer members. Nurturing is basically feeding the new ones the *“milk of the word that they may grow”* **1Pet.2:2**, teaching the basic principles of Christ as set down in **Heb.6:1-2**.

We disciple the believers by teaching them the word of God, encouraging all into a disciplined reading of the Scriptures. A disciple is one who is being taught – disciples need a teacher. Disciples are those who are learning to follow the Lord, becoming taught in the word, so they can grow strong, overcoming the evil one.

**Nurture and discipleship are the responsibility of the pastor/teachers
and take place in the day to day life of the church.**

Disciplined reading of the Scripture

In our community, SHILOH, we have all been reading the New Testament on a committed basis of **three chapters per day**. We have devised monthly plans, so all have a copy of the reading plan [it takes approx. 3 months to read N.T.]. It is a delight to be in one of the community houses and see young men and women spending time on the weekends diligently reading the Scriptures; to hear them say they are purposely staying in on a week night to keep up with their reading schedule. **The key to discipleship is discipling all believers to the committed reading and absorption of the Word of God.** It is a shock to me to find most believers in most churches cannot say they have read all of the Bible.

GOING ON TO MATURITY

TRAINING AND EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR MINISTRY

Once a believer has been disciplined they are ready to be trained and equipped for ministry. This generally does not happen in the house churches; this is the work of the ministry of the apostle; this is why we need apostolic training schools and the opportunity for trainees to travel on team with the apostles to further their training.

PLANTING NEW CHURCHES

Once a disciple is trained, or a minister retrained, these ones are then able to plant the church. **Remember the church is planted in every friendly house.** In **Acts 16**, once Lydia received the word of the Lord through Paul and was baptised, she invited the apostolic team to plant the church in her house. Later in **Acts 16**, significant ministry took place in the house of the Philippian jailer. In **Luke 10** Jesus said, **‘Find a man of peace, stay in his house and minister there – heal the sick and preach the kingdom of God.’** People will be saved! A church will form! Baptise the new believers as soon as possible – in the Scripture that was immediately. Baptism is an integral part of salvation, not something to be done later.

THE EMERGENCE OF NEW MINISTRIES

As the trained workers begin to function in ministry, planting new churches, preaching, teaching and healing, the anointing and gifts that God has imparted to them will become evident. **A new generation of ministers and gifted saints will emerge.** It will be clear as to who is a young apostle, an emerging prophet; the evangelist will be known by the gift manifesting – some are very fruitful in soul winning because they have a gift. The pastor will be recognised by the believers. Others will emerge with gifts of healings, some with the ministry of helps, etc.

Some years ago, a group of believers were led out of a denominational church and in the will of the Lord formed a house church, which received our apostolic ministry. One of the brothers quickly emerged as the pastor of this church, not because he was appointed by man, but because he **‘shepherded the flock of God’**, by the gift of God – he has the ascension gift ministry of the pastor (**Eph.4:11**). Later we did ordain this brother and he is known as a pastor.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ELDERS AND APOSTLES

THE SCRIPTURAL PATTERN

This is the Scriptural pattern: the apostle plants the church in a town or a city or rural area, or the church forms sovereignly, and later **‘the elders [pastor/teacher] are ordained by the apostle’ Acts 14:23.** Many churches today have not been planted by apostles but in the reformation of the church, **every pastor and every ministry leader needs to come into a relationship with and receive an apostle as their mentor/spiritual father.**

TWO LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

In the New Testament there are **two God-ordained levels of government in the Body of Christ:**

the governance of the church overall is the responsibility of the apostles;

the governance of the church locally is the responsibility of the elders.

The emergence of the apostolic team

In these days of restoration, **the reformation of the church** is beginning to take place. As God has formed us into an apostolic company, we have witnessed **the emergence of an apostolic team, that is, the apostle and those called and gifted to work with the apostle in apostolic and prophetic ministry.**

This team:

**does the work of the ministry of the apostle
does the work of the ministry of the prophet.
goes to the nation and the nations;
gives oversight to ministries, pastors and fellowships
ministers in apostolic training schools
and it is to this team that brethren relate in spiritual sonship.**

The emergence of elders

We have also witnessed **the emergence of the elders, that is, the pastor/teachers** who are responsible for the local churches which are growing up in a number of houses.

**The elders give oversight to the local fellowships;
the elders are the pastors who shepherd the flock of God;
the elders are the teachers who feed the word of God to the people;
the elders are ordained and thus recognised and received by the apostle
the elders relate to the apostle or members of the apostolic team.**

CONCLUSION

COMING HOME

As apostolic grace is released more and more to the saints, many are having the experience of 'coming home'. There is a real sense of coming out of the wilderness journeying and finding a true place of rest in Christ. This can be understood in Scriptural terms as '*coming into the land*', as coming into '*the fulfilment of the Feast of Tabernacles*', as '*entering within the veil into the Holy of Holies*'. It is being included by God into an apostolic company; it is coming to know your spiritual father and receiving the security of love, acceptance and approval.

RECEIVING OUR INHERITANCE

**Now we are positioned to receive our inheritance,
to practice sound doctrine,
to follow the apostolic pattern established for us by Jesus and the twelve
and then by Paul.
The rewards and the blessings will flow to us, as we become obedient to the
commandments of Jesus and the Word of God.**

Even as God promises enormous blessings to those who tithe **Mal.3:10-12**, so there are equivalent blessings when we practice New Testament evangelism in which baptism is central and the new believers receive the Holy Spirit. **The day is coming when all who hear the word preached and are convicted will be saved in the same way that the 3000 were saved on the day of Pentecost and added to the church.** No longer will we be talking about the 'percentages' of those who make a decision at a crusade who follow on to join a church.

CONTINUING STEADFASTLY

As we break the bread regularly from house to house and establish the church in every friendly house, we will begin to experience a whole new realm of church life – daily, from house to house. Jesus promises us in **Matt.10:40** that if we receive the apostles He sends we are receiving Him. **As we continue steadfastly in the apostles doctrine, we will grow in the revelation knowledge of Jesus Christ.** True believers are hungry for deeper relationship with Jesus and in **Rev.2:4-5**, Jesus is

calling us to repentance because we have *'lost our first love'*. It is as we *'do the first works'* that we will rediscover *'first love'* for Jesus.

**As the church is reformed and continues steadfastly in the first works,
coming into proper order
and functioning in all the gifts and ministries of the New Testament,**

**the church of Jesus Christ will be built
according to the Scriptural pattern
as it was in the beginning.
as it is written**

“Jesus himself is sanctifying and cleansing the church by the washing of the water by the word that He may present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish” Eph.5:26-27

LOOK UP OUR WEBSITE:
www.revivalministries.org.au

You will find :

1. ***Current newsletters*** and previous ones; you can read the newsletter on the net, receive it by email or by post.
2. All of our manuals are advertised and some are fully published on the website. Copies of manuals can be ordered [donation appreciated to cover costs]
4. Information on **current events, ministry schools, ministry trips** etc.
5. Reports on **overseas ministry**: RMA sends teams to
Myanmar, India, Philippines, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Central Congo and Mauritius.
And much more!

SHILOH SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

is based at the SHILOH Centre in Toowoomba but can travel anywhere.

Short Term Training Schools [2 weeks in duration] are held at least twice yearly, at SHILOH Centre. The short term training provides a means for many saints to be equipped and released into fruitful ministry. Schools are held in other centres on request.

Apostolic/Prophetic conferences hosted every few months with recognized apostles and prophets ministering.

Monthly Training Days held on Saturdays 10am to 5pm. Teaching the apostles doctrine. Occasional guest ministries to teach and train. Leadership gatherings held on Fridays prior to Monthly Training Day.

Weekly Teaching Sessions to open up the scriptures, bringing revelation with line upon line teaching of the Word.

Discipleship Courses to encourage new believers to become full on disciples, through reading scripture, recording what the Lord is saying, memorising verses, praying for the lost and witnessing to their faith.

Bible Research Classes teaching use of concordances, message preparation, preaching and teaching practice.

TEACHING / STUDY MANUALS AVAILABLE

1) The Word and the Spirit; 2) Prayer a Way of Life; 3) Foundations of Our Faith; 4) The Power of Prayer; 5) This Gospel Must Be Preached; 6) Steps to Revival; 7) Strategy to Reach the Nation; 8) The Glory of the Lord shall be revealed; 9) Let us go on to Perfection; 10) And He gave some to be Apostles...; 11) The Cross to the Glory; 12) Planting the Church; 13) I will Build My Church; 14) Faith in Practice

15) Leadership in the Last Days; 16) The Spirit and Power of Elijah

Youth and Young Christians: ***1) Prayer Attack; 2) Foundations of our Faith for Youth;***

3) Born again to Serve; 6) Heroes of the Bible

Children's Manuals: ***1) God Talk; 2) Joseph, Jesus and Me***

"Walking in Our Inheritance" a book by Paul Galligan