

Fountaingate Christian Foundation presents...

The King's Table

Series
Leadership God's Way



***Sending the Word of God to the
Ends of the Earth***

A Personal Letter to You

Dear Friend,

We have observed the Body of Christ in many nations and have concluded that the greatest need is for simple, clear teaching of the Word of God. With this in mind, the Lord led us to create "The King's Table" - one-page studies easy to learn and easy to teach. These have gone around the world.

The first Reformation gave the Bible back to the people and the second Reformation, now in progress, is giving the ministry back to the people. The job of leaders in the Body of Christ is to equip every believer for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16). The shape of each local Body is determined by the people who gather and their individual gifting expressed. We know that the Lord, Himself, is interceding for all of us (Hebrews 7:25) and wants to bring forth a new generation of leaders who understand more fully the principles and responsibilities of leadership.

Our prayer is that these studies might be a great blessing and a challenge to all of us who have been given opportunity to lead.

Every blessing,

Paul and Bunty Collins

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The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

Leadership God's Way

‘ Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule...over all the earth...’
Genesis 1:26

God has a very different view of leadership from that which is seen in the world. His concept of leadership is the exact opposite. We see the Lord's kind of leadership expressed from the beginning of time:

The Creation Mandate

“God said, ‘Let Us [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] make mankind in Our image, after Our likeness, and let them have complete authority...over all the earth...’” Genesis 1:26 (Amplified Bible).

We were all included in this broad mandate of leadership. There are many different levels and expressions of leadership and every one of us is, on some level, a leader of some kind. If you are to exercise the gift God has given you, then you must lead within the sphere of that gifting.

Character of leadership

But note the premise upon which our leadership is given... ‘Let us make man *in our image, in our likeness...*’. In other words, we lead like God leads - with the same character behind it! God is not a tyrant, ruling out of pride in His power and for selfish means. God is love (1 John 4:8, 16) and His rulership in our lives is for *our* sake and, like a Father, desiring the best for *us*. Mankind was meant to rule His creation with the same heart.

Plurality of leadership

The mandate to rule over His creation was given to both Adam and Eve. They were a team together in this great task God had given. Created in the image of God, this follows God's very nature. The Heavenly Godhead - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - always minister in “team” together, each fulfilling their specific aspect of the work.

Creation - what was in the *mind* of the Father, the Son *spoke* forth (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17), and the Spirit brought it *into being* (Genesis chapter 1).

Salvation - the Father had the *heart* of the Cross in giving His Son, the Son did the *work* of the Cross in dying for us, and the Spirit walks the *way* of the Cross in the life of the believer.

Honouring one another

The Father

“...*a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!’*” Matthew 17:5 (see also Colossians 1:18-20; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35).

The Son

“...‘I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does...By myself I can do nothing...I seek not to please myself but him who sent me’” John 5:19,30; 14:2-31.

The Holy Spirit

“...*the Spirit of truth...will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears...He will bring glory to me...*” John 16:13-15. (1 Corinthians 12:3; Romans 1:4).

God's way of leadership has never been that of a single individual ruling as a “boss” with top down control. Thus we see, in the New Testament Church, there was a plurality of leadership - team ministries - each functioning in unity according to the specific giftings and callings given by God (Ephesians 4:11-16; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31).

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Leadership Fundamentals

‘ To aspire to leadership is an honourable ambition.
1 Timothy 3:1 (New English Bible) ’

The Bible's viewpoint of leadership is quite different from that which is, for the most part, in the Church. In many sections of the Church, there is a rigid process for producing a leader. In the New Testament, however, academics has nothing to do with the development of a leader. Rather, a Christian leader is defined by five principles:

Gift

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given us...if it is leadership, let him govern diligently..." Romans 12:6,8.

Leadership in the Church is not meant by God to be based on pyramidal structures or means of succession. It is based on gifting that comes directly from God (Eph.4:7,11) which is then recognized and released by the Body of Christ.

Example

"Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith" Heb.13:7.

A leader leads. Like a shepherd, he or she sets the pace up in front, not pushing from behind. A leader doesn't just tell others what to do, but sets the example, both in pattern of life and in proactive life-style.

Maturity

"Now the overseer must be above reproach...He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil" 1 Tim.3:2,6.

A developing maturity is one of the foundations of true Biblical leadership. This has little to do with chronological age (1 Timothy 4:12) or academic qualifications (Phil.3:4-7; 1 Cor.2:1-5). Rather, it has to do with recognized spiritual depth and a proven pattern of life.

Servanthood

"Jesus called them together and said, ' You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many'" Mark 10:42-45 (Luke 22:25-27; Mark 9:35)..

The mark of leadership God's way is the heart of a servant. Jesus paved the way for a pattern of leadership that this world will never understand. The leader in the Church walks the way of the Cross - laying down his life for those he serves. In the Church there is only one true Leader - Jesus Christ Himself. All leadership must be expressed with the attitude of Christ.

Commission

"For I am a minister of the Church by divine commission, a commission granted to me for your benefit, and for a special purpose: that I might fully declare God's Word...that sacred mystery which up till now has been hidden in every age and every generation, but which is now as clear as daylight to those who love God. They are those to whom God has planned to give a vision of the full wonder and splendour of his secret plans for the nations. And the secret is simply this: Christ in you! Yes, Christ in you bringing with him the hope of all the glorious things to come" Col.1:25-27 (Phillips) (see also Col.2:2-3).

God is looking for leaders whose whole focus of ministry is to lead His people toward the magnificent goal He has set for His Church.

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Functions of Leadership

“...there are different gifts and functions; individually grace is given to us in different ways out of the rich diversity of Christ’s giving. Ephesians 4:7 (JBP)”

There are three specific areas where the different gifts and functions of leadership are expressed in the Body of Christ. All are gifts given by Christ on His ascension (Eph.4:7-10). Thus the Lord Jesus Christ is the source of all true leadership in the Church. Each gift is an expression of who He is in His loving leadership of His people.

Foundational gifts

“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers” Eph.4:11.

These specific ministries listed in verse 11 are gifts to the Church. Aligned with Christ, the “chief corner stone”, they are the *foundation* of the Church (Ephesians 2:19-20). They are not the “roof”, high up for all to see. Their whole purpose is that the beauty of the *building* (the people of God revealing Christ) be seen by all. Read through Ephesians 4:7-16. In this remarkable passage, Paul reveals four specific purposes the Lord gave these gifts:

Equipping believers for ministry

“...for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry...” verse 12 (NKJV)

Every believer is called to the ministry and these five types of ministry gifts are given to equip all for the work of the Lord to reach the world and to bless one another.

Building up the Body of Christ

“...for the edifying of the body of Christ...” verse 12 (NKJV)

These gifts of Christ are given to encourage us and nourish believers with His Word so that the Body grows more and more in His image.

Bringing us to unity

“...till we all come to the unity of the faith

and of the knowledge of the Son of God...” verse 13 (NKJV)

Unity of the whole Body is a priority for these ministries as it is for the Lord (John 17:20-23)

To the fullness of Christ

“...to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” verse 13 (NKJV) (see also 2 Corinthians 3:18).

The goal of these ministry gifts is to see God’s ultimate plan fulfilled - the Church filled with His glory.

Overseers

“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood” Acts 20:28 (Hebrews 13:17; Titus 1:7).

Overseers are the shepherds with the pastoral care of Christ’s flock in a local area...not just one person but a number working in team together, each recognizing the gift of the other (1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17; 2 Timothy:2:24). They are “elders” (1 Peter 5:1; Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17).

The Lord Jesus is the “great Shepherd of the sheep” (Hebrews 13:20) and the “Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” (1 Peter 2:25). In 1 Peter 5:2, Peter instructs the leadership of the Church to be “shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care”, as under-shepherds accountable to “the Chief Shepherd” (1 Pet .5:4)

Every believer

“From [Christ] the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” Ephesians 4:16 (see also Romans 12:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12:12).

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Foundational Leaders

“...built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. Eph.2:20.”

An apostle

“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God” Romans 1:1.

An apostle (the ancient Greek word - *apostolos*) means “one sent forth as a messenger”. As well as the original twelve apostles chosen by Jesus there were many other true apostles (Acts 14:3-4; Romans 16:7; 1 Cor.15:5-7; Galatians 1:1,19).

Credentials of an apostle

Read 2 Corinthians chapter 11. Paul contrasts the “super apostles” who were charismatic speakers and avid money raisers (2 Corinthians 2:17; 1 Timothy 6:9-10) and who, the Lord says, are not apostles at all (Revelation 2:2), to his own “credentials” as an apostle of the Lord...

“We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way...” 2 Corinthians 6:3-4.

*** Suffering for the Gospel**

“...in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything” 2 Corinthians 6:4-10.

*** Letters of commendation** - the lives transformed through the apostle's ministry (2 Cor.3:1-6)

*** Setting forth the truth plainly** - 2 Corinthians 4:1-2 (read through verse 15).

Other evidence of a true apostle includes:

- * **The miraculous** (2 Corinthians 12:12)
- * **Changed lives** (2 Corinthians 3:1-3)
- * **Churches born** (1 Cor.9:1-2; Rom.15:20)
- * **Grounding the Church in truth** (Col.1:25)
- * **Preserving unity in the Body** (1 Cor.3:3-5)
- * **Laying foundations** (1 Cor.3:10)
- * **Setting things in order** (Titus 1:5)
- * **Fostering a wider vision** (2 Corinthians 8)
- * **Fathering new ministries** (2 Timothy 1:6).

A prophet

New Testament prophets are not the same as the prophets of the Old Testament.

Old Testament prophets

Read Exodus 20:18-19; Deut.5:23-29;18:15-22; Hebrews 12:18-21. Because the people were afraid of the revelation of God's glory and holiness they were receiving at Mt Sinai, they cried out for Moses to be their mediator - for God to speak to him and then for him to bring His Word to the people. God then promised them a prophet for each generation from then on.

New Testament prophets

Prophets under the New Covenant are not mediators like those in the Old. There is one mediator - Christ (1 Tim.2:5; Heb.8:6) - and all believers can now “hear His voice” (John 10:14-16). New Testament prophets confirm a believer's call (Acts 13:1-3), encourage and strengthen believers in the Christian life (Acts 15:32), and reveal future events so that Christians can be prepared (Acts 11:27-29; Acts 21:11). This is often expressed in team ministry, by the laying on of hands, in the local gatherings of believers (1 Timothy 4:14).

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Leadership Teams

“...the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them"
Acts 13:2

An evangelist

An evangelist has a two-fold ministry. He not only preaches the Gospel, extending God's Kingdom (Acts 8:5-8; 26-40), he also releases the believers in evangelism (Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Thessalonians 3:2).

A pastor

The Greek word for pastor – *poimen* – means “one who tends sheep or cares for flocks”. It is only once translated as “pastor” (in Ephesians 4:11). The few other times “poimen” is found in the New Testament it is translated “shepherd” (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2-4). The foundational pastor, as one of the five-fold ministry of Ephesians 4:11, expresses the Shepherd heart of the Lord to the Body at large (1 Peter 5:4).

A teacher

Under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, a teacher imparts a hunger for the Word of God (Acts 17:11); gives clarity to the Word (Acts 18:24-28); waters the seed of the new life in Christ (1 Corinthians 3:5-6); and imparts the living reality of the truth (Luke 24:27-32).

Five-fold ministry teams

Just as the Godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – function in “team” ministry, so it is with the Body of Christ. Not one part is designed as an independent functioning entity within itself.

“What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe...I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow” 1 Cor.3:5-6.

Read again Ephesians 4:11-16. God has designed the five-fold ministries to flow and function to-

gether as apostolic teams as they travel to the whole Body. Each needs the other. Two important aspects in relation to these ministries are that they are *sent* and *received*. They have safety in a point of reference (Acts 14:26-27; Proverbs 1:14; Acts 15:33).

Sent

“In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers...While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off” Acts 13:1-3.

These team ministries both *send* and are *sent*.

Received

“...So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. The church sent them on their way...When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders...Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and sent them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas...The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together...” Acts 15:2-30 (see also 21:17-19).

As the apostolic teams travel to the different parts of the Body of Christ, they are then *received* by the leadership in that area and the church is gathered together to receive from their ministry. The time they stay will vary according to the need and situation (Acts 11:25).

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Responsibility of Leaders

“...your leaders...men who must give an account...
Hebrews 13:17”

Accountable to the Lord

Hebrews 13:17 declares that leaders “*must give an account*” to the Lord for those they are leading. This is a serious responsibility and the writer exhorts the believers to “*obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden*” (see also 2 Corinthians 11:27-28).

In Colossians 1:28-29, 2:1-3, Paul declares what this heavy responsibility is:

“We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labour, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me. I want you to know how much I am struggling for you....and for all who have not met me personally” 1:28-2:1

Paul describes the purpose for his “struggle”...

Present everyone perfect

To present everyone perfect in Christ is the awesome task of every leader...to see every believer grow to the “whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-16). It is achieved by...

Proclaiming Christ

Christ is the centre of every message a leader ministers. The whole of Scripture speaks of Him (see John 5:39).

Admonishing the believer

Warning of the dangers of the corrupt generation in which we live (Acts 2:40-42).

Teaching...with all wisdom

Wisdom is a gift of the Holy Spirit experienced as the knowledge of the Lord is revealed in the midst of the events of life (Ephesians 1:17-23).

Encourage in heart

“My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart...” Colossians 2:2.

In the midst of the trials that the believers were facing, Paul’s purpose in ministry was to “encourage them in heart”. So is the ministry of every leader called by God - to lift His people above the surrounding circumstances to the knowledge of His love and purpose for them (Colossians 3:1-3).

Unite in love

“...united in love...” Colossians 2:2.

Unity is always a priority on the heart of God and therefore on the heart of His true leaders, not only for a local group of believers but for the whole Body of Christ. Jesus, in His prayer to His Father before going to the Cross, declared what was foremost in His heart...

“...I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me” John 17:20-21 (read to verse 23).

Complete understanding

“...so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” Colossians 2:2-3.

This is God’s ultimate purpose and the responsibility upon the leader - to bring every believer to the full knowledge of Christ and, in Him, to know the very heart and mind of God.

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The Leader's Credentials

‘...If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church? 1 Timothy 3:5’

Above reproach

"Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money" 1 Timothy 3:2-3.

The Lord is not looking at paper credentials as the qualification for leadership. His credentials are the personal life and character of the leader. Paul speaks clearly concerning this in 2 Corinthians 3:1-3 and Philipians 3:1-17.

In his letter to Timothy, Paul lays down clearly the qualifications for the pastoral ministry of the overseers. These qualifications apply to all leadership:

Relationship in family

"Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord...Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" Ephesians 5:22-25; 6:1-3 (Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Peter 3:7).

The Biblical model of family life is exactly the same as the model of church life (Philipians 2:1-8; Colossians 3:12-16). It is based on the depth of love found in God Himself. The selfless unity of the triune God is given as a picture of the quality of relationship that God has planned within family life (John 17:21). The life of the family flows from God the Father (Ephesians 3:14-15).

An overseer has the responsibility of being an example to all of family life as God intends it to be. The foundation of family life is love. This love is expressed in different ways by different members of the family.

Unity of husband and wife

"Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth" Malachi 2:15 (Ephesians 5:31-32).

The love and unity of a husband and wife in leadership is the greatest example that can be, not only to their children, but to the believers. Family life operates as a cycle of love. It is based upon selfless giving to one another:

* **Husbands** - The husband's expression of love for his wife is like that of Christ's for the Church - *laying down his life*.

* **Wives** - The wife's expression of love to her husband is *submitting*. In the same way a believer willingly submits to the Lord because of His great love for us, a woman will willingly submit to the leadership of her husband when his depth of love for her is like the Lord's love in dying for us.

* **Parents** - When children see this kind of love operating in their parents, their expression of love is *obeying*.

"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" Ephesians 6:4 (Col.3:21; Prov.1:8; 6:20).

Relationship in world

"Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us" 1 Pet 2:12

A leader's credentials - to the church and to the world.- are his character and his family.

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What Leadership is Not

“ You are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have only one Master and you are all brothers... Matthew 23:8 ”

Many Christians, having witnessed the abuse of the wrong kind of leadership within the Church, have retreated to a position of individualism and, sometimes, isolation. They don't want to expose themselves to another abusive leader, and even when some gather together for fellowship in small groups, they view all leadership as unnecessary and counter-productive. However, the Bible is clear that leadership plays a vital role within the life of the Church. The big question is - what kind of leadership!

Leadership is not a title

One of the most common misconceptions of leadership is that it is connected to a title. The Lord Jesus commanded that the leadership of his disciples not be titled-based:

“But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth ‘father’, for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called ‘teacher,’ for you have one Teacher, the Christ” Matt.23:8-10.

Nowhere in the New Testament do you find titles given to any of the leaders. Paul describes his ministry in Romans 1:1:

“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God”.

Never in the Word is he addressed as “Apostle Paul”. He is “an apostle” - a description of his function in ministry. The same applies to all the ministries mentioned in Ephesians 4:11...

“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers”.

None of them begin with a capital letter. They are descriptions of function not a title.

Leadership is not a position

Like the Pharisees in the New Testament, wrong leadership loves the position and recognition.

“Everything they do is done for men to see...they love the place of honour at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues, they love to be greeted in the market-places and to have men call them ‘Rabbi’” Matthew 23:5-7.

Leadership is not control

This is one of the most damaging misconceptions of leadership in the Church today. To be a leader, as some view it, is to be in control of other people's lives. But Jesus instructed the opposite:

“The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves” Luke 22:25-26 (Matthew 20:24-26)..

Leadership is not lordship! Any leadership style that is based on control and manipulation falls into the category of “lording it over...the flock”.

“Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers...not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock” 1 Peter 5:2-3.

Leadership is not the exercise of power over people's lives in order to further the cause and benefit of the leader.

Leadership is not top down

Leadership is not hierarchical. New Covenant leadership is not the leader sitting at the top of a pyramid of authority, directing and delegating to all the minions below.

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New Wineskin Leadership

“ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians 4:16. ”

Ministry of the Holy Spirit

In many parts of the Church today the Holy Spirit is given no place to minister. Many leaders and teachers have slipped into the information mode instead of the revelation mode. Our church meetings have become so structured that no room is given for the Holy Spirit, so the gifts of the Spirit are not operating and expressed in the corporate Body of Christ.

Container for the new wine

A challenge came to the Lord Jesus from the Pharisees and the disciples of John the Baptist...

“...‘John's disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking’” Luke 5:33.

The Pharisees represented the Law and John the Baptist represented the Prophets. In other words, the criticism was that the disciples of the Lord were not fulfilling the standards of the Law (the Old Covenant). The Lord's reply revealed a wonderful truth of the New Covenant.

“And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins” Luke 5:37-38 (see also Matthew 9:17; Mark 2:22).

In those days a goat skin was used to hold wine. When new wine was poured in, the goat skin was flexible with the movement and expanded as the wine fermented. But if the goat skin was an old one it would be rigid and would break at the movement of the wine.

The Lord Jesus declared that the “container” of the New Covenant was totally different to that of the Old Covenant. We not only belong to a

New Covenant but the structure that contains it is also totally new! How important it is for us to realize this!

The old wineskin

The structure that contained the Old Covenant was a pyramid structure...Moses (the Law and the Prophets) at the top, the priesthood beneath, and the people below. All ministry from God came through the ones above to the people below. Sadly, as the Church, we have developed the same “wineskin” to contain the New Covenant believers.

The new wineskin

The new wine pictures the believer in Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, growing into the image of God (2 Corinthians 3:18). This only takes place as each part of the Body “does its work” (Ephesians 4:7-16). Thus the structure for the “new wine” believers must be flexible! The new wineskin is the Body of Christ functioning and flowing together in its different gifts, ministering to one another.

The gatherings

“They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” Acts 2:42 (see also verses 46-47).

The early Christians gathered together for the teaching of the apostles and they met from house to house for the breaking of bread to celebrate the New Covenant instituted by Jesus (Luke 22:18-20; 24:35; Matthew 26:25-27; Mark 14:22-23). There were special times when they were all called together for specific prayer, direction and celebration (Acts 4:23-31; 12:1-19; 14:26-27; 15:1-35).

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"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

Leadership of Holy Spirit

“...the Father...will give you another Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengtheners, and Standby), that He may remain with you forever--The Spirit of Truth... John 14:16-17”

All true “new wineskin” leaders in the Body of Christ are led by the Holy Spirit.

“...the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” John 14:26..

Example of Jesus

There is no greater example of true leadership than the Lord Jesus Himself. Every true leader never fails to be totally dependent on the Lord.

“I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does” John 5:19.

Following the example of the Lord Jesus, a true leader’s message is not his/her own. All ministry is by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The leader does not draw the attention to himself or herself, but to the Lord - uplifting Him and glorifying Him and causing His people to be filled with praise and worship for Him.

“Jesus answered, ‘My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him’” John 7:16-18 (read also verses 28-29).

Led by the Spirit

Led by the Holy Spirit, the early church saw many believe in the Lord and miracles take place.

“The Spirit told Philip, ‘Go to that chariot

and stay near it.’ Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet...Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus...” Acts 8:26-40 (see also Acts 2:1-40; 11:19-24; 13:8-12).

Even the “practical” ministries (deacons) are chosen because they are led by the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:1-7).

Following the Spirit

The Holy Spirit has a specific purpose for every meeting of the Body of Christ together. For this reason every leader needs to be prepared to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in the midst of the whole gathering.

*** Open heart**

Every leader, every believer, needs to come to the meeting with a prepared heart and with the question “what do you want to do Lord?”

*** Open mind**

A “new wineskin” leader allows the Holy Spirit to move in the midst of the gathering, sensitively following His direction and guiding the believers in what the Holy Spirit wants to say and do.

*** Open spirit**

Every believer ministers to the Lord and to one another in unity together as the Holy Spirit directs in their midst.

“...When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church...but everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way” 1 Cor.14:26, 40 (Col.3:16-17; Eph.5:19-20).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

Every Believer a Leader

“ [Christ] makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. Ephesians 4:16 (NLT) ”

Ministry of every believer

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” 1 Peter 2:9 (see also v.5).

Whereas, under the Old Covenant, there was a specific priesthood separated from the people, in the New Covenant it is now the priesthood of all believers. Every believer has been gifted to minister.

“...to each one of you was given the grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ Ephesians 4:7.

Variety of ministry

Ministry is not just that of preaching or teaching behind a pulpit. Read 1 Corinthians chapter 12.

“Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant...There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit...All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines” verses 1,4,11.

The ministries, given by the Lord to His Body, are many and varied. They can be summarized in three categories...

- * **Gatherers** - gather others to hear of Christ.
- * **Teachers** - open the hearts to the understanding of the Word of God.
- * **Nurturers** - minister heart to heart to the needs of people.

These work in “team” together to see people come to know the Lord and grow in Him.

Gifts of the Spirit

“...Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good...All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ” verses 4-12.

As a believer ministers in his/her gifting, at that point of time they are leading and the Body is being blessed and growing in the Lord.

Three-fold ministry

“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God” Romans 1:1.

Here Paul describes the three aspects of his ministry. This applies to all believers .

- * **The priority call** - a servant (literally “love-slave”) of Jesus.
- * **The specific call** - the ministry gift of the Holy Spirit.
- * **The particular call** - the place where that ministry and gift is to be expressed.

Knowing your measure

It is very important that each believer understands his/her measure of ministry and does not step out beyond their gifting (Romans 12:3).

As all believers flow in unity and love together, each ministering in their gifting of the Holy Spirit, the fullness of Christ is expressed in the midst and to the world (Ephesians 4:11-15).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

Symphony of Leadership

For it is from the head that the whole body, as a harmonious structure knit together by the joints with which it is provided, grows by the proper functioning of individual parts to its full maturity in love. Ephesians 4:16 (JBP).

The Body of Christ

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; Romans 12:3-8.

"The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ..." 1 Corinthians 12:12.

There is one Head to the Body and that is Christ. In the same way our physical body responds and obeys our head (brain) so it is with the spiritual Body of Christ. And just as it is essential for each part of our physical body to function for us to have free expression and movement, so it is with His spiritual Body. Every gift in the Body of Christ is an expression of the Lord, Himself. As each one functions in their gifting, in unity with the rest of the Body, the whole Christ is manifest.

The urgent need

"The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"

The great need in the Body of Christ today is to see every part of the Body functioning in their calling and gifting. This is the mandate that has been given to the foundational ministries - not to do it all themselves but to equip and release every believer in their ministry. Only when this is a reality will we grow and come to the full measure of Christ as God has planned.

Different functions

"Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we...have different gifts, according to the grace given us..." Romans 12:4-6 (1 Cor.12:27-30).

Paul lists some expressions of ministry (v.6-8)

Prophecy - speaking forth a Word of the Lord with anointed insight (1 Cor.14:3).

Serving - expressing the love of the Lord in practical help (1 Peter 4:10-11).

Teaching - bringing revelation of the Word for life application (2 Thess.2:14-15; Col.1:28).

Encouraging - lifting faith in times of trial and difficulty (2 Cor.1:3-7; Rom.15:4-6).

Contributing - providing resources for the work of the Lord (Acts 4:32-37).

Leading - facilitating the gifts of others (1 Timothy 4:14; 5:17; 2 Timothy 1:6).

Showing mercy - giving aid and comfort to people in distress (Acts 9:36-40).

Different workings

There are different kinds of gifts and service and different ways those gifts and service (ministry) are expressed.

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" 1 Corinthians 12:4-7.

Leading in gifting

When a believer ministers in the gifting and function God has graced them with, at that moment in time he/she is leading the Body. Led by the Holy Spirit and guided and coordinated by the gifted leader, the Body moves in beautiful symphony together and every gathering is a time of great growth in Christ.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

Leading in the World

6 [Jesus] said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Mark 16:15 9

The ministry of every believer is not just within the Church. We are all called to reach the unbelieving world to lead them to Christ.

Community

As the "Body of Christ" we are the expression to the world of who Christ is. We show His love, His compassion, His power to those in need around us. A great example of this is Dorcas...

"In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping the poor" Acts 9:36 (read through to verse 42).

Dorcas's ministry to the community around her had such a tremendous effect that it ultimately resulted in many believing in the Lord.

Workplaces

Joseph had a dramatic effect on his work place:

"The Lord was with Joseph and he prospered...When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned...the Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph..." Gen.39:2-5.

Led by the Holy Spirit, Joseph was later to save a nation through a time of famine.

"So Pharaoh asked them, 'Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?'" Genesis 41:38 (read to verse 57).

Like Joseph, every believer is positioned by the Lord in the places they work. Their witness as examples in honesty and commitment to hard

work brings blessing to their employers and fellow workers and is a testimony to the Lord in whom they believe. In this way they are leaders for the Lord in their workplace.

Divine appointments

"[Jesus] left Judea and returned to Galilee. It was necessary for Him to go through Samaria..." John 4:4.

At that time in history, for political and religious reasons, the Jews had an extreme dislike of Samaritans and no Jew would travel through Samaria. When it says it "was necessary" for the Lord to go through Samaria, it is speaking of the Divine appointment the Father had prepared for Him there.

Read John 4:5-42. As a result of the "appointment" with the Samaritan woman at the well a large number from the town believed in Jesus:

"...we know that this man really is the Savior of the world." John 4:42.

Jesus' challenge to His disciples concerning that Divine appointment comes to all of us today:

*"Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, **open your eyes and look at the fields!** They are ripe for harvest" John 4:35.*

Every day the Lord has a Divine appointment organised. The all important key is to be ready.

"The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught" Isaiah 50:4.

There is no greater joy than being used by the Lord to be the answer to the cry of the heart of others and reach them for Him. This is the privilege of every believer - every leader.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Leader - God's Messenger

“...out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.”
Matthew 12:34

Focus on the messenger

A leader is first and foremost a messenger of God. Whether ministering to an individual, in a small group or to a large congregation, his/her responsibility is to present and impart the Lord's message. There is often great emphasis placed on developing methods, techniques, or strategies for effective leadership and the delivery of God's Word. But God's first and foremost focus is the messenger himself. God wraps up His message inside a human being. Having all the right intellectual knowledge, learning all the right things to say and practicing all the right methods is not enough (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). A leader has to be the right messenger first!

The messenger's heart

Read Isaiah 6:1-8. Isaiah, on receiving one of the most dramatic revelations of the glory of God in the history of mankind, suddenly realized how far he fell short of that glory...

“Woe to me!” I cried. I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.’ Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, ‘See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.’ verse 5-7.

The Lord then brings a great call...

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?’” verse 8.

The Lord first dealt with the condition of Isaiah's heart before the call came. Only then was Isaiah “qualified” to respond...

“And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’.”

Because God is concerned about the *behaviour* of his messenger, he begins with the *heart* of his messenger. He cleanses the leader's heart, and brings him/her into close, daily fellowship with himself. It is only as the heart comes close to the heart of God that the leader will hear his voice asking, “Who will I send?” And only then can the heart's response be: “Here I am, Lord. Send me!” So, the first key to ministering God's message is: **A prepared heart.**

The messenger's credibility

“Live such good lives...that...they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us” 1 Peter 2:12.

God is equally concerned about the integrity of the leader's message. Does the life match the words? Does he practice what he preaches? The hearer looks behind the words to the life that backs it up. He is not convinced by words, but by the reality that is evident in the life. So, the second key to ministering God's message is: **A changed life.**

The messenger's humanity

Read Ezekiel 2:9-3:2,14-15. God is not wanting “preaching-machines” but genuine human beings who have experienced the life-changing power of God's love and who can share this with others. Like Ezekiel, God wants the leader to identify with the “lament and mourning and woe” of others. Like Ezekiel, the leader needs to show a human face to those to whom he ministers, not some super-Christian facade. God's messenger is a human being, but a *changed* human being, and that is the impact of his or her message. So, the third key to ministry is: **A life that touches others.**

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Leader's Message

For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 1 Corinthians 2:2

Servants of the Gospel

"I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ..." Ephesians 3:7-8.

Every leader is a "servant of the Gospel". He is not called to minister the latest "self-help" trends or use the latest motivational techniques to make the people to feel good about themselves each week. Paul declared that Christ had sent him...

"...to preach the gospel - not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power" 1 Corinthians 1:17.

May we never empty the Cross of its power! The task of every leader in the Body of Christ is to minister the power of the Gospel.

Imparting what he has

Each leader can only impart to the believers that which is a revelation and reality in his/her own life. It is difficulty for people to rise above the experience of the leader. Thus it is vital that he understands and has experienced fully in his own life the reality of the full work of the Cross and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus (Acts 3:6).

Giving his whole life

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect

will" Romans 12:1-2.

The Lord Jesus has established a precedent for ministry - the principle of the living sacrifice. It is only as a leader is willing to lay down his life for others, to step out of the comfort zone for the sake of others, that he truly becomes a worker in the Lord's harvest field.

The Gospel for eternal life

A leader has two priorities in ministering the Gospel message...

Reaching the unbeliever

To reach the world around with the glorious Gospel of salvation must always be a constant priority for every leader, not only for himself but teaching and releasing believers to minister in their areas of influence in the community.

Opening the eyes of the believer

A leader must also know and impart the wonders of who believers are now in Christ, and the glories that are awaiting them in Heaven. As Paul prays in Ephesians 1:18...

"...that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe"

The Gospel for life now

"For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: The righteous will live by faith" Romans 1:17.

From start to finish, God's gift of righteousness now belongs to the believer. The Gospel is the "good news" not only of salvation but for the whole life.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

Leading in a Life of Victory

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)

The Gospel is God's answer for the total human need - past, present and future. The leader's job is to bring people into the revelation of all that the Lord Jesus has accomplished for them through His work on the Cross and in His resurrection.

The old has gone

"For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin" Romans 6:6.

The Lord Jesus not only died for us...bearing on the Cross the judgment of God that we deserved. He also died as us...removing our biggest problem in life - *our old Self* - everything we were "in Adam" (1 Cor.15:21-22). This "old self" involves three things - all dealt with on the Cross...

* **the effects of all we inherited from Adam down through our generational line**

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned..." Romans 5:12 (read through to verse 21).

* **the effects of the sins we have done ourselves**

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction..." Galatians 6:7-8 (see Romans 6:20-21,23).

* **the effects on us of all the sins that others have done against us**

"...My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught at the voice of the enemy, at the stares of the wicked; for they bring down suffering upon me and revile me in their anger. My heart is in anguish within me..."

Psalm 55:2-4 (Job 5:2).

Totally identified

Three things happened in Christ's work on the Cross, in His resurrection and ascension that totally changes and effects the life of the believer down here on earth.

* **He died - we died**

"...We died to sin...don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" Rom.6:2-3.

* **He was buried - we were buried**

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death..." Romans 6:4.

* **He rose again - we rose with Him**

"...just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" Romans 6:4,8-11.

* **He ascended - we ascended with Him**

"And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" Ephesians 2:6.

The new has come

This is the Gospel for Christians! It is absolutely essential that a leader knows it himself and imparts it to the believers. The result is a victorious company of people, set free from the power of sin in their lives and healed from all the wounds of the past, eager to minister the glorious Gospel in their community.

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death" Romans 8:1-2 (read through to verse 4).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

Leader Beware

Keep watch...savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock... Acts 20:29

Warning to leaders

"Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them" Acts 20:29.

Paul gives clear directions to those who are overseers. They are to be like shepherds caring for the flock...to keep watch and protect. A shepherd is constantly alert and fights off anything attacking the sheep (1 Sam.17:34-35).

"...our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against...the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms...With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints" Ephesians 6:10-18.

Paul warns of "savage wolves" who will....

Distort the truth

"For if someone comes to you and preaches...a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough" 2 Corinthians 11:4.

What Paul warned of in Acts 20:29 is exactly what happened. Distortion of the truth - toxic gospels - infiltrated the Church. Many of the letters the apostles wrote were dealing with these "savage wolves". Substitute gospels had begun to poison the Church.

These toxic gospels are still infiltrating the Church today. Every leader must be aware and protect the Body from these distortions of the glorious Gospel.

Toxic gospels

The New Testament identifies four main "toxic gospels" - gospels which are "no gospel at all".

"Gospel" of legalism

"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people...are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ" Galatians 1:6-7.

"Gospel" of human wisdom

"For Christ did not send me to...preach the gospel...with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power" 1 Corinthians 1:17.

"Gospel" of the world

"You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked" Revelation 3:17.

"Gospel" of gnosticism

"Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions" Colossians 2:18.

Draw followers

"...many are boasting in the way the world does...You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or pushes himself forward or slaps you in the face..!" 2 Corinthians 11:18-20.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

New Covenant Leadership

‘ ...Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance. Hebrews 9:15 ’

A new covenant declared

“As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendour, talking with Jesus...” Luke 9:29-31 (read through to verse 36. Also Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-12).

Imagine what it meant to those the disciples when they saw Moses and Elijah with the Lord Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Those two men represented Israel’s whole heritage and relationship with God. Moses represented the Law and Elijah represented the Prophets. Peter wanted to build three tabernacles to keep the three there, on the mountain. Imagine the impact that would have had on the whole nation! But Peter did not understand the fullness of what was being revealed to them. So important was the revelation they were receiving that God interrupted him...

“While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!’” Matt.17:5.

When the cloud lifted, Moses and Elijah were gone. Only Jesus was left. God had declared the old covenant given through Moses and the Prophets had ended. A new covenant, which would be sealed by blood on the Cross of Christ, had begun! This new covenant would be based on three vital principles:

The revelation of Jesus

“...he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became

as white as the light” Matt.17:2.

The New Covenant is based on a revelation of who the Lord Jesus is. This revelation brings salvation (Acts 2:36-37) and also continuous growth in the life of the believer.

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit” 2 Corinthians 3:18 (NASB).

The work of Jesus

“...Moses and Elijah...talking with Jesus...spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem” Luke 9:30.

Every aspect of the New Covenant is based on the finished work of Jesus on the Cross.

“..when this priest [Jesus] had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God...by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy” Hebrews 10:12-14 (read through verses 1-18).

The word of Jesus

“‘This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him’” Luke 9:35.

The Lord Jesus is the focal point of the whole of Scripture. He is the living Word (John 1:1-4) *“And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” Luke 24:27 (see also John 5:39).*

All Christian leaders are leaders of the New Covenant not of the Old.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

Leading in Grace not Law

‘ He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant - not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 2 Corinthians 3:6 ’

It is finished!

The Cross of Christ brought about a dramatic change in the believer's relationship to God. From the moment the Lord Jesus died a contract was sealed in Heaven.

"...Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit" John 19:30.

These words, spoken by Jesus as He died, were common words known by everyone in that day. It was a term used in accountancy. When a man was deeply in debt and brought before the court, the judge would write down on parchment the list of his debts, holding him to account until they were fully paid. When the day came that all the debts were paid, he would then write across the total list the words "paid in full" ("it is finished"). The parchment would then be taken into the open and nailed to a tree so that all could see the man's debts were fully paid.

"He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross..." Colossians 2:13-15.

The old Covenant of Law represented the list of our debts - fully paid by Jesus nailed to the Cross!

The veil is torn!

The moment Jesus died, the veil in the temple that had separated sinful man from God was torn in two, from top to bottom (Matt.27:51). Read Heb.10:19-22; 4:16. On the Cross, Jesus was the veil! Because of His finished work the believer now has free access into the full glory and presence of God. We have an open Heaven!

The Covenant of Law

The Old Covenant can be summed up in two words...self effort! (Romans 10:6) *Do* in order to *get*. It was given for one purpose - to reveal that sinful mankind could not even keep the lowest expression of the righteousness of God (Matt.5:21-22; 27-28). It was given to cause us to recognize how far we fall short of God's glory (Romans 6:23) and to turn us to Christ, the one who could save us (Gal.3:19-26).

The Covenant of Grace

On the Cross God put an end to the Covenant of Law and sealed the eternal covenant he had made with Abraham, ushering in for all believers the Covenant of Grace (Gal.3:15-18; 29).

Two wrong concepts of grace

Grace for salvation only - Galatians 3:1-3. The "foolish Galatians" had received Jesus by faith but were trying to live the Christian life, and reach the goal of full maturity in Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18), by returning to the Law of outward rules and regulations which were impossible to keep (read Romans 7:14-24). They had reverted to **legalism**.

Grace means it's okay to sin - Paul strongly replies to this - "*God forbid!*" (Rom.6:1-2). These people have moved into **license** (Jude 4)

A Covenant of Empowering

The Covenant of Grace is a covenant of *empowering* (Rom.8:1-4; 2 Cor.3:1-18). It is God, by His Spirit, enabling us to be forgiven, saved, born again, and living day-by-day in the full expression of His righteousness (Heb.10:12-18; Romans 8:1-4). As leaders, may we impart and lead people in the glorious **liberty** of the all-powerful Covenant of Grace.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

Leading in God's Power

“ For Christ...did not send me...to preach the gospel...with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 1 Corinthians 1:17 ”

The wisdom of the world

The wisdom of this world focuses on *self* - self-esteem, self-love, self-realization, self-change. This wisdom started at the fall of man. Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because it was “desirable for gaining wisdom” (Genesis 3:6). From that time, mankind chose a path of self-wisdom - a wisdom independent of God. The source of our wisdom has been a central issue with God ever since (1 Cor.1:19; Proverbs 9:10; Isaiah 55:9).

“Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” 1 Corinthians 1:20.

Three levels of worldly wisdom

Wise Man - learnt from the experiences of life

Scholar - learnt from study and higher education

Philosopher - searched for answers. In Corinth they were the high-level thinkers, the forerunners of the modern human sciences - philosophy, psychology and sociology.

The Church has had a long-running affair with the wisdom of this world. Like the Church of Corinth, many Christians today try to pepper the Gospel with worldly wisdom. We add courses in philosophy, psychology and self-help techniques. There exists today a vast “self-help” supermarket where we can shop for ideas. We chase the next formula that will help solve complex problems or help our church to grow. These intellectual teachings appeal to the human mind, but they also empty the Cross of its power. Paul gave a word of warning to Timothy - a warning which is just as applicable to our generation:

“For the time will come when men will not

put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear” 2 Tim.4:3.

The wisdom of God

“For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe” 1 Corinthians 1:21 (see also 2:6-8).

The Gospel encapsulates God's wisdom because it targets the root problem of mankind - independence from God. The wisdom of this world is “darkened” by pride and sin, making people enemies of God in their minds (Colossians 1:21; Romans 1:21; Ephesians 4:18).

God's wisdom - the Cross

“...but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” 1 Corinthians 1:23-24 (read also verse 30).

God's wisdom is found in the Gospel of the Cross - plus nothing! It releases His power into our lives to bring salvation, change and victory.

“When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified...My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power” 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 (see also 1 Corinthians 3:18-20).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

Leading in Gospel Purity

“ Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him... 1 John 2:15-16 ”

Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church “out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears” (2 Corinthians 2:4). This was because the toxic gospel of the world had infiltrated church life. This “gospel” teaches that the purpose of the Christian life is to get the good things in life. It preaches a “give-me” attitude and focuses solely on the blessings God has promised the Christian in this life. It emphasizes worldly motives and worldly methods. This dangerous gospel causes many of the troubles in the Church (James 4:1-4). A look at the first six chapters of 1 Corinthians shows the sorry state of affairs:

- * **Division, quarrelling** (1 Cor.1:10-13; 3:3,21)
- * **Greed, focus on wealth** (1 Cor.4:8).
- * **Pride, arrogance, boasting** (1 Cor.4:8, 18-20)
- * **Immorality** (1 Corinthians 5).
- * **Lawsuits between Christians** (1 Cor.6).

The motives of the world

“...everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world” 1 John 2:15-16.

The gospel of the world changes a Christian’s focus from God to four things:

- * **Wealth** (2 Corinthians 2:17)
- * **Success** (2 Corinthians 10:12,18;11:5,18;12:11)
- * **Pleasure** (James 4:3; 2 Tim.3:4-5; Rom.13:14)
- * **Power** (Mark 10:42-44; 2 Cor.1:24).

The methods of the world

In 2 Kings 16:10-15, we find the story of King Ahaz, who went to Damascus and saw a pagan altar. It was so beautiful that he sent the design to the high priest and ordered a duplicate made for him in Israel. He replaced the bronze altar in

the temple, which had been prescribed by God, with this new pagan altar and started to offer sacrifices to God on it. In his mind, he was not worshipping foreign gods but the Lord. But the results were a gradual change in the temple’s format to become like that of a pagan god (2 Kings 16:10-18). In the same way, much of the Church has introduced many methods of worldly entertainment and performance into church worship, evangelism and fellowship (2 Cor.10:2-4)

The boasting of the world

Read 2 Cor.11;12:11-12. The Corinthians had been swayed by the “super-apostles” who boasted of their gifts and eloquence and were peddling the word of God for profit (2 Cor.2:17). The focus of Corinth had become “personality ministries” who preached a gospel which promised worldly status, wealth and success (1 Tim.6:3-10; 1 Cor.4:8-21). The Church at Laodicea fell into the same trap (Rev.3:17-18).

The Gospel’s answer

“But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses” 1 Timothy 6:11-12.

Read to verse 19. In these verses, Paul gives clear directions for Timothy, and us as the Church today, to escape this false gospel of the world.

The good confession

What was the good confession Timothy had made? Verse13 says it was the same one the Lord Jesus had made before Pontius Pilate...

“My kingdom is not of this world” John 18:36.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

Leading in Truth

“ Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize... Col.2:18 ”

Toxic gospel of Gnosticism

Gnosticism was a rising force towards the end of the first century and it had begun to influence the early Church. Gnosticism comes from the Greek word *gnosis*, which means “knowledge”. A secret knowledge was supposedly given to those initiated - a knowledge of principalities and powers and the keys to breaking their power.

“Let no one disqualify you, insisting on ascetic practices and the worship of angels, claiming access to a visionary realm and inflated without cause by his fleshly mind” Colossians 2:18 (HCSB).

False teachers

False teachers had infiltrated the church at Colosse, telling the believers that the message of the Gospel was incomplete. They advocated the worship of angels and the keeping of special ceremonies and rules that had to be followed. Gnostic teaching went into great detail concerning the satanic hierarchy and the passwords needed to break through their layered ranks to reach the heavenly realm. Their teaching totally divested the finished work of Christ on the Cross.

The evil of “Jezebel”

When speaking to the Church of Thyatira (Rev.2:18-25), the Lord uses Jezebel to picture the spirit of the gnostic teaching (1 Kings 18:4, 19; 21:25). In opposition to the finished work of Christ, “Jezebel” (gnosticism) was offering two spiritually exciting enticements. It offered *supernatural knowledge* - “Calls herself a prophetess” (Rev.2:20) - and the knowledge of “*Satan’s so-called deep secrets*” (Rev.2:24). As a result of this “secret” knowledge, the

gnostic teaching offered supernatural authority over Satan. It is a false gospel of mysticism which produces spiritual pride. Today it often outworks in two specific ways...

False prophecies & false visions

No true prophecy or vision will move outside the boundaries of the Word of God. Speaking in the Lord’s Name holds heavy responsibility and the speaker stands accountable before God and the Church. See Deut.18:20-22; 1 Cor.14:29.

Obsession with the demonic

Demons should never become the focus of our ministry. We are not called to “rail against” principalities and powers (Jude 8-9). The “strongholds” of 2 Corinthians 10:4-6 were mindsets imported from the surrounding Corinthian community. The weapon that has “divine power to demolish strongholds” is the Gospel itself. Spiritual warfare is expressed in action on “ground level”, backed by prayer, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, with authority over demonic spirits in people’s lives (Mark 6:7-13; Luke 10:1-9; 17-20; 1 Timothy 2:1-4).

Leading in the truth

Gnosticism goes out beyond the boundaries of the Word of God. Leaders in the Body of Christ must follow the truth of the Word. The Bible teaches that principalities and powers are real, but declares that their power has already been broken by the Cross of Christ. Satan has been defeated! (Colossians 2:15). Just as Christ was raised from the dead and seated at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 1:20-22) so, too, the believer in Christ has been seated together with Christ. We, too, have been placed in the same position with Christ *far above* all the realms of the powers of darkness (Ephesians 2:6).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

Leading the Firstborn Ones

‘ But you have come...to the church of the firstborn,
whose names are written in heaven. ‘
Hebrews 12:22-23

Every leader has the responsibility to lead the believers in the fullness of all that Christ has accomplished for us.

“My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” Colossians 2:2-3 (see also Ephesians 1:3; 3:14-21; Colossians 1:24-29).

Jesus the Firstborn

The Lord Jesus is declared to be “Firstborn”, speaking of His special status in three distinct relationships. He is Firstborn...

- **Over all creation** (Colossians 1:15)
- **From among the dead** (Colossians 1:18)
- **Among many brothers** (Romans 8:29)

The Scripture is using the family culture of Old Testament Israel to picture Christ’s relationship to His Father and to us as God’s children. To be the “firstborn” in Israel did not necessarily mean that person was the first one born (Genesis 16:22; 25-27; 48:8-20; 1 Chronicles 5:2; Psalm 89:19-37). To be firstborn meant to hold special *status* in the family. The firstborn had...

Special position - he was the father’s “right-hand man”, representing his *authority* to the family and the society they lived in.

Special inheritance - he received a double-portion of the inheritance (Deut.21:15-17).

Special responsibility - he held responsibility for the welfare of the family. This was why he received the double-portion inheritance. He had sufficient to help any of the family should they be in need.

When mankind fell (Genesis 3), The Lord Jesus took His responsibility as Firstborn and came to save us and bring us back to relationship with the Father.

As “*firstborn over all creation*”, He laid down His life and became “*firstborn from among the dead*”, and through His resurrection, bringing many sons into glory with Him, He became “*firstborn among many brothers*” (Heb.2:9-10)

Firstborn ones

The glorious truth of the Gospel is that, not only were we in Christ when He died, taking the judgment of our sins for us, we were also in Him when he rose from the dead, ascended into Heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father in the position of the Firstborn He is.

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus” Ephesians 2:4-7.

Joined with Him at the right hand of the Father, Jesus has shared all that He is and has with the believer. Jesus is the Firstborn *by right*. The believers are firstborn ones *by grace*. Now, seated with Him in that *special position*, sharing with Him that *special inheritance*, we, as firstborn ones, take up our *special responsibility* to share with the dying world the good news of all that Jesus has done for them (Luke 9:23).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

Leading with the Birthright

Just as it is written: 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.'
Romans 9:13

Esau and Jacob

Read Genesis 25:21-34, 27:1-38. Esau and Jacob are given to us as examples of the kind of lives that attract either the love (choice) or hatred (rejection) of God (see Malachi 1:2-3). As we follow the characters of these two men, described in Scripture, we see that it was because of a particular focus in life that each had - a focus that was the motivation of their whole lives.

Two focuses in life

Esau: the man of the field

In the New Testament, Jesus speaks of the "field" as a picture of the world (Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43; John 4:34-38). So also we see, as the Genesis account unfolds, the statement that declared Esau a "man of the field" (Gen.25:27) not only described his occupation, but also was a picture of his heart's focus. Esau was a man who loved the things of the world - who lived for the pleasures of life *now*.

Jacob: the tent-dweller

Gen.25:27 specifically separates Jacob as the one who lived in tents. Hebrews 11:8-10 tells us why: "*By faith [Abraham] made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*"

The key to Jacob's life was that "living in tents" represented a transient life. Like Abraham and Isaac, and all the heroes of faith who would follow him, Jacob's whole attitude was that he was a foreigner and pilgrim in the world (Hebrews 11:8-16). He had his eyes on one major goal - an eternal dwelling - the City of

God. Jacob believed God's promise to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations (Genesis 12:2-3; 17:4-7,16; 18:18; 22:17-18). This promise was ultimately fulfilled in Christ and the New Creation that came forth from Him, for it was the New Creation people, born through Christ's atoning work on the Cross that would make up the "City" of God (Hebrews 12:22-24; 13:14; Galatians 3:7-9, 13-19, 29; Rev.21:2).

The Birthright

Read Genesis 25:29-34. The birthright of the firstborn was the right to fulfill in his generation the next stage in God's continuing plan of His eternal purpose - *a City filled with redeemed people from every tribe, every language and every nation!* (Gen.17:7; Revelation 5:9-10; 7:9-10). This is what the heroes of faith saw. It is this focus of heart that needs to be the motivation of every leader and that he, in turn, then imparts and encourages in every believer.

The Blessing

Read Genesis 27:1-36. Esau thought the blessing was separate from the birthright. When he sold the birthright to Jacob, he knew he was selling him the right to be part of God's plan, but he had no intention of him having the material wealth and blessing of his inheritance that would give him a good life on earth. He "burst out with a loud and bitter cry" (verse 34) when he heard he had lost the blessing. He put no value on God's eternal purpose (Hebrews 12:15-16).

Taking up the baton

Read Heb.11:39-12:1. Like a relay race that has been taking place down through history, the baton - the birthright - has been passed on to us.

"...let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us..." Hebrews 12:1.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

Leaders of a New Way of Life

‘...And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘...you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die’ Gen.2:16-17’

A truth of the Gospel that is vital for every leader to understand, live in and impart, is the truth of the Tree of Life that is now the believer's lifeforce. This revolutionizes the Church from a world mindset to the mindset of God and is the essential factor for unity in the Body of Christ.

The two trees in the middle of the Garden of Eden represented a choice for Adam and Eve - a choice between two ways of life. That same choice is as real today for every leader and every believer. The Tree of Life represented God's way of living, with Him central in all things. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil represented a life with Self in control without God.

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

Read Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-24. The temptation to Adam and Eve was not just a delicious piece of fruit they had been told not to eat. The Enemy's temptation had far greater significance. A liar from the beginning (John 8:44), he told them they would gain two attributes:

- * **Be like God (gods in their own right)**
- * **Gain wisdom (eyes opened)**

Adam and Eve's disobedience to God in eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil had dramatic effect on the whole human race which would come from them. "Self" became their god and they received an ability they had not had before - the knowledge of good and evil. This knowledge gave them the ability to judge what is right and what is wrong but it now came from a sinful deified Self. Thus their wrong choice plunged the future world into the chaotic situation where every individual is ruled by their own decision of what is right or wrong for

them. It has been the most destructive force in the human race and, with everybody living out of the wrong tree, has resulted in every argument, every war, every broken relationship. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil always ministers *death*.

The Tree of Life

If God had dealt with us, in our sins, out of the knowledge of good and evil we would have already been judged and sent to hell. There is no question, we were wrong and He was in the right. But, knowing we were wrong, He came and died, taking our judgment for us. The Cross is the Tree of Life in operation. All the effects of Adam and Eve's sin were met and reversed by Jesus on the Cross (see Romans 6:23; 5:14,21; 6:6; Galatians 3:13-14; 1 John 3:8; John 17:22). At the moment of salvation, the believer "eats" from the Tree of Life. The Tree of Life is *love* in operation.

The knowledge of good and evil is also found in the Tree of Life (Genesis 3:22) but with that knowledge is also the full nature of God - His love, mercy, grace and power etc. We, as God's new creation people, no longer live judging who is right and who is wrong from a self-centred perspective. Like the Lord Jesus in John 8:2-11, we can know someone is wrong, but in the Tree of Life there is the wisdom of God how to handle that knowledge. Leaders are called to lead God's people in a totally new way of life. The Tree of Life always ministers *life* (see Proverbs 3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4; Revelation 2:7; 22:2;14;19).

"...On each side of the river stood the tree of life...And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" Revelation 22:2

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Heart of Leadership

“ I pray...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. John 17:20-21 ”

The heart of the Lord Jesus is expressed in His prayer to His Father in John 17, just before He went to the Cross. Unity of the whole Body of Christ is His priority! This must always be the priority of every leader and the heart of everything ministered to the Body.

“I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” John 17:22-23.

Keys to unity

In His prayer, the Lord Jesus makes five declarations that are the means by which His prayer will be fulfilled:

“I have finished the work” v.4

The central factor of all teaching and ministry by leadership is the work of the Cross. And that it is a *finished* work. Every sin, every need, every hurt, every healing and every division finds its answer there.

“I have revealed you to them” v.6

The Spirit of revelation of the glory of who the Lord is, what He has done, is doing and is going to do, is the all-important ingredient for the fulfilment of God’s plan for every believer. Every word spoken and ministry given to believers must come from the revelation of the Spirit in the heart of the leader ministering. Paul summarizes the revelation essential for every believer in Ephesians 1:17-18:

“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the

Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe” Ephesians 1:17-18 (read through to verse 23).

“I have given them your word” v.14

The Word of God is all-important - not just academic information but revelation. Revelation of the Word by the Spirit makes the Word become a living reality in the heart and life.

“I have sent them into the world” v.18

Jesus declared that He was not praying for the world (verse 9). On the Cross and in His resurrection He accomplished everything that needs to be done to bring the world back into relationship and fellowship with His Father. The Church, His united believers, is now the trusted vehicle to bring that glorious good news to the world.

“I have given them my glory” v.22

The Lord Jesus is the fullness of the Godhead bodily - the full expression of God on earth (Hebrews 10:5-7). This is what has now been given to the total Body of Christ...each believer revealing an aspect of His glory (Colossians 2:9-10). Only in unity can the fullness of God be expressed to the world.

“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.” Colossians 2:9-10 (see also John 13:34).

Ministering these five principles found in Jesus’ prayer is the calling of every leader.

Postscript

It has been our privilege for 50 years to serve the Body of Christ. Jesus loves his Body and he serves us all. He said he had "not come to be served, but to serve" (Matthew 20:28). What a wonderful attitude to follow. He also said, in Luke 9:23, if we want to follow him we must deny ourselves and take up our cross daily. Jesus did the work of the Cross. The Holy Spirit leads us to walk the way of the Cross. There are so many on the mission field we have met who have been wonderful examples of this.

However, there are two areas that we have noticed over the years that have become quite pronounced in the Body of Christ - the blight of sectarianism and the merchandising of the Gospel. In 2 Corinthians 2:17, Paul wrote "Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit" (even back then).

Many times, when you are doing a pioneering work, it often takes years to develop and disciple new leaders. It is tragic then, when sectarian groups, in the cause of the rapid growth of their Movement, buy off the best leaders that others have spent years developing. This can be heartbreaking. The truth is that if we work for the whole Body, God will bless our part. But if we work only for our part it means we are expecting everyone to come to us.

So, as leaders, we are all challenged to build for the whole Body of Christ, for Jesus is coming for a perfect Bride who has made herself ready (Revelation 19:7). Let us train a new generation of selfless leaders with a vision for the whole Body of Christ.

Thank you for your part in the Body.

From our heart to yours,

Paul and Bunty

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