



Christ Is Prerequisite for Church

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"Explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words."

1 Corinthians 2:13

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Prerequisite:

required as a prior condition for something else
to happen or exist.

(Oxford Dictionary)

1 Corinthians 3:9-13

⁹ For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

¹⁰ According to the grace of God, which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. ¹¹ For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.¹

¹ All scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Version* unless otherwise noted.

“Apostolic”

Jesus made disciples. He gave His disciples authority to make more disciples. This is apostolic ministry.²

Jesus told His disciples that He, Himself, would build His Church.³ Yet, like the apostle Paul, all His other apostles understood themselves to be co-laboring with Jesus as He built His Church. This too is apostolic ministry. For Jesus and His apostles, making disciples and building the Church were one and the same.

I hope to show you from the Scriptures that the essence of apostolic ministry is a **Christ-centeredness** which recognizes Christ as being **PREREQUISITE FOR CHURCH**. That is to say, the Church Jesus is building is comprised of only disciples who have a REVELATION of Him and a RELATIONSHIP with Him with a view to being a REFLECTION of Him as an expression of His Body, the Church.

Now we know that “all are not apostles”.⁴ But I believe that all of us in the equipping ministry, who are involved in the building up of the Body of Christ, whether we are called to be apostles, or prophets, or evangelists, or pastors, or teachers,⁵ all need to be “apostolic” in our making disciples of Christ and in our co-laboring with Jesus as He builds His Church.

² Matthew 28:19-20

³ Matthew 16:18

⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:29

⁵ Ephesians 4:11-12

I am using the adjective, “**apostolic**”, to mean a *genre and quality* of faith and practice,⁶ having a particular *principle and purpose*, which was demonstrated by the first century apostles - namely, **LAYING THE FOUNDATION OF CHRIST AND BUILDING CHRIST INTO THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUAL DISCIPLES AND GROUPS OF DISCIPLES** with a view to **PURSUING AN EXPRESSION OF THE CHURCH JESUS IS BUILDING**.

Now, it is one thing to acknowledge the apostolic calling, but it is another thing to actually co-labor with Jesus in this calling. To truly co-labor in the Spirit of Jesus I believe we need to understand what this Church is - from God’s point of view⁷ - so that we are actually co-laboring and not working against the Spirit of Christ; or worse, find ourselves building a church that is different from the one Jesus is building. So, we need to ask, “What is this Church”?

I believe **PREREQUISITE** to understanding the mystery of the Church is an understanding of the mystery of Christ. Let’s reflect on what Paul said about these two mysteries⁸ in **1 Corinthians 12:12**:

For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul is discussing “the body of Christ”, which is the Church. His point is that a concept we now call “unity in diversity” applies to the Church. But, more important to our purpose here, he adds, “**So also is**

⁶ Jude 3

⁷ Cf. Ephesians 1:16-18 J.B. Phillips, *New Testament in Modern English*

⁸ Ephesians 5:32

Christ". That is, what defines the Church is true of Christ. And what is true of Christ is to define the Church. **The Church is as Christ.** If we want to understand the Church – if disciples are to reflect the Body of Christ – **we must first understand the mystery of Christ.**

The body of scripture which the first century disciples had to reveal Christ and His Church was the Old Testament. The writer to the Hebrews indicated that the teaching about the mystery of Christ began in the Old Testament.⁹ I would like to give you just one example of this: In Genesis 28,¹⁰ there is the story of Jacob, who came to **"a certain place"** to spend the night. The scripture says, "He took one of the stones of that place and put it under his head and laid down in that place." **The stone** from that place can be understood as **a type of Christ** – "a living Stone, choice and precious in the sight of God", Peter said.¹¹ The passage goes on to say that Jacob had a dream in which he saw "a ladder which reached up into heaven and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it". In this place, God revealed Himself to Jacob, whose name He would later change to **"Israel"**. When Jacob awoke from the dream he said: "How awesome is this place ... surely the Lord is in this place ... this is none other than **the house of God**". And he called the name of that place **"Bethel"**, which means the house or the dwelling place of God.

⁹ Hebrews 5:12; 6:1. Also: see the Addendum: *Seeing Christ in the Scriptures*

¹⁰ vv.10-19

¹¹ 1 Peter 2:4

Now, let's fast-forward approximately 1770 years later, and in the first chapter of John's gospel,¹² where Phillip is introducing Nathanael to Jesus of Nazareth. As Nathanael is walking toward Jesus, the Lord, said: "Behold, an **Israelite** indeed, in whom there is no deceit." In saying this, I believe Jesus was setting up Nathanael for an awesome revelation of Himself, by bringing to the Nathanael's remembrance the story of Jacob's name being changed to Israel. For Nathanael, being a devout Jew, was surely familiar with that story as well as the story of Jacob's dream at Bethel. When Jesus told Nathanael that He knew him and saw him under a fig tree back in Bethsaida even before Phillip found him, Nathanael spoke out the same revelation Peter would later speak out: "You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel." Then Jesus said to him: "You will see greater things than this – you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man"! In other words, Jesus revealed Himself to be the more perfect "Bethel" – the dwelling place of God. The Christ was now the dwelling place of God. And His Body, the Church would be the dwelling place of God in the New Covenant.¹³

Like Jesus, His apostolic ministers are called and gifted to unveil that mystery of Christ and His Church.¹⁴ The apostle Paul considered it his God-

¹² vv. 45-51

¹³ The Dwelling Place of God: Exodus 25:9, 40; 26:30 (Acts 7:44; Hebrews 8:5); Deuteronomy 12:5-8, 11-14; Psalm 78:67-72. "Not made by human hands": 2 Samuel 7:15; Isaiah 66:1; Acts 7:48; 17:24; 2 Corinthians 5:1; Cf. Exodus 20:25; Deuteronomy 27:6. Christ: Genesis 28:11-12; John 14:43-51; Colossians 1:19; 2:9. Christ's Body: Ephesians 2:21-22; 1 Peter 2:5 (1Corinthians 3:16; 6:19). "Build according to the pattern": (Moses) Exodus 25:9; (David) 1 Chronicles 28:12, 19; (Paul) Acts 26:19. "Building Code: Habakkuk 2:2-3; Proverbs 29:18; Ezekiel 40:3-4; Revelation 11:1; 21:15; 1 Corinthians 3:10-13.

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 3:10-11; Ephesians 3:2-5, 4:9-16, 5:32; Colossians 1:27-29. See my eBook, [*The Apostle's Teaching*](#).

given responsibility to lay the foundation of Christ by revealing the mystery of Christ in his teaching and preaching.¹⁵

Consider, if you will, this scenario: Paul is on his 2nd missionary journey. He has been on the road for approximately 1 ½ years. His last stop will be Corinth, where he will spend another 1 ½ years. He is traveling by boat from Athens to Corinth.¹⁶ I can see Paul praying and preparing his heart and mind for his ministry into the synagogues of this city. People will be hearing the gospel for the first time; and when he leaves, he will be leaving a group of new disciples in Corinth, as he had in other places. He's asking God: "What is your plan and purpose for this place? Give me direction for how to minister to these people." Paul was undoubtedly the most effective minister in the early church. He wrote most of the New Testament. He knew a lot. He could have said and done any number of impressive things. But this is what he decided:

As for myself, brethren, when I came to you, I resolved to know nothing (to be acquainted with nothing, to make a display of the knowledge of nothing, and to be conscious of nothing) among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.... So that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.¹⁷ This is apostolic ministry.

¹⁵ I've heard it said: "It is the responsibility of the teacher to teach and the responsibility of the learner to learn." I have found this "responsibility" issue key to discipleship. From the scriptures, I understand a "disciple of Christ" to be one who is not merely a hearer of His words, but also a doer of His words.¹⁵ If a disciple is, in fact, a "follower" of Christ, "following" requires more than just hearing. The "doing" aspect, in the case of both an individual disciple and a group of disciples, is taking responsibility to pursue REVELATION of Christ, RELATIONSHIP with Christ, and REFLECTION of Christ in His Body, which is the Church. (Colossians 1:18).

¹⁶ Acts 15-18 Cf. Acts 18:1-18. (49-52 or 50-53 A.D.) *The Apostle Paul's Life & Ministry Timeline*:

<http://www.blueletterbible.org/study/paul/timeline.cfm>

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 2:1a, 2, 5. *The Amplified Bible*

Christ is Prerequisite for Church

Let's look at something Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:29: **"He who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."**¹⁸ "The Lord's body" is the Church.¹⁹ The context Paul is addressing is the Lord's Table, but the specific problem he is addressing is Christians **"not discerning" the Church**. Let's investigate the phrase **"discerning the body"**. What does Paul mean by the word **"discerning"**? *The God's Word Translation* uses the phrase "recognizing" the body. That's a good translation. The Greek word is *diakrino*.²⁰ A.T. Robertson says that Greek word means to "discriminate" or to "distinguish from". I would like to suggest that the phrase can be understood as "distinguishing" the Church from all other Christian groupings. The Church Jesus is building is not just a group of Christians gathered together. What distinguishes the Church that Jesus is building from all other Christian groupings is that - not in word only, but in faith and practice - Jesus truly is "preeminent in all things"²¹ – He has "first place in everything".²² The Church Jesus is building has a "single and simple devotion to Christ"²³ as the **Foundation of the Church** and as the **Head of the Body**.²⁴

¹⁸ *New King James Version*

¹⁹ Colossians 1:24

²⁰ Strong's # 1252

²¹ Colossians 1:18 *English Standard Version*

²² Colossians 1:18 *New American Standard Version*

²³ 2 Corinthians 11:3

²⁴ 1 Corinthians 3:11; 1 Corinthians 11:3

The Head

Colossians 1:18

He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

The apostle Paul said, “Christ is the Head of the Body”. If I were to walk in with a bag over my head, would you be able to identify my body? If you had never seen me before, in a photo or in person, you wouldn’t be able to distinguish my body from any other man’s body. If you had previously seen a photo of me or met me in person, with my head being covered, you could probably guess that it was my body, but it would merely be a guess. Without seeing my head, you could not know if that was, in fact, my body. We have to have the “veil removed”, so to speak, so we can see the Head in order to recognize the Body. “So also is Christ”.²⁵ We will not be able to distinguish the Body of Christ from any other mere gathering of Christians without first having a REVELATION of the Head of the Body.

The apostle Paul said, “Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church.” What does that actually mean? What does the Headship of Christ look like when given a preeminent place in the life and worship of the Church?

The Headship of Christ is like the Lordship of Christ. Confessing “Jesus is Lord” is a bit like getting married: We walk down the aisle, say “I

²⁵ 1 Corinthians 12:12b

do”, and then we spend the rest of our lives finding out what we did! We confess, “Jesus is Lord”, and as we go along, we find out what that means: He is Lord of our heart, Lord of our mind, Lord of our body, Lord of our marriage and family, Lord of our money, etc. As we grow in our understanding of His Lordship, we adjust the way we live. The same is true of His Headship: As we grow in our understanding of His Headship in the Church, we must adjust how we “do church” so that His Headship is not merely a figurehead position but a functioning reality in our midst.

The apostle Paul referred to Christ as a mystery.²⁶ There are many who follow what Paul referred to as “another Jesus”.²⁷ The mystery of the biblical Christ has not been revealed to them. So also with the Church. The apostle Paul referred to the Church as a mystery, which is intrinsic to the mystery of Christ.²⁸ It seems that many make the assumption that a group of Christians who are growing in number, maintaining regular attendance at meetings, multiplying in finances and programs is the Church that Jesus is building.²⁹ Unfortunately this assumption is the very basis for most church planting methodologies, so this has resulted in a proliferation of churches that are essentially different from the one Jesus is building.

We must understand the mystery of Christ before we can understand the mystery of the Church.

²⁶ Ephesians 3:3-4; Colossians 1:27

²⁷ 2 Corinthians 11:4

²⁸ Ephesians 3:1-11

²⁹ This is, in fact, the basic premise taught by the Church Growth Movement which began with the publication of Donald McGavran's books *The Bridges of God* and *How Churches Grow*.

The Foundation

I Corinthians 3:10-11

10 According to the grace of God, which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. 11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

No Christian would deny that Christ is the Foundation of the Church. After all, Paul said it was so. But what does that actually mean? How is the Foundation of Christ laid in the life of a disciple? What is different about a group of Christians who have been truly built upon the Foundation of Christ?

Peter said that the Church is “being built up as a spiritual house”.³⁰ We know that in a building, **every aspect of that building utterly depends upon its foundation.** But what exactly did Paul mean when he said he “laid a foundation”? Also, what did Paul mean when he said he laid **a foundation which already is laid?**

The apostle Peter told us that in Zion, **God Himself** laid as a foundation “a Choice Stone”, “a Precious Cornerstone”.³¹ God may have done this 725 years before Jesus of Nazareth was born, for that is when Isaiah prophesied it.³² But if we equate the Church to the people of God who were “chosen” in Christ and “adopted” through Christ, then it would be

³⁰ 1 Peter 2:5

³¹ 1 Peter 2:6

³² Isaiah 28:16

accurate to say that the **Foundation of Christ was laid “before the foundation of the world”**. This is the view of the Church we see in the writings of the apostles Peter, and Paul, and John.³³

But what does it mean that God laid Jesus Christ as the Foundation? And how did Paul lay a Foundation **that had already been laid**? What do these statements mean? To find the answers, let’s go back to the One from Whom the apostles got their ideas about the Church. Let’s go back to the One Who was the First Christian, Jesus Christ, “the Author and Finisher of our faith”,³⁴ the One Who invented the whole idea of Church. Let’s go back to that very first mention of the word “church” in the New Testament:

³³ 1 Peter 1:20; Ephesians 1:4-5; Revelation 13:8. This concept is also put forth by Simon Chan in his, Simon (2006) *The Ontology of the Church*, Chapter One, *Liturgical Theology, The Church as Worshiping Community*. InterVarsity Press. (2006)

³⁴ Hebrews 12:2

The Revelation

Matthew 16:13-18

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

Jesus asked His disciples about the general consensus of the surrounding society and culture – who did people think He was? But His Church is not marketed and built on cultural trends. The people’s perspective seemed sensible – Jesus was “one of the prophets”. But we will see that being part of His Church requires a REVELATION of a “Particular Prophet”³⁵ – the prophet Who is also Priest and King – the Prophet Who is “the Son of the Living God” – the One Whom Moses and all the prophets prophesied would come.

Jesus said, “But who do YOU say that I am”? To be part of His Church, Jesus insists on a personal REVELATION OF HIMSELF, which is given to each individual disciple by the heavenly Father. He said, “No one can come

³⁵ Deuteronomy 18:17-19; Acts 7:36-38

to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father”.³⁶ In other words, people may come to the church building, but people don’t “come to Jesus” unless the Father REVEALS Christ to them. In this passage, Jesus informs us that REVELATION is the foundational rock – the bedrock³⁷ – upon which He builds His Church. It is a foundation which is laid, and then built upon. JESUS BUILDS HIS CHURCH BY REVELATION OF HIMSELF.

From this passage in Matthew, we can see where Peter got the analogy he used to define the Church as those who have a revelation of “The Living Stone”, “The Precious Cornerstone”, and are coming to Him and being built up “living stones” in a spiritual house.³⁸

So, we understand that the “rock” upon which Jesus is building His Church is the REVELATION of Who He is – “The Christ, the Son of the Living God”. The way Jesus builds His Church is by REVELATION OF HIMSELF. Jesus said that the ministry of the Holy Spirit, is always to “**testify of Me**”.³⁹ An angel told John that “the spirit of prophecy is **the testimony of Jesus**”.⁴⁰ This is the way the Church that Jesus is building is built – through REVELATION. Now Christianity has produced a proliferation of methods and means with regards to church planting, church growth, and church ministry. But THIS is how Jesus builds His Church – BY REVELATION OF HIMSELF. And I believe the scriptures indicate that this is how the apostolic

³⁶ John 6:44; Cf. John 6:44; Isaiah 54:13

³⁷ Greek: *petra*, *Strong's* # 4073, as distinguished from Peter, *petros* (#4074), a piece of rock larger than *lithos* (#3037), a stone.

³⁸ 1 Peter 2:4-6

³⁹ John 15:26; 14:26; 1 John 5:6

⁴⁰ Revelation 19:10

workers of the first century (and throughout church history) co-labored with Him –by preaching Christ. REVELATION of Christ is absolutely key for there to be Church.

So, we understand that the “rock” is REVELATION. But is the “rock” the foundation? Not exactly. This “rock” – *petras* – is defined as “*a mass of rock, a bedrock*”.⁴¹ It is not the foundation itself, but something the foundation is laid upon. So, the bedrock is REVELATION of Christ, and the Foundation is laid upon REVELATION. But what is that FOUNDATION? Let’s look at more of what Jesus has to say about it:

⁴¹ *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, Strong’s # 4073.

The Relationship

LUKE 6:46-48

⁴⁶ Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? ⁴⁷ Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: ⁴⁸ he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul said that “fire” would test and reveal what sort of work each man has done in the Lord.⁴² And here in this parable, the Lord is saying that a “flood” would serve the same purpose, that is, to test and reveal if a spiritual house has been “well built”.

Regarding this, in verse 48, Jesus says: the man “laid a foundation on the rock”. The “rock” is REVELATION of Christ; and the foundation is laid on the “bedrock”, that is, the foundation is laid on the REVELATION of Christ. So, what is the foundation that is laid?

In verse 46, we see the words, “Lord, Lord”. The subject matter is lordship. Because of the REVELATION he received from the Father, in his very first recorded sermon, Peter preached Jesus as “both Lord and Christ”.⁴³ That is what Jesus is referring to here - relating to Him according

⁴² I Corinthians 3:10-15

⁴³ Acts 2:36

to that **REVELATION**. If He has been **REVEALED** to us as Lord, then we should **RELATE** to Him as Lord. Otherwise, it is hypocrisy.

Verse 47 gives us further indication: The idea of “coming” to Jesus and “hearing” Jesus are also **RELATING** type activities. And, of course, that “hearing” means following through in action - obeying what we hear. So, we can conclude that the foundation is **RELATIONSHIP with Jesus as Lord and Christ**.

THAT is the Foundation: RELATIONSHIP with Christ! The Foundation of our Christian life and the Foundation of the Church is RELATIONSHIP with Christ.

This **RELATIONSHIP** starts with **REVELATION** – we cannot relate to that which we do not know. And this **RELATIONSHIP** continues in **REVELATION** - as our **REVELATION** of Christ grows, our **RELATIONSHIP** with Christ grows.

Everything in our Christian life, and everything in the life of the Church utterly leans on and depends upon our **RELATIONSHIP** with Christ. As the apostle Paul put it: “... **serving God through his Spirit, boasting in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in human nature.**”⁴⁴ **THAT** is authentic, biblical Christianity.

Now this foundation is not a dependence upon our ability to get revelation, for that would be works instead of grace. Rather, it is a blood-bought **RELATIONSHIP** with Christ through faith. Yet, this **RELATIONSHIP**

⁴⁴ A literal translation of Philippians 3:3. Cf. Robertson’s *Word Pictures in the New Testament* & Vincent’s *Word Studies*.

is determined by – that is, limited to or proportionate to – our REVELATION of Christ. We cannot relate to what we don't know about Christ. The *bedrock* of REVELATION sets the parameters of the *foundation* of RELATIONSHIP.

“Doing Church”

I have suggested that as we grow in our REVELATION of Christ's Headship, we must adjust how we “do church”. I believe we can encapsulate “the normal Christian life” as well as “the normal Christian Church life”⁴⁵ with “3 R's”: REVELATION, RELATIONSHIP and REFLECTION. In the Church Jesus is building, disciples are pursuing REVELATION of Christ and RELATIONSHIP with Christ with a view to being a REFLECTION of Christ to those within and outside the Body of Christ.

As we grow in REVELATION of Christ, that REVELATION should be “translated” into RELATIONSHIP, as it were. In other words, however we begin to see Christ *revealed* in the scriptures we should begin to *relate* to Him as such, so that the REVELATION always becomes part of the personal RELATIONSHIP – not mere “head knowledge”, but experiential knowledge. This is “building on the foundation with gold, silver and precious stones”.⁴⁶

The process of “translating” REVELATION into RELATIONSHIP can be referred to as “BODILY FUNCTIONS”, that is, the daily functions of the Body of Christ listed in Acts 2:42:

⁴⁵ These are phrases used by Watchman Nee. By “normal”, I mean “biblical”.

⁴⁶ I Corinthians 3:12

- Apostolic Teaching
- Apostolic Fellowship⁴⁷
- The Breaking of Bread
- Prayer

Obviously, there is much EQUIPPING MINISTRY required for the incorporation of these fundamental activities of the normal Christian life and Church life; but suffice to say here that the specified goal of each of these activities is TO SEE CHRIST and to “translate” that REVELATION into RELATIONSHIP.

And finally, “doing Church” is REFLECTING Christ through “**BODY MINISTRY**”. By that term, I mean the **RECEIVING** and **SHARING** of the fruits and gifts of the Ascended Christ.⁴⁸ The apostle Paul said that this “causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”⁴⁹ Again, much EQUIPPING MINISTRY is required for spiritually authentic BODY MINISTRY to take place (there are no short cuts in authentic discipleship) but suffice to say here that **the Body of Christ lives and grows ONLY by the life of Christ. TO KNOW CHRIST IS TO RECEIVE HIS LIFE. TO MAKE HIM KNOWN IS TO SHARE HIS LIFE.** Therefore, the specified purpose of all spiritual gifts would be that each member of the Body

⁴⁷ In his commentary on Acts 2:42, John Gill, reminds us that the disciples were also fellowshiping with the apostles. The syntax in the Greek text has both the teaching and the fellowship referring back to the apostles. In fact, *The Amplified Bible* translates it as: “the instruction and fellowship of the apostles”.

⁴⁸ Ephesians 4:7-8

⁴⁹ Ephesians 4:16

RECEIVE LIFE FROM THE HEAD AND EFFECTIVELY SHARE THAT LIFE WITH THE REST OF THE BODY⁵⁰.

⁵⁰ It is clear from the example of Jesus and His disciples that spiritual gifts are meant to be shared with those outside the Church as well.

Summary

CHRIST IS PREREQUISITE & PREEMINENT

Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church. We cannot *discern the Body* until we first *discern the Head*. We cannot understand the mystery of the Church until we understand the mystery of Christ. Jesus is building His Church through *revelation of Himself*. As we pursue the revelation of Christ, *He builds His Church*.

As disciples of Christ, let us pursue REVELATION of Christ as the Head and the Foundation, having that translated into RELATIONSHIP with Christ, with a view to REFLECTION of Christ. May the Church, which is His Body, be able to say: “Look, ‘so also is Christ’”.



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Forward

About the Format of this Group Discussion Guide

This group discussion guide is intended to accompany the reading of the book entitled *“Christ is Prerequisite for Church”*. I have intentionally presented this material in both a book (or lecture) format, as well as, in a discussion guide format, because I see in scripture two types of meetings in the New Testament Church which had two different formats:

- 1) “Equipping Ministry” (a speaker shares his particular gift of the Spirit with an audience for apostolic teaching, prophetic and evangelistic preaching for “equipping the saints”. Ephesians 4:11-12) In this case, it is the apostolic teaching in the book, *“Christ is Prerequisite for Church”*.
- 2) “Body Ministry” (each member of the body shares the gifts of the Spirit for “the body edifying itself in love”. Ephesians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 14:26). In this case, it is this guided group discussion.

I have chosen to present this material in a group discussion guide format also for this reason: Through many years of ministry experience, I have found that personal initiative is essential in authentic discipleship. And in this case, it would be a “group initiative” that is required. In this sense, perhaps James’ admonition of being “doers of the word and not merely hearers” (1:22) can be applied. Indeed, if a disciple is a “follower” of Jesus, “following” requires more than hearing. The “doing” in this case is a group of people taking responsibility to pursue REVELATION of Christ,

RELATIONSHIP with Christ and REFLECTION of Christ in His Body, which is the Church. (Colossians 1:18)

Indeed, the goal of authentic apostolic equipping ministry is to “minister the word” in such a way as “they all shall know Him from the least to the greatest” (Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 8:11) and thus realize the New Covenant. A “New Testament Church” is a “New Covenant People”. A “New Covenant People” are those who know their God”. (Daniel 11:32) And in the case of the Church, it is a matter of pursuing the knowledge and service of God “together”.

Yet another reason why I have chosen to present this material in a group discussion format is because the exercise of that format is preparation for actually functioning as “the Body of Christ, the Church”. (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18, 24)

The format can be referred to as “DIALECTICAL”. “Dialectic” means: ‘the art or practice of examining concepts or ideas logically, often by the method of question and answer’ (Webster). Jesus, as well as most ancient teachers, used this method of instruction because it leads the disciple into REVELATION KNOWLEDGE of a given concept or idea. In the logical progression of questions and answers, the understanding ‘drops from the head into the heart’. So, trust the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you into real heart and life changing revelations as you progress through this guide.

“Apostolic”

(pp. 4-8 in the book)

READ IN UNISON: I Corinthians 3:9-13

⁹ For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building.
¹⁰ According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. ¹¹ For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work.⁵¹

1. What ministry did Jesus give to His disciples?
2. Whose ministry is it to build the Church?
3. What is the essence of apostolic ministry?

⁵¹ All scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Version* unless otherwise noted.

READ IN UNISON: 1 Corinthians 12:12

For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

4. What does the phrase “So also is Christ” mean?
5. What is prerequisite to understanding the Church?
6. Discuss: The correlation you see between the story in Genesis 28:10-19 and the story in John 1:45-51.

READ IN UNISON: 1 Corinthians 2:1a, 2, 5 (Amplified Bible)

“As for myself, brethren, when I came to you, I resolved to know nothing (to be acquainted with nothing, to make a display of the knowledge of nothing, and to be conscious of nothing) among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.... So that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”⁵²

7. What is the God-given responsibility of apostolic ministers?

⁵² 1 Corinthians 2:1a, 2, 5. *The Amplified Bible*

Christ is Prerequisite for Church

(p. 9 in the book)

READ IN UNISON: 1 Corinthians 11:29 (NKJV)

“He who eats and drinks in an unworthy manor eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.”

8. What does it mean to “discern” the Lord’s Body?

9. What distinguishes the Church that Jesus is building from all other Christian groupings?

The Head

(pp. 10-11 in the book)

READ IN UNISON: Colossians 1:18

He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

10. What is prerequisite to discerning the Body?

11. Discuss: The similarity between seeing the Lordship of Christ and the Headship of Christ.

The Foundation

(pp.12-13 in the book)

READ IN UNISON: I Corinthians 3:10-11

“10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. 11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

12. What did Paul mean by saying he “laid a foundation which already is laid”?

The Revelation

(pp. 14-16 in the book)

READ IN UNISON: Matthew 16:13-18

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

13. Where is the source of revelation of Christ?

14. What is the “rock” (bedrock) of the Church Jesus is building?

15. How does Jesus build His Church?

16. What is the revelation that Jesus requires of His disciples?

The Relationship

(pp. 17-19 in the book)

READ IN UNISON: LUKE 6:46-48

“⁴⁶ Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? ⁴⁷

Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: ⁴⁸ he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.”

17. What tests the quality of the work built?

18. What is the bedrock?

19. What is laid upon the bedrock?

20. What is the foundation?

21. What is the specific revelation and relationship Jesus requires of His disciples?

22. What does everything in the Christian life and the Christian Church life depend upon?

23. What sets the parameters of our relationship with Christ?

“Doing Church”

(pp. 20-22 in the book)

24. How can you summarize the “normal Christian life” and the “normal Christian Church life”?
25. What should we do with our growing revelation of Christ?
26. What were the “Bodily Functions” of the first century Body of Christ?
27. What is the specific goal of all these activities?
28. How can we reflect Christ to one another and the world?
29. What is the simple definition of “Body Ministry”?
30. By what does the Body of Christ live and grow?
31. What is it to “know Christ”?
32. What is it to “make Him known”?
33. What is the specific purpose of all spiritual gifts?

Summary

READ IN UNISON:

CHRIST IS PREREQUISITE & PREEMINENT

Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church. We cannot *discern the Body* until we first *discern the Head*. We cannot understand the mystery of the Church until we understand the mystery of Christ. Jesus is building His Church through *revelation of Himself*. As we pursue the revelation of Christ, *He builds His Church*.

As disciples of Christ, let us pursue REVELATION of Christ as the Head and the Foundation, having that translated into RELATIONSHIP with Christ, with a view to REFLECTION of Christ. May the Church, which is His Body, be able to say: “Look, ‘so also is Christ’”.

ADDENDUM



A Resource for Organic Church

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Preface

By definition, “the Church” is the “Body of Christ”.⁵³ These terms presuppose “belonging” to Christ and His Body. This resource is intended for Christians – that is, those who “have the Spirit of Christ” and therefore “belong to Him” and “have been baptized into His Body”.⁵⁴

I understand church meetings to be primarily for the Church, and not necessarily something to invite the unbeliever to attend. In saying this, I am NOT saying that the unbeliever is unwelcome at a church meeting. What I am saying is that, not being a member of the Body of Christ, the unbeliever visiting a church meeting will essentially be observing rather than participating with the Head and the members of His Body. Never-the-less, the unbeliever may still be receptive to receiving the ministry of the Holy Spirit at a church meeting.⁵⁵

This resource is meant to help put into practice the ideas communicated in my book and its group discussion guide, *“Christ Is Prerequisite for Church”*, and can be used as a resource in helping to establish “Organic Churches”.⁵⁶ The adjective “organic” refers to *a derivative of that which is living*. Therefore, I am using the term, “Organic Church”, in reference to a group of disciples of Christ who, through REVELATION of Christ and RELATIONSHIP with Christ, are **RECEIVING AND SHARING**

⁵³ Colossians 1:18

⁵⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:4-6

⁵⁵ Unbelievers apparently, maybe only occasionally, attended church meetings in the 1st Century Church: 1 Corinthians 14:21-25.

⁵⁶ I prefer that term “Organic Church” to “House Church” or “Simple Church”.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST. A scriptural phrase I associate with this concept is found in Romans 8:2: **“The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”**.⁵⁷

While this biblical concept has unfortunately become highly trivialized through indiscriminate use of the term “Organic Church”, never-the-less, I cannot think of a better way to describe **A GROUP OF DISCIPLES WHO ARE PURSUING REVELATION OF CHRIST AND RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST, WITH A VIEW TO A REFLECTION OF CHRIST IN HIS BODY THROUGH RECEIVING AND SHARING HIS LIFE.**

⁵⁷ T. Austin Sparks is quoted as saying: “God’s way and law of fullness is that of organic life. In the Divine order, life produces its own organism, whether it be a vegetable, animal, human or spiritual. This means that everything comes from the inside. Function, order, and fruit issue from this law of life within. It was solely on this principle that what we have in the New Testament came into being. Organized Christianity has entirely reversed this order.”

Introduction

I believe we see in the New Testament scriptures two different types of church meetings which can be called “Equipping Ministry Meetings” and “Body Ministry Meetings”.⁵⁸ These two different types of church meetings have different formats and different purposes. “There is a time ... for every purpose under heaven.”⁵⁹ That is to say, God speaks in different ways in different meetings. The scripture refers to a set of activities I will call “Bodily Functions” – namely, *Apostolic Teaching, Apostolic Fellowship, The Breaking of Bread, and Prayer*.⁶⁰ In church life, these activities are covered by these two types of church meetings. Each group of believers must led of the Spirit on how to incorporate these “Bodily Functions” into the life of the Church. But a survey of the New Testament Scriptures pictures what I will refer to as an *Equipping Ministry Meeting* covering Apostolic Teaching and Apostolic Fellowship, as well as a *Body Ministry Meeting* covering Breaking of Bread and Prayer (the whole spectrum of worship), as well as “the fellowship of the Holy Spirit”⁶¹ and the exercise of spiritual gifts.

⁵⁸ While the terms used for the two types of meetings may vary, this Bible-based perspective of church life and ministry is shared by many, including Watchman Nee in a book entitled, “The Normal Christian Church Life”.

⁵⁹ Ecclesiastes 3:1 *New King James Version*

⁶⁰ Acts 2:42

⁶¹ 2 Corinthians 13:14 and Philippians 2:1

Equipping Ministry Meetings

(These can be either large or small group meetings.)

Equipping Ministry Meetings are church meetings where the word of God is taught or preached by an apostle, or a prophet, or an evangelist or a pastor or a teacher.

e.g. Acts 2:42 **“They devoted themselves (“daily”, v. 46) to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”**

e.g. Acts 6:4 **“But we (the apostles) will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”**

“The ministry of the word” is for the “maturing and equipping of the saints”, as **“He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”**⁶² The maturing and equipping are for “the work of ministry”. The “work of ministry” is for “the building up of the body of Christ”. And “the building up of the body of Christ” is the purpose of the other type of church meeting – namely, *“Body Ministry Meetings”*.

⁶² Ephesians 4:11-12

Body Ministry Meetings

(These are best as small group meetings.)

Body Ministry Meetings are meetings in which all the members of the Body – not just the equipping ministers – share the Word of God. I believe the context of Body Ministry is pictured in the following scriptures:

Acts 20:7 “On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread”

Hebrews 10:24-25 “Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together ...but encouraging *one another*.”

1 Corinthians 14:26 “What is *the outcome* then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.”

“Bodily Functions”

“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

Acts 2:42

- Apostolic Teaching
- Apostolic Fellowship
- The Breaking of Bread
- Prayer

The specified goal of each of these activities is **TO SEE CHRIST** and to “translate” that **REVELATION OF CHRIST** into **RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST**. We will be discussing what it means to “see” Christ and how revelation is “translated” into relationship.

Apostolic Teaching

Teaching that Lays the Foundation of Christ
by Building Revelation & Relationship with Christ

Seeing Christ

Christ is the heart and theme of the Bible. The message in every book of the Bible, Genesis to Revelation, points to and reveals the person and the work of Christ.

Jesus referred to Himself as “the Alpha and the Omega”⁶³, i.e. The first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. Nothing precedes Alpha, and nothing follows Omega – Christ is all.

“What the alphabet is to literature, Christ is to life. He is its essence, its structure, and its composition.... He conveys the truth of God to us just as the alphabet is the vehicle for bringing the thought of the author to the mind of the reader.” (Oral Roberts)

Christ is the “Word of God”.⁶⁴ Christ is the *Logos* - God’s full and complete thought, expression, message to humanity. We know and understand God through knowing and understanding Christ.

Christ was there in the beginning when God created everything.⁶⁵

⁶³ Revelation 1:8

⁶⁴ John 1:1, 14

⁶⁵ John 1:2-4

The Christ revealed in every book of the Bible “is the same yesterday, today and forever.”⁶⁶

Hebrews 12:2 “... fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and Perfecter of faith....”

2 Corinthians 3:18 “... beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord (‘in the face of Christ’ – 4:6), we are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

WE ARE TRANSFORMED INTO HIS IMAGE BY SEEING CHRIST.

Matthew 16:15-18 “He said to them (His disciples), “But who do you yourselves say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock (revelation) I will build My church.”

JESUS IS BUILDING HIS CHURCH BY REVELATION OF HIMSELF.

⁶⁶ Hebrews 13:8

Seeing Christ in the Scriptures

A Directed Scripture Reading/Study Guide

1. **Revelation ABOUT The Christ**

1.1. **Begins in the Old Testament types and is fulfilled in Christ Jesus:**

1.1.1. Hebrews 6:1 (Lit.) “The beginnings of the discourse concerning Christ...”

1.1.2. Hebrews 11:40 Christ = the “better things”

1.1.3. Hebrews 8:5 & 10:1 “...the shadow of the Good Things to come (Christ)...”

1.1.4. Colossians 2:17 “...but the substance belongs to Christ...”

1.1.5. “shadow” = revelation of Christ. “substance” = relationship with Christ.

1.2. **Seeing Christ in: The Old Testament Types:**

1.2.1. The Tabernacle: Exodus 25-40

1.2.2. The Priesthood: Exodus 28-29 & 39

1.2.3. The Feasts: Exodus 23 & Leviticus 23

2. **Revelation OF The Christ**

2.1. **Seeing Christ in: The Four Gospels: The witness of Christ by Jesus of Nazareth and by God the Father:**

- The Beatitudes: Matthew 5:1-12 The Character of the King and His Kingdom
- The Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5-7 The Law of the King and His Kingdom
- The Parables: The Mysteries of the King and His Kingdom (Mark 4:11)

2.2. **Seeing Christ in: The Four Gospels:** The witness of Christ by the prophets:

The visions of Ezekiel (1:4-28) and John on the Island of Patmos (Revelation 4:6-11) come through the Four Gospels:

- Matthew: The Lion (of Judah): The Lord and King
- Mark: The Ox: The (Suffering) Servant
- Luke: The Son of Man (Redeemed Humanity): The Pattern Son
- John: The Eagle: The Divinity of Christ
- The Revelation of THE WHOLE CHRIST: for relationship & for evangelism

3. **Revelation of Jesus Christ**

- **Seeing Christ in: The Book of Revelation:**
- “The revelation of Jesus Christ...” (Revelation 1:1)
- “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” (Revelation 19:10)

Apostolic Fellowship

An Excerpt from “Discipleship & The Equipping Ministries”⁶⁷

“... He gave gifts to men.... And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ....”⁶⁸

This passage tells us that Jesus gave certain ministry gifts to men and gave certain men as gifts to the Church. Something that is important for us to understand is this: In building His Church,⁶⁹ **Jesus blesses men – not methods.** There may be some value in considering methodologies for how to make disciples; but in the end, Jesus blesses disciples **through men** rather than through methods. Acts 2:42 tells us that the disciples “**were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship....**” In his commentary on this verse, John Gill, reminds us that **the disciples were fellowshiping with the apostles.** The syntax in the Greek text has both the teaching and the fellowship referring back to the apostles. In fact, *The Amplified Bible* translates it as: “**the instruction and fellowship of the apostles**”. Again, Jesus gave certain ministry gifts to men and gave certain men as gifts to the Church. The apostle Paul was able to say to the Thessalonians, “You know what kind of men we proved

⁶⁷ See my eBook [Christ-centered Discipleship & Equipping Ministries](#).

⁶⁸ Ephesians 4:7, 11-12. (“as” in the NASB, and “to be” in the NKJV are not in the Greek text.)

⁶⁹ Matthew 16:18

ourselves to be....”⁷⁰ What qualifies these men to equip the Church is not their fulfilling the presupposed “job descriptions” of apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, teacher, but rather who they are as ambassadors of Christ⁷¹. These are men who “have been with Jesus”⁷², and bring the presence of Jesus.

⁷⁰ 1 Thessalonians 1:5 *The Amplified Bible*

⁷¹ 2 Corinthians 5:20

⁷² Acts 4:13

The Breaking of Bread

An Excerpt from “The Breaking of Bread”⁷³

As the apostle Paul admonished the early Church, the “**breaking of bread**” or the Agape Meal should be considered as **sacred** as the thanksgiving for the bread and cup that precede and follow it. I don’t believe that for Paul *sacred* would have meant *solemn*. I don’t believe he expected a love feast of eating and drinking to be a *solemn* occasion. The word *Eucharist* means *thanksgiving*. The *Breaking of Bread* and the *Agape Meal* are occasions of celebration – a celebration of life – a celebration of resurrection life. *Sacred* doesn’t mean *solemn*. *Sacred* means *consecrated to the Lord*. So, how can the Breaking of Bread – how can an Agape Meal – how can a “Potluck Meal” be *consecrated to the Lord*? By being aware that the Lord is in our midst. By being aware that we are eating and drinking with Jesus – just as He did with His disciples a number of times after His resurrection. There is a particular scripture which “says it all” for me. It gives a picture of a *sacredness* without a *solemnity*. It’s about *seeing* and *celebrating* the *spiritual* in the *physical*. It speaks of the Hebrew phrase *Le Chayim* – meaning a salute “**to life**”. It is an example of people sharing a meal before the Lord – aware of His presence in their midst. The verse is: Exodus 24:11 “**So they saw God, and they ate and drank.**” Or as another translation simply puts it: “**They shared a meal together in God's presence!**”⁷⁴

⁷³ See my article [Breaking of Bread](#).

⁷⁴ Exodus 24:11 *New Living Translation*

Excerpts from “The Table & The Feast”⁷⁵

Jesus shared His last Passover with His disciples in the Upper Room. We refer to this as “the Last Supper”; but that was not really the last supper, because there were other meals He shared with His disciples after His resurrection,⁷⁶ one of which He shared with the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus.⁷⁷

When the two disciples took the bread and cup with Jesus, they had a revelation of Christ, and they understood “the things concerning Himself in all the scriptures beginning with Moses and with all the prophets”. What they understood was the full gospel – **the fullness of salvation: *justification in the Feast of Passover, sanctification in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and glorification in the Feast of First Fruits.*** What they saw was *Christ’s blood in the Feast of Passover, Christ’s body in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the life of the Eternal One in the Feast of First Fruits.* How did they see this? In the bread and the cup, while eating and drinking of the life of the Eternal One at the Lord’s Table.

⁷⁵ See my eBook “The Table & the Feast”. A complimentary .PDF copy can be obtained by emailing me: AtChristsTable@gmail.com

⁷⁶ Luke 24:30, 41-43; John 21:9-14

⁷⁷ Luke 24:13-32

Prayer

Excerpts from “The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit”⁷⁸

The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit involves ...

- “Seeking” the Spirit
- “Waiting” on the Spirit
- “Hearing” what the Spirit is saying
- “Praying in the Spirit”
- Studying, reflecting, and meditating under the guidance of the Spirit

The Components of Fellowship WITH the Holy Spirit

- ❖ **Desire:** An absolute pre-requisite which arises out of a sense of need (Matthew 5:3) and love of the Lord. The Connection: Luke 8:36-47
- ❖ **Discipline:** e.g. [Ordering Your Private World](#) by Gordon MacDonald
- ❖ **Direction:** The Scriptures give the proper direction & guidance to our “holy habits” / spiritual disciplines - FELLOWSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- ❖ **Devotion:** e.g. Acts 2:42 “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” (Greek) *proskartereo* (Strong's #4242) *steadfastly*

⁷⁸ See my eBook “The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit”. A complimentary .PDF copy can be obtained by emailing me: AtChristsTable@gmail.com

attentive to, constantly adhering to “holy habits” / spiritual disciplines –
FELLOWSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Excerpts from “Tabernacle Truths”⁷⁹

There are two Greek words which are translated “worship” in the New Testament:

- 1) *proskuneo*, Strong’s # 4352: to bow down (e.g. John 4:24)
- 2) *latreuo*, Strong’s # 3000: to serve (e.g. Romans 12:1)

Therefore, “Worship” can be defined as a lifestyle of SURRENDER and SERVICE to the Lord.⁸⁰

We can also consider the concept of “Worship” as the way by which we approach God and carry on a relationship with God. I believe the Lord gave the Tabernacle to His people as a heavenly pattern for **Revelation of Christ and Relationship with Christ**. It is God’s ultimate intention to reveal Christ through the activities of Worship and Prayer. Worship and Prayer are two main aspects of our Relationship with Christ. The Tabernacle provides a pattern for Worship; and Prayer is included in Worship, as it is also essentially an approach to God.

The Tabernacle pattern is a revelation of the Person and the Work of Christ. Each of the Tabernacle Furnishings is a symbol of either the person

⁷⁹ See my eBook “Seeing Christ in the Tabernacle”. A complimentary .PDF copy can be obtained by emailing me: AtChristsTable@gmail.com

⁸⁰ See my book [*A New & Living Way*](#).

or the work of Christ. As the apostle Paul tells us in Colossians 2:17: These furnishings were “shadows” or symbols, and the “substance” of fulfilled reality is Christ. The Tabernacle pattern is a guide for **Revelation of Christ** and **Relationship with Christ**. We want to appropriate and experience all of Christ’s work in our relationship with Him, and Worship and Prayer are two means by which we can do this. Worship, the experiential aspect of our relationship with the Lord, can be understood as the way by which we approach God and carry on a relationship with Him. This has a public or collective dimension when we gather together, as well as a private dimension in our daily individual devotional lives.

To “Worship in Spirit and Truth”,⁸¹ we need to read the Old Testament in light of the New Testament and apply New Covenant truth to the Old Covenant pattern (“shadows”, symbols). To help us understand Worship in Spirit and Truth, I believe it is accurate to say that in New Covenant Worship and Prayer, the Tabernacle Pattern changes from a prescribed sequence to a composite in which the Holy Spirit may highlight a given aspect and lead us into a particular dynamic of worship at any given time.⁸²

⁸¹ John 4:24

⁸² What is very briefly mentioned here is, in fact, an absolutely essential principle in the understanding of Worship in Spirit and Truth in light of the New Covenant. See my eBook “Seeing Christ in the Tabernacle”. A complimentary .PDF copy can be obtained by emailing me: AtChristsTable@gmail.com

Body Ministry

Hebrews 10:24-25 “Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together ...but encouraging *one another*.”

1 Corinthians 14:26 “What is *the outcome* then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.”

Note:

The Body of Christ lives and grows ONLY by the life of Christ. TO KNOW CHRIST IS TO RECEIVE HIS LIFE. TO MAKE HIM KNOWN IS TO SHARE HIS LIFE. Therefore, the specified purpose of all spiritual gifts would be that each member of the Body RECEIVE LIFE FROM THE HEAD AND EFFECTIVELY SHARE THAT LIFE WITH THE REST OF THE BODY⁸³.

⁸³ It is clear from the example of Jesus and His disciples that spiritual gifts are meant to be shared with those outside the Church as well.

Spiritual Gifts: An Overview⁸⁴

The Purpose

- Ephesians 4:15b-16 “We are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *that is*, Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”

The Body of Christ lives and grows by the life of Christ – specifically, “by what every joint supplies”. Therefore, The Purpose of the Spiritual gifts is to share the life of Christ with the members of the Body of Christ, and those outside the Church.

- I Corinthians 12:4-7 “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all *persons*. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

“The common good” is the life of Christ

⁸⁴ See my eBook [Spiritual Gifts: An Overview](#).

The Varieties

- **“Gifts”** - of the Father: **Motivational Gifts**: Can be found listed in 1 Peter 4:10-11 & Romans 12:6-8
- **“Ministries”** - of the Son: **Ministry Gifts**: Can be found listed in Ephesians 4:11 & 1 Corinthians 12:28
- **“Effects”** - of the Spirit: **Manifestation Gifts**: Can be found listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11

The Principle

- God-given faith & the motivational gift lead to a manifestation gift.
- Consistent manifestations lead to a ministry gift.

It All Begins with Motivation

- Romans 12:3b-6a **“God has allotted to each a measure of faith. For just as we have many parts in one body and all the body’s parts do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually parts of one another. However, since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to use them properly: if prophecy, in proportion to one’s faith.*”**

Each of us has been given a gifting and “a measure of faith”. Just as we prophesy according to our level of faith, we exercise any spiritual gift according to our level of faith.

- 1 Peter 4:10-11 “As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the multifaceted grace of God. Whoever speaks *is to do so as one who is speaking* actual words of God; whoever serves *is to do so as one who is serving* by the strength which God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”
 - Two categories of Spiritual Gifts: “Speaking” & “Doing”
 - Two basic Motivations: “Speaking” & “Doing”
- Romans 12:6b-8 The 7 Motivational Gifts:
 - Prophesying - speaking
 - Serving - doing
 - Teaching - speaking
 - Exhorting - speaking
 - Giving - doing
 - Leading – speaking & doing
 - Showing mercy – doing

We may have more than one motivational gift, but there will be one which manifests as being the dominant motivation in our life and ministry.

Bill & Frances Furioso
~ At Christ's Table ~



Bill Furioso and his wife, Frances, have been married for more than 40 years, and have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Bill and Frances served as missionaries in South Africa for thirteen years making disciples, establishing churches, and training church leaders. Over a span of 40 years, they also traveled extensively in an itinerant Bible teaching ministry which took them to hundreds of gatherings on four continents ministering in churches, conferences, spiritual formation seminars, and home gatherings. They have shepherded several churches, discipled many to Christ, and mentored church leaders in the USA and abroad.

Being an avid student by nature, Bill has done both formal and informal study in various fields including Education, Music, Philosophy and Theology. As a writer, he has authored many publications which are distributed worldwide. Because of Bill's disabilities resulting from a spinal cord injury, their ministries of writing, recording, distributing, mentoring, and correspondence are now shared primarily via the Internet... www.AtChristsTable.org

ACTpublications

“... explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.” 1 Corinthians 2:13

A teaching ministry from Bill and Frances Furioso

At Christ's Table

Disciples of the King and His Kingdom eating and drinking of Jesus

THE HEAD

THE CENTER

THE FOUNDATION

of Biblical Christianity

with a view to

REVELATION of Christ

RELATIONSHIP with Christ

REFLECTION of Christ

FREE ONLINE MINISTRY RESOURCES

OUR WEBSITE: www.AtChristsTable.org

WRITTEN MESSAGES

Restoration Library: <https://www.therestorationlibrary.com>

Academia.edu: <https://independent.academia.edu/WDFurioso>

RECORDED MESSAGES

YouTube: www.YouTube.com/user/BillFurioso

Academia.edu: <https://independent.academia.edu/WDFurioso>

SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/user-648428572>

Spreaker: <https://www.spreaker.com/user/14502151>

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: www.facebook.com/atchriststable

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/at-christ-s-table-ministries-254b5320/>

Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/atchriststable1>