

The background of the book cover is a photograph of a large, leafy tree in a park-like setting. The sun is shining from behind the tree, creating a bright lens flare that streaks across the sky and illuminates the scene. The overall color palette is warm, with golden and brown tones.

BEING

THE

PLANTING FAITH COMMUNITIES
IN A POST-MODERN WORLD

CHURCH

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with **JASON CALAHAN**

Being the Church

Planting Faith Communities in a Post-Modern World

An Instructional Guide for the Coming Reformation

Dedication Page

To My Family

For having the courage to forsake everything
for Christ and join together on this journey

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Preface

[John 5:19] Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.

Continuing the Reformation

This book is born out of reformation. It is not born from the theological reformation of the Protestant movement. It is born of the coming reformation that I wrote about in my first book titled **Disciple Driven Church - The Coming Reformation**. I have learned much about this Reformation since that book was published in 2009. This Reformation is about correcting the practice of the Christian faith and in turn the Church. The Reformation is here now.

The Protestant Reformation did very little to rid the church of the corrupt structure that had taken over the church after the Edict of Milan. The church that Christ started on the Day of Pentecost was a loosely structured organism that operated under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and manifested His power through the spiritual gifts of the disciples. By the time of the Protestant Reformation, the church was a strictly structured and ordered organization with a leadership structure that had little in common with the early church or the instruction of scripture. There was a core of practices to which Martin Luther objected. In spite of this, it was theology that won the day. Instead of returning people to God's design for His church, the Protestant Reformation spawned thousands of man-made organizations fighting to be theologically correct.

What followed the Protestant Reformation was an unleashing of theological debate that helped to destroy many man-made dogmas that had held captive the church. This debate did not reach into the majority of corrupt practices. The

focus of Luther's protest was what he saw as abuses of power by the Catholic hierarchy. He saw the works they required for the forgiveness of sins to be abuses of scripture. His position is summarized as *sola scriptura - sola fide - sola gracia*. This translates as by scripture alone through faith alone by grace alone. These words became the mantra of the Protestant Reformation.

The leaders that joined with the reformation were now free to explore the faith. This led to many doctrinal debates. The debate between Martin Luther and Huldreich Zwingli is evidence of the type of theological debate that broke out. These men debated over the word "is" as they deliberated the nature of the communion elements. They eventually split over the meaning of the word and the first of many divisions occurred. Only a few major corruptions of practice were dealt with in Luther's theology. The new churches looked very much like the old one in order and structure. The resulting denominations and organizations created new dogma instead of returning to God's design. They insisted that you must believe as they do, and submit to their authority.

We owe much to the reformers. They risked their lives to unleash God's children from what they saw as an unbiblical and oppressive organization. Since that time, many denominations have arisen that are just as unbiblical and oppressive as what the reformers opposed in their day. Along the way, these man-made institutions have picked up many more unbiblical practices and have wandered even farther from God's design for His children and His church. This reformation is about returning to God's design. How can it be bad for Christ followers to live by God's design? How can it be bad for the church to order itself under the structure designed for it by God and instructed in scripture?

Returning to God's Design

This book is a big picture work. Consider it a fly over of God's biblical design for His children and His church. The theology I will discuss will likely challenge many of the current practices of the modern church. The theology is plain and simple yet controversial. It would not be controversial except that many who profess Christ are ruled more by the practices and traditions of their church than they are by scripture. It was this way when Christ walked the earth. See what He said about the religious leaders of His day.

[Mark 7:7-9] 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.' "Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men." He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.

My prayer for you is that you set aside your traditions for a moment and look fresh at God's Word. God is at work today finishing what He started on the Day of Pentecost and continued in the Protestant Reformation. The signs of the times are right before us. The next Reformation is here. It is not a work of theology as much as it is a work of correcting and purging corrupt practices and structure.

I understand that much of the theology mentioned in this book and my previous book has been lost, modified or ignored in the modern church. How can a church leader teach God's design if they don't follow it? The controversy created by my teaching only exists because man-made organizations have set themselves up as authorities over God's church. Does that sound familiar? The reformers saw things this way in their day. The Apostles saw this in their day. All of the Apostles and Reformers that we highly revere left the organized religious structure of their day to go follow Jesus. What follows is my fresh understanding of the church and how it must operate by

God's design. If we fail to recognize the signs of the times we may miss this great work that God is doing today.

There is a movement happening during our current age. Look around you. God is calling people out of the man made structure of religion that calls itself the church. The structured church organization maligns, labels and ridicules the movement. They don't see what God is doing. They call some of them the "Dones" and others are labeled as bitter or church haters. Don't be fooled by the name callers. This movement is a work of God. He is setting His children free from a religious system born out of pagan practices. He is returning them to their rightful place as stewards of His creation. It is in this position of God given authority, working through God given methods and power, that the church of God will once again transform the known world.

God is at work in every generation to bring about His plans and purposes. The remnant will embrace the change and be the church.

Chapter One - Being the Church

Inviting people to a building on Sunday morning does not make a church anymore than standing in a garage makes you a car.

My short story

I was not raised in a Christian home. In fact, there was only one person in my extended family that regularly attended church. I came to Christ in my teen years. I had no role model in the faith and no one to disciple me. I had an encounter with God that led me to His word. I began to read and study. What I found was a fascinating collection of stories about people that walked with a supernatural God who performed miraculous things as they spread His Gospel and cared for the widows, the orphans and the poor.

The churches I attended did not appear to walk with this power or even extend the same care that I saw in scripture. In the Book of Acts the church is distributing food daily to the widows. They were selling everything they owned and laying it at the Apostles feet. They were sharing what they had with each other. They were of one mind and miracles were taking place. In that early account, a single phrase stood out.

[Act 2:44] And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;

I wanted to experience the power and unity of the church I read about in the Book of Acts. I wanted to see power and compassion walking side by side. I was guided through a series of churches and denominations as I moved around the country. Some extended a little care, mostly in missions. Others had a little power but mostly in their Sunday services. I felt like something was missing from my faith. I was longing for more. I saw one church in scripture and an entirely different church on every street corner in America. I did not know how to get to that

church that I saw in scripture. It seemed as if it had disappeared.

What I saw in scripture did not line up with what I saw represented as the church on every street corner in America. But who was I to judge? I was a new convert and these people had been following God for years. So I did what many of you have done. I did as they instructed. I attended faithfully. I served the church. I grew in knowledge and taught Sunday schools, volunteered in youth group, led small groups and led my family to do the same. I believed their reasoning for why the church was different. The desire for more never left me.

In my early Christian life I felt a growing passion for that early church. I asked too many questions and made too many suggestions. I was sometimes labeled as rebellious. I had a fire in me that would not settle for less than what I saw in scripture. Over the next 20 years, God would guide me on a journey of discovery. He would raise me up in the system so I could see deep inside the structure. I obtained my Ph. D., was ordained and eventually assigned to a district leadership position. What I learned there was devastating. It is worse than it appears. I struggled again with God as I sought the church I saw in scripture. I connected with Jesus' cry on the cross as I looked longingly for God's church. *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? I heard the same response that Jesus heard.

[Psa 22:24] "For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He hidden His face from him; But when he cried to Him for help, He heard."

The voice of God was present and calling me to "Be the Church".

It was in this setting that God called me to this work of reformation. He showed me what He would do and how He would rebuild His church by His design. He told me to reform

everything. That is a big calling. He said He was starting in the most devastated areas of our country and I was being called to one of the worst. In the next few months I resigned my ordination, quit my job, sold everything we had and moved to the inner city of North St. Louis. Over the next several years God taught me, my family, and a few disciples how to live as the church I was seeking.

Finding the Church

What I share with you in this book is a summary of what we have learned. You can experience what you read about in scripture but only if you do things by God's design. I run no church. I am part of The Church! I named my teaching ministry the Disciple Driven Church because that is God's design. Disciples are supposed to be the church, lead the church and expand God's Kingdom. If you have felt a longing for the church you see in scripture, I relate to your search. I have discovered my spiritual gifting and I use it here. I do not desire to rule over anyone but rather to assist you in being a part of what God is doing in America today. He is completing the Reformation He started. He is calling the remnant out of the man made system to follow His design. He wants you to be a disciple of Jesus and follow His design for His church and your life. He is throwing off the corruptions of man in order to set free the people of God.

The following chapters outline the things He taught us on this journey. It is a collection of corrections. It shows where we have gone off course. It outlines what must be done in order to be the church we see in scripture. There is a living and powerful God that wants His followers to stop living for the things of the world and start living the way God designed them to live. When you do this, you will find the church!

I am here to help correct the course. It is my calling. I do not teach through some authority that was delegated to me by a man made structure. I teach from my experience through the gifting that God has given me by His Holy Spirit. The goal here

is not to gather you into a new organization or denomination. The goal is to help you "Be the Church" you have read about. The time is right. It is a "*Kairos*" moment in history. People in America are leaving the corrupt institution by the thousands. They are not leaving God. They are seeking what I was seeking. They seek the true church. God is doing a great work in America today and He is calling out His remnant to be a part of it.

Leaving the corrupt thing is not enough. We must rediscover God's design. This requires us to gather together with other believers. It requires us to function as the church was designed to function. We carry heavy baggage from our church experience. God is faithful to help us unpack those bags and return us to His design. You will find that some traditions die hard. Our tendency is to do what we know. Our traditions and practices hold our affections. We must go back to the Bible for our instructions. We are meant to live a supernatural life.

When the church functions by its design it is the most powerful force on earth. It can correct every problem and thwart every kind of evil. The idea of a group of people laying down their lives for the common good of society may seem like fantasy. The truth is, that even small groups of people throughout history have had huge impacts on society by living as Jesus did. The goal of every Christian should be to become more like Christ. You cannot do that if you do not follow God's design. Jesus knew this and communicated it in John 5:19 - "Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner."

Over and over Jesus calls us to follow. Are you following Jesus? For us to follow we must have a leader. Is your leader Jesus or is your leader a man made institution? In our modern day we have a multitude of institutions that want you to believe

that the only way to follow God is to submit to them. What did Jesus say about this idea of submitting to man's leadership?

[Mat 23:10] "Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ.

Jesus teaches us about authority. His design is built on spiritual authority and does not require man made leadership structures. When we operate by God's design, His power will manifest through spiritual gifting. He will raise up those He approves. He will use leadership to affirm His teachings. He will always keep our eyes on him and not man. God's spiritual gift of leadership can manifest and function without making man your leader. When we look to man for leadership we can be easily led astray. I have been given a gift of leadership. It manifests as God gives me wisdom, insight, and the power to communicate what He is doing. People do not follow me because the structure makes them do it. People will follow a Godly leader as God's power is manifest through them. A Godly leader will always lead you to follow Jesus where ever that leads.

We have not been given the liberty to design God's church and do it however we please. We have been told to obey God and follow Jesus. He has given us ample instruction on how we are to live and how we are to structure and function as the church. In most versions of today's church the instructions have been rewritten. It's easy to see if you fall into that category. Write out the basic structure of your church. How do you find and select leaders? What positions do you have? Does your order of service resemble scripture or ancient pagan practices? Are you part of a denomination? Where is your scriptural support for the design of your church? Most people never examine this. Many others rationalize things to justify their practices. In the end you will be judged by scripture. Shouldn't you be comparing your life and church to scripture now?

What about the way you live. Is it in line with how Jesus and the Apostles lived? Does it resemble the early church or does it resemble your unbelieving neighbor? Are you seeking and saving for the same things? Is your goal a nice house, newer car, vacations and retirement, or is it to use all that you are and all that you have to serve others and build the kingdom? One of the appeals of the modern church is that it does not require much sacrifice. There is a level of comfort in our religious institutions. We can schedule it in. We can give anonymously. We can serve when convenient or not at all. This is not the Christian faith that Christ died to establish. The Christian Faith that Christ taught and handed down to the Apostles required everything of them. They left their homes, jobs, inheritance to go and preach and serve and die for the kingdom. We have inherited a weak fabrication of the church and God desires to correct that.

In the next few chapters we will examine what life is like by God's design. We will look fresh at what Jesus taught and how He lived. We will examine the basic structure of our Christian life and how that comes together as the church. Don't let your traditions prevent you from exploring this topic. God is calling out the remnant. He wants those who have met Him face to face to leave everything in order to become the church that He designed so it can once again transform the known world. Don't settle for old wine. [Luke 5:37-39]

If we fail to live by God's design, we will fail to obey Him. Everything we do from that foundation will be slightly maligned and less pleasing to our Lord. The church will not then represent the presence of God in its midst.

Chapter Two - The Gospel

[Gal 1:8] But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

Discovering the Good News

The Gospel is the first thing that must be set in order before you can be the church that God designed. Make sure you are preaching and living the Gospel that Jesus came to preach and live. Look at what He preached. See how He lived. Study what His disciples taught and how they lived. You will get a picture of what the church is meant to be. If you don't start with the Gospel you will never get back to God's design.

The Gospel that came out of the Protestant Reformation was a reaction to the works that were emphasized in the practice of the Catholic Church at the time Luther lived. In time, the mantra of *sola scriptura - sola fide - sola gracia* developed into many denominations. These denominations added their own theology and ideals to the mantra. Eventually the idea of a "works righteousness" became the common enemy. The fear appears to be that "Catholic Corruption" would creep back in and cause people to fail to rest in the finished work of Christ.

By the time of Dwight L. Moody, the Gospel had been reduced to something that is different from the Gospel Jesus preached. It was Moody who perfected the Gospel of a personal Savior. This "one and done" theology takes the deep gospel of Jesus and reduces it to an ineffective repetition of a prayer that may or may not result in salvation. It was John the Baptist that is quoted in Matthew 3:8 where he tells people to prove by the way they live that they have repented of their sins and turned to God. The fear of works has become a powerful lie that binds the Gospel of Jesus from producing the results it was designed to produce.

I am a full believer in a simple Gospel of *sola scriptura* - *sola fide* - *sola gracia*. The truth I see in Scripture is that works are not required for our salvation. I also see the truth that our Salvation is not the only goal of the Gospel. There is a much bigger result desired by God. He designed the Gospel to produce His desired result. If we lose sight of the desired result, we will settle for a weaker, partial Gospel. God desires the Gospel to produce a royal priesthood zealous for good works. He desires the Gospel to produce a functioning body of believers that live together by His design, set apart from the world and united by the Holy Spirit. This priesthood will fulfill the covenant of Adam as it is fruitful, multiplies, stewards and rules over God's creation.

There are many negative effects of the fear of works. One is that the fear keeps us from preaching the full Gospel of Jesus. Due to a fear of works righteousness, we fail to emphasize the need for a sacrificial life and a serving lifestyle as a response to Jesus' work on our behalf. James chapter 2 makes it clear that faith without works is dead. Later he asks if that kind of faith can save you. Another negative effect of the idea of a personal savior is that the focus of our faith becomes us. Falling under the fear of works leads many to put their focus on serving a church organization in order to spread the Gospel. This in turn can lead people to be enslaved to a works based faith. The works they are led to are not presented as being required for Salvation. Instead they are taught that the right response to *sola scriptura* - *sola fide* - *sola gracia* is supporting and attending the institution. Statistics show that the modern American church will spend on average 86% of its resources on building and salary related expenses.¹ A return to God's design

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will direct those resources towards the lost and hurting world where they can impact people for the kingdom.

What Then is the Gospel?

The good news! That is what Gospel means. It is good news. What is the Good news that Jesus came to proclaim? Is it the forgiveness of sin? Is it living forever? Is it as simple as Paul states in *Romans 10:9* - *that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved?*

Is salvation the goal or is it more than that? What Gospel did Jesus preach and teach in His time on earth? Today there is a dominate fear among many Christians. They are afraid that someone will preach that works are required for salvation. This sets up a straw man. The straw man is salvation. If you set up salvation as the goal of the Gospel you have determined a wrong goal. Salvation is the starting point that starts us on the road to living the Gospel that Jesus preached. The church is the goal of the Gospel. There is no personal savior in scripture. We are personally saved but only to be added to a body where we can function by God's design with other believers.

It is important to understand the Gospel that you received. It will shape your understanding of your purpose and your relationship with God. The Gospel is the first thing we must examine in order to live by God's design. The Gospel I received as a teenager was like a seed planted in my soul. That seed grew in me and is still growing in me today. The word of God does that. Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a mustard seed that grows and grows. We should never stop examining the Gospel. As we surrender more and more of ourselves to the Gospel it gets deeper and deeper. Satan does not want you to go deeper into the Gospel. He desires you to grasp a shallow gospel with no depth so that you will be prevented from bearing

fruit. Remember that God is building us up into a holy temple with Christ as the corner stone.

When Paul wrote to the Galatians, he warned them of another Gospel or a distorted Gospel. This Gospel had them doing things that put them under bondage. Is it possible that you have received a partial or distorted Gospel? If your mind is not open to examining that possibility then you are stuck. If you have received a partial or distorted Gospel, there is only one way to get free from that Gospel. That is by examining the Gospel that Jesus preached. See how Paul pleaded in 2 Corinthians 6:1-12. He was calling the Corinthian Christians to a deeper level in the Gospel.

Modern Distortions of the Gospel

Let's establish a few facts first. The Gospel cannot be all about living forever. The Christian faith teaches that everyone lives forever. Some will spend eternity in hell and others in heaven. There are sects that believe some will simply be annihilated at death. These views have been traditionally outside of Christian Orthodoxy.

So what does it mean when John 3:16 says - *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."*

Jesus explains the meaning of eternal life in John 17:3 *"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."*

Did you receive the Gospel of repentance for the forgiveness of sins? That is only a partial Gospel. The Gospel Jesus preached is much deeper. Did you understand that the Gospel leads us to know God? The Gospel of Jesus returns to us the Spirit of God and the ability to reclaim what Adam lost in the Garden. The Gospel of Jesus results in the church. Is it possible that you received a partial Gospel? Maybe there is more to God's design and good news than you have been

taught. Let's examine the Gospel that Jesus taught and preached.

1 John 3:8 says Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil - He did this through the Gospel or Good News of the Kingdom which, when entered and abided in, will accomplish His purpose for His coming.

In Mark 1:38 - it says Jesus came to preach.

What did He preach? Let's explore. I picked the following passages because they represent the Gospel in a more complete way. What is the Good News? It is that we have been set free from the effects of the fall of Adam and can now live by God's design. We can have the Spirit of God and follow the Spirit of God in all that we do. We can once again walk with God in our midst and do what He designed for us to do. The Gospel is the good news of what it takes for us to live by God's design and what awaits us if we choose to live by God's design.

Here is the Gospel According to Jesus is -

1. Repent

Matt 4:17 - Mark 1:15 - Luke 13:13:5 - Luke 24:46-49

2. Believe

Mark 1:15 - Mark 16:15-16 - John 5:24 - John 6:29 -
John 6:40 - John 6:47 - John 11:25-26

3. Confess

Matt 12:37 - For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

4. Be baptized

Matt 28:18-20 - the Great Commission
Mark 16:15-16

5. Follow

Matt 4:19 - Matt 8:22 - Matt 16:24 - Mark 1:17 - Mark 8:34-35 - Mark 10:21 - Luke 9:32 - John 12:24-26

6. Obey

Matt 28:18-20 - the Great Commission
John 8:51

John 14:23-31 - obedience is essential in order to abide

7. Resurrection

John 6:40 - 54

8. Be humble

Matt 18:3-6

9. Be a servant

Matt 10:26 - Mark 10:43-45 - John 12:24-26

10. Deny yourself

Matt 16:24 - 8:34-35 - Luke 9:32

11. Take up your cross

Matt 16:24 - 8:34-35 - Luke 9:32 - Luke 14:27

12. Must sell your possessions and give to the poor

Matt 19:16-21 - Mark 10:21 - Luke 12:33 + 34 - Luke 14:33 - Luke 18:22

13. Love one another

Matt 37-40: - two greatest commandments - love God and neighbor

John 13:34-35 - John 15

14. Bear fruit

John 12:24-26 - John 15

15. Abide

John 8:31-32 - John 14:23-31 - John 15

16. Christ will return

Matt 24 - John 5:28-29

17. There will be reward for your sacrifice

Matt 19:29 - Mark 10:29 + 30 - Mark 10:43-45 - Luke 14:13 + 14

18. Judgment will come

Matt 16:27

Let's see if we can summarize the complete Gospel according to Jesus.

Repent - Believe - Be Baptized

Follow - Obey - Be a Humble Servant

Deny Yourself - Take up Your Cross - Follow Jesus

Sell Your Possessions - Give up your life - Suffer and
Expect a Reward

Love - Abide - Bear Fruit

Christ will Return - You will Be Resurrected - All will face
judgment

The Gospel according to Jesus is deeper than the Gospel many people have heard preached. The Gospel is simple. The Gospel is received by faith. The Gospel is powerful. The Gospel requires something of us. According to the Bible, the Gospel must be preached, believed, revealed, obeyed, participated in, defended, confirmed, trusted in and hoped upon,. We are workers in it for it has been entrusted to us.

[1Th 2:4] "but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts."

We best serve the Lord when we handle the Gospel correctly and pass it on as Jesus taught it.

Living the Gospel You Preach - Avoiding Hypocrisy

When we start with the complete Gospel of Jesus, it will lead us to become disciples of Jesus. One of the most controversial and overlooked teachings of Jesus is His teaching about our possessions. Jesus says in Luke 14:33 *"So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions."*

Over and over Jesus tells His followers to give up or sell their possessions. It is part of His Gospel. This is why we see the early church in the Book of Acts living this principle. They had received Jesus' Gospel and applied it to their lives. The result of Peter's sermon is seen in the actions of those who had

believed. [Act 2:44-45] *"And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need."*

As God led us into being the Church, this was the first lesson we had to live. Each of us had pursued our own lives. It is what we were raised to do. Through a series of events and through reading scripture, God showed us that we could live by His design today. Now our body of believers lives having all things in common and sharing our resources. We work and use our income to help others. Living a modest lifestyle is a part of the Christian faith. Giving up your possessions is a foundational step to rediscovering God's design for His church and obeying the Gospel that Jesus preached. Our desire is to help people rediscover this wonderful element of God's design.

Today this message is absent from most preachers' teachings. Entire ministries have been built on the opposite teaching of wealth. Just look at how Jesus and the Apostles lived and you will see the truth. In Acts 2:45 we see that this component of the Gospel was followed by the early church. If we are to return to the Gospel of Jesus we must begin to give up our possessions and learn to share what we have with others. Imagine the impact that such a group of people would have on the society where they lived. This is a picture of what the church could be, what it was meant to be.

We must rid ourselves of the "Easy Believism Gospel" that permeates America. The Gospel of a personal savior is a modern adaption of the Gospel Jesus preached. It is, as Paul puts it, a different Gospel. Once free of the shallow gospel, we can begin to embrace God's design of a deep Gospel that produces the fruit God desires. You don't need to go any farther than the Sermon on the Mount to see that Jesus' Gospel was meant to produce a transformation in those who obey it. There is no need to fear speaking of works in relation to the Gospel. We should embrace works and preach them as the

desired result of the Gospel. When we receive the free gift of salvation through grace alone, it will produce a transformation in our lives. The result will be a joining with other believers and a zealous desire for good works. It is time the Gospel returns to this message.

Transparency and Transformation

One of the principles of the Gospel of Jesus is that it is meant to transform those who receive it and obey it. The cost of the Gospel is your life - *[Mar 8:35] "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it."* The incomplete Gospel that permeates America wants you to believe that sin is the focus of the Gospel. It is all about repenting and being forgiven. That is partially true. The complete Gospel of Jesus is meant to produce transformation that leads us to live by God's design. We should never present an incomplete Gospel. Our Gospel must be complete in order to fulfill our calling. There are two other aspects of the Gospel that are needed to complete it.

The complete Gospel of Jesus forgives us of our sins, cleanses us of our shame and guilt and adds us to a functioning body of spiritually gifted believers that humbly serves others. If we stop at an incomplete Gospel we will struggle to find our God given purpose. We will lead others into that struggle. The incomplete Gospel of salvation from sin is meant to be the starting point. Jesus came to do so much more and the Gospel He preached is meant to fulfill His purpose. This is outlined in Ephesians 2:8-10 - *"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."* The Gospel of Jesus will lead us to the good works that He designed for us to do. It is why we were born again as a new creation in Christ.

When we look at the original sin of Adam and Eve we see that they do not repent of their disobedience - they were afraid due

to their nakedness - they had shame! Adam's actions of disobedience brought a realization of his shame for his immediate past. Job recognized this in Adam as he contrasted his own actions.

[Job 31:33] "Have I covered my transgressions like Adam, By hiding my iniquity in my bosom..."

Adam found no relief from his sin and Job was found blameless before God.

When we hide our sins under a blanket confession, it fails to bring us the needed healing for our guilt and shame. The idea that a blanket confession for our sins is what God desires for us is a modern invention. It was developed by preachers that were looking for a quick way to count converts. The failure to preach the need for consecration and healing as a part of our Gospel has left millions professing Christ yet plagued by their past and the hidden sins of their life. Look at how this affected Adam. What were the results of this sin? See Genesis chapter three.

Shame and a realization of their nakedness - v. 10

Spiritual warfare between man and Satan - v. 15

Pain and envy for woman - v. 16

Toilsome labor for man to survive - v. 19

God covered their shame (nakedness) with clothes - v. 21

Do you find any place in the Bible where Adam asked to be forgiven of his sin? Did Adam return to God with sacrifices as his sons did? Is it possible that Adam's guilt and shame kept him from recovering intimacy with God? Is it possible that your guilt and shame are keeping you from intimacy with God?

The path to redemption from the curse of Adam went through the Law. Galatians 3 tells us the Law was also a curse. Jesus came to redeem us from the curse and this will be fulfilled in the end when we put on imperishable flesh. What

part of the curse are we redeemed from now? An incomplete Gospel tells us that everything Jesus has for us is automatically applied to us when we repent and believe. Everything Jesus has for us is offered to us. We are not talking about salvation here. A clear principle of scripture is that we must take an active part in our own consecration. This includes us clearing our conscience of shame and guilt over our past sins and actions.

When we put on Christ (Romans 13-14) we are clothed in righteousness and not the skins of animals. The Law no longer gives us the ability to look past our shame but rather our shame is removed through the Spirit. This is not automatic. Look at the story of Simon the sorcerer in Acts 8. Here is a man that has the Gospel preached to him by one of the twelve apostles. He is then baptized by him. A few verses later Peter tells him he is still in bondage! If everything is automatic then how could this be possible?

The complete Gospel of Jesus deals with our shame and removes the guilt of our past. Look at some of the references to shame in relation to Jesus.

Psalms 69 and 89 - Jesus bore our shame

Isaiah 54 - the descendants of Sarah will forget the shame of their youth and resettle the desolate cities

Isaiah 61:7 - instead of shame they will get a double portion

When we preach an incomplete Gospel we leave people feeling like the forgiveness of their sins is the desired result. It is only a partial truth. The desired result is a forgiveness of our sins, removal of the curse and removal of our shame. When we receive the complete Gospel of Jesus the Holy Spirit is given to us to empower us for ministry. He does this by removing our sin, shame, guilt and gifting us with supernatural power. This

gives us the ability to walk in unity with other Christians and live in a way that is contrary to the ways of the world.

The complete Gospel of Jesus can be expressed like this
[{(Repentance + Faith in Jesus) = Salvation} = {(living as the body + being separate from the world) = Living under God's Design}]

This Gospel produces a transparency that cannot be faked. Many Christians fail to lead a fruitful life because they fail to grasp the part of the Gospel that deals with their guilt and shame. Others keep secret sins hidden. In order to accept the complete Gospel of Jesus we must be transparent with other believers. James instructs us to do this.

[Jas 5:16] "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

This is a passage of scripture that was written to believers! Our past has often locked us in our shame and our guilt. Jesus wants to free us from this. The sins we keep hidden are barriers to fruitfulness. These are works of the devil in our lives and Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil.

When we are presented with an incomplete Gospel of repentance for salvation it is often presented as a personal Gospel. I remember hearing the phrase in church services so many times - with heads bowed and eyes closed. Many people have been taught to preach the Gospel of a personal savior. This is not in scripture. The Gospel that Jesus and the Apostles preached called out sin. It often did this in crowds. Refusing to expose your sin keeps it where Satan wants it - hidden. If we want to accept the complete Gospel we should start with complete repentance - transparency.

[2Co 4:1-2] Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of

truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Many people are kept from living a fruitful life in the Kingdom due to their hidden things. The church is designed by God to be the place where the hidden things are brought into the light. The spiritual gifts help reveal what is hidden and bring healing to the repentant person. The modern man-made church system is a place of anonymity. People can walk in, sit in the back, remain unknown to everyone and think they are doing good by "going to church". Many think this is an open door policy that is of benefit to people. I think many lonely people have come and gone through this door and left feeling more lonely than before. If we as believers, the church, would be encouraged and taught to practice hospitality, we would not need to have this practice in our church gatherings. Once again, we have turned to the institution to do something that God designed for us to do.

Hebrews 10:19-24 says Jesus makes the way into the inner court through His blood by cleansing an evil conscience

Forgiveness of sins is automatic in the Gospel of Jesus. The removal of shame requires us to engage in discipleship and the church body. Through this, our relationship is built with God and each other. The favorite passage of the incomplete Gospel also speaks of the need for confession. See Romans 10:9. To simply say, "I am sorry Lord for everything," will leave you stuck with many things weighing you down and preventing you from living in the power and authority that Jesus came to give you. Entering into the process of discipleship and consecration helps us heal. It is a part of putting on our armor. It allows other believers to bear our burdens.

We must deal with sin and shame in our Gospel. We must preach the complete Gospel to anyone that asks to understand our work and ministry. We must be ready to add people to the church and let God expose their hearts through the working of

the spiritual gifts for the purpose of healing. When this is done in love it is a beautiful thing. The Holy Spirit reveals the heart when people are faking their transparency. You see this in the Book of Acts when Ananias and Sapphira were faking their generosity but were actually hiding greed. The Holy Spirit dealt with it in a very strong way.

Paul instructs the Corinthian church to renounce the things hidden by shame, Once we have done this we can voice with confidence the work of God in our lives that overcame these shameful things. This gives our testimony a power that God uses to breakdown strongholds in the lives of others. It is how we overcome the enemy of God's people.

[Rev 12:11] "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death."

The Gospel is meant to produce a set apart people that is zealous for good works. These works have been designed for us by God. God created us anew in Christ Jesus so we can do the works. He empowers us with the Holy Spirit so we can do the works. The fear of preaching a "works righteousness" must be overcome if we are to return to God's design. It is possible to preach salvation by faith alone. This is accurate. We must move past that to the fruit the Gospel is designed to produce.

There is a personal Gospel that dominates America today. It is a true but incomplete picture of the depth of Jesus' Gospel. We should preach and live the Gospel Jesus preached and lived. We must not fear preaching about works but embrace the Gospel as what leads us to our Ephesians 2:10 works.

Chapter Three - Discipleship and Consecration

[Mat 28:18-20] And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

It Starts with You and How You Live

In order to "Be the Church" we must be seeking the things of God. If we seek His ways we will find His ways. The hard part about finding God's ways is that He expects us to live his ways and obey His commands. Consecration is the process of setting ourselves apart from the things of the world and the ways of the world. God has much to say about the world. If you study the world as described in scripture you will find it takes on the qualities of an entity that is our enemy.

One visible quality of the church should be that it lives differently than the rest of the world. It lives supernaturally. It does not live under the same priorities as the rest of the world. It does not seek the same things as the rest of the world. Its value system is God's value system. Jesus instructs His disciples to seek the Kingdom first. In order to "Be the Church" we must be set apart. The primary method that is outlined in scripture to accomplish this process is discipleship. If you go back to scripture you will see that we are never instructed to go and start churches. We are commanded to go and make disciples.

The modern church has put itself in the place of chief disciple-maker. Because of this, it is more concerned with reproducing itself, church planting, than it is with making disciples that live and preach the complete Gospel of Jesus. Reproducing an institution is not God's design. I know this because God did not design the modern church institution. If

He had designed it, you would find instruction for it in scripture. We are moved to be better equipped when we take on the personal responsibility to make disciples. It challenges us in our deepest places as God brings us people to care for that share our challenges and struggles.

We remove from our lives one of the strongest tools for our own spiritual growth if we adopt the pattern of letting the institution be the disciple maker. When we engage in making disciples there are many great and desirable results. Making disciples aids in our own consecration and that of our disciple. The process allows us to struggle in our spiritual battles together.

Disciple making is God's design. We obey God by doing it. Obeying God blesses us. The process of discipleship will drive you to be more spiritually disciplined. As we make disciples, we increase our need to learn, teach, pray and also care for others. If you want to "Be the Church" you must dedicate yourself to making disciples that make disciples who live and preach the complete Gospel of Jesus..

Before we make disciples we must dedicate ourselves to being set apart for good works. Consecration is the process of cleansing or purifying ourselves so that we may become useful tools in the hands of our Lord. Paul instructs Timothy in this way - [2Ti 2:20 + 21] *"Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work."*

Preparing to Be Fruitful Soil

Are you prepared? Are you in the process of preparing? God called you and saved you for a purpose. He wants to give you the privilege of joining Him in His work. Faith has become

intellectualized these days. We are taught that we need to study God's word and that the more we know the more holy we will become. If you examine the Bible you will see that Jesus and the Apostles spent much of their time doing. There are accounts of teaching. Teaching without doing leads to a dead faith. As James says in his letter, Faith without works is dead. God wants to bless you by letting you participate in the work of His kingdom. Many people never move to this place in their faith. Jesus spoke of this in His foundational parable of the sower. In Matthew 13 Jesus paints a word picture of how the kingdom operates. What follows is a simple breakdown.

According to this parable there are four kinds of people in this world. Each is defined by how they relate to and react to the Word of God. The sower is the one who sows the Word of God. There are four reactions to the sowing of the Word.

1. The hard roadside - The Word is snatched away
2. The rocky soil - Springs up, receives the Word with joy and quickly falls away - no depth
3. The thorny soil - Choked out. No fruit due to the worries of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth.
4. Good soil - Bears fruit of varying abundance.

Which soil do you relate to yourself when you read this parable? God is looking for laborers. He wants you to bear fruit. Bearing fruit is how you prove to be Jesus' disciple (John 15:8). Many people have never been shown how to prepare themselves to make disciples. They have not entered intentionally into a process of being a disciple and setting themselves apart to become useful to God. The early church preached and served. It taught in order to equip people for the works of service and not for the sake of knowledge. Ephesians chapter four speaks to this. God gave some spiritual gifts that help equip people for works of service. Equipping is God's design for how leadership should function. If you want to return to being the church that God designed, then you must start with

your own faith. You must be equipped to do the works of service and then be empowered and released to go do them.

Consecrating ourselves and preparing to make disciples requires us to lead a spiritually disciplined life. Paul instructs Timothy to discipline himself for the purpose of godliness. He later affirms to him that it is God who gave him the spirit of discipline.

Another aspect of discipline is the discipline of the Lord. Hebrews 12 tells us that if the Lord does not discipline us then we are illegitimate children. These teachings make it clear that the Christian life is a life of ever increasing discipline. We must discipline ourselves and then listen to God and respond to His discipline. This process will lead us to be fruitful in the Kingdom and to receive God's blessings.

What discipline should we be adding to our lives in order to bear fruit and increase in godliness? The Bible outlines, instructs, or demonstrates at least ten spiritual disciplines that I suggest as a starting place. This is not a complete list but I recommend mastering these first.

Spiritual disciplines are patterns or habits that we build into our lives in order to make it easier to hear and obey God.

These disciplines have the following qualities.

- They must be done regularly.
- They must be developed or improved upon in our lives.
- They are deliberate choices we make.
- They involve the discipline (or control) of our wills.
- They strengthen our spirits by denying our fleshly desires.
- They produce character and spiritual formation.

I dealt with these disciplines in depth in my first book **Disciple Driven Church - The Coming Reformation**. For this

work I will only deal with the foundational disciplines. These are broken down into two categories.

- Inward disciplines
The “First Works”
- Outward Disciplines
The “Growth Works”

Inward Disciplines

The foundations for a Godly life

- Prayer – communicating with God
- Bible study – understanding the Word of God
- Fasting – deliberately choosing to abstain from food
- Meditation – going deeply into passages of Scripture
- Journaling – recording your thoughts and events in a book.

Outward Disciplines

The foundations for building the kingdom

- Living by Faith – walking in the Spirit.
- Evangelism - sharing your faith with another person or group.
- Stewardship - surrendering your possessions to the Lord.
- Giving - intentionally giving to the poor and to build God’s kingdom.
- Serving - having a ministry; Pastoring your community.

Fasting is the key to establishing the inward disciplines in your life. Fasting intentionally denies your flesh. It puts the focus on the battle between your flesh and spirit. Start by adding a day of fasting into your life each week. You will find that the rest is easier to implement.

Just as with the inward disciplines, there is a key discipline that will help you establish the others in your life. Living by faith or walking in the Spirit is the key to establishing the outward disciplines in your life. A quick look at the spiritual

disciplines will show us how they work together to help us know and serve God. The outward disciplines make our faith active. By walking in the Spirit we can see what God is doing and follow Him in it. Giving is the key to stewardship. Without putting money in its proper place we can never handle the more important spiritual things correctly [Luke 16:11]. Serving aids us in evangelism. As we go into the world to serve, we will have opportunity to share the Gospel and make disciples.

Once you have dedicated yourself to be set apart, you should immediately adopt these spiritual disciplines. Do not look at them as religious requirements. Your motivation should not be a duty to be kept. These are ways to get to know God better and more deeply. Everyone that professes the name of Christ should desire that outcome. When you approach spiritual disciplines, do so as someone seeking to get the privilege to share in a wonderful work. If I am seeking privilege for service with God then my disciplines will not be burdensome and the Lord will meet me there to prepare me for the works He designed for me before the foundation of the world [Eph. 2:10].

Preach and Teach What You Live

We are seeking to be set apart through our disciplined life to be able to hear and obey God. We should also prepare to make disciples. Here are some questions to ask yourself about making disciples.

1. What is my Gospel?
2. Do I live what I preach so I am not seen as a hypocrite?
3. What will I teach them first?
4. What about baptism?
5. How will we gather and what will we do when we gather?

Many people have never explored these questions. They simply left it up to the church organization. If you want to be the church you must be equipped to do the work of ministry. These questions are so overwhelming to some people. It seems like a lot to do. Jesus died for us. It was a lot for Him to do. Don't we

owe Him our whole lives? If you fail to set yourself apart and prepare to make disciples, you will never be the church that God designed.

We are responsible for the Gospel we preach and live. We will stand before Christ and give an account. Our personal responsibility is to consecrate ourselves, be disciplined for the purpose of godliness and make disciples.

Chapter Four - The Sacred Assembly

[Rev 21:3] And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them..."

When I started my first business I was taught that when a customer asks about price, they are really seeking more details. Price is the easy thing that can help them delay a decision. If my product is right and my sales presentation is complete, then price is rarely the objection. I found this to be true. It is a little different in ministry. Many times people use another common excuse to avoid following Jesus by faith.

There is one very common obstacle to people when faced with following God's design. Many people want to figure out what it looks like before they start. This immediately puts God in a man sized box. God leads by vision. We are to walk by faith and not by sight [2Cor. 5:7]. This question asks to see the structure or end result. I think this question is really a different question than the one being asked. This question delays the decision to do it. What difference does it make what it looks like? If it is God's design and you believe He is who He says He is, then why wait to follow?

God is the creator and sustainer of all things. His way will always be better than your way. This question is usually asked by those weighing out how much life will change and what will be given up. This question is minimized when you come to Jesus through the Gospel that preaches complete surrender. How easy would it be to follow God if you had been told it cost you everything? Would you be worried about how it looks?

I think the church in America has presented a picture to its followers that emphasizes how it looks. We are presented an easy Gospel that immediately turns us into religious consumers. This Gospel puts us on a road to our life in the

world with a church added to it. We hop and shop until we find what we think looks and feels right. When presented with the complete Gospel we immediately ask in our mind what it will cost. We express this by asking, "What will it look like when I follow God in this way?" Imagine if Moses or Abraham had asked this.

One of God's redemptive purposes is to create a sacred assembly of His children. The redemptive plan of God is to gather together the followers of God in a separate and distinct assembly that will manifest God to the rest of humanity and steward His creation. This assembly will be joined with Christ at the end of the age when He returns to earth for His bride, the church. This concept is first displayed in Adam and Eve. They were the first sacred assembly. They displayed the image and likeness of God. They were given the responsibility to be fruitful, multiply, subdue the earth and rule over it.

[Gen 1:28] God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Adam and Eve lived in paradise and walked with God. They had God given responsibility. After the fall, there was a need to restore that condition to man. It is what God intended for us. The rest of Scripture outlines God's plan and process for redeeming mankind from the fall and preparing the church to live with Him forever. We will once again walk with God in paradise. That is what it will look like. Nothing you give up now will matter then. Everything you hold back will perish. That is a pretty compelling reason to leave it all and follow God.

We see God working out His plan in the call of Abraham to have a people set apart for Himself. Abraham would become the father of many nations. The sign of the set apart people was circumcision. The Old Testament outlines the strict rules for God's people. It discusses their separation. It shows us that

God dwells among His people and gives them special treatment and favor. The sacred assembly of the Old Testament is a picture of what we will experience in heaven. Only God's set apart people will be allowed in heaven. See Revelation chapter 20.

In the current age of grace, God is still preparing His Sacred Assembly. Paul puts it this way. *[Tit 2:14] "(Jesus) who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds."* Circumcision is no longer required to be a part of the Sacred Assembly. Christ's work on the Cross restores to us God's Holy Spirit. Possessing the Holy Spirit is what gives us entrance into the Sacred Assembly in the current age. Without the Holy Spirit we are excluded from the Sacred Assembly.

The Sacred Cow that Must Be Slaughtered: Unbelievers in the Worship Gathering

A common practice of the church is to invite unbelievers into the church service as a means of evangelism or to grow the church. This practice is not God's design. Before you go crazy over that statement just take a minute and look for the instruction in scripture. Do you find any place that instructs you to allow unbelievers to enter a worship gathering of believers. It is not there. It wasn't until the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D. that the practice began.

I used to try to point to historical reference and facts to prove this point. I was acting as if I had to defend the right thing by proving the other way wrong. I will not do that here. You can find no Biblical support for the practice of allowing unbelievers into your worship gathering. It's not in the past church, the current church or the future church. It is up to you to decide if that matters.

Do not confuse the times where the Gospel was preached in the open public with the worship gathering of the saints. These are two distinctly different events in scripture. The worship gathering consisted of communion, singing, prophecy, the working of the spiritual gifts, etc. Today's church claims the open preaching of the Gospel is equivalent to our Sunday event. This leaves both of the outlined events absent from our modern church. Where is the gathering that is only for believers? Where is the open public preaching of the Gospel that we see occurring in the public square in the early church?

God's design for His church is for it to be made up of His followers. The church gathering described in scripture requires the presence of the Holy Spirit in order for someone attending it to participate in a meaningful way. See 1 Corinthians chapters 12 -14. Since an unbeliever does not possess the Holy Spirit or acknowledge God as Lord, they can have no meaningful role in a church gathering that functions by God's design.

Our modern church services make room for unbelievers by not following God's design for His church. This has been done for so long that now many people are offended by the simple mention of this corruption. The Church of God's design is meant to operate entirely on the basis of spiritual gifts. It is meant to be a supernatural gathering of His children where He dwells in their midst.

Jesus' Gospel of the Kingdom requires us to change the way we live. It includes us in a body of believers that functions in the world in unity of mind - ***homothymadon*** .

What is ***homothymadon***? It is a unique Greek word, used 10 of its 12 New Testament occurrences in the Book of Acts. It helps us understand the uniqueness of the Christian community. Homothymadon is a compound of two words meaning to "rush along" and "in unison". The image is almost musical; a number of notes are sounded which, while different, harmonize in pitch and tone. As the instruments of a great

concert under the direction of a concert master, so the Holy Spirit blends together the lives of the members of Christ's church.

The Gospel of Jesus requires us to make disciples and incorporate them into a worship gathering made up entirely of believers. This is the only way the church can walk in the Spirit and live in the kingdom. When we allow unbelievers to enter our worship gatherings, we violate the instructions found in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. God's design for His children is to live together in homothymadon. This can only be accomplished through His Spirit. The Bible refers to people living without the Spirit of God as His enemies. They do not possess the Holy Spirit or spiritual gifts. Therefore it is impossible for them to do the things that the church is designed to do. The Sacred Assembly requires the Holy Spirit in order to function.

Don't try to reform the system. Jesus did not tweak the system. The unbiblical system is the problem. Jesus warned us in Matthew 9:16-17 that you can't put the new in the old. Consider for a moment that God is calling out a remnant as He did in Jesus' day. Then "out" is the desired location where His work will be done. The only way to fix an unbiblical system is to leave it. If you were able to get your church leadership to agree to go to scripture and adopt God's design, the result would be a destruction of the system as you now know it.

You Can't Put the New in the Old

You can save yourself a lot of time and trouble by just asking your church leadership if the system they follow comes from scripture. If the answer is yes, they should be able to show the scripture they used when setting it up. Where is the instruction for incorporating, tax exempt status, the senior pastor, allowing in unbelievers, etc.? If they cannot support their structure from scripture, you can just ask them if they are willing to change it to be biblical. Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, as Jesus instructed. Most man made systems

rationalize the system by claiming the authority or freedom to change things for the modern times. Remember that you are responsible for what you do, Peter and John told the leaders of their day that they must follow God and not man. Jesus expects no less of you.

A hypocrite is someone who says one thing and does another. It is very common today to see churches proclaim that they are Bible believing churches. When it comes to structure and practice, they are not. Jesus warned us about this too. Luke 12:1 - Hypocrisy is the leaven of the Pharisees - beware and avoid it. The surest way to avoid hypocrisy is to live what you believe. God's design is timeless. His Sacred Assembly will be just as effective today as it was in any time past or future. A lie of the devil is that we must adapt to be relevant. Love is always relevant. The Sacred Assembly that operates by God's design is the greatest physical expression of God's love on this earth.

The Law of the Tithe

Love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Jesus said you can only serve one master - money or God. The New Testament has no teaching to enforce the tithe. We have been freed from the Law. Most churches in America still teach the tithe as a biblical instruction. They do this in order to sustain the institution they call church. Under God's design for the new covenant church there is no institution to receive a tithe! Instead of the tithe, Jesus raises the bar for our handling of money just as He did for adultery and murder. We are instructed to give up all of our possessions. God sets up a leadership structure that is based on spiritual gifts. He outlines part of it in Ephesians chapter four. He instructs the leadership to set up deacons and elders in order to bring spiritual authority and physical management to the church. The giving found in the New Testament is to care for people and not support an institution.

Many today see this teaching as outrageous. How can God expect us to give up everything and live together as we see the church doing in the Book of Acts? There is a simple answer. It is His design. God knows best. It is essential if you want to follow God's design. The financial system at work today is not God's design. We run the risk of allowing greed into our lives when we gather and store up for ourselves. Greed has many forms.

[Luke 12:15] Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

Once we grasp this truth and apply it to our lives we will begin to see the power a small group of people can have. When our combined efforts are directed at the common good and caring for others, we can change the world. Our group has been living like this for several years now. We manage our possessions and responsibilities together. We operate 5 businesses that provide for our basic needs and bring employment to what most would consider unemployable people. When you give up your possessions, your focus shifts. We have been given many opportunities to meet needs and show love through provision for others.

[Luke 16:10-13] "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you? And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

Consider a couple of parables that Jesus taught.

[Mat 13:44-46] "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it."

Once you find the Kingdom of Heaven you will give up everything to have it. Have you found the Kingdom? The Sacred Assembly has Jesus as the chief cornerstone. It is designed for a purpose but it must regain its design before it can function properly.

The church is designed to be composed of only believers in Jesus Christ who join together through the Holy Spirit in Homothymadon. It is designed to share its combined resources, use its spiritual gifts and walk together loving everyone and caring for all of God's creation through the supernatural power given to each member by God's Spirit.

Chapter Five - Rediscovering the Gifts

[1 Corinthians 12:1] “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.” God does not want us unaware (literally, ignorant) about spiritual things, especially spiritual gifts.

The phrase “spiritual gift” is used only once in Scripture, in Romans 1:11, where Paul tells the Roman disciples, “*For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established.*” The spiritual gifts establish or set us in the body [1 Corinthians 12:18, 28].

The Holy Spirit places us in the church by the gifts He has given us. The church is designed to be built on Christ, the chief cornerstone, and to function on the basis of spiritual gifts. Take a few minutes and read through 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14. The focus of Paul's writing here is the proper working of Spiritual gifts in the worship gathering of the Sacred Assembly. Does your church service remind you of this passage? Does everyone bring a spiritual gift? Unbelievers are unable to bring a spiritual gift because they lack the Spirit.

There are some harmful things that happen when we fail to recognize and enable this pattern for operation and leadership. One of the primary results of the unbiblical church structure is to take what was designed to be led by a spiritual gift and replace that ministry function with an office that is not dependent upon a spiritual gift. This changes the way leadership functions and how we train and raise up leaders in our church. By training for an office instead of recognizing a gift, we may remove the supernatural leadership of the Holy Spirit and replace it with a leadership that appeals to man. This will in turn rob the church of the supernatural aspect that we see the leaders demonstrating in the early church. Another danger is that we may revere qualities in our leaders that have more to do with the flesh than the Spirit.

God's design is for His chosen leaders to manifest His power through the Spirit so it is evident. This way their authority is appropriated through the power of the Spirit. In our current system we train in other ways to fill unbiblical offices that then run our organization. Then the leaders of the organization delegate authority to the people of their choosing who will be under their control.

In these systems of control it is rare to see a congregation that is empowered to work in their spiritual gifting. The way a church gathering is described in scripture is that of a group of people that are all encouraged to speak, prophesy, perform miracles and manifest God's power during the worship gathering. Through the distribution of these gifts and the empowering of their function, God brings balance to the church. Today's organization has reduced spiritual gifts to natural abilities or personality tendencies and then places them in man made positions of service to the organization. Look in 1 Corinthians 12 and see how Paul describes this concept of spiritual gifts bringing honor to the less esteemed members of the body.

Only by returning to God's design will we experience the results of a supernatural faith. What you see described here is a group of people empowered by the Holy Spirit and empowered by the congregation to manifest their gift in service to each other. God uses the functioning by His design to unite the church and expose sin. The complete Gospel of Jesus can only be supported by a church that functions by God's design.

How do we get back to God's design for spiritual gifts? The quick answer is to start in the right place. We must first start by making disciples and gathering our disciples. When we start by planting churches we have immediately left God's design. Church planting is a modern invention. It assumes that the way to spread the Gospel is to first establish a church institution. This is simply not God's design. When you start with a church institution you have already placed an unbiblical structure in

place. God desires us to preach and live the Gospel and let Him build the church. Our job is to make disciples. God will affirm His desired leadership through power and the producing of fruit in a minister's life. This organic development of God's church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is God's design for growing the Kingdom.

Today we assess personalities and degrees to select church planters. They attend "boot camps" to learn modern social sciences to help them select target demographics and people groups. Then they identify "felt needs" and design their church. These designs are plotted and planned and a leadership group is put together from properly vetted and approved candidates. Funding is secured and the group launches a new church institution. All of this is possible without God. The goal is to launch a new branch of an institution. This is not the Church!

God's Design for Birthing New Churches

[1Co 12:28] "And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues."

1 Corinthians 12-14 contains the most comprehensive presentation of teaching on spiritual gifts found in Scripture. The passage above gives us an order to the presentation of gifts in the church. When the passage refers to "first", it cannot be speaking of value because the gifts are designed to bring balance and value to all members. What Paul is communicating here is what we should expect to see in the way of gifting when the church grows by God's design. When we focus on making disciples and working in our gifts we will see the church built through the operation of the gifts as God sees fit. He will add to the church the gifts outlined here in the order outlined here. As the congregation matures we can expect to see all the gifts working together to build up the body unto maturity.

Today we start with offices and select what we think is needed in order to run a church institution of man's design. The apostolic gift will only function to preach the Gospel and make disciples in new places when we identify, empower and release it. This making of disciples will result in new churches. Current church planting methods put the cart before the horse. We do not make disciples by planting an institution. We launch new churches by releasing and empowering gifts to make disciples. The church is designed by God to be the fruit of disciple making, not the other way around.

Clearing Up Our Understanding

The modern church structure has either neglected to teach on spiritual gifts or they have distorted the proper function of the gifts in order to make them function in the man made institution. The first step to the proper function of the spiritual gifts is to understand that they are meant to function in a church that is structured, led, and operated by God's design. One example of this misuse and misinterpretation of the gifts is the gift listed as "administrations" in some translations of 1 Corinthians 12:28. Today we make this out to be filing or organizing the paperwork. It actually means governing or wise counsel.

There is a portion of Christianity that teaches that the word Apostle is used only in reference to the twelve that Jesus disciplined. This is refuted in Scripture where others are referred to as apostles. This teaching also says that some of the gifts have passed away or no longer function. This premise is usually based on a bad interpretation of 1 Corinthians 13:8. The passage never speaks of the apostolic gift. Why would Paul instruct us on the apostolic gift in Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12 if it was limited to only the twelve? If the term apostle was only for the twelve, how could people pass themselves off as apostles as Paul warns in 2 Corinthians 11:13?

For the church to return to God's design we must make room for the proper working of the apostolic and prophetic gifts. The growth of the church and the correction of errors are fueled by these gifts. We must return to a church that is built on and operates by the supernatural power of the spiritual gifts that God bestows on His children. This is the power to heal and set captives free. We have traded the supernatural power of our God for human wisdom and methods.

Clearing Up the Issue of Tongues

1 Corinthians 14 has been used to create controversy over the proper use of the gift of tongues. It has led the church to divide and argue over one of the most evangelistic and intimate of the spiritual gifts. Some churches go as far as forbidding the speaking of tongues in the church. This is a violation of the clear teaching of Paul in the following passage.

[1Co 14:39] "Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues."

Other denominations use tongues as a sign of salvation, claiming that if you don't speak in tongues you are not saved. The Apostles received the Holy Spirit from Jesus before they spoke in tongues [John 20:22]. Both of these concepts, which help fuel the controversy, are easily dismissed by reading these passages.

There is one passage of scripture that appears to fuel the debate. It involves the translation of a *Greek* word to *English*. The word has multiple possible translations and the context of its use should determine which word to use. Let us deal with the passage that causes the confusion regarding the proper use of tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:22-25

22 - So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe (pisteuō) but to unbelievers (apistos); but prophecy {is

for a sign,} not to unbelievers (*apistos*) but to those who believe (*pisteuō*).

23 - Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men (*idiōtēs*) or unbelievers (*apistos*) enter, will they not say that you are mad?

24 - But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever (*apistos*) or an ungifted (*idiōtēs*) man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all;

25 - the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.

As we break down the passage we must make note of the context.

1. Tongues are a sign not to those who believe (*pisteuō*) but rather to *apistos* which is translated here as unbelievers.
2. Prophecy is a sign not to unbelievers (*apistos*) but rather to *pisteuō* which is translated believers

Tongues are a sign to unbelievers (*apistos*).
Prophecy is a sign to believers (*pisteuō*).

In the beginning of chapter 14 Paul is outlining why prophecy is superior to tongues for edifying the church. In verse 23 a hypothetical is stated, "If the whole church is gathered together and all speak in tongues..." We must remember that the hypothetical is given to make a point. What is the point? Is it that unbelievers' regularly entered the services and therefore they would be converted? No, that is not the point. The point of the hypothetical is that if tongues are being spoken anywhere, they are for a sign to unbelievers. The passage says, "if ungifted men (*idiōtēs*) or unbelievers (*apistos*) enter, will they not say that you are mad?" If tongues are a sign for *apistos*, and it is correctly translated as unbelievers, why would Paul expect this reaction? Tongues is the sign that is designed to speak to them. Paul is not writing with this *English* word in

mind. Paul has an alternative meaning in mind as he writes. This becomes clear by the context.

In verse 24 we see the same gathering with all prophesying. Prophesying is the sign to believers. Paul then says *“if an unbeliever (apistos) or an ungifted (idiōtēs) man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.”* Why would an unbeliever be convicted by something that is not a sign for unbelievers? I think the answer lies in the word being translated here as unbeliever.

The available possible definitions of the word *Apistos* are offered below:

- 1) unfaithful, faithless, (not to be trusted, perfidious)
- 2) incredible
 - a) of things
- 3) unbelieving, incredulous
 - a) without trust (in God)

Most bible translations offer the translation of the word *apistos* as unbeliever in all of this passage. The context will indicate that this approach to translation leaves the passage confusing. If verse 22 is truly speaking of believers and unbelievers, as in reference to their state of salvation, then there is a contextual problem with the passage. If we carry the same interpretation of the word through the rest of the passage, it leads us to a confusing instruction that cannot be followed. We would be better off to understand the meaning of the word *Apistos* as one of its alternate renderings in the later verses as is indicated by the context.

22 - So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who have faith (pisteuō) but to unbelievers (apistos); but prophecy {is for a sign,} not to unbelievers (apistos) but to those who have faith (pisteuō).

23 - Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men (idiōtēs) or those without trust (in God) (apistos) enter, will they not say that you are mad?

24 - But if all prophecy, and those without trust (in God) (apistos) or an ungifted (idiōtēs) man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all;

25 - the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.

The contrast is made here between tongues and prophecy. Tongues are a sign to unbelievers and prophecy is a sign to believers. The reactions in both verses 23 and then 24 + 25 are consistent with the reaction we would see from a believer. A believer would not see tongues as a sign and a believer would be convicted by prophecy. The context of this part of Paul's letter is to explain why prophecy is a superior gift in the church. Prophecy builds up the believers in the church.

Early in this chapter Paul instructs those that speak in tongues to remain silent in the church if there is no interpreter. Why does he do this? His reasoning is because the gift of tongues is a sign for unbelievers. Paul has no expectation that unbelievers will be present in the worship gathering. Therefore tongues are not useful as a sign. Tongues are only valuable in the church if they are interpreted by way of revelation, knowledge, prophecy or teaching. If they will not be interpreted, they will only benefit the speaker since there should be no unbelievers present to receive the sign.

In this controversial passage of scripture we can now see that Paul is instructing a church made up entirely of believers and the instruction is to do things that will build the faith and gifting of those that may enter. Verse 23-25 are not speaking of those that lack saving faith but instead it speaks of those, like Thomas, who lack faith in the works and presence of God. The

same word *apistos* is used here and in John 20:27 where Thomas doubts that he is standing before the risen Lord.

[John 20:27] - Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving (apistos), but believing (pistos)."

It is unlikely that Jesus is considering Thomas, who was counted among the twelve, as being an unbeliever. Jesus had already affirmed that He had lost none but Judas (John 17:12). The truth is that our modern bible translations were made after the practice of mixing unbelievers in the worship service had long been an established tradition.

If we interpret this passage correctly we will remove the controversy over speaking in tongues. It is a sign gift to communicate the Gospel to unbelievers. It is not useful in a church that operates by God's design since there should be no unbelievers in the worship gathering. We should not forbid speaking in tongues. The speaker may speak in tongues to God if they desire. Not everyone will speak in tongues. It is not a test of salvation.

The Spiritual gifts have been taken captive and shoved into a man made box. We must return them to their proper place under their proper administrator. The gifts are meant to operate in God's design under the leadership of the Holy Spirit as God sees fit.

Chapter Six - Returning to the Covenants

[Eph 2:12] remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

God is a God of covenants

God has established His relationship with mankind based on covenants. Covenants are binding upon both parties even if one party fails to keep their part of the agreement. God never fails to keep his part of His covenants. In simple terms, a covenant is a pledge from God to man. God initiated a covenant with Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:28. He instructed them on their part of the covenant. After the fall, their part became more difficult.

We commonly teach about covenants. Look at the covenant of Noah. Have you taught your children the meaning of the rainbow? How about the New Covenant of Jesus? Have you ever been taught about the covenant with Abraham? God works through covenants to instruct and teach man. He assures us of His intentions. God is still working through covenants today. Here are some examples of God's covenants.

To Adam

Be fruitful, multiply, steward and rule - Genesis 1:28

To Abraham

A land and a seed - Genesis 17

One component of the covenant with Abraham is often taught – the seed which resulted in Christ. What about the land? Does God still have a land for us? I believe He does. Part of God's design for His church is to fulfill what He instructed Adam and Eve to do. We are to be fruitful, multiply, steward

and rule God's creation. Look how God extended the idea of a land to the Hebrews coming out of Egypt.

God's covenant to Moses

To perform miracles and drive out the inhabitants

[Exodus 34:10-14] Then God said, "Behold, I am going to make a covenant. Before all your people I will perform miracles which have not been produced in all the earth nor among any of the nations; and all the people among whom you live will see the working of the LORD, for it is a fearful thing that I am going to perform with you. "Be sure to observe what I am commanding you this day: behold, I am going to drive out the Amorite before you, and the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst. But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

Look at the meanings of the names of the inhabitants of the land.

Amorite - the bitter rebels that babble

Canaanite - Zealous Merchants

Hittite - Broken and fearful

Perizzite - Village dwellers

Hivite - Wicked

Jebusites - Those who falsely occupy Jerusalem (Zion)

God was painting a picture through Moses of what it will look like to fulfill the covenant with Adam. He offered to start them without the burden of the curse. He was willing to do the work for them. They only needed to obey and not fear.

[Deu 6:10-11] "Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land which He swore to your

fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied,

God is communicating the same thing today. All the work He has for us to do has been finished since before the foundation of the world [Eph. 1:4 and 2:10]. We must simply obey God and walk without fear in the power of the Holy Spirit He gives us. How wonderfully simple is that?

You may have been told that God has a wonderful plan for your life. Very few have been told what that plan really is. They are left to wander through a myriad of religious ritual trying to get the instruction that will lead them to "The Plan". It is much simpler than that. You can only find God's plan if you live by His design. No arrangement of bad eggs will make a good omelet.

Look at some of the other covenants that God has made with His people.

- To Phineas - Numbers 25:12 a covenant of peace - the inner court priesthood
- The covenant of blessings and curses for obedience and disobedience - Deut. 28, a corporate covenant
- The new covenant - Jeremiah 31 - The Holy Spirit

Many times we fail to understand that the promises to all of these people are still binding for us. What was instructed to Adam and Eve is still our instruction. What was promised to Abraham is still promised to us. What worked for Moses will still work for us. What was promised to Phineas, Noah, Jeremiah, and through Jesus are for you, if you have entered into covenant with God through Christ.

He revealed this information to us once we were again functioning as the church by God's design. We had

responsibility as His children to gather together, to function supernaturally, to live sacrificially and to do what He instructed Adam and Eve to do. We too were promised a land and a seed just like Abraham, We can obey God and walk without fear now that Christ has restored the Spirit of God to us. If we do this we will find that wonderful plan for our lives that is spoken of in Ephesians 2:10.

We didn't have to go start a church or grow a church. We had to *Be the Church!* We had to do for others what Jesus did for us. We had to give up everything and lay down our lives for others. What a great concept. Think of the greatness of this Gospel. As Jesus is proclaimed and people place their faith in Him, they will sell all they own, move to the desperate places and care for the oppressed. If you are the oppressed in this picture you will fully grasp the goodness of this news. Who else but God can compel people to do this?

In America today the church leaders are taught to "Grow the Church". In the Bible, this is clearly outlined as God's job [John 6:44]. Our job or our part of the covenant is to love and care for God's creation. If Christians will get back to this concept we would see the church growing and thriving. Instead, we see the man made American church dying a rapid death. God is serious about His covenants. As a Christian, your faith rests on His promises. It's time we began to do our part of the covenant relationship and quit trying to do Jesus' part.

God's Covenants Bless His Children and Accomplish His Purposes

God has given us covenants in order to bless us and lead us into accomplishing His purposes. If we fail to understand this concept we will fall short of our creative purpose. If we completely miss the importance or operation of covenants we may miss God's redemptive purposes for mankind.

Some of God's covenants are eternally binding. Others are meant to be fulfilled. The covenant of Noah is an eternal covenant. The covenant of the Law was fulfilled in Christ. Fulfilling a covenant does not invalidate a covenant. Fulfillment changes the way the covenant functions. The covenant of Jesus did not invalidate the Law (see Matthew 5:17, Romans 8:4, 13:8 and Galatians 5:14 and 6:2).

It is important for us to know which covenants are still at work and which have been fulfilled. Walking in covenant can bring us intimacy with God and blessings. Trying to uphold the requirements of a fulfilled covenant, like the Law, can place you under bondage (see Romans 7 and Galatians 2). Every covenant has its ultimate fulfillment in the final return of Christ.

[Psa 103:17-18] But the lovingkindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children, To those who keep His covenant and remember His precepts to do them.

Chapter Seven - Confirming Your Geography

*[Isa 61:7] Instead of your shame you will have a double portion,
And instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their
portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their
land, Everlasting joy will be theirs.*

God is building His kingdom throughout the earth. My calling was to the inner city of North St. Louis. Your calling may be to another place. It may be to where you live now or it might require you to leave everything as it did for Abraham, Moses and Jesus. I think some people that are returning to God's design will start new works. Other people will join into existing bodies of believers and find their prepared works in that setting.

You cannot bypass the return to God's design. Don't think this is something that can be done in the modern church system or without giving up your possessions. God wants His children to live by His design. The work is the privilege you get for following God's design. It is through God's design that we find the rest that is spoken of in Scripture. When we rest in God's design and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, the burden lightens. Things fall in place when you walk in a prepared work. God's covenants point us to our prepared work.

Once you are dedicated to returning to God's design you should begin to pray and fast. If you start with activity you may miss the instruction. God designed the works He has for you to do (Eph. 2:10). It is why He made you a new creation in Christ Jesus. He will not hide them from you if you prepare to receive them. It is up to us to prepare to live and preach Jesus' Gospel. We must be consecrated, disciplined and prepared to make disciples. We must discover our spiritual gifts and join with others who want to live by God's design. It is up to us to live differently and separate ourselves from the things of the world. Our prepared works will become evident once we do this.

Many today have fallen into the trap of shopping for a church. Even those who have settled in a church may fall into the practice of ministry shopping. They are assessing and analyzing things as they visit a service or volunteer in a ministry. How can you find the works God designed for you if you are looking at other things? We need to seek God, not works. If your pursuit becomes about the works, you will miss the point. The entire Christian walk is designed to grow us into the likeness of Christ. Through this process we will learn to be what God designed us to be. Nothing compares with finding this. There is no amount of riches or power or prestige that can compare with knowing God more intimately. This is the goal. Knowing the Father and the Son is the eternal life that Jesus came to give you [John 17:3].

We had no idea where we were supposed to do this thing God had called us to do. We began by seeking the Lord. We prayed and fasted and responded when God prompted us. It was a very strange experience when compared to how I had done things in the past. It was an exploration *with* God. In the end, God made it very clear where we were supposed to start. He prompted someone to give us a wood shop in the neighborhood He had been drawing us to for over a year. Once we were there, we continued to walk and pray and fast and listen. God had prepared a place for us to go and "Be the Church". I did not pick the place. In fact, I objected to His choice at first. I wanted to go somewhere else.

As you begin to discover your land, may I suggest that you put aside your desires. Do as Jesus said. Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Him. Follow the example of Jesus in the Garden. Accept God's will over your own [Mark 14:36]. Join God in the discovery process. Let him lead you. It is where you will find the plan He has for your life. The place He led us was a desolate and violent place. When we arrived in our newly donated wood shop it sat in a 100 square block neighborhood with over 700 vacant buildings and 300 vacant lots. We moved into that warehouse and in the first 8 months, a dozen people

were shot and killed within four blocks of our door. There was close gun fire nightly. Unemployment is still near 50%. God called us to the privilege of rebuilding this place and serving these people. It has been a fantastically rewarding journey that has opened my eyes and brought me closer to God.

As God led us to this place, we discovered how He had been working for years to prepare it for our arrival. There were many things He had put in place that have fueled what we are doing. There were private developers, governmental agencies, law enforcement issues, and many other things at play in the land where He called us. His work of preparation was thorough and extensive. There was no way I could have imagined how much was put in place before I arrived. God connected us to all of this preparation as we walked in faith.

The same scenario now exists all across America. People are hungry for the supernatural things of God. They are leaving the institutional church by the thousands.² God is preparing to receive this remnant by raising up groups of people that are dedicated to living by His design. The inner cities of America are prepared for revival and renewal. These places represent the worst of Satan's attacks on America. They are filled with neglect, racism, oppression and poverty. These places need God's people to come into them and live sacrificially for the sake of the residents that have suffered in them for generations.

My understanding of how God prepares a work has increased greatly in my time in this ministry. I read Joel chapter 2 in a new way. God has allowed certain conditions to exist so that He can show the world His love and His ways. Consider the man healed in Acts 3. He was born lame. It says he sat at the gate of the temple daily. Jesus must have passed by him or at least seen him during his lifetime. The man was not healed until God was ready to heal him. He was healed to show the

2. <http://www.businessinsider.com/christians-are-leaving-the-faith-in-droves-2015-4> and <http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/12/living/pew-religion-study/>

power of God through Peter. The inner cities of America are damaged. God has not healed them yet. I think He is ready to heal them now in order to show His power and affirm the church that operates by His design.

[2Ch 7:13-14] "If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Chapter Eight - Following the Spirit

[John 16:13] "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

A Change in My Perception

Early in my seeking of God's design, I was drawn to a new work that I discovered on the internet. It called itself a church multiplication movement. The person leading this movement was named Richard Greene and it was called the Keystone Project. I was later ordained in the denomination that Richard worked under. He was having great numerical growth in Africa and some other mission fields. The denomination wanted the same thing to happen here in America. I was in the second group of U.S. pastors to attend Richard's training.

Richard spoke of making disciples that made disciples and following the Holy Spirit. As I sat in his class I felt like all the dots were connecting for me. It was in the Keystone training where I first heard the term Pastoring the Community. Richard said He was giving us all promotions. We were no longer the Pastor of our church but rather of our whole community.

One of the things Richard emphasized was releasing new works. He said to go and contextualize what he was teaching and let God mold it as we walked in it. Eventually, I left that denomination but what Richard taught me has forever changed my life. I needed to focus on the leading of the Holy Spirit to go and make disciples that could make disciples and pastor my community. The biggest problem was that I didn't think I knew how. Here I sat with a Ph. D. in theology and no one had ever taught me how to make a disciple that could make a disciple. I was always taught to rely on the church for that. I had no idea how to pastor a community. I had never seen it done.

From Genesis to Revelations the Bible records how God has led His people through visions.

Very early in this journey I was seeking more of God. I wanted the supernatural experience I read about in scripture. I wanted God to speak and tell me what to do. I was begging for Him to show up. One Monday morning, as I sat in my living room early in the morning, it happened. Over the course of the next four mornings a vision came to me. A portion came to me each morning. Each portion was a continuation of the vision from the day before. On the fifth day I was given an interpretation. Here is my account of the vision and my understanding of the interpretation. It was a few years later that I gained a full understanding of the vision. It was so compelling that it moved me to seek what I saw.

In my vision I was standing alone in total darkness. Suddenly it was like a silent explosion occurred and a rushing wind blew the darkness away like sand. I was left standing in a beautiful field on a nearly clear and sunny day. As I looked around I felt the sun and breeze on my face. I saw trees and birds and puffy clouds. In the distance a small river began to flow over a hill and across the scene in front of me. There I was standing in this idyllic setting.

As I looked around I noticed a small dark spot was on the ground before me. It caught my attention because it was out of place and I pondered what it was. As I stared at it, the spot began to grow in size and then it bulged up from the ground. It grew to a tremendous height and took the form of a creature with many tentacles. I was immediately aware of the evil in this thing yet I was not afraid. It moved swiftly away from me towards the river in the background and it stuck its tentacles into the ground and river. As it did this, the entire scene began to turn black. It was not all the same black and was certainly not in black and white or gray-scale. Everything was black but all of the defining shapes and lines were still distinguishable.

A city skyline took shape on the other side of the river. It too turned black. Soon there was a full and bustling city on the other side of the river with hundreds of people walking to and fro. Each was going about their business as if unaware of the monster or its effect on them. The scene shifted a bit and now I was standing a few hundred feet from the river (before this the river was in the distance). The monster was between me and the river with the city behind it. The beast turned its attention to me and began to flail its tentacles and make hideous noises in an attempt to scare me away. For some reason I still felt no fear.

I looked to my right and I saw a group of people sitting in a circle. They were all covered with the black goo and they were reading their bibles. As I watched I would see the goo begin to crack on a couple of them. Light would begin to shine from underneath the goo. Every once in awhile a couple of them would get up and walk down to the river bank and start throwing ropes out into the river. After many tries they would drag a person up on shore that was covered in goo and bring them back to the bible-studying circle of people.

The monster now turned its attention to this group. It would torment the group with its tentacles. It would occasionally grab someone from the group and flail it around in the air as the person suffered in agony. The monster would eventually throw the person into the river. I was now getting angry at the monster for its torment of these people. It smiled an evil smirk at me and used one of its tentacles to open its chest like you would open a coat. In its bosom there was an infant wrapped tightly in a blanket. It had the face of an adult and was clinging to a bible across its chest. Its face was racked in agony.

As it closed its covering over the infant, I now saw many people in its grasp. The majority of the people in the group of bible studiers were unaware of the monster or what it was doing to these people. I remember thinking to myself, "Why doesn't someone do something?" I then saw an arrow strike the

monster in one of its tentacles that was holding a person. The monster dropped the person and roared in anger. I looked to my left to see where the arrow had originated. I saw an angelic being with a bow that was shooting arrows at the monster. He paused and looked directly at me. He said "There is more help available if you would just ask."

On the other side of the angelic being to my left was another group of people sitting in a circle. They were shining as bright as the sun and were praying together. Two of them got up and went to the aid of the person the monster had dropped. That person was still covered in goo. They brought them back to their group and sat them down. As they interacted with the rescued person the goo began to crack and fall from their body. It wasn't long before that person was also shining brightly.

I was struggling to understand as I watched the scene before me. The group to the right repeatedly sent people with ropes to the river but rarely rescued anyone. The monster regularly tormented the group and snatched many away. The angel continued to shoot arrows at the beast. The group to my left was focused on prayer and picked up those dropped by the beast. Then a person from the group on my left, shining brightly, got up and walked to the edge of the river of goo. As they stepped into the goo it parted for them. They proceeded over to the city on the other side of the river. Soon they returned with a goo covered person through the parted water and sat them down in their group. Then 2 went across and only two returned. Two that were shining brightly went across and only one shining brightly and one covered in goo would return. As I watched this scene repeat, I wondered why one would get recovered in goo while the other would not.

Then I looked across the river to the city. In the midst of the goo covered people were people that were shining brightly. I looked back at the angelic being and he now had several others with him. He was smiling and they were all battling more furiously with the beast. Another glance toward the city on the

other side of the river showed hundreds of people of light walking with the people covered in goo and the goo was beginning to fall from the city structures and the scenery. The beast was now screaming in agony and anger as the vision ended.

My Understanding of the Vision

The easiest way for me to communicate the interpretation of the vision is to outline the characters first.

Me - The person God has called to preach and teach people to return to His design for the church.

The beast - The enemy of God's people fighting us - the World.

The group on the right - Traditional modern approaches to ministry - The Modern American Church

The group on the left - The church operating by God's design.

The Angelic beings - God's army, the ministering spirits that assist us in spiritual battle.

The people in the tentacles - Those finding no freedom from their sin and past through the Modern American Church. They are easily trapped again by the things of the world.

The baby in the bosom - Those who have given up on freedom and are clinging to God's Word and waiting for the return of Christ.

The people in the city - The lost of the world.

This vision was given to me to help me understand the fundamental changes that needed to take place in the way God's church functions. It is not a condemnation of the people that are in each situation. God offers hope and freedom to anyone. It is a teaching vision that highlights why the American church is losing its place and standing in society. We don't function by God's design. The people that went to the group on the right were seeking freedom from the monster and the goo. The group on the right was not teaching how to get rid of the

goo. The group was covered in the things of the world and focused mainly on teaching the bible and gathering people to the group.

The group on the left focused on getting free from the goo before they went out into the world. With this freedom they passed through the goo without getting tainted. This light attracted people to the freedom being offered by this group. This group on the left sent people of light to live in the goo stained city. These people walked among those stained by the world. The group on the left were the ones asking for more help from the angels. They would walk with the person that was covered in goo until they were free from it.

The people in the tentacles were easy targets for the beast as they had plenty of places he could attack. They were never separate from the world. They walked in a religious system that was also covered in goo. The baby in the bosom represented the people that claim Christ and have given up on freedom and fruitfulness. They are simply clinging to the Bible until they die.

The identity of the monster was confusing to me at first. I assumed it must represent Satan in some form. It was later in our journey that our group discovered the true identity of the beast in the vision. We discovered it as we were discussing some people's aversion to the term religion. It appears that many people that participate in organized religion do not like to be identified by that participation. Someone brought up [*Jas 1:27*] "*Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.*" It clicked. One of the most harmful things that God's people do is to participate in the things of the world. It is also one of the most difficult things to define and teach. Where you draw the line is a personal concern. A large majority of the American Church embraces the things of the world. They teach on how to get them. They use them to be relevant and draw people to their gatherings. This

vision showed me that in order to walk in God's design we must continually be separating ourselves from the world.

The Vision that Put Feet to the Movement

I had left my job and turned in my ordination papers. I was trying to follow the Holy Spirit and make disciples. I knew this was my calling. I arranged a training session near my home and invited a bunch of people to come. We had people from several different areas attend. On one of the breaks the people started coming to me and saying that God showed them something during their lunch hour. They wanted to share it with everyone. As we sat down to start the class again I gave up the floor to the students.

What happened next was incredible. Each person shared a snippet from the Bible and said God had compelled them to share. As we went around the room, a picture started to appear from what was shared. It started with Abraham's land and seed promise, and led us all to Isaiah 61.

[Isa 61:1-3] "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."

Many of us felt like God was speaking to us, like He was asking us to follow Him in this passage. It is the first passage that Jesus publicly read. Jesus did claim it was fulfilled in Him. I went home after that class and I began to pray and ask God

what it meant. I read it again. This time I continued in the passage to verse four.

[Isa 61:4] "Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, They will raise up the former devastations; And they will repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations."

Over the next five hours I sat at my computer and typed. It was like God was downloading a plan to me. I outlined everything He showed me. We were to go to the devastated areas and rebuild them. As we did this, God would let us participate in the work of verses 1 - 3. The plan had three components.

The Leadership Center

Sun Ministries was started in March of 2006. It was during my struggle with where God wanted me to go. I felt clearly compelled to start a Non-Profit even though I felt my real calling was to plant churches. I started it and did nearly nothing with it for two years. I formed a board of directors and filed all the needed paperwork. It was official and inactive.

As I wrote this vision I realized that God would use Sun Ministries as the tool to handle the physical realities of ministry. This would keep the church free to do what it was designed to do - spiritual things! Sun Ministries would have three primary components. The first would be developing and promoting leadership. One of the things that is needed in our devastated communities is Godly leadership. The Leadership Center would recruit, train and relocate missionaries to work in the inner city where we would locate.

The Opportunity Center

The Opportunity Center would work to establish businesses and train people in the skills needed to be employed. It would provide for the needs of the ministry financially and would

provide jobs for those living in the neighborhood where we would minister.

The Narrow Gate

The Narrow Gate would deal with housing and buildings. It would take people from homelessness to home ownership. It would also deal with buildings for businesses and missionaries.

These three components have developed into a very unique tool to rebuild our neighborhood. I still have the original plan I wrote that day. We still let that vision guide our decisions. Sun Ministries still keeps the church free from the entanglements of the world. Martin Luther wrote about the right and left hand of God and how they work together. Today I see the need for physical management of resources and for spiritual over-sight of the church. Through this vision that God has given us, we have both hands fighting in the battle to set captives free.

Operating our resources under a Non-profit has allowed us to do many things that would be harder under a For-profit structure. A Non-profit allows us to remove the money motivation from our work. We operate businesses that seek to care for our employees and the community. It is a huge change when all of your efforts are directed towards others. Greed is curtailed since no individual or group owns the property or takes a salary. Most businesses seeking profit would find it difficult to exist in our neighborhood. Using a Non-profit allows us to operate with less tax and administrative expenses.

Disciple Driven Church

I call my teaching ministry the Disciple Driven Church. It is not a church in the modern sense. There is nothing to join here. There is no membership. This ministry teaches on a spiritual level. It teaches how the church was designed to function. What I teach is the contextualization of what God has led me to do in

my setting. If you were to take what I teach and apply it in your life and where you live, it would likely change slightly. The church is not a formula or a method or a system. The church is designed to be a living organism that transforms society. As the principles of Disciple Driven Church are applied in different settings the physical manifestation of the church will take on many forms.

We cannot bring glory to God by glorifying man. A Godly vision will minimize man and magnify God. We glorify God best when we operate by God's design and allow the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit to flow through us. Disciple Driven Church teaches us how to return to this pattern for our lives and churches.

**When vision leads ministry then ministry will display God.
When man leads ministry then ministry will display men.**

Chapter Nine - Preparing for Spiritual Battle

[Act 19:13-16] But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, "I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches." Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. And the evil spirit answered and said to them, "I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

Entering into spiritual battle unprepared is a certain way to suffer.

[Eph 6:13] Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

Everyone is involved in the spiritual battle between Satan and God. It affects all parts of creation. The difference between us is the level of our awareness and preparation for our involvement. We have what we need in Christ to be victorious.

Strong's Concordance - palē

1) wrestling (a contest between two in which each endeavors to throw the other, and which is decided when the victor is able to hold his opponent down with his hand upon his neck)

a) the term is transferred to the Christian's struggle with the power of evil

We cannot kill our enemy. Our enemy was defeated long ago. Our enemy has not been given his full punishment. He is not completely restrained from doing his evil. Therefore we restrain him as we take back the ground that Adam had turned over to Satan. We take back the ground as we tear down his

works in our lives through consecration. When we put on the armor of God spoken of in Ephesians 6, we can make disciples and steward God's creation. This takes people and things out from under Satan's authority and puts them back under Christ. We do this through wrestling with him. The goal is to return creation to its proper place. All things are meant to be under the authority and rule of Christ.

The definition of the term "Wrestle" is found above. The only place in Scripture where this word appears is in Ephesians 6:12 *"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual [hosts] of wickedness in the heavenly [places]."* According to the definition, one is victorious in wrestling when they can subdue their opponent and hold them down by the neck. Paul is painting us a word picture of spiritual warfare.

Satan has people held down through his strongholds. It is the strongholds that are the "hand on the neck" for him. If we are to prevail in "Wrestling" (*palē*) with our enemy, then we must flip him off of us and onto his back. We hold him down with spiritual weapons such as truth, prayer, fasting, and the preaching of the word of God. Separating from the world and following God's design will eliminate the ways in which Satan can attack us. Minimizing his ability to attack us will strengthen our ability to walk in spiritual authority.

As we prevail he will attempt to get a grip on us. We must stand firm in our righteousness and salvation. Consecration allows us to remove the handholds that Satan can use against us as we wrestle.

The wrestling match continues as we walk in the truth that opposes the stronghold. By refusing to be held by the stronghold in our mind and our actions, we actually break free from Satan's grip and can then turn the match against him. As we walk together in opposition of the strongholds we also use

spiritual weapons to subdue our enemy and free those he is still prevailing against. The combination of spiritual weapons and living in opposition to the strongholds of Satan is how we prevail in the spiritual wrestling match.

To battle successfully we must first put on the armor of God. I see this as our personal aspect of the battle. Once we are prepared to live righteously, stand in our salvation, and have the faith to stop the enemy's attacks, then we can attack our enemy's grip through spiritual disciplines. Once we have turned the match against our enemy personally, we must go and help others prevail.

In order to "wrestle" the enemy on a regional level we must identify his "grip points" and discern how to break his grip in those areas. These "grip points" will be strongholds where Satan has distorted some truth of God's word in order to hold down his enemy – God's people. We attack these grips in prayer and in life. We ask for angelic assistance in breaking his grip. We walk in the Spirit so we can see where his grip is weak. We use spiritual weapons to dislodge his grip and through discipleship we prepare others to walk free from his grip and to join the battle.

Satan's most useful tool in his arsenal is the lie. When people believe a lie then he can gain influence over them. As people believe more and more lies he can then hold power over them. One of his other tools is accusations. He attempts to make us doubt our forgiveness in Christ. These accusations lock people in shame and guilt for what they have done. On the physical side of the battle there are many more tools that Satan may use. He attacks people through those he influences and controls. He compels racism, violence, crime, fear and so many other harmful things. He uses these to lock people in poverty and oppression.

As we engage in Pastoring our Community we must understand both the physical and spiritual realities of spiritual

warfare. The Gospel must address sin, guilt and shame. We must help provide ways for people to break out of poverty. We must fight for justice and stand against all forms of oppression. If we fail to do this we are essentially fighting with one hand tied behind our backs. We must be skillful to battle with our left hand and our right like King David's fighting men .

Learning to Battle

As we entered into this work we were being trained to fight. We examined the history of the territory. We looked for repeating patterns and historical strongholds. We walked and prayed and fasted and processed together. God was faithful to reveal many things to us. We were anxious to defeat them all. We learned that just because He shows us something it does not mean we should do something. My tendency was to take every revelation as marching orders. I had to learn to be taught. Many times I just needed to know what stronghold was over the land and the people because it affected what I was doing.

As we learned what we were up against, we also learned to ask for direction in what we should fight next. This is how we must learn to do spiritual warfare. I heard many people who preached and taught some very powerful concepts of spiritual warfare. They would say things like, "Just go preach the Blood of Jesus over there and set them free". Others would come to our neighborhood and proclaim over the PA system that the Christians were here and so now Satan had to leave.

These powerful proclamations may sound good. You may want to line them up with Scripture but they are not reality. Satan will still be here and working when Jesus returns. He has been here and working since the garden. You do not have the power to proclaim people to freedom. If you think you do then I hold you responsible for not using that power to set all of humanity free. See how quickly we add conditions to our power? The truth of scripture is that people have free will. People can choose to follow Satan and believe lies. You can't

stop them. That would violate our free will. So what is our role in spiritual warfare?

We are a Supernaturally Powerful People

When we walk according to God's design we are powerful. We have the ability to change things. We can lift physical oppression through our own sacrifice and commitment. We can suffer and endure for others. We can intercede through prayer and fasting. We can use our spiritual gifts to bring to light the lies of the enemy. All of this is within our power. Look what the Bible says about our power.

[Matt 18:19] - "Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven."

[Matt 21:22 and 43] - "And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

[Mark 11:24] - "Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you."

We can cast out demons but we cannot prevent people from inviting them back. We can heal but we cannot prevent death from eventually catching up to everyone. We must become consecrated, disciplined, set apart, Spirit-filled children of God and follow His design for our lives and the church. When this happens, He will show us the strongholds of the enemy that He is breaking. He will show us the diseases He is willing to heal. His timing is perfect [Acts 3]. He will show us how to lift the physical oppression over people. He will instruct us on how to stand up for justice. It is in this intimate relationship with God that we find our power.

The Bible teaches us about power and spiritual battle. It uses great symbolic pictures of power. We can move

mountains or raise the dead. [Matt 17:20] - *"And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."* Can we move every mountain all the time? Can we raise everyone who dies? Can we really do anything apart from God? If we want to understand spiritual battle we must understand it the context of God's work. I do not want the power to do anything other than what God is doing. If I am working in harmony and intimacy with God, then I can move any mountain, every time.

When we walk together in this manner, we will be a powerful people accomplishing God's will. We will work in our spiritual gifts together removing the enemy's grip from our communities and their residents. Once the grip is broken, it is up to them to choose whom they will obey just as it is for you.

Understanding the Battle

On the next page is a diagram that I made to provide you a visual summary of the spiritual battle. This is not a complete picture but it will help you understand how the spirit realm affects the physical.

God is Sovereign over all

Good

All Creation

Evil

Jesus

Satan

The Battleground is in the mind.

The victory is determined by what we believe and obey.

When we believe and obey God we are saved and gain freedom

When we believe and obey lies we are in bondage that builds strongholds.

Weapons of redemption

Weapons of destruction

The Holy Spirit and Holy Angels

Spiritual Forces Eph. 6:12

Church

World

Elders, Deacons,
Gifts of equipping (eph. 4)
and Spiritual Gifts

World systems, government, money
evil people, ideology, religion, trends,
entertainment, institutions, business

Unity in the body, love, praise, humility,
willingness to suffer, worship, the blood,
resurrection power, spiritual authority,
discipleship, faith, revelation, the word of God,
repentance, contentment, consecration,
deliverance, fasting, God glorifying expressions,
denying oneself, kindness, salvation, rhema,
mercy, compassion, patience.

Sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures,
idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy,
outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension,
division, envy, drunkenness, racism, fear, war,
poverty, crime, ignorance, cults, habits, greed,
pride, arrogance, selfishness, suppressing truth,
strife, deceit, malice, gossip, slander, boasting,
drugs, psychology.

You must determine the power behind something in order to see its use in battle.

Economics - music - creativity - nature - education - entertainment - institutions are not inherently evil.

Satan works through "open doors" in the life of a person. The opening allows Satan to have influence in your life in order to get you to first believe and then obey lies. All open doors are bad. The life of a believer should be the pursuit of the things listed under the Church side and a fleeing from the things listed under the World side. To indulge in the things of the world is to be a friend of the world and thereby make yourself an enemy of God.

When we want to understand the power behind something we only need to see what is in it. Does the thing promote or contain the things listed under the World? If so, it is not from God as we can be sure that God is not behind any of those things.

In order to win a battle we must understand how to fight. The next diagram is a simple outline of spiritual warfare. It is merely a very simple representation. Remember, our enemy is ancient, powerful and wise.

There is no way to give you a full understanding of how he battles. That is why it is essential for you to consecrate yourself and put on your spiritual armor. It is the only way to abide in Christ so that He can walk with you through the battle.

We are to discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness. If we understand how our enemy works we will be better prepared to withstand his attacks. We cannot prevent him from attacking us. When I began this journey, I had a very naive understanding of how Satan attacks. As I have walked in the battle I have gained a more complete picture of how he works. His tactics are more complex and complete than you may know.

A church that is functioning by God's design is the best weapon against Satan's attacks. Through the Holy Spirit we have all the power and authority we need in order to stand against our enemy. Next are some of the ways that Satan attacks God's people.

God is Sovereign over all		
Good	All Creation	Evil
Jesus		Satan

How Satan Attacks

Through his Weapons of destruction he -

The Holy Spirit and Holy Angels	Distorts the image of the Holy Spirit by implanting false teachings. Some teach that the Spirit no longer works or manifests while others fake His power and working. This cuts off the effectiveness and distorts or eliminates the most effective tools of the church - spiritual gifts.
Church	Infiltrates the church with worldly ideas, practices, and concepts. This allows him access to the people in the body and seeds the church with tares. Allowing and/or inviting unbelievers into the worship gathering is his most effective tactic in this attack.
Elders, Deacons, Gifts of equipping (eph. 4) also known as The Leadership	He utilizes ungodly power and control systems to distort this group. Strongholds of division are reinforced through denominationalism. Gifts are replaced by offices. Business practices replace discernment and Godly rule. He also uses the things listed below to gain personal control just as he does in the lives of the saints.
Elders, Deacons, Gifts of equipping (eph. 4) also known as The Leadership and the saints.	He utilizes all of the above to rob them of proper leadership and authority as well as keeping them from working in their God given spiritual gifting. He uses the things of the world to subtly gain small footholds in their lives and slowly trap them in his systems through his tools. He uses entertainment, education, politics, hobbies, and other tools to distract from God and secure influence. He then attacks with outward forms through those he controls using racism, violence, poverty, crime, etc...

Understanding the battle will give us direction in our ministries. Consecrating ourselves and walking separate from the world will give us the ability to stand against our enemy. Living sacrificially will help us defeat our enemy. Living separate from the things of the world in a consecrated lifestyle

that is disciplined and dedicated to making disciples is a powerful tool in the hand of God. Satan desires to keep God's people from living by His design. All of his attacks are directed at this goal.

Learning to battle spiritually is learning to walk intimately and consecrated with God in the supernatural power He bestows on us.

Chapter Ten - Pastoring Your Community

*[Psalm 67: 1 - 2 and 6] - “God be gracious to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us – **that Your ways may be known on the earth**, Your salvation among all nations... God, our God, blesses us. God blesses us, that all the ends of the earth may fear Him.”*

God’s focus is on the salvation of the world. He wants the world to know His ways. For this to happen, we must do things His way.

Jesus said, *[John 3:17] “For God did not send His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”*

The Father’s desire and plan has been to “bless” the nations. He said to Abraham, *[Genesis 12:2-3] “I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”*

God’s agenda is to bless the world and make His ways known! This is how He plans to draw people to Himself to be saved. If your ministry is in harmony with God’s design, then it will embrace the same divine focus – to be a blessing to your community and the world and show them His ways.

Too often, we as Christians place our attention, time, resources, energy, dreams, gifts, and hopes on the growth of a church and doing things the church’s way. When that is so, we face the danger that our focus will be on ourselves and we will use the community to grow our church instead of the church to bless our communities and show them how to follow God’s ways. When we embrace God’s design to bless our communities and show them His ways, our focus will be outward rather than inward.

Does your community exist to bless you and your church or ministry, or does the church exist to bless your community and show them God's ways? How can you know? Look at the needs of your community vs. the needs of your church. Where are your church's time and money spent? Are they spent building programs and offering things that bring people to church? Are they spent solving the problems in your community?

Next look at the ways in which your church does things. Are they God's ways? God's way is interdependence, sharing of all things, forsaking the world, etc...

If you are not committed to doing things God's way and denying yourself in order to bless the world then you can not pastor your community. Your focus will be slightly tainted and therefore your outcome will be tainted.

Pastoring the Community Requires a Commitment to Fulfill the Great Commission Personally

Understanding the Implications of a Great Commission Vision

1. The focus of the Great Commission is the *nations*.
2. The direction of the Great Commission is *outward*.
3. The message of the Great Commission is "go!"
4. The power of the Great Commission is *multiplication*.
5. The effect of the Great Commission is *releasing, life, and blessing*.

The Great Commission is not focused on "a church," it is focused on the Kingdom of God! Many of the strongholds of Satan have been built in communities over many years. Some will take time to destroy. Pastoring your community means being a loving shepherd to your community and using God's ways to destroy the works of the devil [1 John 3:8].

We started in our neighborhood by walking, praying and picking up trash. We did this faithfully for nearly nine months. During this time we did not see the fruit we were desiring. God was building for the future. It was on one of these walks that we met the Alderman over our neighborhood. He became our friend and has helped us many times to navigate problems with the city. We met adults and children, homeless and home owners. We were on a training mission with God. Where we live now is very different from any place I have ever lived before. I needed to see what God saw. Here is a simple outline of how we started.

God's Purpose in the Church is to Bless Your Community and show them His ways

1. We asked our leaders how we can help.
2. We adopted special community projects (cleaning parks, Hyde Park Festival, and Christmas Party).
3. We swept and cleaned up litter in the streets.
4. We reported or repaired what is broken, replace what is damaged or lost.
5. We do prayer walks in the community.
6. We prayed *with or for* police officers and government leaders.
7. We encouraged our people to volunteer in community programs.
8. We served and helped widows, orphans, and poor families.

Pastoring your Community means Being the Expression of God's heart in your community!

God is giving you a job promotion! You are now His Ambassador to your community!

What things are required to pastor the community?

1. A shepherding heart
2. A community vision
3. An intentional investment in the community
 - through projects
 - through volunteer work
 - through education and jobs (literacy, skills, etc.)
4. Developing relationships with community leaders
5. Maintaining integrity in all things
6. Unity with other Christians

Pastoring Your Community Starts with Becoming a Good Steward

Pastoring the Community is where you will find your Ephesians 2:10 works. In order to find these works you will need to begin to see things as God sees them and do things as God designed them to be done – His way.

From the beginning, God has had a plan for the redemption of mankind and the proper operation of His chosen people. We can see this plan in the commands given to Adam and Eve.

Genesis 1:28 - God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

This was the beginning. God created man and woman. He blessed them and gave them an assignment.

Be fruitful and multiply - Reproduce

Fill the earth - Occupy

Subdue it - Steward

Rule over – Authority

Reproduce - Occupy - Steward – Rule

Somewhere along the way man decided to do it his way. Occupy became overtake. Steward became withhold for our own use. Authority became man made and enforced structure and leadership. Reproduce was reduced to forced submission or only natural reproduction, not spiritual. Jesus even mentioned this when he said to the leaders of His day – you travel all over to make one convert and then make him just as much a son of hell as you are [Matt. 23:15].

What man has made of this commandment is not what God intended. This God given command still applies today.

Reproduce - Occupy - Steward - Rule

The command to reproduce has two components. One is to be fruitful. We reproduce the fruit of the Spirit of God as others come to know Him and we make disciples of Christ, not men. As we teach people to live by God's design and not the ways of the world, we will bear this fruit. We multiply when we teach our disciples to make disciples. Another element of multiplication is to release people to start new works. The church is designed to have people traveling about and teaching others what they have learned.

Occupy refers to the your geography. There are places that are desperate and in need of help. It is my belief that God is starting this reformation, this return to His design, in the inner cities of America. These places are prepared to receive healing and renewal.

Steward the things God has given us by being careful to care for the environment and the people that live in it with special attention to the poor, the widows and the orphans. One interesting aspect of stewardship is lost in most teachings in the church today. You can only steward other people's possessions. You can't steward your own stuff. Take a look at

the meaning of the word most often interpreted as steward in the Bible.

According to Thayer's (New Testament Greek-English Lexicon) and Strong's (Greek Dictionary of the New Testament)

"a steward, manager, superintendent (whether free-born or as was usually the case, a freed-man or a slave) to whom the head of the house or proprietor has intrusted the management of his affairs, the care of receipts and expenditures, and the duty of dealing out the proper portion to every servant and even to the children not yet of age"

This may be why Jesus emphasizes the need for us to give up all of our possessions and follow Him. We can only learn to steward properly after we have given it all to God. Then He can teach us to manage His things.

The command to rule is spiritual in nature. We must rule with Godly authority as those responsible for others. Rule from love and service, not through force or oppression. Lead by empowering and equipping people.

What does this mean for you?

Reproduce – learn to share your faith and make disciples. You must seek consecration so God can have His way with you. Dedicate your self to making disciples that make disciples. Teach people to follow God's design.

Occupy – God has called you to a land. You were made to occupy, steward and rule over your land through loving service to the community. God will lead you there is you seek Him first and His kingdom.

Steward – We must learn to take care of our community. We must be good stewards of our environment. We must not squander our wealth on ourselves.

Rule – We must understand the spiritual authority that is granted to us as we seek to be holy as God is holy. We must walk in our authority.

These things do not come easy or quick. The Christian life is one of obedience and discipline. You will learn to be disciplined and it will produce in you godliness.

Pastoring the Community

Once the sacred assembly is restored and functioning by God's design, we must move to begin pastoring our community. The church is referenced in the New Testament in two contexts. There is a general reference to the church universal which is the bride of Christ and is composed of all those who have their name written in the Book of Life. The main references to the earthly church in the New Testament are in the context of location. We see the church at Jerusalem – Acts 11:22, the church at Antioch - Acts 13:1, the church at Ephesus – Acts 20:17, the church at Cenchrea – Romans 16:1, etc. There is no reference to denominations or separations in the local church that are by God's design. All such divisions are dealt with as just that – division! [1Corinthians 1:11-13]

When we look at God's pattern and design for the church we can see that it is a vehicle of blessing for the nations. We can see that God designed the local church to be unified and led by elders, deacons, and the leadership gifts. Leadership is designed to be accomplished through equipping. Ephesians four outlines the equipping gifts. When the sacred assembly is functioning properly, it will be operating under spirit led leadership by God's design and it will be a blessing to those around it.

Beginning to Pastor Your Community

We should not attempt to pastor our community until we have dedicated ourselves to consecration and returning to

God's design. You do not need to accomplish these things before you start. God will use your service to others as a means to train you. We learn better through actions. We do not need to forsake the classroom but we must return to the field with our knowledge and let God teach us through doing.

1. Establish the boundaries of your community. When God promised Israel a land He clearly laid out the borders. The same pattern can be expected today as we walk in God's design for His church. When we accept God's call to Pastor a community we are accepting the responsibility to be His servants in that region.
2. Establish prayer for that area. Our battle is a spiritual battle and requires us to use spiritual weapons. Prayer is the foundation of spiritual warfare.
3. Identify Satan's strongholds over the community. Avoid identifying the manifestations of the strongholds as the actual stronghold. Tearing down long established strongholds will often require hard work. Even when the battle is won spiritually, there are long-standing patterns of behavior that will only be worked out through discipleship. Look at Paul's letters to the church at Corinth to see how lifestyles were plaguing the church.
4. Take a leadership role in your community. You do not have to lead through politics in order to lead. Lead by serving. Take on tasks that will help the community grow and work together. Be the initiator of unity in your community.
5. Get to know the residents of your community. This may require going door to door. Be ready to pray for healing and expect miracles to establish God's authority in your ministry.
6. Stand against evil. This must be done in the physical and spiritual realms. Evil will use physical manifestations like crime and violence to oppress the people of your community. As a part of Abraham's covenant we are to walk without fear and be examples to the community of how God is in our midst.

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7. Identify emerging leadership and release them to make disciples and start new works. The biggest hindrance to the growth of the modern church is the control of man. Establish leadership according to God's design and release it under the authority of the Holy Spirit. Lead by empowering and equipping – not by controlling and managing.
 8. Be ready to train. Many people have inherited a false view of the sacred assembly. The tendency for them is to bring in the practices of the church that they have grown to know. Many of these ideas are corruptions and are the tares sewn in the church by Satan. We must teach them the reason why these are tares instead of ruling through control. If they refuse to accept the teaching then we must stand against ungodly practices in the church. The best way to do this is to release them. I have no problem letting our differences be made known. I am willing to give them voice and ask others to join them in their new work. If you follow this advice you will find that the group that remains will be strengthened in their unity.
 9. Change the focus of your understanding of church. Many of us have been raised in a church that serves its community as a means to grow the church. We must change that focus. We must learn to serve the community on behalf of God and not worry about growing our church. It is clear from Scripture that only God can truly grow the church. Getting more people to our services does not grow the church. Bringing people to a point of repentance whereby they receive the Holy Spirit is how the true church grows.
 10. Do spiritual warfare! Satan and his minions will attempt to thwart us at every opportunity. We must learn to war in the Spirit. We have been given all authority for ministry. When we walk in the Spirit and focus on spiritual warfare we will see what God is doing in our midst. Obstacles and opposition often discourage people. Some of the greatest moves of the Holy Spirit have come in the midst of great opposition. When we

focus on the spiritual aspects of ministry we can walk boldly in the face of our enemies.

Steps to Pastoring Your Community

1. Ask the community leaders how you can help.
2. Get in the habit of serving others. Take on special community projects and bless them by serving.
3. Clean up the place.
4. Do prayer walks in the community.
5. Pray for and with the people you meet.
6. Always teach your disciples to serve the community
7. God's heart is with the widows, orphans and the poor. Locate them in your community and serve them. Many times there are extensive services available to these groups. Become aware of them and help these people to take full advantage of what is available to them.

Follow the 2 Peter 1:4-11 Principle of Discipleship in your Ministry

Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or shortsighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

What is required to have the entrance into the eternal Kingdom supplied to us and to be fruitful and useful?

- Diligence in our faith
- Moral Excellence
- Knowledge
- Self-control
- Perseverance
- Godliness
- Kindness
- Love

The modern Gospel that focuses on the forgiveness of sin does not take us to this depth. The Gospel of Jesus moves us to maturity in our faith.

What is the P.E.T.E.R. pattern of ministry?

Provide – Empower – Train – Encourage – Release

Provide – Feed, heal, equip, organize, unite, pray for, and protect (Requires Diligence)

Empower – Delegate tasks to those exhibiting moral excellence (Encourages Moral Excellence)

Train – Add knowledge, preach the Gospel, teach the difference between the holy and profane, disciple for self-control. (Build into our disciples knowledge and self control)

Encourage – lift up, walk beside, forgive errors, equip, Help them find their Eph. 2:10 work (Requires building perseverance)

Release – Teach to show kindness and love, let go, mentor (When we refuse to control people we show kindness and love)

The objective of Pastoring Your Community is to release it from the control of Satan and bless it by the manifest

presence of God through His consecrated people living out His design. With this in mind, what will Pastoring the Community look like or entail for us in our ministries?

1. We will be a visible representation of God to the lost. We are designed to be a supernatural people.
2. We will fulfill God's design for our part of the covenant. We will serve and sacrifice for others.
3. We will break down Satan's grip on our community so the people will be free to choose to know and serve God.
4. We will exercise our God-given dominion and authority over evil.
5. We will restore God's glory to man through discipleship as we make disciples that make disciples that live by God's design.

[Exo 8:1] Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me."

Chapter Eleven - Reforming Everything

[John 14:15] "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

As we focus on reformation, we must ask ourselves, "What needs to be reformed?" As we walked in our ministry we identified six areas that have a large influence over society and culture. These areas can be used to declare God's glory when they follow God's patterns and design. Likewise, they can be used in corrupt ways to bring harm upon God's children.

The first and foremost thing that needs reformation is the Church. Once the church is functioning by God's design, it will be ready to reform the other areas outlined below. We do not ask what needs to be reformed so we can impose our ideals on others. We are not to reform by force. Christianity is not about setting up man-made authority to impose our values on others. We are to live by God's design and let others see that God's way is best. We seek to reform these areas so they can declare God's glory and bring value to people. When these things are functioning properly they bring peace, joy, provision and protection to God's children.

We have identified five areas of reformation besides the church that shape and influence the culture. There may be more but we feel we can fit most things into one of these five. The nations will be blessed as these five areas and the church follow God's design and principles.

They are:

- Creative Expression
- Ecology
- Education
- Entertainment
- Economics

Each of these is made up of many parts. An entire book could be written on the proper biblical functioning of each of

these areas. I trust that the Holy Spirit will lead you into all understanding as you walk in God's design for these areas. What follows is a brief outline of each area.

Creative Expression: Can include music, written or spoken word, drama, art, craftsmanship, etc. Creative expression is a powerful tool. When it is used for evil it can sway masses. When it is used properly it can bring glory to God.

In the Bible we see God bestowing creative abilities on people in order to accomplish His purposes. When God instructed Moses to build the Tabernacle, He informed Moses that He had done this.

[Exo 31:2-5] "See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship, to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all kinds of craftsmanship."

The Bible also acknowledges that craftsmanship can be used for things that are opposed to God.

[Deu 27:15] 'Cursed is the man who makes an idol or a molten image, an abomination to the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret.' And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen.'

Creative expression and entertainment are the most difficult to reform. They move people emotionally and can be used to drive the desires of the flesh. These are some of Satan's most powerful tools. It is not enough to just offer alternatives. The alternative must be of the highest quality. Our creative expression should be a reflection of the glory of God. God is the ultimate creative personality. We are creative because we are made in His image.

When used properly our creative expression can communicate to the world the attributes of God's personality. We can break down barriers and inform people of God's heart on many matters.

Ecology: It baffles me as to why the church has lost the lead in the fight to care for creation. Our absence has caused godly stewardship to be replaced by Eco-extremism. The church needs to place everything in its proper order and usage as good stewards of God's creation. Today we see the church standing by as people pillage the creation to obtain wealth.

Ecology centers the fight on the availability and free use of resources to make money. God's design is for us to use our resources freely yet wisely as good stewards. Where there is disregard for this concept we see abuse. The reaction is often either Eco-extremism or exploitation of natural resources. We have been given the authority to rule over the earth. We must use that spiritual authority to lead the way towards God's design for stewarding the earth.

Abraham was considered a wealthy man. In his day, the way to wealth was managing natural resources. His wealth was counted in things that needed care. He could only own as many animals as his family and servants could manage. Today's economic system lets people ravage the earth for its resources in order to store up wealth. They are also allowed to take advantage of people in order to retain wealth. God is not opposed to wealth, but it should never be obtained at the expense of the planet's natural resources or people. If we share the fruit of our labor we will manage well and extend care to others.

Consider the earth as an extension of the idea of your children. Do you care for your children the way you care for the earth? Is it because you don't take your ownership responsibility as serious for the earth as you do for your children? When it comes to our kids, we care for and nurture

them wanting only the best outcome for them. When it comes to the earth, we should have the same outlook. Both our kids and the earth are gifts of God's creation to us.

Our stewardship of the earth is a primary responsibility of the church. The care for creation was given to Adam in Genesis 1:28. Adam gave it over to Satan in Genesis 3:6. We see this confirmed in the temptation of Jesus.

[Luke 4:6] And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.

Jesus died for us and gave us His Spirit so that he can destroy the works of the devil [1John 3:8]. We take back the ground from Satan as we care for creation and steward it well.

Education: The Bible places the foundational responsibility of educating children on the parents. Parents must decide what to teach and how to teach their children. The parents are commanded to teach God's ways. The parents are told to be the discipliners of their children. One of the most important tasks of any parent is educating their children. We must not buy into the idea that professionals are better at educating our children than parents. A large part of education is character and values. We must balance the need for training in these areas with the need for cognitive learning.

Education should be Christ-centered and parent-led, not institutional and government-controlled. If you choose to use the government and institutions then you must decide how to correct any false teachings that may result from that. I see many Christians fighting the establishment over things they deem inappropriate. Why would you place your children in a system that violates your beliefs?

One of the most vocal arguments against parent led teaching, or homeschooling, is the lack of social skills it would

provide. This is a false argument. Everyone that has interaction with others will learn social skills. The current system of age segregation in schools places a very high value on teaching children to interact with their peers. What is lost in this setting is the ability to interact with other ages. This system also brings students to a similar performance standard and behavior standard. The system decides what is important to learn.

In America, education is done mainly through an institution. The thought being that trained teachers can provide better education. This is not God's design. The family teaches moral character that is not taught through the institution. When families teach their children, they build the family up as they do it. When we delegate this responsibility to the institution we weaken the family. The same can be said for church.

Entertainment: This is a core value in America. One of the most commonly asked questions we get from visiting people is, "What do you guys do for entertainment?" Most Americans can't fathom a fulfilling life without pursuing entertainment. Entertainment should focus on creativity and interaction as opposed to vain imagination and isolation.

God's design is for people to live together in love and unity. Today we see entertainment isolating, desensitizing and even influencing society. Watch what the cartoons are teaching today if you want to know the political movements of tomorrow.

Entertainment can teach and inform in a unique way. When you are entertained you let your guard down. Subtle influences can become preferences and eventually ideologies.

Economics: This is a reality of life. The economic system can be very oppressive. We can recreate a business structure that removes the profit motivation and emphasizes the care and empowerment of the individuals that are part of it and its community. We can use our businesses to provide for needs

and not excesses. The church should be promoting Christ centered values, not capitalistic rights to wealth.

For example, in America we are under a system that promotes using the free market to gain wealth for ourselves without a responsibility to care for our workers, their families, strangers and the community. This is not God's design. We only need to look at the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10) to see Jesus' heart in this matter. Jesus has been generous to us. If we are to become like Christ, we must become generous to others.

Satan does not have spiritual weapons. He uses the things of the world to overcome people. When we see people believing and acting upon the lies of the enemy, we see bondage played out before us and strongholds established.

God has established in man a desire to do the things listed above. We all have the fingerprints of God because we are made in His image. We allow Satan to corrupt these things when we follow ideologies that pervert them.

I see the redemption as follows. First the church must be redeemed and operating as designed. Then the economic system must be recreated to allow people to begin to experience the freedom from the taskmasters.

From these two the rest will flow. Creative Expression, Entertainment, and Education will be supported by the resources of the economic system and will be used to build the church.

Reforming everything requires us to take personal responsibility over these areas and use them the way God designed for them to be used. This is the way to bring glory to God and show the world His ways.

Chapter Twelve - Empower and Release

[1Th 4:9-12] Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more, and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you, so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.

I have covered many things in this book. This chapter is a summation. This will tie everything together in a plan of action for you. The Gospel is meant to empower people to sacrifice their lives for others. It is the Gospel Jesus preached and lived. It is the Gospel that the apostles preached and lived. If the Gospel does not move us to do this then we have not obeyed it. Here is what I am trying communicate to you.

1. Revisit the Gospel of Jesus. If we start with the wrong Gospel we will never get things right.
2. The first focus of your faith is to get prepared to be a useful tool for the Master. If we start with activity we may miss the instructions. We must consecrate ourselves. We need to repent of our sins as the Holy Spirit brings them to our mind. We need to accept the healing of our shame and guilt. We must live differently. Separation from the world is God's design.
3. We must learn to be a disciple and make disciples. Discipleship is the primary function of all believers in Jesus. God's design for discipleship is not done vicariously through others or an organization. God commands us to make disciples. Seek the Lord! He has works that He designed for you to do. He creates you new in Christ in order to find them and accomplish them. Seeking the works will not get you there.

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4. Join with others who are seeking to follow God's design. The Gospel of Jesus cannot be obeyed apart from a body of believers. The result of the Gospel is the church. It is not the organization that permeates the landscape in America. It is the supernaturally functioning gathering of those who have submitted their lives to Jesus as Lord.
 5. Learn about spiritual gifts. Study them in the context of the time in which they were written about. Do not put them into the man made box that is called the church today. The gifts are supernatural abilities. Do not make them into natural abilities or tendencies. Find your gift and learn to use it. This is an exploration of intimacy with God.
 6. Understand covenants. God still works through them today. We need to take our responsibility seriously. God did not save us to have the freedom to indulge in the things of the world. He saved us to restore to us our rightful positions as stewards of His creation.
 7. God leads by vision. Seek the vision He has for your life. It may be a vision that is being proclaimed by others that are already working, It may come straight from God. It does not matter where you find the vision that God desires you to follow. It will always line up with scripture. It will always be bigger than you. It will always take sacrifice to join it. The Holy Spirit will make it clear for you.
 8. Confirm your geography. Ask God where you should be ministering. No matter what the answer, you should go there. God still has a land and a seed for all of His children.
 9. Learn about spiritual battle. Study from the Bible. When we started out, we decided to stick to the Bible in matters of spiritual warfare. We had many suggestions from people about books to read and people to follow. God is faithful to teach us and guide us into all truth. We can learn about spiritual warfare

through discipleship. Just be careful when the teaching leaves scripture.

10. Dedicate yourself to Pastoring your Community. This is the way to retake the ground and bless the nations.
11. Look at every aspect of your life. Dedicate yourself to reforming everything. It does not happen all at once. We are way off track from God's design in many areas. We must be willing to follow God's design in every aspect of life. You may need to stop doing something before you know the right thing to do. You may need to immediately do something different. God will lead you if you approach Him with the desire to do right.
12. Empower and release people. The modern church is designed around control. This is not God's design. Godly leadership will equip people for the works of ministry. This requires us to recognize gifting and empower people to do what God designed for them to do. You should avoid a system if it is retaining people and controlling the use of their gifts.

As we move into the next phase of our ministry we recognize the need to empower and release on a much bigger level. We are spending more time and resources developing the training we think is needed in order to help people find God's design. Listed below are some of the tools we are making available to you. We offer these tools for free whenever possible.

[Http://www.sunministries.org](http://www.sunministries.org)

[Http://www.isaiah61initiative.org](http://www.isaiah61initiative.org)

[Http://www.discipledrivenchurch.org](http://www.discipledrivenchurch.org)

[Http://discipledrivenchurch.blogspot.com](http://discipledrivenchurch.blogspot.com)

The Resistance Radio Show is a podcast available at our BLOG or on Itunes and Stitcher

There is a companion Bible study that will help you to explore the contents of this book on a deeper level. This book is a big picture flyover of the reformation that is happening in America today. The study has been added to the end of this book and is available on the Disciple Driven Church website.

If you have connected with the contents of this book I encourage you to contact me. Come and visit us in St. Louis and see what God is doing. We offer additional training for those who wish to start new works. We are also adding new missionaries to our group. You may want to explore this teaching and lifestyle as an alternative to college or other full time ministry. We offer an Urban Missions Training Program for you. It is a free ten month training program that will let you learn and experience what it is like to live by God's design. We provide room and board and all the training materials for free.

It is my sincere desire that this book moves you to examine your faith and return to God's design for your life. Here are a few more resources to help you on the path.

For a historical look at modern church practices:
[Pagan Christianity](#) - Barna and Viola

For those suffering from the pain of past abuse:
[Pain and Pretending](#) - Rich Beuhler

[Jas 2:14-17] What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

Be the Church - Bible Study

What is the Purpose of this Study?

This study was designed for people that have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. It is a study for Christians that desire to "Be the Church" that God designed. The end result of this study will be a biblically functioning body of believers. It is not merely an intellectual pursuit. It will require action. In the end your group will be functioning as the church and ministering to the people in your community.

The study is composed of ten sessions. These sessions may be done in any time frame that fits your group. This does not need to be a ten week study. The sessions are not designed to take any specific period of time to complete. Your group should approach this study as an exploration of your faith. These are the marching orders of the Christian faith, so to speak. This is foundation that leads to action.

What will we learn?

Unfortunately, in America today, we lack foundation. We assume we know things and that is enough. This study will challenge you to do the things you know. You will examine what you know, what the Bible says and what you learned. You will work together to become spiritually disciplined, active in the spiritual battle, operating in your spiritual gifts and active serving your community. This is not a study for passive people.

The contents of the study will examine the following:

1. The Gospel
2. Spiritual Disciplines
3. The Gathering of the Believers
4. Spiritual Gifts
5. Spiritual Warfare
6. Pastoring the Community
7. Walking in the Spirit

By the end of the study your group will be a supernaturally gifted, disciplined, Spirit led body of believers that will go out and bring the Good News to your community through loving service. You will not be a perfect group. You will be a group that is a useful tool in the hands of God. He will guide you and mold you as He sees fit. Your focus will be spiritual. He will show you what to do as you dedicate yourself to knowing and serving Him!

Every Christian has had an experience with the Gospel. Our faith is to be founded on the Good News that Jesus came to preach. Today in America we see many different approaches to preaching the Gospel. We even see many variations in what people consider to be the Gospel. This study is designed to help you understand the Gospel Jesus preached, the Gospel you received and how they compare.

Getting Started

Before you begin you should pick one person to facilitate the discussion. Do not worry about keeping on track. Discussion is good. You should also dedicate a scribe to write down answers that will require discussion later. These tasks should not fall on the same person.

This is an interactive study. If you don't share what you know, this will be difficult study to use. No one is grading you or judging you. We want you to understand what your Lord Jesus preached and taught. If you have placed your faith in Him, you should want that, too.

Some sessions have homework, some questions are to be answered individually and some corporately. Most sessions have an application that will involve soul searching and action.

This study will lead your group to an active expression of your faith. Many Bible studies never take you out into the world to serve. This one is different.

After the group has read this introduction together you may begin the first session.

The Gospel of the Kingdom

[Gal 1:8] But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

Session One - What We Know

1.1

Have each group member write out a brief summary of the Gospel as they received it. Tell us three things.

1. Where you were when the Gospel was preached to you?
2. Who presented the Gospel to you?
3. How were you disciplined after you received it?

1.2

Have each person share their story including the three points. Have the group pick out the key components of the Gospel that was presented and have the scribe write them down. Example: Repent of your sins, get eternal life, etc. Take your time and make sure everyone shares their story. No one is allowed to pass.

1.3

Have the scribe compile a summary of the main points of the Gospel that was presented to all the group participants. Someone should read aloud all of the components that the scribe wrote down. Then discuss these questions:

1. Was everyone presented with the same Gospel?
2. Was everyone presented with the Gospel of the Kingdom that Jesus preached? If no, what was missing?
3. Was everyone disciplined after they received the Gospel?
4. Is the Gospel you received the same Gospel you preach today?

Many people that receive the Gospel never share it with anyone else. Recent studies show that as few as 5% of American Christians ever share their faith. What are some

things that prevent you from sharing the Gospel with others?
Have the scribe make a list.

If possible put this list on a marker or chalk board. Display it in some way so everyone can see it for discussion purposes. When looking at this list, can you come up with ways to overcome these obstacles to the Gospel? Discuss your answers together. These will be very important later in the study so keep your list of obstacles and ideas for overcoming them.

Homework - Write out your Gospel. This will be the essential elements that you would share with someone about Jesus if you were presented with the opportunity. You can do this as a group or individually.

Session Two - What the Bible Says

2.1

The word Gospel simply means Good News. If the Gospel is the Good News, what then is the bad news that the Gospel addresses? Discuss this and have the scribe write a list of the main points.

2.2

It is now time to explore the Good News that Jesus preached. Here are some verses for you to consider. Take some time to read them together. When you are ready you can move to the next step.

Here is the Gospel According to Jesus:

Repent

Matt 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 13:13:5; Luke 24:46-49

Believe

Mark 1:15; Mark 16:15-16; John 5:24; John 6:29; John 6:40; John 6:47; John 11:25-26

Confess

Matt 12:37 - For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

Be baptized

Matt 28:18-20 - the Great Commission
Mark 16:15-16

Follow

Matt 4:19; Matt 8:22; Matt 16:24; Mark 1:17; Mark 8:34-35; Mark 10:21; Luke 9:32; John 12:24-26

Obey

Matt 28:18-20 - the Great Commission
John 8:51
John 14:23-31 - obedience is essential in order to abide

Resurrection

John 6:40-54

Be humble

Matt 18:3-6

Be a servant

Matt 10:26; Mark 10:43-45; John 12:24-26

Deny yourself

Matt 16:24; 8:34-35; Luke 9:32

Take up your cross

Matt 16:24; 8:34-35; Luke 9:32; Luke 14:27

Must sell your possessions and give to the poor

Matt 19:16-21; Mark 10:21; Luke 12:33-34; Luke 14:33;
Luke 18:22

Love one another

Matt 22:37-40 - two greatest commandments - love God
and neighbor

John 13:34-35; John 15

Bear fruit

John 12:24-26; John 15

Abide

John 8:31-32; John 14:23-31; John 15

Christ will return

Matt 24; John 5:28-29

There will be reward for your sacrifice

Matt 19:29; Mark 10:29-30; Mark 10:43-45; Luke 14:13-
14

Judgment will come

Matt 16:27

2.3

Take out your homework from session one and compare your list to these verses. How many of these 18 points are in each of your Gospel?

How many of these points are not relevant today? Why?

Jesus commanded us to make disciples, not converts (Matthew 28:18-20). Discuss the difference between a disciple and a convert. Which does your Gospel produce?

Your group should discuss the following question. If God gives you the privilege of preaching the Gospel to someone

and they receive it, what are the next steps you should take with them? Have the scribe make a list of responses.

Homework - Take the list of next steps and find bible verses that support them.

Session Three - What I Learned

Here is a summary of what you should have at this point in the study. If you don't have these things then you have not completed your assignments and cannot proceed. Stop and be sure you have these things completed before moving on.

1. You have a list of the main points or components that were presented to your group members when they received the Gospel.
2. You have a list of 18 points of the Gospel of Jesus outlined in Scripture.
 - You have a list of Gospel points that are no longer relevant.
 - You have a list of the main points of the bad news the Gospel addresses.
 - You have a list of what prevents you from preaching the Gospel and ideas of how to overcome those obstacles.
3. You have a list of things that you would do as follow up to a decision to accept the Gospel and the Bible verses to support those actions.

Take a few minutes and examine your lists. Does your Gospel address the bad news it was designed to address? Is it complete? If not, what points in your Gospel are lacking?

Before you can "Be the Church" you must become grounded in the Gospel. It is the foundation of everything the Christian faith has to offer. We must be sure we understand the Gospel, are able to communicate the Gospel, live according to our Gospel and have a plan for what to do if someone accepts our Gospel.

The unity of your group starts with the Gospel. In the early church we see that they were said to be of one mind [Acts 2:46]. Before you continue in this study, you should take the time to agree as a group on the following items. Write them out.

Don't be afraid to discuss them. Make sure you can back up your points from the Bible.

1. What Gospel will we preach?
2. Will we all live that Gospel?
3. How will we, as a group, work to overcome the obstacles that prevent us from sharing the Gospel with others?
4. What is our plan to make disciples if the Lord allows us to preach the Gospel and someone accepts it?

[John 3:36] "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

The Gospel is designed by God to be obeyed. If we preach a Gospel that we do not obey we make ourselves to be hypocrites. Jesus has nothing good to say about hypocrites. We are commanded by Jesus to make disciples and teach them to obey. Our Gospel is the key element of this process. It is time to align our Gospel with our lives. Write out the Gospel as you now see it. Make a plan to overcome the obstacles you have outlined. Make a plan to follow up with those who receive your Gospel. Dedicate your group to praying for an opportunity to present the Gospel.

Spiritual Disciplines

Session Four - What we know

4.1

In Matthew 13, Jesus paints a word picture of how the kingdom operates. Read the parable of the sower and then see which soil best relates to your life at this time. Have each person write down their perceived soil in their own notes. You can share them if you like but it is not required.

There are four reactions to the sowing of the Word.

- The hard roadside - The Word is snatched away
- The rocky soil - Springs up, receives the Word with joy and quickly falls away - no depth
- The thorny soil - Choked out. No fruit due to the worries of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth.
- Good soil - Bears fruit of varying abundance.

Your soil can be changed! That is part of the Good News. If we are not happy with our soil condition, we can take steps to change it.

Paul instructs Timothy to be disciplined. *[1Ti 4:7] But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;*

Hebrews 12 tells us that if the Lord does not discipline us then we are illegitimate children.

Discipline is important to the Christian faith.

Spiritual disciplines are patterns or habits that we build into our lives in order to make it easier to hear and obey God. These disciplines have the following qualities.

1. They must be done regularly.
2. They must be developed or improved upon in our lives.

-
3. They are deliberate choices we make.
 4. They involve the discipline (or control) of our wills.
 5. They strengthen our spirits by denying our fleshly desires.
 6. They produce character and spiritual formation.

4.2

Some disciplines are personal. You do them by yourself. Others are designed to be done together.

1. List as many personal spiritual disciplines as you can. Have the Scribe make a list.

Have each person make two lists for themselves. The first list should contain all of the personal disciplines you have ever done. The second list should contain the personal disciplines that are a regular part of your life. You do not need to share these lists.

Take a few minutes and have each person share their favorite personal discipline and how it has impacted their faith.

4.3

Now list as many group disciplines as you can and have the Scribe make a list.

Have each person make two lists for themselves. The first list should contain all of the group disciplines you have ever done. The second list should contain the group disciplines that are a regular part of your life. You do not need to share these lists.

Take a few minutes and have each person share their favorite group discipline and how it has impacted their faith.

Session Five - What the Bible says

There are at least ten individual spiritual disciplines instructed or displayed by example in the Bible.

1. Prayer - communicating with God.
2. Bible Study - understanding the Word of God.
3. Fasting - deliberately choosing to abstain from food.
4. Meditation - going deeply into passages of Scripture.
5. Journaling - recording your thoughts and events in a book.
6. Living by Faith — walking in the Spirit.
7. Evangelism - sharing your faith with another person or group.
8. Stewardship - surrendering your possessions to the Lord.
9. Giving - intentionally giving to the poor and to build God's kingdom.
10. Serving - having a ministry.

These can be separated into two groups.

- **Inward disciplines**
The “First Works”
- **Outward Disciplines**
The “Growth Works”

Inward Disciplines — The foundations for a Godly life

- Prayer — communicating with God
- Bible study — understanding the Word of God
- Fasting — deliberately choosing to abstain from food
- Meditation — going deeply into passages of Scripture
- Journaling — recording your thoughts and events in a book.

The Outward Disciplines - The foundations for building the kingdom

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- Living by Faith — walking in the Spirit.
 - Evangelism - sharing your faith with another person or group.
 - Stewardship - surrendering your possessions to the Lord.
 - Giving - intentionally giving to the poor and to build God's kingdom.
 - Serving - having a ministry - Pastoring your community.

Here are nine other things that require discipline and can help us grow in our faith.

1. Silence — not speaking for periods of time
2. Simplicity — doing the same things with fewer resources
3. Solitude — deliberately being alone with God
4. Submission — choosing to yield your rights to another, humility
5. Secrecy — doing acts of kindness secretly
6. Watching — spending extended times in prayer
7. Frugality — abstaining from using money to gratify our desires
8. Sacrifice — abstaining from the enjoyment of necessary things
9. Celibacy — purposefully abstaining from sexual intercourse

Corporate Disciplines — Things we do with other believers

Corporate Prayer — prayer with others

Confession — telling our faults and sins to another

Celebration — honoring a person or event with others

Worship — expressing praise and adoration for God with others

Guidance — seeking the wisdom and counsel of others

5.1

I have listed a total of 24 disciplines. How many of these were on your group's list?

What are some obstacles that prevent you from incorporating the personal spiritual disciplines into your daily life? Make a list as a group.

What will it take to overcome these obstacles? Make a list of ideas for overcoming the obstacles.

What are the obstacles that prevent you from incorporating the corporate disciplines into your life? Make a list as a group.

What will it take to overcome these obstacles? Make a list of ideas for overcoming the obstacles.

What should I do next?

There is one thing we all have in common. We have 24 hours in a day. If you are like most people, you are already using all of these hours each day. In order to become disciplined for the purpose of godliness we must replace something in our life with spiritual disciplines.

Take some time to examine what you are willing to remove from your life in order to add spiritual disciplines. Make a personal list. You do not need to share it but can if the group desires to do so.

There is no easy way to add discipline to your life. If your group wants to add disciplines into their daily life I have a plan. Start with the inward disciplines.

Inward Disciplines — The foundations for a Godly life

- Prayer — communicating with God
- Bible study — understanding the Word of God

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- Fasting — deliberately choosing to abstain from food
 - Meditation — going deeply into passages of Scripture
 - Journaling — recording your thoughts and events in a book.

Fasting is the key to strengthening your spirit and subduing the flesh. It is foundational to starting a disciplined life.

Agree as a group to fast together one day per week. Make it a 24 hour fast. Nothing after dinner but liquids until you meet together for dinner the next night. As a part of this fast you should pick a passage of scripture. Read it alone, study it alone, pray over it alone and write out your thoughts on it alone.

When you come together each week you can share a meal and break your fast. Each person can share what they wrote about the passage and you can enjoy the discussion. After you have done this for several weeks you will notice that you have established five basic disciplines in your life.

The Sacred Assembly - The Gathering for Worship

Session Six - What we know

For many people their understanding of the church is influenced more by the traditions and structures of the churches they attend than they are by scripture. These sessions will help us to look at the church described in scripture and align ourselves with God's design for the church.

1. Have the group read a few passages of the Bible that are their favorite descriptions of the church.
2. Have the group define the term church. Have the Scribe record the answer.
3. What are the essential elements or components of the church? Have the Scribe record the answer.
4. What leadership is required for the local church? Have the Scribe record the answer.
5. List some of the functions of the local church. What is it supposed to do? Have the Scribe record the answer.

When you combine these lists you now have a definition and description of the church according to your group. It describes what it is, what it is made of, how its led and what it should do. Be thorough. This may appear to be a short session but it should take time to do a complete job. Review the information and refine your answers.

Session Seven - What the Bible says

Strong's Concordance G1577

ekklēsia - (ek-klay-see'-ah) a calling out, i.e. (concretely) a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both): Assembly, church.

The word church in the New Testament simply refers to the called out ones. The church in Scripture is referred to as being subject to Christ, with Christ as its head, a body, specifically Christ's body, the pillar and support of truth and the household of God. It includes those enrolled in heaven.

The church is made up only of those who have placed their faith in Christ. It is designed by God for a purpose and it has a specific way in which it is designed to be led and operate.

How is the church to be led? There are plenty of modern and traditional ideas, covering everything from pastors, bishops, and popes to youth ministers, Sunday school, and worship service. Although Scripture does not contain an order of service, it does mention spiritual gifts, leadership, and care of the church. There are numerous descriptions and commands given to believers, leaders, and the church as a whole to guide us forward. Also, the Bible speaks clearly that God gives His Holy Spirit to His people to empower them, and it speaks clearly of spiritual gifts. The proper, biblical functioning of the Church is dependent on the Holy Spirit, Godly leadership, and believers walking in their giftings.

1 Corinthians 12-14 describes the functioning of the church as it gathers for worship. Ephesians 4 tells us of the gifting that God designed to lead and equip those in the church for the works of service. This implies that service is a primary function of the church. The Book of Acts describes the functioning of the early church. From all of this we can conclude the following:

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- The Church is established and built up by Christ.
 - The Church is led by Christ through the Holy Spirit.
 - The Leadership of the church is based on spiritual gifting. The only offices described in scripture are overseer and deacon.
 - Every person in the worship gathering is free to participate through their own spiritual gifting.
 - The church shares everything it has with each other.
 - The church manifests the power of God to the world.

These things that are not in the church we find in scripture.

- Unbelievers
- Tithing
- Worship Leaders
- Denominations
- Senior Pastors
- Public open worship gatherings

There is firm scriptural support for the six things in the first list. There is no scriptural support for anything in the second list. The New Covenant changed the structure of the church. The things found in the Old Covenant were done away with. The structure outlined in the New Testament is God's design for His church.

Many in your group may have trouble with this section. If they do, you should take some time to look up any scripture that supports the things I listed as not being in the church. You may find reference to overseers, bishops, etc... These are not the same as the positions we see in churches today. You must study the historical context of these positions in order to understand the differences. The early church that functioned by God's design did not have paid leadership positions that congregations hired to fill.

The Bible gives us plenty of instruction on how to order the church. Why do you think so many churches do things their own way and add to the instructions? Is this OK?

Discuss what you can do to return to God's design for His church. How will you recognize leadership? How will you order your services?

Spiritual Gifts

Section Eight - What we know

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware. · (1 Cor 12:1)

God does not want us unaware (literally, ignorant) about spiritual things, especially spiritual gifts.

The phrase “spiritual gift” is used only once in Scripture, in Romans 1:11, where Paul tells the Roman disciples, “For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established.” The spiritual gifts establish or set us in the body. (1 Corinthians 12:18, 28)

The Holy Spirit places us in the church by the gifts He has given us. The church is designed to be built on Christ, the chief cornerstone, and to function on the basis of spiritual gifts.

Take a few minutes and read through 1 Corinthians chapters 12 - 14. The focus of Paul's writing here is the proper working of Spiritual gifts in the worship gathering of the Sacred Assembly.

The Bible mentions 25-30 spiritual gifts. Some are in the Old Testament, some in the New. Some are clearly listed, while others are demonstrated. What are spiritual gifts? They are part of how God created His people and His church. They are spiritual abilities, motivations, or inclinations that God grants to His people. They are His grace on us. We are to use these to build the Kingdom, whether it's ministering to believers, or preaching the Gospel and serving the poor out in the World. Walking in your spiritual gift is part of walking in who God made you to be. God made everyone for a purpose. And when they enter into His covenant, He returns His Holy Spirit to them, and they are empowered to take part in building His Kingdom. If you're not walking in your spiritual gifting, you're missing out on part of your life in Christ.

Take a few minutes and list as many spiritual gifts as you can. Have your scribe record the list. How many did you come up with?

Now remove any that are just natural abilities. Spiritual gifts are supernatural abilities endowed on us by the Holy Spirit. Some natural abilities can be empowered to work supernaturally. The Bible mentions that Craftsmanship was supernaturally empowered by the Spirit. [Exodus 31:3]

1. Have each person make a list of the gift(s) they think they have been given.
2. How many gifts are represented in your group? Have the scribe record a list.
3. Read 1 Corinthians 12:23-24. How does it say that God brings honor to people in the church?
4. What is the negative effect on these people if the gifts are not allowed to operate in the worship gathering?

Preparing for Spiritual Warfare

Section Nine - What should I do next?

Let's recap what we have learned so far.

1. We have examined our Gospel and written out what we will preach, teach and live. Our Gospel is now matching our life.
2. We have examined spiritual disciplines and incorporated the five inward disciplines into our lives. We are trying to lead a more disciplined life.
3. We are gathering with a group that is made up only of those who profess Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
4. We are working in or seeking to understand and operate in our spiritual gifts.

If you have taken all these steps I want to congratulate you. You are now functioning as the Sacred Assembly! You are doing as Paul instructed in 2 Timothy 2:19-21 *"Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness." Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work."*

It is time to prepare to go out into the world and make disciples. Your first step to doing this is prayer.

1. Take a few minutes to discuss the ways that you see evil affecting your community. Have your scribe make a list.
2. Look at your list and discuss some ways that you can come against evil both physically and spiritually. Have your scribe make a list. These are now your group's prayer targets.

Spiritual Warfare must be fought in both a physical and spiritual way. As you go out into your community to defeat evil, God will open opportunity for you to bear spiritual fruit.

Make a plan to use this meeting time to go out and serve your community. Pick one of the ways you see evil impacting your community and discuss how to stop it. It may be as simple as picking up trash. It may be as personal as fixing a widow's porch. It does not have to be something big. It should be something that everyone agrees is within your power to fix now. God will bring you bigger challenges as you walk in obedience and faith.

Whatever you decide to do should be made into a prayer target. Decide together what you will ask God to do. Make sure you are all continuing in your spiritual disciplines together and add these new prayer targets to your list.

Pastoring the Community

Section Ten - Building the Kingdom

Once the sacred assembly is restored and functioning by God's design, we must move to begin pastoring our community. The church is referenced in the New Testament in two contexts. There is a general reference to the church universal which is the bride of Christ and is composed of all those who have their name written in the Book of Life. However, the main references to the earthly church in the New Testament are in the context of location. We see the church at Jerusalem — Acts 11:22, the church at Antioch - Acts 13:1, the church at Ephesus — Acts 20:17, the church at Cenchrea — Romans 16:1, etc. There is no reference to denominations or separations in the local church that are by God's design. All such divisions are dealt with as just that — division!

When we look at God's pattern and design for the church we can see that it is a vehicle of blessing for the nations. We can see that God designed the local church to be unified and led by elders, deacons, and the leadership gifts. Leadership is designed to be accomplished through equipping. Ephesians four outlines the equipping gifts. When the sacred assembly is functioning it will be operating under Spirit-led leadership by God's design and it will be a blessing to those around it.

In order to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit you must learn to walk in the Spirit. Just as fasting is the key to the inward disciplines, walking in the Spirit is the key to the outward disciplines.

Some Guidelines for Walking in the Spirit

1. Only those who are born again can walk in the Spirit (John 3:3).
2. Spiritual maturity helps us to walk in the Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

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3. Have no condemnation - We must let the Gospel free us from the shame and the guilt of our past. (Romans 8:1).
 4. We must have no fear (Romans 8:15).
 5. Develop and operate in your spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1).
 6. Do not be entangled in the world (2 Timothy 2:14).
 7. Master spiritual disciplines (1 Timothy 4:7).
 8. Follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14).
 9. Fill your life with God's Word (John 8:32).
 10. Trust God for every need (Matthew 6:28-32).
 11. Resist the devil (James 4:7).
 12. Master your fleshly desires (Galatians 5:16-17).
 13. Develop discernment (Philippians 1:9).

How do we follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit

- 1 Promptings are inward urgings to do God's will.
- 2 Our spirit understands them as the Holy Spirit fills us.
- 3 They are usually opposite to our basic desires and inclinations.
- 4 They are always in harmony with the total message of the Scriptures.
- 5 They almost always involve less control on our part.
- 6 They always require faith.

Now that your group is ready to step out in faith you should make a plan for your first trip. Use the other five disciplines listed below as tools to open the door for the Gospel.

The Outward Disciplines - The foundations for building the kingdom

- Living by Faith — walking in the Spirit.
- Evangelism - sharing your faith with another person or group.

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- Stewardship - surrendering your possessions to the Lord.
 - Giving - intentionally giving to the poor and to build God's kingdom.
 - Serving - having a ministry - Pastoring your community.

Making a Plan

The outward disciplines work together. As you go out and serve, identify needs. Take some of your money as a group and dedicate it to meeting the needs you find. Giving in this way leads you to understand biblical stewardship. Serving opens opportunity to evangelize. Don't force it. The goal is to obey God, not make converts. If we obey God He will give us the privilege of making disciples. This may take time.

Your group can walk in service to the world and see the fruit of their labor. You may decide to do this on a larger level. Listed below are some steps we recommend that will help you open opportunity for ministry.

Steps to Pastoring Your Community

- Ask the community leaders how you can help.
- Get in the habit of serving others. Take on special community projects and bless them by serving.
- Clean up the place.
- Do prayer walks in the community.
- Pray for and with the people you meet.
- Always teach your disciples to serve the community
- God's heart is with the widows, orphans and the poor. Locate them in your community and serve them. Many times there are extensive services available to these groups. Become aware of them and help these people to take full advantage of what is available to them.

What's Next?

As you lead people to the Gospel you must be ready to disciple them and add them to your group. Don't worry about adding structure or leadership until it is absolutely necessary. God will raise up the leadership you need. Only add structure that you can validate from scripture. Congratulations on your new abundant life. Drop me a note and let me know how things are going. If you need additional support just ask.

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Additional Resources

Disciple Driven Church

Web Site · www.discipledrivenchurch.org

Blog · discipledrivenchurch.blogspot.com

Sun Ministries

Web Site · www.sunministries.org

Blog · sunministries.blogspot.com

The Isaiah 61 Initiative

Web Site · www.isaiah61initiative.org

The following resources are available —

3-week Inner City missions training on location in St. Louis
Missouri

Dr. Terry Goodwin is available for a limited number of speaking engagements. He does not charge for speaking engagements and is available as long as funds to cover the expenses for these engagements are available.

Isaiah 58 prayer and fasting on the first Sunday of each month. Have your group join groups from across America in fasting and praying for revival and reformation in America.

For more information on any of these resources contact terry@sunministries.org

This book is born out of reformation. The church that Christ started on the Day of Pentecost was a loosely structured organism that operated under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and manifested His power through the spiritual gifts of the disciples. By the time of the Protestant Reformation, the church was a strictly structured and ordered organization with a leadership structure that had little in common with the early church or the instruction of scripture. This present reformation is about returning to God's design. How can it be bad for Christ followers to live by God's design? How can it be bad for the church to order itself under the structure designed for it by God and instructed in scripture?



Dr. Terry Goodwin is the founder and Executive Director of Sun Ministries. He and his wife, Suzette, have raised 5 children together. As missionaries to America, they find themselves ministering together in one of the poorest and most devastated areas of North St. Louis.



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