

2011

Vision 52

Our Seed

Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For

the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

Habakkuk 2:2-3



"There shall come a breath and the breath shall bring the wind and the wind shall bring the rain and the rain shall bring the floods and floods and floods and the floods shall bring the torrents and torrents and torrents.

So shall they be saved like falling leaves from the mighty oaks swept by a hurricane in a great forest. Arms and legs shall come down from heaven and there shall be no ebb."

PROPHECY FROM 1934; ARTHUR BURT

It is deeply seated in the heart of God to see His sons and daughters come into their inheritance, co-laboring with Him to continue what Jesus, His Son, reinstated ... the restoration of all things! Jesus clearly passed the baton when He said, "*as I have been sent, so I now send you.*"

It is very important that the believer be properly equipped to engage this assignment. There are specific areas that need to be addressed in the process of making one whole and prepared, such as love, honor, character, submission, understanding, provision, proper order, etc.. I believe this vision is a launching pad for that purpose.

We declare this word of God over you as you engage this vision:

"... that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated [Him] at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

(Eph 1:17-23)

THOMAS STREBEIGH

In the following pages I share my thoughts on the church and the purpose of our calling. These thoughts draw from years of ministry and the many discussions, observations, insights and convictions formed over that period. It is a document that I hope will appeal to every believer, young and old, but especially those in ministry or aspiring to be in ministry.

We are now at an important point in the story of the church of Jesus Christ, one that has been highly anticipated by many ... to see the seed of Christ, the ecclesia, rise up and assume its proper place in creation. As much as this is exciting, it is also challenging. Changes are necessary and inevitable; some of them significant. No longer will the value of each believer be measured by their capacity to fund programs or advance agendas, but embraced as the object of God's deep affection, and viewed as co-laborers and fellow heirs in advancing the Father's desires, with each member contributing to that cause according to the measure of grace apportioned them.

With this in mind, I encourage you to read further and allow the Holy Spirit to paint the Father's dream on the canvas of your heart.

It's an amazing picture.

VINCENT CANNATELLO

PART 1

DEEP TRANSFORMATION

[Matt 26] *Later, out by the gate, another servant girl noticed him and said to those standing around, "This man (Peter) was with Jesus of Nazareth. Again Peter denied it, this time with an oath. "I don't even know the man," he said. A little later some of the other bystanders came over to Peter and said, "You must be one of them; we can tell by your Galilean accent." Peter swore, "A curse on me if I'm lying—I don't know the man!" And immediately the rooster crowed.*

[Acts 2] *"So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!" Peter's words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"*

These two accounts bookend one of the most amazing personal transformations in the early church ... and it took only 52 days to unfold.

In the first account, we find Peter fervently protecting his life by denying all association with Jesus. He even goes as far as to call a curse upon himself if his denials were proven false; an act that amplifies the seriousness of his rejection. These denials were not impulsive emotional responses; they took place during the interrogation proceedings of Jesus by the Sanhedrin, which we know lasted at least one hour¹. That provided sufficient time for Peter to compose himself and consider his actions; to stand by his friend who stood by him in many challenging times. But he didn't, and so history records his deep betrayal.

But this story doesn't end here for Peter. It's not long after this incident that he finds himself among the 120 who are obeying Jesus' directive to *"stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven."*²

Then, when the Holy Spirit filled everyone in the upper room, it was Peter who stepped out from among them to explain this unusual occurrence. He proceeded to publicly and unashamedly proclaim the Gospel to all who would listen. And many did. Then, at the end of his discourse, Peter made this bold statement ... *"so let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!"*³

In this closing comment, Peter intentionally and publicly committed capital treason in two cultures.

To the Romans, he said that Tiberius Caesar is not who he believes he is ... the supreme lord over the known, civilized world. There can only be one **Lord**, and that title belongs to Jesus, and He alone. Peter knew his statement marked him as an insurrectionist and an enemy of the Roman empire, punishable by death.

*Peter intentionally
and publicly committed
capital treason in two cultures*

To the Jews who were in Jerusalem for the Passover and Pentecost feasts, Peter testified as an expert eye-witness that Jesus is indeed the anticipated **Messiah**, the central figure of their religion and their culture. In doing so, Peter made the same claim that Jesus Himself

made, which earned Him a death sentence not long before Peter's sermon.

So, in this one unambiguous statement, Peter crossed a transformational threshold that should inspire every believer in Christ. From passionately denying his Lord in order to protect his life, to publicly laying his life down so that the good news of Jesus and His accomplishments would be known.

What does this mean for us?

First, this transformation is not unique to Peter. According to church history, all of the apostles, with the exception of Judas Iscariot but including Paul, experienced a comparable paradigm shift, often at the cost of their lives.

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So it stands to reason that we, as fellow believers and heirs of the same inheritance, ought to expect a similar radical shift, one that changes our worldview, our allegiance to a carnal culture, and our sense of self-preservation. A shift that comes only by submitting to the Holy Spirit.

Unfortunately, for many the issues of life cloud their view, distract their attention, and hijack their understanding of faith. The Gospel is too often presented as a 'personal development' tool to help people deal with the physical, emotional, relational and financial problems of life. Although these areas are important and are addressed as we press into our journey of

faith in Christ, the essential revelation of the Gospel must transcend far above the notion that Jesus came simply to offer an antidote for life's issues. The Gospel, at its core, is all about new life, not a refurbished or 'better life'. Life that is whole and complete ... life that the scriptures call "zoē".

ZOË

Appearing in the New Testament 134 times, 'zoē' is the Greek word for life or life-giving. It represents the fullness of life, temporal and eternal, covering both the spiritual (pneuma) and the biological (bios).

In the opening chapter of his Gospel, John writes "*in Him (Jesus) was life (zoē), and the life was the light of men.*"⁴ Later on, in chapter 7, he quotes Jesus saying "*He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living (zoē) water.*"⁵ And in chapter 10 ... "*I have come that they may have life (zoē), and that they may have it more abundantly.*"⁶

These verses are just a few of many that highlight the main theme of Jesus' assignment ... to bring into the world a dimension of life that didn't exist before. A life that was distant to mankind and unreachable by man's ability or wisdom. It was Albert Einstein who correctly said "*no problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.*" Although man trapped himself under the law of death by his own treason, he needed the intervention of a higher entity to free him. This was why Jesus came and why He brought with Him zoē life in abundant measure!

It's this life that made possible the covenant which restored us in relationship to God; a life that is superior to our natural existence, rises far above the popular belief that Jesus came

simply to show us an improved way of living, and is available to all who place their faith in Christ. This life is unprecedented, entirely unique, and other-worldly.

In his first letter to the church at Corinth, Paul states that *"the first man, Adam, became a living being. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit."*⁷ This life is the force that overcame the grip of death and reconciled us to our Creator. As we place our faith in Jesus, *zoē* life becomes the new law that rules our days ... *"for the law of the Spirit of life (zoē) in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."*⁸

By the time we get to Acts 2, Peter is well acquainted with this new life. He likely remembered Jesus' word's *"for whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."*⁹ Peter certainly found it, and it changed him forever.

So, how do we get there? How do we experience this deep and total metamorphosis? If these questions echo in your heart, I recommend you read on!

THE FATHER'S DREAM

To better understand the nature of this metamorphosis, it's helpful to step back a bit and consider what motivated Jesus to do what He did. The Apostle John can help us here as he was the closest to Jesus and was likely the one Jesus confided in the most. As we see below, John's writings reveal Jesus' motivation more than any of the other New Testament books. Here are some of his excerpts:

John 4:34 *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work."*

John 5:19 *"I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner."*

John 5:30 *"I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me."*

John 6:38 *"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."*

John 8:28 *"... I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things."*

It's life that is superior to our natural existence, rises far above the popular belief that Jesus came simply to show us an improved way of living.

John 12:49-50 *"For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."*

John 14:31 *"But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do."*

1 John 5:20 *"And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him (the Father) who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life (zoē)."*

It is clear from these scriptures that Jesus was not motivated by His own agenda. All the miracles He performs, all the teachings He gives, and all the people He encounters are for one purpose and one purpose only ... to fulfill His Father's dream. And that dream has always been to reconcile all of creation in His Son, and, in doing so, bring eternal life to all who place their faith in Him.

With His purpose firmly established, Jesus completes His assignment with an overwhelming victory over death. On that resurrection morning 2000 years ago the Father's dream was sealed, the new covenant established, and provision for new creation made available to all humanity. This is the good news of the Gospel ... the message that is to be proclaimed to the nations!

We, likewise, as believers, receive the very same mission.

Soon after the resurrection, Jesus appears to His disciples to announce "*as the Father has sent Me, I also send you*".¹⁰ At that moment they were commissioned to continue Jesus' ministry, expand His Kingdom, and be living witnesses of new life. Likewise, we, as believers, have received the very same mission. And like the early disciples, are to be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to carry out that mission. This infilling marks the beginning of a process in which we progressively mature into the fullness of Christ, growing up in all things into Him who is the head. This beginning all starts when we are *born again*.

UNLESS ONE IS BORN AGAIN

It was under the cover of darkness one evening when Nicodemus, a member of the Pharisees, approached Jesus to ask Him how He performs

miracles. Jesus responded that '*unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*'.¹¹ Jesus then goes on to describe the mystery of being born by the Spirit.

To this day, many misunderstand the premise of this conversation. 'Born again' has become a popular religious and political term associated with a people group, and often connotes what people need to 'be' in order to go to heaven when they die. When Jesus said '*unless one is born again*', He was not talking about membership into a religious fraternity, but a transformational process that all who place their faith in Him must undergo. A profound regeneration.

We gain further insight into the nature of this regeneration by considering the image of 'birth' that Jesus uses in His conversation with Nicodemus.

From the moment of birth, all children begin developing along three areas ... their worldview, their language, and their instincts. Their worldview is formed by their social condition, environment and culture (their world); their language is how they communicate to that world; and their instincts influence how they interact with it.

Jesus was saying to Nicodemus that to 'see' the Kingdom of God, he must be spiritually born in a similar way he was naturally born. That is, he needs to develop a spiritual worldview, a spiritual language, and spiritual instincts. We, as believers, also must develop in like manner.

Our spiritual worldview is no longer limited to the natural boundaries of our senses and life experiences. This new reality is based on a Kingdom that, though not seen, is supreme, ever present and without end. The laws of this Kingdom supersede all other laws; it's the realm of Jesus' authority and the home of our

ambassadorship. It is this Kingdom that Jesus said we are to pursue above all other pursuits, so that it's culture can reshape what every culture shapes ... our appearance, our appetite, and our passion.

Our spiritual language also transcends natural boundaries. Just as Jacob saw a ladder being raised from earth to heaven and angels crossing it, so our life and therefore our language ought to bridge two worlds. It's not a coincidence that a supernatural expression of language marked the infilling of the disciples in Acts 2 as well as numerous other accounts in the early church. Simply put, our words carry great power, and when they are formed together in a language by the Holy Spirit, we release truth and declare the deep mysteries of God.

Finally, there are spiritual instincts.

An instinct is an inborn tendency or impulse. We naturally possess scores of them, and they manifest in our behavior and reflexes. Some instincts are present at birth, while others develop over time. Spiritual instincts, therefore, are the tendencies and impulses of our renewed spirit man, or as Paul says, our 'inner man'. It is instinctual for our inner man to trust God, to believe His Word, and to hear His voice ... to live life far beyond natural limits. These spiritual instincts are expressed through faith, the evidence of a reality in which we *call those things which do not exist as though they did*¹² (traversing two worlds). Faith, working through love, becomes a natural way of living, and not just a spiritual concept we frantically attempt to understand and employ in crisis situations. We learn from the scriptures that a continuous life of faith is the only way to please God, and, therefore, essential to carry out His dream.

From this vantage point we see that being 'born again' is not a static, singular event, but the start of the re-birthing process and the beginning of a transformative and wonderful journey led by the Holy Spirit. All believers, without exception, are called to travel this path. Just as it is necessary to be born naturally to enter biological life, it is necessary to be born of the Spirit to enter 'zoē' life. But it's important to remember that this is a process, one that is measured not by age, as is the case with natural maturity, but by obedience. Jesus said *"If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."*¹³

... being 'born again' is not a static, singular event, but the start of the re-birthing process and the beginning of a transformative and wonderful journey led by the Holy Spirit

So we should expect to approach life progressively, maturing in stages, individually and corporately, as we advance from faith to faith. Luke records Jesus growing in this same manner ... *"Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."*¹⁴ Paul also refers to this process in his letter to the Ephesians as he describes the eventual development of the church in relation to Christ ... *"till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"*.¹⁵ A little later in this letter, Paul envisions a matured church, one that emerges out of adolescence, ready to assume the responsibilities that comes with stewarding the Father's dream. He writes *"that He (Jesus) might present her to Himself a*

*glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."*¹⁶

It is this hope that stirs our hearts and gives life to this vision ... to see each member of the Body of Christ whom we touch come to a place of maturity and wholeness. ... to see them radically transformed like Peter. Then to see a company of transformed believers, *joined together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*¹⁷

This is our dream. Now is our time.

OUR TIME

In a recent blog posting on christianpost.com, George W. Sarris insightfully describes the condition of the church. He opens with this statement ...

"During the last 50 years, the evangelical church grew in size at a tremendous rate to the point where we have mega-churches and mega-ministries. Unprecedented numbers of people have attended seminars, crusades, concerts and large arena events. We've built publishing companies and broadcast organizations to get our messages out to an ever increasing public. In 1960, there were less than 100 churches in this country that had over 1,000 members. Today, more than 10,000 churches have congregations of that size and much, much larger.

However, during that same half century, the values of our society have moved rapidly away from Biblical standards. There is rampant immorality. Cases of abuse have proliferated, even in the church. And, we see a

*headlong quest for wealth, power, and sensual pleasure all around us ... What did we do wrong? We have grown tremendously in size, but smaller in influence."*¹⁸

Mr. Sarris goes on to discuss the distortion in many Christian's understanding of the 'Great Commission', distinguishing the call to make 'converts' from the call to make 'disciples'. According to Matthew 28, it's the latter we are to undertake although we've seemed to have mastered the former.

*This is our dream.
Now is our time.*

This situation parallels the problem Alexander the Great faced in 327 BC. Having quickly conquered a vast territory, stretching from Macedonia (Greece) to India, he was challenged with the task of retaining this land. Shortly after his death at the age of 33, Alexander's kingdom was divided among his four generals, ushering in the Hellenistic Age. It was during this period that the Greek culture ... art, philosophy, education, architecture and politics ... was spread to these conquered lands in order to assimilate them; a process called 'Hellenization'.

Looking back in time, we see the broad influence Hellenization had on many cultures. However, it failed to make actual Greek nationals from the Persians, Jews, Egyptians, or any of the other people groups Alexander conquered. Rather, they became Greek-flavored Persians, Greek-flavored Jews, and Greek-flavored Egyptians, so to speak. Though influenced by Hellenization, history tells us that much of their native cultures remained intact.

In a similar manner, the church's effort to reach the world has resulted in more Christian-flavored converts than disciples that are deeply transformed by the Holy Spirit and equipped to carry the Father's dream. Although Christian values have influenced our moral code and social norms, much of the world's culture has remained largely unchanged, and has even been absorbed by the church. The pursuit of money, fame, and power are, unfortunately, all too common. It can be said the church has done more to 'Christianize' our nation than to disciple it. In doing so, the church has succumbed to the pressure of conformity and the world's view of social relevance.

Now is the time to come to terms with our true purpose

We've recently seen the fruit of this condition with the movement among several prominent ministries to merge Christian and Islamic liturgies in what has been coined "Chrislam" (see Appendix C for more information). Postured to demonstrate the church's desire to embrace tolerance and ecumenical peace, interfaith activities like this are naively and broadly accepted by Christians as bold acts of love. In reality, they are extremely dangerous, deceptive and misguided, contributing to the dilution of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the disempowerment of the church.

This level of compromise is accelerating the significant generational drain that has been taking place in the church. Just in the past ten years some 37,000 American churches have closed their doors. Churches in the U.S. lose about 2,765,000 members each year and 18,000 pastors leave the ministry annually. Only 2.2% of churches in the United States are growing¹⁹ while Mosque construction is at an all-time high with a 57 percent increase since

2000²⁰. These statistics show that we are moving quickly towards a predominantly secularized society and away from our Judeo-Christian roots.

Now is the time to come to terms with our true purpose; now is the time to be equipped. The world must see us for who we are ... the seed of Christ, the most powerful and influential entity on this planet! The fear based message that has dominated our expression and long defined our modus operandi to proselytize people with an emphasis on the avoidance of hell and the escape of this planet must give way to the demonstrable power of God's love. This is our invitation to discipleship.

This love is a real and relevant force, one that ought to "*compel us*"²¹ as it did Paul and deeply influence us as he describes in Romans 8 ... "*for I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"²²

Although the rejection of Christ has severe consequences and is indeed a vital topic to be shared, the core message of the Gospel has always centered around the restored relationship we have with the Father, our participation with the Holy Spirit in the redemption of creation, and the indescribable love He wants people to experience through His Son. This message applies to all humanity, not only those facing life's challenges.

Love, not fear, must be the motivator of our life, our relationship with God, our relationship with others, our pursuit of holiness, and our desire to mature in Christ. It is this love that draws us into deeper intimacy with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is this love that

releases the power of God in a darkened world. It is this love that enables our faith, gives life to our dreams, and stretches our vision.

Now is the time to see this love unleashed without restraint, so a wayward world can meet an amazingly good and loving God. Partnering with the Holy Spirit to bring this about in our time is our dream and the essential premise of our vision.

This vision is presented in the next section. It is our prayer and hope that it resonates in your heart as it does in ours so that we may journey together on the greatest of all endeavors.

PART 2

A PERFECT MAN

If Jesus was all about the Father's dream, then should not we, as His seed in the Earth, share that same passion? Of course! But we don't arrive there by chance or by tenure. We must be brought to that place through discipleship that is only possible in the context of genuine and committed relationship. That is what this vision is about ... building a framework and creating an environment designed to equip and mature believers so they are fully prepared to carry on the Father's dream.

The scripture that lies at the core of this vision is Ephesians 4:11-16:

"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head --Christ-- from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."

Paul writes about the hope we have of arriving at a place where we, as the church, develop into a perfect man that is measured against the highest of all standards ... Jesus Christ Himself. A place where every member, with no

exception, contributes using the gifts and desires that God has given them.

To do this, we must have a strategy to help believers (1) discover the Father's dream (*theology*); (2) be empowered to demonstrate it (*spirit*); (3) develop the essential character traits to steward it (*character*); (4) have time to run with it (*provision*), and, finally, (5) secure the physical stamina to sustain it (*wellness*).

These are the areas the Holy Spirit has directed us to pursue. Before I describe them in more detail, I want to take a moment to discuss the Kingdom principle of 'growth' as well as the significance of the number '52', from which we get our title.

THE GROWING SEED

In Mark 4, Jesus reveals how growth in the Kingdom of God takes place. He shares a story about a man who plants seeds. While resting, the seed sprouts and grows in stages: first the blade, then the head, then the full grain ... a process the man doesn't understand, nor is he expected to understand. His role is to sow the seed, then to have faith that the earth knows how to process it. Then, when the plant is fully matured, he harvests his crop (receives it). Any interference with this process will abort the seed and cancel the harvest.

There are two important insights to be drawn from this parable.

The first is to recognize the process by which everything grows in the Kingdom ... from a small, seemingly insignificant stage to a fully developed reality, with faith bridging the process from beginning to end. With this in mind, I share this vision very much like the

man planting seeds. How and when the 'crop' will come about and what it will look like in full development, is left to the Holy Spirit, the only One empowered to bring it to maturity. We are committed to listen and obey Him at every step, and to avoid solely relying on experience, resources and intellect.

(Note: to help guide us in this journey, various prophetic words spoken at WOCIC from guest speakers through the years have been recorded and arranged by the sections of the vision. They are posted in Appendix B.)

As far as this vision taking form, we are already seeing this growth process unfold. Since sharing it with our church family and other ministers, several areas are already bringing forth 'the blade', and in some cases 'the head'. I will discuss this later on, but suffice to say it's exciting to see this vision manifest as Jesus describes. So, just as it says in Job 22:28 ... *"you will decree a thing and it will be established"* ... I consider the content of this paper a decree before heaven and earth, one that will be established in the hearts of its readers, will bring forth strategies and plans, and will be fulfilled in its appointed time.

The second point to note in this parable is the emphasis of the story. Although the man sows many seeds, Jesus centers in on how a single seed matures. He intentionally highlights the process of maturity rather than commenting on the quantity of plants that make up the crop. We need to grasp this point, especially as it relates to our concept of the church and church growth. The Holy Spirit doesn't build churches as we tend to think of them, He builds people. The number of people who occupy a building does not necessarily have anything to do with the expansion of the Kingdom. How, when, and where we meet should be a function of our purpose, not the result of carefully crafted

programs, convenience, social relevance or enticing settings. God is far more interested in the full maturity of His children than how many can gather in a single location. We see this principle at work in Jesus' ministry ... in the beginning He has 12 apprenticed disciples but in the end He is left with only 11. However these 11 were thoroughly transformed and proceeded to turn the known-world upside down! We ought to expect similar results. (This discussion is continued in the section entitled "Sharing Life".)

FIFTY-TWO

The number '52' was significant in the inception of this vision, and became even more important as it developed.

First, it represents Peter's profound transformation as described in the opening section of this paper.

'52' is also the number of days it took Nehemiah to complete the reconstruction of the wall of Jerusalem against great opposition. This is an accurate image of the Holy Spirit's task in preparing the bride of Christ, His church, to be without spot or blemish (mature). Nehemiah 6:15-16 records this accomplishment as follows ... *So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty two days. And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God.*

'52' is also the number of weeks in a complete year. It represents a full cycle of time, inclusive of all seasons. Or, in other words, the 'fullness of time'.

Finally, '52' recalls the 52nd Psalm, a song of David that ends with this verse ... *I will praise You forever, because You have done it; and in the presence of Your saints I will wait on Your name, for it is good!*²³ That, I believe, speaks for itself!

This is why we call it 'Vision 52'.

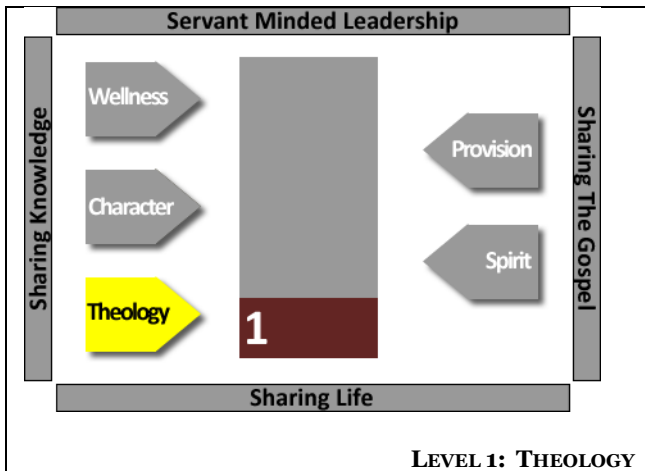
As previously mentioned, this vision includes five closely integrated components ... theology, spirit, character, provision and wellness. All of these are mutually dependent on each other, and, together, form a balanced and holistic framework to help believers spiritually develop in revelation, experience and awareness. It is essential that all of these components, without exception, be in place to effectively equip the saints.

Once in place, we anticipate the discovery of more effectual ways to interact with the world, and ways the world will want to interact with us, so they too may come to a knowledge of Jesus Christ and experience new life. It is also at this point we believe we will begin to experience the anticipated paradigm shift from our traditional understanding of church life to ways that will more effectively accommodate our renewed mission, strengthen our community, and deeply extend the reach of the Kingdom. How we meet, where we meet, when we meet, and how we assimilate new disciples into a community of loving, passionate and committed believers will all change as we, together, pursue this journey and follow the Holy Spirit's direction. In the meantime, we resolve to be at peace and embrace what Hebrews 6:12 says, *'imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises'*.

Let's look at these five areas now.

[1] THEOLOGY: DISCOVERING THE FATHER'S DREAM

It all starts here ... knowing the Father's dream.



It is vital we have an accurate understanding of the Gospel. Sincerity can no longer be a measure of accuracy. As the saying goes, "we can be sincere but sincerely wrong."

This story is not about us, our life or our problems; it's about God, His plan and our participation in it. Therefore, it is important we understand the Father's motive for sending His Son, for carefully directing everything He said and did, and for raising Him from the dead. For many, these events are taken for granted or viewed as doctrinal tenets that are to be accepted but not investigated. We need to think differently; we should know why we believe what we believe. Not to intellectualize spirituality or apply natural reasoning to the Word of God, but to seek out understanding so the Holy Spirit can reveal hidden things.

With this principle in mind, it's our intent in this area to prepare a comprehensive case for the resurrection of Jesus Christ and its implication on our existence. Paul prays for the church at Ephesus that they also would arrive

at this understanding ... *"that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."*²⁴

Later on Paul outlines the church's mission, with careful attention to its relationship to the Father's purpose ('dream') having been revealed in Christ. *"[My purpose is] to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him"*.²⁵

This revelation lies at the center of our theology and forms the foundation from which all other areas of the vision are built. Grasping the full extent of Christ's accomplishment is critical in understanding our assignment. It is here where we learn about the Kingdom of God, our position in creation, salvation, eternal

life, justification, the work of the Holy Spirit, and several other essential topics. Every believer who journeys with us will, in turn, have a consistent and comprehensive core theology.

Before we travel down this path, we need to first recognize the importance of having an accurate filter from which to learn and perceive. It's not uncommon for Christians to use the same terminology in conversation, while having different underlying definitions for the concepts conveyed. This gives the illusion of agreement but it is only at the level of semantics. We must go beyond semantics and agree on substance. To achieve this we must share a common worldview.

A worldview is a conceptual framework of ideas and beliefs from which we interpret the world and interact with it. The two most important worldviews that have influenced our understanding of scripture are the Hebrew worldview and the Greek worldview.

The Hebrew worldview is unique and ancient; one that has been carefully preserved through the ages. It is within this framework that God chose to deliver and preserve His Word, and where we discover the true intent of His plan. We, therefore, should give our full attention to it, particularly where it's in sharp contrast to the more pervasive Greek worldview formed from the teachings of Aristotle, Plato, Plutarch, Philo, and other early century philosophers.

Since its inception, the Greek worldview has influenced many ideologies and societies, most notably those in our modern Western world. As a result, it has become an important factor in how the Bible has been interpreted and doctrines formed. Because of this, we must understand it and identify where it presents conflicts. Let's briefly look at these two

frameworks, beginning with the Greek worldview.

The view of man formed by Plato and by later thinkers influenced by him, lies in a dualism of two worlds, one visible (the natural world) and the other invisible (the spiritual or heavenly world). Man stands between these two worlds, related to both, with his truest self, his soul, fallen from the invisible to the visible. Salvation, therefore, is the flight or the freeing of the soul from its entanglement in the physical world and its restoration to the heavenly or invisible world. Platonic dualism sees the physical, specifically the body, as evil and a hindrance; a tomb that traps the soul. The world, nature and human history are transient and, by comparison to the invisible, inferior. Reality, in this view, belongs to the realm of the invisible where good only resides. Life's pursuit, therefore, is to purify the body by cultivating the mind to think immortal thoughts and in doing so attain a level of wisdom or enlightenment that enables the escape to an upper world.²⁶

This worldview is similar to Gnosticism, a false teaching that was spreading throughout the first century church. Because Platonism and Gnosticism both assert that the body is intrinsically evil, teachers from these streams of thought taught that God could not have come in the flesh (i.e., taking upon Himself an evil cloak) and therefore Jesus could not be the incarnate Son of God. John addresses this in his first epistle ... *"who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son ... I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you."*²⁷ And again in his second epistle ... *"For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."*²⁸ Today we find

ourselves addressing similar issues from these very same sources, though modernized, some 2000 years later.

The Hebrew view of man, on the other hand, is very different. In it, the world is God's world and man is God's creature, although rebellious, sinful and fallen. Salvation is defined not by a flight from the world but by God coming to man to restore him into fellowship with Himself. The Old Testament view of God, man, and the world is very different from Greek dualism. Fundamental to Hebrew thought is the belief that God is the creator, that the world is God's creation and is therefore good. When God said on the end of the sixth day of creation that His work "*was very good*"²⁹, He never recants nor apologizes for that statement even though sin entered and contaminated creation. God had a plan to address that contamination in order to restore creation, not abandon it.

The Hebrew worldview sees God, though a spirit, as a living personal being who visits man in his earthly existence and who will finally visit man to establish His perfect rule and redemption in the world. This redemption involves all of creation, the seen and the unseen; the whole man, including his body, and the world to which man belongs.

Paul describes this in his letter to the Colossians ... "*Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in*

Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross."³⁰

He goes on to describe our role in this redemptive process in Romans 8 ... "*for the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*"³¹ This is the basis for the doctrine of bodily resurrection, which begins to emerge in the Old Testament but is fully developed in the New Testament.

From this brief comparison, we can see how our understanding of the work of Christ is shaped. If the Greek view is predominant, the emphasis will likely be on escaping this world for a better life elsewhere. End time events (eschatology) tend to be the focus of attention, even a source of relief, as Jesus' return is seen as a rescue mission, not necessarily the culmination of His redemptive plan. As far as the promises of God are concerned, they are largely placed in the future, in the "sweet bye and bye". In the meantime, our "Christian assignment" is to convince as many people (converts) as possible to prepare for their escape. There is little hope offered here, other than the dream that a better place lies on a distant horizon.

The Hebrew perspective creates a far more engaging scenario, one that places emphasis on partnering now with God in redeeming creation. Understanding the finished work of Christ is not only a doctrinal responsibility but becomes an essential step in discovering our

purpose within our earthly experience. Though we still share Paul's sentiment that *"to be with Christ is better by far"*³², we are motivated to conduct our life here within a paradigm that is not driven by selfish ambition but by an immovable commitment to see Jesus receive His reward and to extend His Kingdom. Developments in our world are still of interest, but as a reminder of the relevance of our assignment, not our need for a rescue. We are here not to escape the world's evil but because of it. This is why Jesus says in John 17 *"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one."*³³

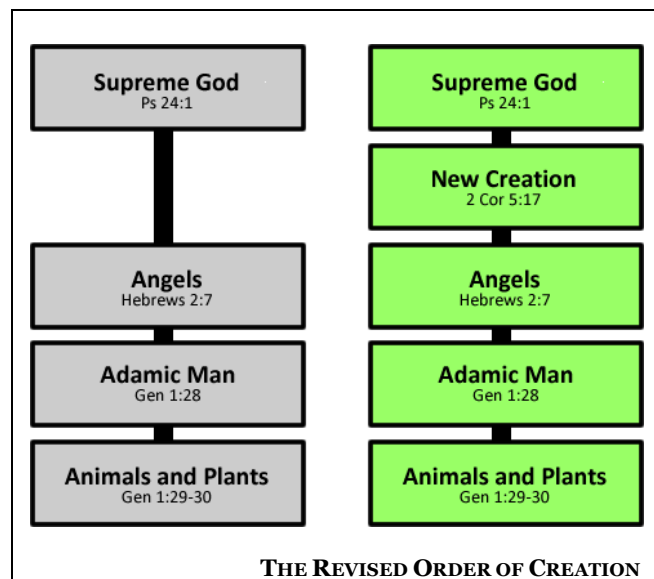
The finished work of Christ becomes our blueprint for victory and basis for understanding our inheritance that we have in Him. This is why Jesus tells His disciples *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."*³⁴

Jesus removed Satan as the ruling power of the Earth, having it delivered to him by Adam. The enemy no longer has place to accuse us; he has been cast down and cast out. Through Jesus' death, he who had the power of death has been destroyed³⁵ and been openly shamed³⁶. All authority and power which He secured, He has delegated to us, the sons of God.

The implication of this accomplishment is vast ... it even altered the very order of creation. Those in Christ are brought into a realm that did not previously exist. A realm where we have the same Spirit that He has³⁷, the same mind that He has³⁸, and are being transformed into the same image as we behold His Glory³⁹.

When Adam was formed, he was placed a little lower than the angels in the order of creation⁴⁰, eventually trapped there by the law of sin and death⁴¹. Having removed this limitation by His death on the cross, Jesus made it possible for man to assume an entirely new identity, one that only comes by faith in Him as He is the firstborn over all creation (resurrection!)⁴² With the law of life⁴³ now ruling our life, we should expect to mature into the co-heirs that we are now... not to be preoccupied with leaving the planet, but occupying it until He comes.⁴⁴

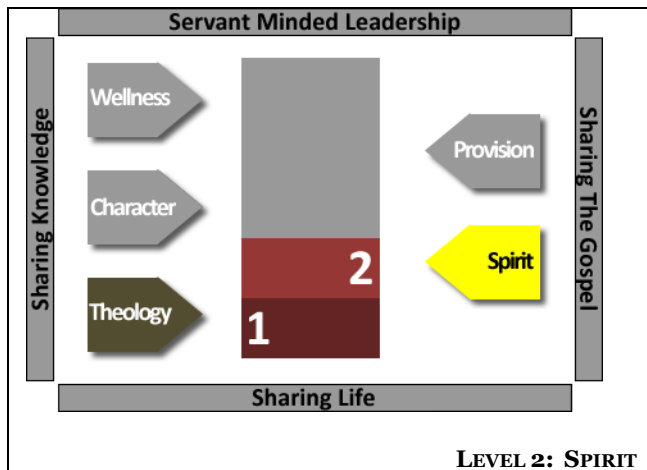
Everyone in Christ, therefore, is a new creation.⁴⁵ This is our non-negotiable present reality and the basis of our theology. We have been inserted, by adoption, into a layer of creation where we are seated with Christ⁴⁶ (see diagram "The Revised Order of Creation"). With this new position, the angels, who were once ranked higher⁴⁷, are now servant spirits assigned to minister to us.⁴⁸



This is the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the dream we hope all believers discover.

[2] THE SPIRIT: EMPOWERING THE FATHER'S DREAM

Not only are we to know the Father's dream, we must be empowered to live it out.



Just as Jesus lived His life by an indwelling Father, so we must live our life by an indwelling Christ. This is where we discover our true identity and purpose as revealed by the Holy Spirit.

We see this clearly in the experience of the early disciples. Many of them were eye witnesses to Jesus' ministry and saw firsthand all the miracles He performed ... feeding 5000 one time, and 4000 another, with just a couple of pieces of food; raising 3 people from the dead⁴⁹; cleansing numerous lepers; freeing demoniacs; healing at least 7 blind people; restoring a withered hand; healing a 12 year bleeding condition; healing paralysis; healing an 18 year old bent back; healing a fever; reattaching an ear; calming a storm; turning water to wine; fetching a coin from a fish; commanding schools of fish into a catcher's net; cursing a fig tree; and walking on water. They also heard the audible voice of the Father, touched a resurrected body, witnessed Jesus'

transfiguration, and were taught firsthand about the Kingdom of God.

And this is what we know from what's recorded. John says "*and there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.*"⁵⁰ It is likely this list would continue for pages if we had more of His ministry documented.

Suffice to say these disciples had an impressive resume, one that would certainly have qualified them to participate in many modern day ministries. But Jesus thought differently. He tells them to "*stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven*"⁵¹. In other words, 'your experience is insufficient for your assignment; there is something else you need. So stay in this room and say nothing about Me until you receive power.'

It's important we grasp this! It's not enough to simply tell people about Jesus. Even our testimony, as precious as it is to us, cannot accomplish much without His power. God expects more from us, and He has provided for that.

In the opening chapter of Acts Jesus gives these final instructions to His disciples "*you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*"⁵²

Note the preposition is "to" ... not "of". He didn't want them to simply be a witness about Him, but be a witness 'to' Him by presenting an indwelling Christ to an alien world. As Paul said "*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by*

faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."⁵³ To accomplish this they would need to have in them the same Spirit that was in Jesus. And that's exactly what took place in Acts 2 ... and what needs to take place in our lives.

Jesus Himself said "*without Me you can do nothing*"⁵⁴, that is, nothing of eternal value. Without the infilling or baptism of the Holy Spirit we are an empty, powerless shell. The term "Spirit filled" must cease to be primarily a description to identify charismatic sects. Every believer, regardless of denominational affiliation, must encounter God at this level ... it is essential for our assignment. Without it we are no better than those who "*have a form of godliness but deny its power.*"⁵⁵

Paul addresses this in his letter to the Romans: "*But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*"⁵⁶

When we receive the Holy Spirit⁵⁷, we are introduced to a new world ... the world of the

spirit. Here is where we learn about the unseen realm, how it's structured, who occupies it, how we engage it, and how we are influenced by it. We learn of angels, demons, strongholds, warfare, intercession, deliverance, generational curses, soul ties, prayer, fasting, faith, healing and worship. We learn about the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit. We learn of prophecy, it's role in our lives, how to hear the voice of God, and how to share His council with others. We learn of a life that is lived beyond natural strength and ability. And, most importantly, we learn of His uncontested power in our lives, which sets us apart and makes us attractive to a skeptical world.

As Paul put it, "*my preaching was not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*"⁵⁸ *For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.*"⁵⁹

This power should be an attribute of every believer ... it's the force that heals the sick, raises the dead and evicts demons.⁶⁰ It's also the visible evidence that Jesus has thoroughly overcome the world.⁶¹

No longer are we in a cosmic battle between good, led by God, and evil, led by Satan. That conflict has been settled. Scriptures are abundantly clear that Jesus secured complete victory over sin and death, and over every principality and power, bar none.⁶² We, as His ambassadors, are called to enforce the terms of that victory by claiming territory for His Kingdom in a yet unredeemed Earth until such time that the last enemy, physical death, is destroyed.⁶³

Until that time, Satan will oppose us, even with great strength, in order to separate us from our relationship with God and our destiny; to

entice us with the lust of this world and the pride of life. Therein lies our battle and the purpose for the armor we are to wear at all times.⁶⁴ This armor not only protects us, but serves as a reminder that we have been resurrected with Christ and placed in a realm of creation untainted by death. A place from which we cannot be dislodged as long as our faith is in Christ and Him alone⁶⁵. We are seated with Him in heavenly places⁶⁶, blessed with every spiritual blessing⁶⁷, and positioned to make known the manifold wisdom of God to all principalities and powers⁶⁸. This is not a distant hope but a present reality! Scriptures are clear that we are to be partakers of His divine nature now.⁶⁹ Because of this, *"we seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Setting our mind on things above, not on things on the earth."*⁷⁰

As this revelation is rooted in our spirit, our faith will be strengthened and our path made sure, even to the point where our resistance against spiritual darkness is so firm that even the enemy flees in utter exhaustion.⁷¹

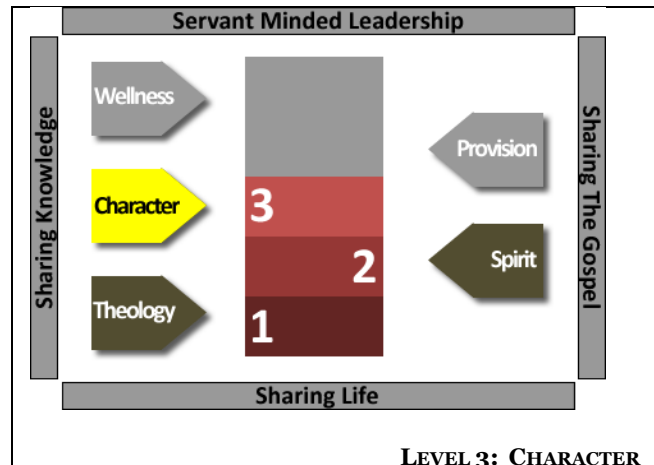
It's our intent to help believers arrive at this place ... to be entirely immersed in the Holy Spirit ... to be exposed to deeper dimensions of the spirit world ...to be trained to set their minds on 'things above' ... and to be shown how to rest in His presence.

[3] CHARACTER: STEWARDING THE FATHER'S DREAM

Where 'Theology' is discovering the Father's dream and 'The Spirit' is being empowered to carry it out, 'Character' is developing the necessary moral strength to steward it.

A good illustration of the formation of 'character' is found in the ancient art of creating a samurai sword.

Made to be durable or dependable, the samurai sword and the skilled artisans who make them have withstood the test of time. How this sword is made is similar to the process the Holy Spirit uses to 'make us'.



The process starts with a tow pound lump Tamahagane, a high strength carbon steel made from iron and black sand found in Japan. The samurai swordsmith heats, hammers, folds and cools this steel repeatedly in order to combine the iron and carbon, and to draw out any impurities. This step is as vital as it is tedious, because any impurities that remain in the steel will weaken it. Once the swordsmith has removed all impurities, he layers this hard steel, which forms the outer layer, with a softer steel, that forms the back side and inner core. These two types of steel give the sword both flexibility and strength.

The swordsmith continues this process by pounding the sword repeatedly, this time to alter the alignment of the steel's molecules. Each pound moves them out of their natural linear formation into a swirl. This makes the

blade extremely strong as energy applied against it must travel further through this swirl than it would through a straight line. As such, the force of the energy dissipates quicker, making it very difficult to break the metal. Without this molecular realignment, the sword remains brittle and prone to failure.

When the swordsmith feels the metal is ready, he then polishes it to a brilliant shine and sharpens it to a razor's edge, creating an extremely durable instrument of war that is also a beautiful and highly valued work of art.

To the untrained eye, however, a sword made of common steel that is simply polished and sharpened (not worked as described above) can be mistaken for an authentic samurai sword. They look and feel similar. That is, as long as they are only on display. In battle, the samurai sword will live up to its preparation and perform to the skill of the warrior holding it. The other sword will likely fail, regardless of the skill of its holder, as it has not been tempered. It's good only as a showpiece.

As believers, we are all swords in God's hand. However, the type of sword we are is determined by the path of life we choose. Either we submit to the Holy Spirit's guidance whereby we are transformed into the image of our Lord's glory⁷², which takes time and patience, or we remain stagnant in our current condition. It's the Holy Spirit's desire and His mission to develop our person by "*producing in our lives love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*"⁷³ Anything short of this will keep our character underdeveloped, rendering our ability to fulfill our assignment limited, and the power we are to operate within inadequate.

Like the making of the samurai sword, this process is marked by times when we are in the

fire, then times when we are being folded, then times when we are put out in the cold, only to have this cycle repeat itself. If we embrace the goodness of God and resist bitterness from rooting in our heart, this process will remove all impurities that linger from our 'old man'⁷⁴. As this process advances, it forms a hardened exterior (our resolve) with a soft, pliable interior (our heart), bringing forth the full expression of the 'new man'. This is also the place where our internal molecular structure is altered – when we no longer are "*conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of our mind, that we may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*"⁷⁵ It is here where God promotes us⁷⁶ by polishing us to His brilliance and sharpening us for His purpose.

This preparation, regardless of its duration, is necessary in order to embrace our destiny. It took Jesus 30 years to prepare for a 3 1/2 year ministry; it took Paul 14 years before receiving his assignment⁷⁷; it took the Hebrews 40 years before they were ready to enter their own land. This is the pattern of maturity and the reason we are encouraged to receive the promises of God by faith and patience⁷⁸.

Learning how to navigate life with this in mind is the focus of this area of the vision. Not the process itself, as that is unique to each person, but recognizing the importance of character, teaching the essential values that form moral strength, and creating a healthy and safe environment that nurtures its development.

Our hope is to see an abundance of life (zoē) flow through an abundance of honor. To see a place where one's character and moral integrity are more attractive than one's gifting. A place where the person of the Holy Spirit is acknowledged and revered at all times. A place where we submit one to another, putting the

interests of others above our own. A place where correction that exposes weaknesses and advances people is accepted. A place where respect, trust and compassion are esteemed by all. A place where love is the primary motivation of all actions. A place where holiness is not a foreign and outdated concept. A place where people are valued for what they are ... the object of God's deep affection. A place where ministry offices are recognized without an undertone of competition. A place where we don't put people in pulpits simply to draw crowds and, in turn, collect large offerings. A place where leadership is not addicted to the approval of people but to the affirmation of the Father. A place where strife is quickly exposed and eliminated.

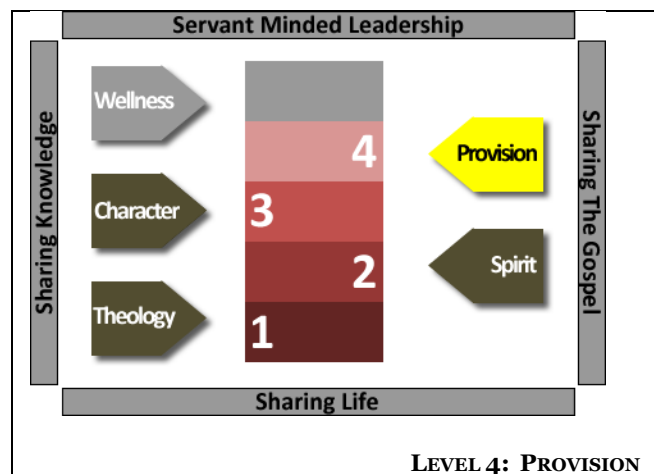
We see these qualities in Jesus. There's a brief description recorded in John 4 that shows the depth of His integrity. *"Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples, He left Judea and departed again to Galilee."*⁷⁹ The Pharisees saw an opportunity to incite jealousy and envy between Jesus' disciples and John the Baptist's disciples. Realizing their intention, Jesus quickly removes Himself from the situation and any opportunity He may have had there to minister. He left for Galilee ... a 70 mile, 3 day journey ... demonstrating how dangerous strife is and how far He was willing to go to avoid it.

In like manner, we need to jealously guard the interests of those with whom we are journeying⁸⁰. This is how a culture of honor is formed, a culture that must emerge from His church. This culture empowers people, correctly stewards the supernatural, and attracts the world as Jesus attracted sinners⁸¹. This culture is possible only when godly character is recognized, valued and nurtured.

[4] PROVISION: ENABLING THE FATHER'S DREAM

This is where we become thoroughly disentangled from the world systems.

In His teaching on the beatitudes, Jesus introduces a basic conflict we all need to resolve. He says, *"no one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"*⁸²



The concept of 'mammon' has its roots in the Chaldean word for 'confidence'. It was only in the Middle Ages that mammon was thought to be a demon or a reference to Satan. This belief is still held by many, however, when Jesus gave this teaching, it simply meant 'confidence in riches'; a meaning that is consistent with the remaining text of His discussion. With this said, we see Jesus making a very important point about two worlds and the relationship we have with them. We must place our confidence in one or the other, but not both.

Jesus is not saying food, water and clothing are unimportant, but rather that we need to consider our source. In essence, He is saying whomever we depend on for the needs of life we also empower to determine how we spend our time and conduct our life. This is a fact we desperately need to understand, particularly given our uncertain times.

The world, and the systems that govern it, are changing rapidly. Unprecedented shifts are taking place in our economy, society and geopolitics. Our children and grandchildren are inheriting a world that will look very different than it did when we were their ages. It was only a couple of years ago, in 2008, that the financial world was shaken to its core, teetering on the brink of total collapse. Several major financial institutions disappeared overnight, US unemployment rocketed from 4.4% to 10.1%⁸³, and the stock market lost \$1.2 trillion in market value in a single day. Though it may seem the economy has since stabilized, the underlying problems still exist. This was apparent with the recent S&P downgrade of United States' treasuries from AAA to AA+ due to our government's colossal debt burden ... the first time our sovereign credit rating has ever been changed since it was granted in 1917.

We are also seeing major developments in the world's population growth. It had taken all of human history for the world's population to reach one billion – this happened in 1810. Each additional billion followed more rapidly. In 1900, the global population stood at 1.6 billion. One hundred years later, it had almost quadrupled to 6.1 billion people. The sixth billion was reached in 1999, only 12 years after the fifth. In 2011, also 12 years later, we will reach the seventh billion. More than 85% of the population growth of the past 100 years took place in developing countries; of the expected

population growth to 2050, 97% is projected to be in developing countries.⁸⁴ To meet the needs of their massive populations, countries like China and India continue to aggressively seek after limited and dwindling natural resources. As a result we will likely witness an irreversible shift of economic and geopolitical power from the west to the east over the next 5 to 10 years, creating a new world economy.

These are just a few signs that significant change is taking place in our world. This should be a loud wake up call to everyone, especially believers; a call to prepare for the inevitable. We need to seek the Lord for strategies and direction; we need to think differently about employment, careers, retirement, savings and personal health care; we need to disengage now from being dependent on the world's systems. In all of this, we must know that our citizenship is in heaven⁸⁵, from which all our needs are met according to *"His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"*⁸⁶. It's here, and only here, where we remain established and insulated from the inherent weaknesses of these systems.

Unfortunately, Christians are indistinguishable from others when it comes to our reliance on these systems for the necessities of life. We see this with the out-of-control consumer debt problem, which is nearly \$2.4 trillion in the US ... that's \$7,800 per person!⁸⁷ This is a strong indicator that 'living beyond our means' has been accepted as a social norm for both believer and unbeliever; a very dangerous development that needs to be reversed. Even if we possess proper theology, are filled with His Spirit, and have strong character, if we submit to the demands that the world's systems place on us, we will forfeit most of our time and energy just to meet our needs. This ought not be.

Jesus refers to the enemy as the '*ruler of this world*'⁸⁸ and Paul calls him the '*god of this age*'⁸⁹. Both attach him to the present world, and, therefore, to the systems by which it is governed. Satan uses these systems first and foremost to devour our days. This is his most effective strategy to keep believers from fulfilling their Kingdom destiny ... and we've seemed to play into his hand.

We must become more self-sustainable, particularly in the areas of food production, water management, renewable energy, and health maintenance. We also must develop revenue streams that are consistent with God's economic model of 'daily bread', a concept introduced to the Israelites in the desert and brought forward in the Lord's prayer. This economic system diminishes greed, depends on God's revealed knowledge, and will require 'great faith'⁹⁰ to develop. However, once in place, these streams will be instrumental in liberating our time by providing an 'as needed' flow of capital that is completely independent of local economic weaknesses. Managed and allocated correctly, these streams will be key in removing the pressure and influence that money has on the motivation for ministry, keeping that motivation pure and clean.

These pursuits will serve to disentangle our dependency from the world, not by building isolated communes or utopian communities, but by developing skill sets and building 'knowledge stores' – repositories of information that are well organized, accessible, and implementable. Identifying and developing these assets, with the close guidance of the Holy Spirit, are the bold objectives of this component of the vision.

Some of the initiatives that have been identified, of which several are already in research, are intraday futures trading,

hydroponics and aquaponics farming, seed banking, reverse-osmosis filtration, food storage and preservation, super-food & medicinal-food development, alternative power plants (solar and algae), and community service agriculture (CSA's) plans.

Joseph is someone to consider to see how this works. After he was put in prison for a crime he did not commit, he was called upon to interpret Pharaoh's dreams. Joseph told him that the dreams forecasted seven years of plentiful crops followed by seven years of famine. He then advised Pharaoh to make a wise man commissioner over the land with overseers to gather and store food from the seven years of abundance to save for the years of scarcity. Joseph then traveled throughout Egypt, gathering and storing enormous amounts of grain from each city. After the first seven years, a famine spread throughout the world; Egypt was the only country that had food. Joseph was in charge of rationing grain to the Egyptians and to all who came to Egypt. In that position, he became the second most powerful man in all of Egypt next to Pharaoh.

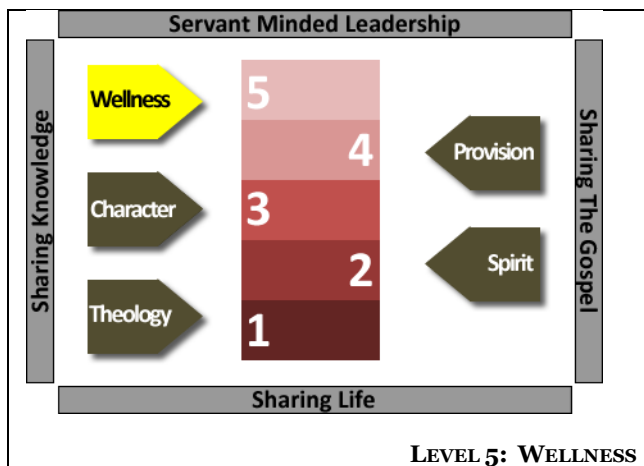
Joseph was chosen for several reasons. First, he knew how to hear God's voice; second, he knew how to communicate with leaders; third, he knew how to develop strategies; and lastly, he knew how to implement those strategies. In doing so, he saved an entire nation. If God did this through Joseph, he can certainly do it through us.

We first need to trust Him where we once trusted the world. Our faith will bring us to places and solutions that were previously thought to be impossible. In John's Gospel, Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the "*Spirit of Truth*"⁹¹. Then, a little later, says "*He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*"⁹²

Living a life of faith is living a life constantly being guided by the Holy Spirit, who always leads us into deeper levels of truth. Discovering these truths is our expectation.

[5] WELLNESS: SUSTAINING THE FATHER'S DREAM

*"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."*⁹³



Although wellness is the final area of our vision, it is certainly not the least. Health and well being are as important to our spiritual maturity as are the other areas. God wants us healed if we are sick and strong if we are well. This must be a firmly settled truth in our heart and in our theology, regardless of our current circumstance.

Attaining and maintaining strong health is a process directly connected to our relationship with God. As Proverbs says, *"do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh and strength to your bones."*⁹⁴ In other words, our reverence of God forms the pathway to healing and health. This is the path we are seeking.

The first step in this journey is to align our paradigm of life with that of God's. It's clear from scripture that those who walked out their days fulfilling the will of God ended their earthly existence when their assignment was completed. Certainly Jesus comes to mind, knowing His exit would be through a cross. In addition, there was Paul who tells Timothy *"the time has come for my departure"*⁹⁵; and Peter who wrote *"knowing that shortly I must put off my tent (body), just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me"*⁹⁶. Even Jacob, a character from the Old Testament, carefully prepares his exit. Scripture records that he called his sons to himself to bless them, then, when he *"had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people."*⁹⁷

All of these men, and many others not mentioned, had a perspective of life and death that is foreign in our culture today. We need to view our life and prepare for our future the same way they did! Until our assignment is complete, we ought to stand firm on the promise they stood on ... that *"no weapon formed against (me) can prevail"*⁹⁸. As this becomes our 'new normal', we will see more believers in cemeteries who are there simply because they finished their course rather than having succumbed to sickness.

We need to change our thinking and then change our behavior. This is one area that we certainly cannot *be conformed to this world, but must be transformed by the renewing of our mind.*⁹⁹ Just because we are getting older does not mean we accept the prevailing thought that sickness and disease are inevitable. Blood disease, heart disease and all other diseases are not our inheritance! There is another reality; one that is far better and more compatible with God's will for our lives. Even if you are facing physical challenges

today, be encouraged. God has not forgotten you nor is He done with you. He is the One *"who forgives all our sins and heals all our diseases."*¹⁰⁰

Right thinking will always produce right behavior. As it says in Proverbs, *"as [man] thinks in his heart, so is he"*¹⁰¹. A life of prayer, Godly devotion and healthy living has been studied and proven to yield very positive results. In 2005 such a study was performed with these results: *"47% of study subjects prayed for their health, and 90% of these believed prayer improved their health. Those who prayed had significantly less smoking and alcohol use and more preventive care visits, influenza immunizations, vegetable intake, satisfaction with care, and social support, and were more likely to have a regular primary care provider. The study concluded that those who pray had more favorable health-related behaviors, preventive service use, and satisfaction with care."*¹⁰²

As a far as the church goes, we need to be healthier, stronger and have more vitality than we have today. We have the Spirit of Truth to guide us and the mind of Christ to comprehend revelation ... we just need the right pursuit.

This is why "Wellness" is in the vision. Since it was added, we've had several divine connections that have since evolved into strategic relationships. One is an association with a team of scientists, Dr. Gerry Norton and Dr. Bill Huggins, pursuing research and development in natural medicine and botanical sciences. Dr. Norton is the CEO of a company that produces a product called "CellQuest". This 'gift' from God, as Dr. Norton refers to it, is a liquid extracted from a unique hybrid of the plantain plant that has remarkable properties to strengthen our immune system. Dr. Norton recently wrote a short paper on

CellQuest which is included in Appendix D. We continue to maintain close contact with these doctors and their research.

Another divine connection happened at a recent wedding. During the rehearsal dinner, the grandfather of the bride, whom I had never met, approached me at the end of the dinner to share how God miraculously healed him of several diseases, including terminal prostate cancer and colon cancer. (His name is Ed.) I responded that "God certainly has something for you to do that you have yet to finish." Ed quickly responded back with one word ... "wellness". I was amazed as that was the exact name recently given to this layer of the vision. He then told me that God revealed to him why he developed these cancers and what he needed to do to build a strong immune system. Ed has since organized this information in a multi-lesson plan to be used as a teaching platform for believers. Before we left the dinner, he mentioned that God told him to give all this material to me. Mind you, Ed knew nothing of our vision nor our desire to pursue God in this area of wellness ... this quick 15 minute discussion was entirely arranged by God!

Our goal here is to use these relationships and others we encounter to build a "knowledge store" of wellness that includes discoveries from cutting edge research and practical wellness information revealed by the Holy Spirit. Once established, we will use this knowledge to teach believers how to secure their healing, reverse the course of disease, and maintain strong health. All with one intent in mind ... to see the Father's dream sustained in each son and daughter of God.

MATURED SONSHIP

All of these 5 areas share a singular purpose ... to see God's children fully assume the responsibilities of their inheritance in Christ.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul says *"Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."*¹⁰³ The word for 'son' is *huios*, a Greek word which means matured son as opposed to a young child (*teknon*). *Huios* also describes a son that has attained a level of likeness to his father so that he can confidently take on family responsibilities. Understanding this sonship is necessary before we can assume the tasks of an heir.

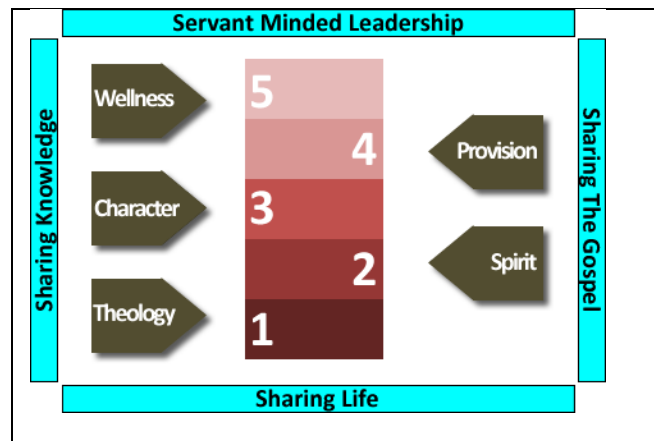
R. B. Jones, Bible commentator describes this sonship: *"To be a son is infinitely more than to be a child, and the terms are never loosely used by the Holy Spirit. It is not a difference in relationship, but in position. Every "born again" child of God has in him the nature of His Father, and is a beloved member of His Father's family. Adoption cannot make the child any nearer or dearer, yet it gives the child a status he did not enjoy before, a position he did not occupy. It is his recognition as an adult son, the attaining of his maturity, the seal upon his growth to maturity of mind and character. A child is one born of God; a son is one taught of God. A child has God's nature; a son has God's character."*¹⁰⁴

Empowering God's children to move from a slave mindset to this level of sonship is the goal of this vision. With this as our foundation, we can more accurately foresee how we function in our community, region, and nation: that is, how we are governed, how we interact with the world, how the world ought to interact with us, and how we journey through life together as a

bonded family. These areas are represented in the outer boxes in the diagram below.

Committing ourselves to this cause promises to develop a unity among the Body that has been all too elusive. To date, it's been our disunity that has attracted the world's attention.

According to *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, there are over 20,800 denominations in the world.¹⁰⁵ That is an astonishing fact and a sad testimony of our cause. To reverse this, there have been numerous attempts to bridge our differences by organizing interfaith meetings, shared worship and prayer services, and interdenominational conventions. The intent of these efforts is noble and admirable, however we are no more cohesive today than before. The reality is that true unity comes one way, and only one way ... by wholeheartedly embracing a clear and common vision without compromising essential values. This is what was formed among the 120 in the Upper Room.



Unity then ceases to be the object of a search and becomes the natural consequence of a pursuit. It follows the same principle that forms lifelong friendships between soldiers who meet in a foxhole. Because of a shared goal to defeat a common enemy, deep and lasting bonds between them naturally form.

This is what the prophet Amos is referring to when he says "*can two walk together, unless they are agreed?*"¹⁰⁶; and what Paul discusses in the 4th chapter of Ephesians. He says "*He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*"¹⁰⁷

Notice that Paul carefully positions 'equipping' before 'unity'. In this sequence, we see that 'equipping' produces 'purpose', and 'purpose' then produces 'unity'. This is why *the equipping of the saints* is so vitally important and lies at the center of this vision!

Paul further elaborates on this unity in verse 16: "*from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*"¹⁰⁸ At this point, every member, fully equipped, engages other members, sharing their grace, experiences, and faith with one selfless purpose in mind ... to see the Body of Christ rise to its destiny. For some, this may seem to be an unattainable dream. We think otherwise as we are firmly convinced that Jesus will receive His reward in the Earth, even in our time!

SERVANT-MINDED LEADERSHIP

In the opening section of Ephesians 4, Paul mentions the ministry offices that are commonly referred to as the '5-fold': Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher.

These offices form the full complement of Jesus' anointing in His earthly ministry.

Although there are many descriptions for these offices, according to Ephesians 4 they jointly serve a singular purpose ... to equip the saints. As such, they complement each other and stand side by side in their responsibilities. No longer are they to be viewed as independent ministry paths or church management positions. They serve a far more strategic and essential role as they work closely with each other and the Holy Spirit to jealously guard the preparedness and well being of the Body of Christ. The relationships that bond them together are established on honor, respect and mutual submission, giving cause for them to support and protect each other as envisioned by the prophet Joel: "*straight forward they march, never breaking rank. They never jostle each other; each moves in exactly the right position.*"¹⁰⁹

Those called to these offices hold the highest standard of 'servant ministry', not motivated by money, opportunity, or personal advancement, but selflessly devoted to the cause of Christ in each believer, even to their personal discomfort. As Paul says to the Colossians "*I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for his body, the church.*"¹¹⁰

In this 'servant' context, these offices form a governmental layer (presbytery) that oversees the church's maturity and growth. Not to lord over it¹¹¹, but to serve it in the full capacity of Christ's anointing and love. We envision this oversight at both the local and regional levels, appointed by the Holy Spirit and acknowledged by the Body. This presbytery then appoints like-minded elders who are experienced, enthusiastic and of good reputation to attend to local needs. In Acts, we see this

arrangement working harmoniously in the early church ... *"now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter."*¹¹² In like manner, these offices collectively serve the Body just as Jesus served His disciples ... with purpose, love and patience.

ENGAGING THE WORLD

Although most of this paper has been about internal matters of the church, its underlying purpose is to prepare believers, individually and collectively, to touch a darkened world. Jesus said that we *"are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?"*¹¹³ In other words, we are it ... there are no other varieties of salt! Therefore, how we, as matured believers, relate to the world is as important as knowing what we have to offer them. We can learn much from Jesus and how He touched those around Him.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus connected to individuals, then to hundreds, and then to thousands. He laughed with friends, grieved with the hurting, ate with sinners, and counseled with the religious. He also healed the sick, raised the dead, and cast out demons. In all of these encounters, He never relied on chance or self-ambition; every step of His life was directed by the Holy Spirit. Under this guidance, there were times he would enter a village to meet its people¹¹⁴, and other times villages would empty out to meet Him¹¹⁵. This attraction Jesus had towards people and people towards Him shows us how we should engage the world.

It goes without saying that the message we have and the life we possess needs to be proclaimed, for *"it is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes."*¹¹⁶ This

is where we 'go to the villages'. But we also should expect the villages to come to us. Like Jesus, we must have an attraction that draws their attention and gains their respect, whether they agree with us or not. We must have something the Holy Spirit can use to invite them to encounter the Kingdom of God.

As children of God and co-heirs with Christ¹¹⁷, we ought to be the most creative, the most perceptive, and the best problem-solving people on this planet. This is why Joseph served Pharaoh during a national famine, why Daniel served in the courts of four transitions of power¹¹⁸, why Nehemiah found favor with the Persian king Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem's wall, and why Esther saved the Jews from an evil plot of extermination. These are just a few examples of people who were deeply embedded in their culture while functioning with supernatural wisdom and courage ... and they were under a lesser covenant! How much more should we, having been grafted into God's family by a more complete covenant through Christ, be entrusted with even greater responsibilities?

As we develop in Christ, we will have more to offer the world, and, therefore, be viewed as a more valued asset in their eyes. Currently, Christians are typically characterized by their dogmatic intolerance and judgmental opinions. Whether true or not, it is an all-too-common perception ... and, in the world, perception is reality. The good news is that perceptions can change.

Much of what we have covered in this vision, particularly in 'Provision' and 'Wellness', will create more opportunities for us to touch the world with practical solutions, ingenuity and authentic charity. We can give, and give freely, without an expectation to get something in return. With this in mind, we need to dream

how we can be a significant blessing to our neighbors, schools, civil servants, businesses, cities, etc., trusting the Holy Spirit to open doors that no man can open.

We see this unfold in Acts when Phillip visited the culturally rejected people of Samaria. When he preached Christ to them, they received it gladly and "*there was great joy in that city*".¹¹⁹ We, too, ought to expect to be the means by which entire cities are affected. Not by compromising our values, but by grasping a more realistic understanding of the world's condition so we can effectively relate to it.

Paul raises an important point regarding this in his first letter to the Corinthians: "*I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person.*"¹²⁰

Paul's explains an important aspect of our assignment. First, we must understand that the immoral condition of the world is a natural state for them. We are not to be as offended as much as we are to be moved by the Holy Spirit to know how to address and navigate through that immorality in order to reach the people ensnared by it. As matured believers, we should have sufficient inner strength for Him to insert us into places where the life in us exposes more than the darkness we are facing can conceal. This is when we will see greater penetration of the Gospel in all aspects our culture and society.

Second, Paul states clearly that this immoral behavior is simply unacceptable and is not to be tolerated within the church. He clearly delineates the difference between these two worlds and the rules that govern them.

As we advance in this understanding and move from glory to glory, we will be entrusted with more responsibility¹²¹, touch more people, and become better stewards of our inheritance in Christ.

SHARING LIFE

Finally, we must consider how we share life with one another, and what that looks like as we mature in Christ.

Today, our interaction is often limited to a meeting or two per week, which take place at a predetermined location and time. This practice, although important and commended in the Bible¹²², unfortunately has become the primary identifier of our purpose. When people refer to 'church', invariably they are referring to an organization or a building where people of like faith congregate. This view is deeply rooted in our understanding and language as evidenced by terms like 'going to church', 'doing church' or 'what happened at church today'. The issue this exposes has to do with our identity, which ought to be defined by our shared assignment, not our meeting practices.

Furthermore, whenever there is a movement to bring about change in the church, it is often expressed by revising the format of our meetings. Over the years we have seen many of these revisions: simple church, cafe church, 'go to' church, missional church, traditional church, contemporary church, blended church, seeker-sensitive church, internet church, drive-

through church, e-church, and even pub church. Within these, we have spawned cell groups, home groups, life groups, marketplace groups, meet-up groups, men's groups, women's groups, student groups, kinship groups, prayer groups, outreach groups, fellowship groups, discipleship groups, and bible study groups. And these are not all of them. When you consider the 20,800 denominations that exist worldwide, the offshoots of these multiply exponentially.

The main reason for testing these various types of gatherings is to find new ways to reach and maintain new followers. We've also seen the church service itself dramatically transform to accommodate this objective by becoming a product to be sold; an experience designed to appeal to the senses. Many church platforms are now draped with impressive backdrops, filled with larger-than-life props and splashed with eye-catching laser lights. The more colorful, dramatic and huge, the better. To ensure people are comfortable, whatever may be offensive is often removed or concealed, and the messages presented track more with pop-culture and life-coaching than with Spirit-led truth ... all under the guise of being more 'relevant'.

At the center of this modern phenomenon lies a consumer-driven growth strategy that relies more on marketing than the leading of the Holy Spirit, the result of a carnal culture that has permeated the church. This is not to say that how we meet is unimportant, but that it's not enough to simply modify our format to bring about the changes that are needed today. If we've been dysfunctional in an old format, we will likely be dysfunctional in a new one. We need to look deeper.

The church, or more accurately the 'ecclesia'¹²³, was born supernaturally in relationship.

Therefore, its maturity must be organic. Paul describes it as a *"whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."*¹²⁴

As this Body grows, we who are part of it discover the strategic purpose we've been assigned by the Holy Spirit. It's this purpose, along with the culture and social norms of our location, that influences our meeting style. This might look like home groups in one place, stadium meetings in another, and underground meetings in yet another. Regardless of the format, our call remains the same ... to disciple nations.

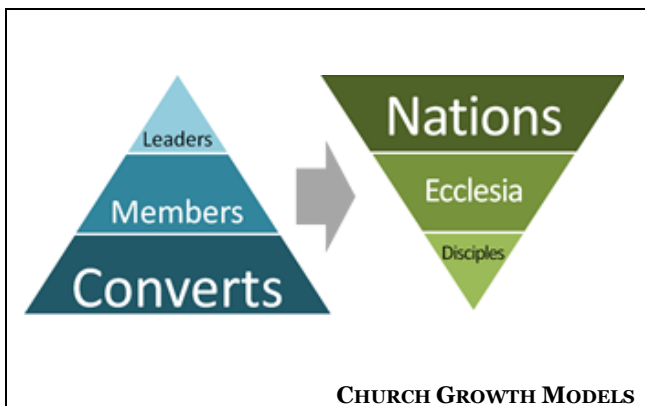
To further explore how the ecclesia accomplishes this calling, we must understand the concept of 'leverage'.

Leverage is the use of a rigid object (a lever) as a fulcrum or pivot point to multiply the mechanical force against another object.¹²⁵ In other words, it's the ability to generate output that is far greater than the input invested. A seed is a good example of this principle in nature. Given the right conditions, a small mass (the seed) produces a much larger mass (the tree). This is also the principle Jesus used to establish His Kingdom. Given just twelve men by the Father, He changed the entire Roman world with a 'movement' that is still underway today! This is the same principle we are to follow to fulfill our assignment.

To better appreciate this, our paradigm of church needs to be turned upside down. Today, the popular model of church growth (see diagram below) is to make converts, then from these make members, and then from these make leaders. These leaders in turn make more converts, and the cycle is repeated. This

process works well if the intent is to build an organization. However, it looks different if we are to build an integrated organism.¹²⁶

As we observe the growth of the early church, we see an approach that uses leverage, and, in doing so, turns the 'convert model' on its head. This early church model first invests in equipping disciples, which may be just a few people. These transformed disciples develop relationships around a collective, well-understood purpose and share life, giftings and passions with one another. These relationships form the connective tissue of the ecclesia, keeping the Body healthy, strong and focused. This is what Jesus had in mind when He first mentioned the 'ecclesia' and said that the *gates of Hades will not overcome it*¹²⁷.



As this ecclesia grows under its servant-leadership (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers and Elders), it establishes Kingdom outposts where worship, prayer, and prophetic ministry takes place. From these gatherings, believers are trained to engage their community based on known local needs, cultural nuances and opportunities. These outposts, though spread out over a region, remain connected with one another, and, on occasion, come together for fellowship and worship.

Several of the New Testament epistles were written to churches in such an arrangement. For example, Paul opens Galatians with *'to the churches at Galatia'*¹²⁸, a region in Asia Minor south of the Black Sea. And Peter *"to the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia."*¹²⁹ These were mostly home churches that would receive these letters, read them to the people, and then pass them to the next closest church in their region.

As they are established, these outposts become the base from which believers touch their cities, regions and nations with the supernatural power and love of God. As every believer is equipped in all five areas of this vision, they remain accountable to one to another and submitted to the local leadership. The absence of greed and self-ambition keeps the church pure and focused.

It's also in this environment that the individual believer is valued for who he/she is, a child of God and an important member of the Body of Christ. No longer are they viewed as a revenue source or someone who can advance another's agenda. Each member's spiritual maturity is of paramount importance, and their well-being of great interest to everyone.¹³⁰

CLOSING

In closing, I want to share a curious event that took place in February of this year.

My wife and I were out of town for a short vacation when I received a call from a friend, Pastor Joe Bennett. He mentioned that a gentleman by the name of Arthur Burt from North Wales was visiting Florida and could minister at our church that coming Saturday (it was late Thursday when I received his call).

My knee-jerk response was that I certainly could not arrange a meeting on such short notice, especially for a man I never met let alone knew. Plus I didn't want to cut our vacation short. However, as soon as I hung up with Joe, I sensed in my spirit that we needed to meet this man. As I shared this with my wife, she also felt the same way. I then called Joe back to let him know that we did want to meet Arthur and set up the meeting, which he graciously arranged.

It turned out that Arthur was 99 years old at the time and a protégé of Smith Wigglesworth; the only person alive who has ministered alongside Wigglesworth. Arthur has been ministering for over 75 years, through several World Wars, and numerous moves of God. I thought to myself, "what an amazing treasure trove of experience and perspective! But why would God send him to us? With all the relationships he's made over his lifetime, he certainly has connections to thousands of other churches in the US."

I learned the answer to this question when we heard a story from Arthur while having dinner at a local Cracker Barrel. He told us that in 1934 he was part of a group that received a prophecy about a revival that would eclipse all others. One that would not end, or, as Arthur put it, have 'no ebb'. At the time the prophecy was given, Arthur was promised he would see it fulfilled before he died. He is the only living member of that group, and, at the time of this writing, is closing in on 100 years.

This is the prophecy:

"There shall come a breath and the breath shall bring the wind and the wind shall bring the rain and the rain shall bring the floods and floods and floods and the floods shall bring the torrents and torrents and torrents. So shall

they be saved like falling leaves from the mighty oaks swept by a hurricane in a great forest. Arms and legs shall come down from heaven and there shall be no ebb."

I share this story in closing because it best conveys the historic importance of our days and the importance of this vision. We are on the threshold of an unprecedented time where there will be no ebb to the outpouring of God's glory in the Earth. A time for which the church was destined; a time when the children of God will be manifested¹³¹.

There are also many challenges and uncertainties that lie ahead, some that are mentioned in this paper and others that are not. But this one thing we know, that the Holy Spirit is summoning us to be prepared ... to be equipped ... and to be about our Father's business.

As I mentioned in the section entitled "The Growing Seed", this paper is our declaration and our seed. We sow it in faith, believing that the Holy Spirit will indeed bring it to pass. We see all of the components of this vision coming together to form an integrated equipping center for the Body of Christ as a whole.

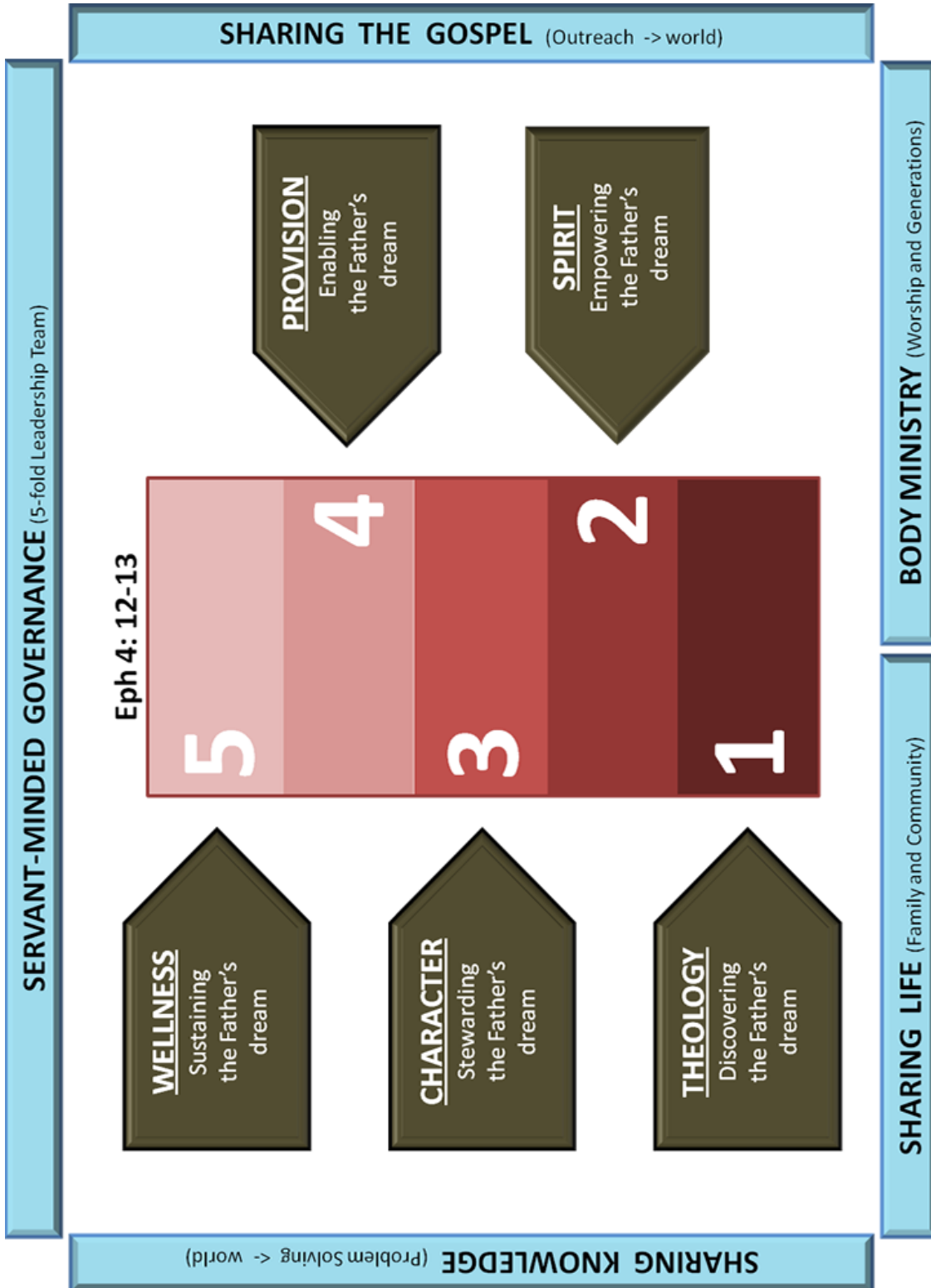
We hope you are blessed, challenged and stirred having read it. We also hope you are as captivated as we to eagerly journey into the next chapter of our destiny in Christ.

I leave you with Paul's word of encouragement that he gave to his friends in Ephesus ...

*"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."*¹³²

Appendices

Appendix A: Vision Diagram



Appendix B: Prophetic Words

Introduction

Beginning in early 2010, several members of WOCIC began experiencing a phenomenon with the appearance of repeating numbers. The first sequence that began to appear was '333', which we perceived to be a reference to Jeremiah 33:3 *"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know."* Then other sequences began to appear ... 111, 1111, 222, 444, 411. These have been showing up for over 18 months and are as frequent now as the time this began in early 2010.

It is our belief that these repeating numbers speak of a season of alignment and rhythm. With that in mind, Jacob and Jordan Owens organized the following prophetic words by the sections of the vision; they are from visiting prophets as far back as 2006. Although they address WOCIC and in some cases Pastors Vin and Laura specifically, we view them in terms of their benefit not to a single church or individual, but for the Body of Christ as a whole. We hope you see them in the same light and believe with us that now is the time for their fulfillment ... a time when the word of the Lord converges with His kairós (appointed times), a flow that we are being constantly reminded of with these repeating numbers.

Theology

- I saw this place becoming a major place for education. Just as there's been a real thrust for line upon line. God says He's going to establish through this body of people a major training house. And it's not just going to be training with respect to what we might think is sacred things. It's going to be training with regard to secular things. It's going to be training with respect to world views. With how people see the world so that they are trained to understand, they cannot just adopt every secular ideology, but they can engage with meaning and understanding in the secular world, but bring the principles of the kingdom of God there. *(Martin Scott 12/3/06)*

Spirit

- You are going to have a stream of the prophetic flowing from here. God gave me a picture of you while you were worshiping and I saw a stream flowing from this place. *(Jan Nel 12/10/06)*
- Because there is going to have to be a prophetic acceleration in the worship team ... because God is trying to release signs and wonders in this place during the meeting. *(Jan Nel 12/06/10)*

Provision

- I saw a major training place here with respect to the marketplace. That God was going to raise up. Because this place is going to become an incubator for those who carry dreams and visions with regard to entrepreneurship. With regard to innovative ideas. It's going to be like an incubator place here. In days to come, there will even be part of your buildings that will be housed, and there will be those in business in part of it. Where they're going to be trained in business, they're going to be released in business, it'll be like incubator that releases them out from there. *(Martin Scott 12/3/06)*
- And I hear the Lord say, "And I'm not just giving you a school of ministry" but I saw even a school of business begin to raise up. A school of marketplace ministry. That I'm going to begin to raise up the Josephs out of your house, an anointing on Josephs. For you are going to begin to send even young people out, even into capitals of finance even around this, uh, the nations. For God's going to give you not just the capital nations, but the capitals of finances. *(Bob Hazlett 3/29/08)*
- ...But God says, "No what's failed in other places, will work here. Because I'm going to raise up marketplace ministries that will touch the nations. I'm going to raise up marketplace ministries that will go around the nations. And because I'm calling you to be one who would release the Joseph anointing. Not just into this nation, but into the nations, says God. *(Bob Hazlett 3/29/08)*
- [For God would even say that]...But I'm going to even begin to cause you to raise up businesses that are counter-intuitive to what the way the world would raise them up. Because I'm going to release an anointing to them. *(Bob Hazlett 3/29/08)*
- Because God says there's going to come some radical things that you're going to begin to do with your finances. That even at this stage you don't fully see or understand. But God's going to demonstrate something through this church of His provision that is going to be almost indefinable. ... Because God says He's going to do something that's almost indefinable, that people cannot pin down. Cause I believe God wants to raise up something fresh, something new even to model something in the financial area. *(Martin Scott 12/3/06)*
- I hear the Lord say, this is a year for capital investment, even into your ministry. And God's going to do a sign for you. Because He's going to pay off your mortgage in a supernatural way. He's going to begin to cause there to be supernatural increase and release. Because He doesn't want your church to be tied down with a mortgage. He's doesn't want your church to be tied down with bills because He wants you to constantly look towards expansion. And just as Moses, everything was provided to build the house of the Lord on the earth before it was time to build. God says, I've already made provision for that which I've asked you to build. I already have it; it's just up to you to release it. *(Bob Hazlett 3/29/08)*

- I hear the Lord saying you are like a David with his mighty men of war around you, and God is using you to raise them up, to impart life to them, impart strength to them. He has that mantle, that kingly anointing mantle upon you to make mighty men of war to bring down the giants, to bring down the enemy's camp. Even in this region, you are going to see breakthrough in the colleges, you are going to see breakthrough in the marketplace. The Lord says even the wealth that has been processed here, and the stirring up of wealth transfer ... the Lord says this is coming, that I'm bringing you into a time of promise. Many things have been promised to you ... the Lord says this is a season of breakthrough for you; this is a season where the things that have been held up by the past ... the enemy has tried to delay things, the poverty spirit has tried to block things ... the Lord says I'm breaking that now. I'm releasing my life to you, I'm releasing my blessing to you, I'm releasing my Kingdom purpose to you. *(CI Prophetic Team at Regnum 12/12/2009)*

Servant Leadership Governance

- I saw this house becoming a house of prophetic council. Where there would be teams here who would understand the times and seasons of God, and they'd be available for prophetic council, not just here. God says there's going to be not just prophetic ministries, but prophetic office raised up through this house, that's going to carry something. And it's going to carry it particularly in and through the context of the sound of music. There's rising out of this place a sound of music that is going to be truly a prophetic sound that is going to go out from here. *(Martin Scott 12/3/06)*
- ... you will send ministry gifts from here that will go beyond your borders regularly. Do you understand what it means to be an apostolic/prophetic center? A resource center? *(Jan Nel 12/10/06)*
- ... A number of tests that will come because God says in this next season, He has to put the testing on you, because He actually has got an apostolic mantle He wants to release upon you. But the fullness of that is going to come as you walk through the tests of the next season. How you respond to those who come, how you respond to the demands that are put on you. How you organize and shape your finances. *(Martin Scott 12/3/06)*
- ... I thank You oh God that in the spirit, there is such a strong apostolic mantle that is there Lord God waiting. Cause I feel like there's been ministries in this city that have lost mantles, but the mantles have not gone. *(Martin Scott 12/3/06)*
- ...God is going to begin to cause there to be a reclaiming of things and of mantles that have been lost in this area mantles that haven't been claimed in this area, but God is going to cause you to be one to reclaim those mantles. *(Bob Hazlett 3/29/08)*

- [Later on] For God would even say, I've chosen you. And I don't want you to underestimate this or feel bad, but I feel like God would say, there was someone else who God had appointed to do this. But they didn't see it the way God saw it. It's not like you're the second choice. Cause you're doing exactly what God did, so you're His first choice. But there's a mantle that you're picking up that someone failed to pick up. *(Bob Hazlett 3/29/08)*
- ... And I saw the Lord cause you to join, and I just heard the words, Apostolic council. That there's an apostolic council that God would you to begin to join to begin to cause there to be the government of God to be set up, but not in a hierarchical way, but in a way of relationship. You're not asking for position, you're not asking for recognition, God's asking you to do it. *(Bob Hazlett 3/29/08)*
- I saw flowing into you as a church, multiple streams. Multiple influences. I'm not saying this literally, but in my spirit, what I get is the number 12. It might not be literal, but it's like a set of streams that is going to release a governmental authority here. *(Martin Scott 12/3/06)*
- I'm beginning to bring the streams together into a mighty river. And I've called you to be one who would bring the streams together. Ones that would bring the streams of tradition, the stream of charismatic, the stream of Pentecostal, the stream of even Calvinistic thinking. That there's all those streams are coming together into a great river, and that's what God's going to begin even to do in this region. *(Bob Hazlett 3/29/08)*
- For God would say, I'm even going to begin to raise up prophets within the media out of your house. I'm going to begin to raise up prophets that will go in to the media marketplace, and begin to take the Word of the Lord into those places. *(Bob Hazlett 3/29/08)*

Sharing Life

- In days to come, there will even be part of your buildings that will be housed, and there will be those in business in part of it. *(Martin Scott 12/3/06)*
- And God isn't just calling you to be a possessor of the land but one that will be a settler of the land and I saw some additional property that's like a budding where you're at. I feel like God is saying that there's an extension of properties that He's going to give you. And the building that you have right now isn't big enough for what God has called you to do, there's even going to be an additional thing and I kept seeing what I saw, like a dormitory like what would be at a college for the Lord said I'm going to be getting you a college, establishing a college even amongst your midst, you're going to have dormitory style living. *(Bob Hazlett 3/29/08)*

- And I hear the Lord say, “And I’m not just giving you a school of ministry” but I saw even a school of business begin to raise up. A school of marketplace ministry. That I’m going to begin to raise up the Josephs out of your house, an anointing on Josephs. (*Bob Hazlett 3/29/08*)
- I don’t know what this means Vin, but I hear the Lord saying “You’ve cried out for a place”, you said God, we need a place. I see God giving you a camp-like place. There’s a facility, its like a big campground. And there’s room for multiple people. Your dream will become realities. God says, “I’m going to make a way, when there seems to be no way. And I just hear the Lord saying, there’s a strong word over your life. I’m making room for you. (*Bishop Tony Miller 2/15/08*)
- You're eventually going to have a place which [is going to] house ministries that are not all just going to flow out of your church. You’re going to actually house other ministries. And you're going to give them, not just a physical covering, as in a roof, but I believe you're going to give them a spiritual covering. (*Martin Scott 12/3/06*)
- But I hear the Holy Ghost saying, “You are coming up on heaven’s radar screen. And you’re coming up on the radar screen of this city. And God is saying, I am making room for you and your wife, and the territory is bigger than you think. It’s bigger than you’ve ever imagined.... This is a strong word Vin, I hear the Lord saying this, “That there’s a lot of people that live under the same sky you live under, but they don’t have the same horizon you do.” You see things they don’t see. (*Bishop Tony Miller 2/15/08*)

Sharing the Gospel

- And I’m not just giving you a school of ministry” but I saw even a school of business begin to raise up. A school of marketplace ministry. That I’m going to begin to raise up the Josephs out of your house, an anointing on Josephs. For you are going to begin to send even young people out, even into capitals of finance even around this, uh, the nations. For God’s going to give you not just the capital nations, but the capitals of finances. (*Bob Hazlett 3/29/08*)
- And I hear the Lord say, He’s going to begin to open doors for you. I saw the Lord open doors for you in Asia. And I hear the Lord say, begin to even look for what I’m going to do in China, and in some of the emerging markets of Asia, because I’m going to cause there to be an anointing for you. To transfer and even to reclaim from Asia, and there’s some anointing and even some cross-pollenization for God to do there. For what God is going to do is going to be something that’s been tried in other places and have failed. And they say, “Well don’t waste your time on that, there's a lot of resources you’ll spend doing that”. But God says, “No what's failed in other places, will work here. Because I’m going to raise up marketplace ministries that will touch the nations. I’m going to raise up marketplace ministries that will go around the nations. And because I’m calling you to be one who would release the Joseph

anointing. Not just into this nation, but into the nations, says God. *(Bishop Tony Miller 2/15/08)*

Sharing Knowledge

- ... you will send ministry gifts from here that will go beyond your borders regularly. Do you understand what it means to be an apostolic/prophetic center? A resource center? *(Jan Nel 12/10/06)*
- “For I am going to make your house a gathering place. A gathering place for this region, and a gathering place even for the western part” and I saw people coming all the way from the southern tip, all the way up to Tampa, and even to the corner of the Panhandle. For God would say, “I’m even going to cause there, this to be a hub of activity in the Spirit for this region. For even as there, what I’m giving you, it goes beyond revival. It goes to revolution. For I am going to cause there to be a revolution in the way that church is done in this area. *(Bob Hazlett 3/29/08)*
- ...This is going to be a place like they would even call it a headquarters for ministry. Because God’s causing there to be a sphere of influence, an opening in the heavens that’s going to begin to impact things. Ministries are going to begin to relocate here. Going to begin to move here, going to begin to set up their bases here. Because the kingdom of God is being established in this region like never before. *(Bob Hazlett 3/29/08)*
- I also hear God say get ready, because God’s going to begin to raise up, I saw like a recording studio, and like even a television studio, and for you even to begin to put DVD projects together, and for you to put some training curriculums together. Not so that you can just make something that you can train everybody to do it exactly that way, but there’s some things that God’s given you, and there’s a spirit of excellence. And that’s what I hear God say, a spirit of excellence that He’s put on your house. And that He’s going to put a spirit of excellence on the media that comes out of that place. For there is some that God is raising up even to take the mountain of media out of your church. For God’s going to even begin to give you some new ideas. *(Bob Hazlett 3/29/08)*
- But God says I’m going to give some creative media ideas ... *(Bob Hazlett 3/29/08)*
- For God would say, I’m even going to begin to raise up prophets within the media out of your house. I’m going to begin to raise up prophets that will go in to the media marketplace, and begin to take the Word of the Lord into those places. *(Bob Hazlett 3/29/08)*
- I saw major productions being released from here, because God says you are also going to release things that are going to be like productions that are going to be put on; performances

that are going to be put on. Music performances that are going to be put on. That are going to at one level seem to entertain people, but at a second level is going to just come with like a wave of God's spirit almost beneath the surface that then begins to rise and impact people. And people thought they were coming and they were simply going to be entertained, but they came and they had an encounter with God. (*Martin Scott 12/3/06*)

- I feel one more thing in the Spirit, in Jesus name prophetically...speak to the church here. Indeed you did not make a mistake, you are on the course that I want you to go. And even now will I push a body through. I'm raising up those to be trained. And there shall be a training group here, who will go to nations. Already I put it within your heart. But you watch and see. There'll be a new fire on them. And they will rise up with a zeal that you've not seen in past times. And they will be a fire quickeners into many others where they go. I will send them across this nation, but I will send them to other nations also. Watch and see. People of dark skin, people..slanted eyes. There'll all before you. And from this place I will send, I will send so many. You watch and see. For My favor is upon you, and I have answered your prayer. And they are now among you. You watch and see. You did not make a mistake. You are doing what I want you to do. (*Harold Eberle 8/14/2010*)
- Don't look at the world appraisal system. This is not about big buildings, this is not about lots of people, this is not about programs. What is the Lord saying about you? I will say this about what the Lord is saying about you Pastor Vin and Pastor Laura, that you are apostolic. And I say this very seriously. All these things shall be added onto to you as it says in Matthew 6. The Kingdom appraisal system might make things look bad initially, but we're only in the 3rd inning. I also want to say this now ... so that there are witnesses. I felt the Lord show me you are going to be on TV, actually you are going to be on CNN. And the reason why you are going to be on CNN is because you have solutions on what to do when things go bad. And you won't be "Pastor Vin" at that time, you will just be "Vincent". But you would be the authority because you will have something that works. (*Peter Han 5/1/2011*)

Appendix C: Chrislam

Chrislam and Religious Syncretism¹³³

by Bill Muehlenberg ... Posted March 1, 2011 | Culture Watch

I have written before about the new development known as Chrislam in which some misguided Christians believe they can somehow combine the two religions (Christianity and Islam) and still have something recognisable as the Christian faith. Sorry, but it can't happen.

As I have demonstrated, such attempts are all one-way traffic. Muslims are happy to use such versions of religious syncretism to gain entry into Christian circles, but it just results in the creation of more dhimmitude – Christians becoming second-class citizens.

Islam always wins in such attempts, while Christianity always loses. The truth is, the two religions are fully incompatible. They may seem to be similar (both are world religions, both have Abrahamic origins, both are monotheistic, etc) but the differences are far greater.

By way of analogy, the uninformed motorists might think gas and oil are all rather similar, and can therefore be used interchangeably. After all, both are liquids, both are products from the ground, and both are used in cars. But just try using half gas and half oil in the fuel tank or oil tank, and disastrous results will follow.

Yet some quite foolish Christians think they can blend their faith with that of Islam and still remain intact, effective, and biblical. Sorry, but it just does not – indeed, cannot – happen. But increasingly Christians are going down this path. Some years ago now I saw a TV documentary about some churches in London sharing their premises with Muslims.

They seemed to think that a church and mosque could coexist in the same premises, and that Christianity and Islam could coexist as a faith system. But all that happens is the Christian faith gets watered down while Islam continues to thrive.

More recently in the US some churches have been sharing services with Muslims. Here is how a recent news outlet carried this story: “They see it as their Christian duty. But others disagree, saying it extends the hand of fellowship where it was never intended to go. Two Protestant churches are taking some heat from critics for opening their church buildings to Muslims needing places to worship because their own facilities were either too small, or under construction.

“Heartsong Church in Cordova, Tenn., let members of the Memphis Islamic Center hold Ramadan prayers there last September. And Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Alexandria, Va., allows the Islamic Circle of North America to hold regular Friday prayers in their building while their new mosque is being built. Diane Bechtol of Aldersgate says this is something Christians are called to do: Be neighborly and develop relationships – even those who don't share your beliefs.

Plenty of questions arise here. First and foremost is this: If Christians needed a place to worship in say, Saudi Arabia, would the local Muslim mosque be happy to open its doors to them? Of course not. Christians must either submit to Allah and renounce their false beliefs, or live as dhimmis there.

It is always one-way traffic in any Muslim-Christian interfaith venture. They gain while Christians lose. And if these churches are into “relationships” and open-door policies, will they allow a coven of witches to do their thing in the churches?

Will they allow cults free reign in their sanctuaries as they denounce the very core teachings of Christian faith? And if building bridges is the aim, why not allow atheists in to conduct their meetings, or secular humanists, or any other group for that matter? After all, we want to show just how tolerant and friendly we Christians are.

Melbourne-based expert on Islam Mark Durie offers some words of warning about all this: “A prominent element in Islamic daily prayers is the recitation of Al-Fatihah (the Opening), the first chapter of the Koran. Often described as a blessing, Al-Fatihah has a sting in its tail. After introductory praises, the final sentence of Al-Fatihah is a request for guidance ‘in the straight path’ of Allah’s blessed ones, not the path ‘of those against whom You are wrathful, nor of those who are astray.’

“Who are the ones who are said to be under Allah’s wrath or to have gone astray from his straight path? According to the revered commentator Ibn Kathir, Muhammad himself gave the answer: ‘Those who have earned the anger are the Jews, and those who are led astray are the Christians.’

“Al-Fatihah is as central to Islamic devotion as the Lord’s Prayer is to Christians: It is recited at least 17 times a day as part of daily Muslim prayers. Yet according to Muhammad himself, this prayer, which is on the lips of every pious Muslim day and night, castigates Christians as misguided and Jews as objects of Allah’s wrath.”

And while Muslims may look up to Jesus as a prophet, they regard it as blasphemous to view him as God’s son and the saviour of the world. As Durie remarks, “Certainly there are some similarities between Isa of the Koran and Jesus of the Gospels. The Koran calls Jesus ‘al-Masih’ – the Messiah – and both figures are said to have been born of a virgin, to have performed miracles of healing and to have raised the dead. Yet here the similarities end. Isa of the Koran was not crucified and did not die but was raised up by Allah (Sura 4:157-158).

“It is in Muhammad’s vision of the end times that the role of the Muslim Jesus comes into sharp focus. Muhammad taught that when Isa returns, he ‘will fight for the cause of Islam. He will break the cross, kill pigs, and abolish the poll tax. Allah will destroy all religions except Islam’ (Sunan Abu Dawud 27:4310).

“What does this saying mean? The cross is a symbol of Christianity. Breaking the cross means abolishing Christianity. According to Islamic law, the poll tax, or jizya, buys protection of the lives and property of Christians (and Jews). Abolishing this tax will mean that jihad will be restarted against Christians and no more protection shall be afforded to those who do not submit to Islam.”

Bringing a false religion like Islam into the Christian churches is really the beginning of the end of those Christian houses of worship. Sure, Christians can invite a Muslim – or any other non-Christian – into a Christian service to point them to Jesus the saviour, and to expose them to the truth claims of the biblical gospel.

Effectively signing your own death warrant by foolishly seeking for some sort of theological equivalence here is not the way to go. We help no one with that approach. It simply undermines the Christian faith and does an injustice to our Muslim neighbour who desperately needs to be set free from the bondage of Islam and released into the freedom of the gospel of Christ.

As Durie concludes: “Churches should not welcome into their buildings the veneration of Isa the Islamic Jesus, who, as a true Muslim, is intended to bring about the final, violent destruction of Christianity. By all means, let Christians show kindness to their Muslim neighbors, but the sentiments embedded in Islamic daily prayers, which curse Jews as the target of Allah’s wrath and Christians for going astray, can have no place in a Christian church – even if recited in the cadences of classical Arabic.”

This unenlightened religious syncretism by some Christians may be just another sign of last days madness in which the church of Jesus Christ which is supposed to be heralding the great news of the gospel is instead becoming bound in false beliefs, false practices, and above all, a false understanding of what Christian compassion and tolerance is all about

Appendix D: The Miracle of CellQuest (by Dr. Gerry Norton)

Introduction

Typically, the use of plants and herbs in the science and art of medicine, involves the manufacture of powders, tablets and capsules. The totally natural approach to consuming raw, unprocessed plants and plant parts as “whole food remedies” has been essentially modified by the manufacture of more convenient forms of prescription drugs and dietary supplements.

The active ingredients of approved drugs and dietary supplements are either synthesized or otherwise extracted from natural sources. Although the sources may be natural, their extraction processes frequently involve radical processing. These include thermal or solar drying, grinding for the production of fine powders, liquid extraction of specific ingredients (single compounds) sometimes using inedible solvents, freeze drying and compression into tablets or alternatively finished, product forms. Any semblance to nature is compromised by the thermal removal of plant water and the attendant destruction of included enzymes (catalytic proteins); even further by the frictional heat of grinding and the chemical extraction and separation of specific compounds from the original plant composition. The drug manufacturing philosophy dictates the extraction of single compounds from complex natural combinations of many different compounds comprising the plant’s total phytochemical structure.

These single compounds have been found to alter or mitigate the effects of certain disease conditions via specific, activity pathways determined by laboratory studies and verified by clinical tests.

Consequently, there is a serious conflict between the efficacious dosage requirements of such drugs and the safety risks associated with them.

In the context of alternative medicine, plants should be consumed in the whole food condition in order to ensure “total naturalness”. Typical exceptions include the extraction of juices from fruits by physical, as distinct from chemical methods. However, a special hybrid of the musaceas (plantain, banana) plant extract (manufactured by CellQuest Inc.) provides an ideal and somewhat unique method of maintaining the essential natural form of the plant liquid. This is achieved by the physical recovery of pseudo-stem juice, previously concentrated in the plant by CellQuest bio-botanical processes, which ensure the inclusion of “live” phytoalexins in the final product. Since no chemical solvents are involved in the process and the natural plant defensive, compounds remain un-altered, the product is delivered to the user in the natural state.

Origins of CellQuest

In European mythology, the variety of musaceas plant commonly identified as “French Plantain” is believed to be the original fruit of paradise with legendary associations to the “garden of Eden”, hence the name of that specific variety, “Musa Paradisiaca” or “fruit of paradise”.

Musaceas plants are particularly unique in the sense that they are herbs, derived from ancient wheat grasses. Herbs are defined botanically as having fleshy rather than woody stems or trunks.

According to the Bible, God said “ Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed upon the earth, and all trees that have in themselves seed of their own kind, to be your meat”. (Gen. 1:29-30)

the biblical reference to “meat” correlates to nutrition in today’s context. There are also biblical references to the intended uses of the specific parts of plants and herbs.

“.....upon the banks thereof, on both sides shall grow all trees that bear fruit: their leaf shall not fall off, and their fruits shall not fail:and their fruits thereof shall be for food, and the leaves thereof for medicine”. (Ezek. 47:12)

“.....On both sides of the river, was the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit according to each month, and the leaves for the healing of the nations. (Rev.22:2)

In using the special hybrid variety of the musaceas plant stems and leafs as medicine, CellQuest has followed these biblical references to the letter.

The Structure of musaceas plants incorporates a botanically defensive natural compression of the herb’s stalks into a pseudo-stem giving the illusion of a tree-like trunk.

Unique even among herbs, it both flowers and bears berries (“fruit”). Unlike typical fruit bearing trees, musa plants produce a single central berry comprising several “fingers”.

Classified botanically as a monocot (single seed), the musaceas plant growth cycles propagate from a rhizome or corm type root structure developing horizontally beneath the soil. Each successive “bunch” of plantains results from individual shoots or stems. After yielding its berries (fruit), the existing stem becomes inactive and is replaced by a successor vertical shoot sprouting from the next position closest to the corm. The corm generates about ten successive shoots before new seeding is required.

This giant tropical herb, reaching as high as twenty feet, relates very much in botanical character to its wheat- grass origins. The original home of musaceas plants is thought to be India with later migration eastwards through Malaya and westward to Africa and eventually to many locations within the tropics. There are significant differences in phytochemical composition between specific parts of the herb.

The berry (fruit) is primarily nutritious with energy sources of sugars and starches, while the stems, stalks, leaves and peel contain little nutritional value but many medicinal phytochemicals.

CellQuest Inc., has developed a bio-botanical process of generating and extracting liquid containing specific phytoalexins (defense compounds) from the pseudostems of a specific hybrid of plantain and banana varieties. An essential part of the process is to ensure extraction of “live phytoalexins” of consistent composition in the manufacture of the CellQuest product. .

Traditional Uses of Pseudo-stem Liquids

Traditions in India, Iran and Asia ascribe miraculous properties to musaceas fruits with regard to health and the prolonging of youthful characteristics.

The medicinal uses of musaceas pseudo-stem juice even crudely extracted without the optimum concentrations and recovery of phytoalexins contained in the CellQuest product, evidence successful historical treatment of several diseases and disorders.

Early successes were recognized in the treatment of intestinal disorders, including constipation and diarrhea in generally normalizing the functionality of the large intestine with respect to water balance in the colonic system.

The juice has been applied to the treatment of urinary disorders, particularly in regard to eliminating toxins and reducing the formation of kidney stones (antilithlatic activity) comprising magnesium ammonium phosphate and calcium oxalate.

Tests on rats showed that an oral dose of three milliliters (3mls) daily for each rat was effective both in reducing the formation of new stones and the dissolution of existing ones. This is scaled up to an equivalent 8 ounces daily for a 170 lb human.

The Yoruba-speaking people of South-Western Nigeria use musaceas plants in the treatment of diabetes mellitus, specifically in the management and control of the disease. Animal studies indicated dose related reductions in the blood glucose concentrations of both normal and diabetic mice.

Prevalent among the diseases treated in Indian Ayurvedic medicine using musaceas plant liquids are bronchitis, asthma, dysentery, ulcers, diabetes, obesity, some gynecological problems, diarrhea and insect bites.

The composition of CellQuest mucilaginous exudates resulting from proprietary methods of trauma induction “in situ” comprises highly branched arabinoxylan including an arabinogalactan type I pectin, deriving from water soluble polysaccharides. The fibers in beta-glucans and soluble arabinoxylans lower cholesterol and postprandial (after eating) glycemic response (blood sugar level). They are beneficial in controlling the adverse effects of diabetes.

For more information on CellQuest, see www.cellquest.com

Appendix E: References

Note: most scripture references are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

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- ¹ Luke 22:59
² Luke 24:49
³ Acts 2:36
⁴ John 1:4
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⁶ John 10:10
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⁸ Romans 8:2
⁹ Matthew 16:25
¹⁰ John 20:21
¹¹ John 3:3
¹² Romans 4:17
¹³ John 14:23
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²³ Psalm 52:9
²⁴ Ephesians 1:17-23
²⁵ Ephesians 3:9-11
²⁶ Excerpts taken from "*The Pattern of New Testament Truth*" by George Eldon Ladd
²⁷ 1 John 2:22, 26
²⁸ 2 John 1:7
²⁹ Genesis 1:31
³⁰ Colossians 1:15-20
³¹ Romans 8:19-21
³² Philippians 1:23
³³ John 17:15
³⁴ Matthew 28:18-19
³⁵ Hebrews 2:14
³⁶ Colossians 2:15
³⁷ Romans 8:11
³⁸ 1 Corinthians 2:16
³⁹ 2 Corinthians 3:18
⁴⁰ Psalm 8:5 and Hebrews 2:7
⁴¹ Romans 8:2
⁴² Colossians 1:15 and Romans 8:29
⁴³ Romans 8:2
⁴⁴ Luke 19:13
⁴⁵ 2 Corinthians 5:17
⁴⁶ Ephesians 2:6
⁴⁷ Hebrews 1:4
⁴⁸ Hebrews 1:14
⁴⁹ widow's son, Lazarus and Jairus' daughter

- 50 John 21:25
 51 Luke 24:49
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 53 Galatians 2:20
 54 John 15:5
 55 2 Timothy 3:5
 56 Romans 8:9-16
 57 Acts 19:2
 58 1 Corinthians 2:4-5
 59 1 Corinthians 4:20
 60 Matthew 10:8
 61 John 16:33
 62 Colossians 1:13 and Ephesians 1:20-23
 63 1 Corinthians 15:25
 64 Ephesians 6:10-18
 65 Acts 4:12
 66 Ephesians 2:6
 67 Ephesians 1:3
 68 Ephesians 3:10
 69 2 Peter 1:4
 70 Colossians 3:1-2
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 100 Psalm 103:3
 101 Proverbs 23:7

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- ¹⁰² O'Connor P.J., N.P. Pronk, A. Tan, and R.P. Whitebird. 2005. Characteristics of adults who use prayer as an alternative therapy. *Am. J. Health Promot.* 19:369-375.
- ¹⁰³ Galatians 4:7
- ¹⁰⁴ "Teknon, Huios & Huiiothesia", Stephen Garrett, Dec 20, 2008
- ¹⁰⁵ "Dictionary of Christianity in America", Intersity Press, 1990, "Denominationalism," page 351
- ¹⁰⁶ Amos 3:3
- ¹⁰⁷ Ephesians 4:11-13
- ¹⁰⁸ Ephesians 4:16
- ¹⁰⁹ Joel 2:7-8
- ¹¹⁰ Colossians 1:24 (NLT)
- ¹¹¹ 2 Corinthians 1:24
- ¹¹² Acts 15:6
- ¹¹³ Matthew 5:13
- ¹¹⁴ Matthew 9:35
- ¹¹⁵ Luke 5:17
- ¹¹⁶ Romans 1:16
- ¹¹⁷ Romans 8:17
- ¹¹⁸ Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, Cyrus
- ¹¹⁹ Acts 8:8
- ¹²⁰ 1 Corinthians 5:9-11
- ¹²¹ Matthew 25:23
- ¹²² Hebrews 10:25
- ¹²³ *ekklēsia* - a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place (Strong's G1577)
- ¹²⁴ Ephesians 4:16 (NLT)
- ¹²⁵ Wikipedia: Lever
- ¹²⁶ 1 Corinthians 12:12
- ¹²⁷ Matthew 16:18
- ¹²⁸ Galatians 1:2
- ¹²⁹ 1 Peter 1:1
- ¹³⁰ Philippians 2:3
- ¹³¹ Romans 8:19
- ¹³² Ephesians 3:20-21
- ¹³³ <http://www.billmuehlenberg.com/2011/03/01/chrislam-and-religious-syncretism/>