

## Paul Is Knocking---At The Door of YOUR Church.....!



1 ¶ And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,  
2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.  
3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:  
4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, **Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?**  
5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, **I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.**  
6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, **Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.**



7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damascus.



9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.



10 ¶ And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, **Ananias**. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord.

11 And the Lord *said* unto him, **Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for *one* called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,**

**12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his sight.**

13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:

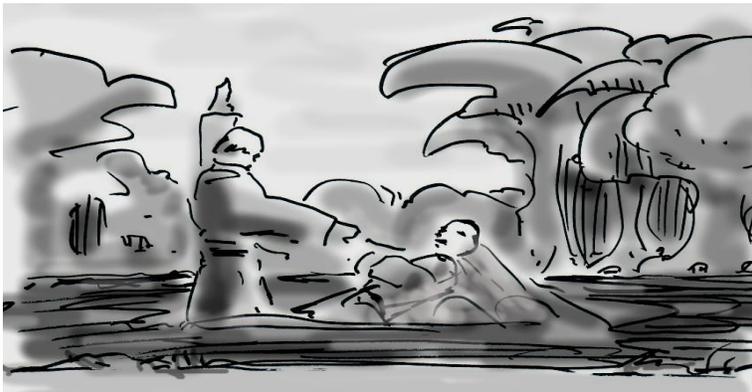
14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

15 But the Lord said unto him, **Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:**

**16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.**

17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.





19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.



21 But all that heard *him* were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. (Act 9: 1-22)

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I am sure we are all familiar with this area of scripture--the "conversion of Paul". We read how Saul (Paul) had been persecuting Christians--and in fact was on his way to Damascus to do just that--but he meets Jesus! In an instant he is "turned around" he is saved--("And he said, Who art thou, Lord?...he acknowledges Jesus as Lord the first moment he sees Him). Paul is struck blind--and heads to Damascus.

This is the part of the story that we would like to examine closely. In Damascus, Paul is healed of his blindness, immediately baptized (the scripture says he was baptized before he was cleaned up from his ordeal!). And after only a few days spent with the Christians at Damascus, he "straightway" begins preaching---ministering--witnessing Christ out to the world. Paul walks directly into his apostleship and starts serving God.

I am sure we as Christians can all relate to Pauls' conversion experience. We all have met Jesus on our sinful road--and had our lives "turned around". When anyone meets Jesus Christ , with faith, He does His ministry upon them....

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19)

Jesus said he came to bring a Gospel of salvation--healing--deliverance--but also--RELEASE. The words "to set at liberty" are the Greek: "apostello aphasis"---literally--"apostolic liberty". The "setting at liberty" that Jesus proclaims as part of his Gospel mission is the free release to minister, to freely (and immediately!) serve God, witness the Gospel and to carry on Christ's mission. The Bible calls ministry a "gift given unto every one of us" (Ephesians ch 4). In the Bible, people met Jesus, were saved, healed, delivered and "set at liberty" immediately to serve God.

There are many other examples of this in the new testament (The demoniac of the Gadarenes in Mark 5--the blind man in John 9-10--among many others--study scripture carefully with regard to release!). The church of Damascus was obedient to carry on this part of Christ's mission--clearly recognizing the anointing in Paul, and realizing that he could and should "straightway" preach. The immediate release to ministry is a clear new covenant doctrine and is found in many examples. There are a multitude of excuses for ignoring this concept, but the hard question is this: are we carrying out this part of the Gospel? Or, has past church tradition muddled the purity and fullness of Christ's Gospel?

The challenge is this:---Could this series of events happen in our churches today?

What if Paul came knocking on the door of your church?

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## PAUL #1---BLINDNESS--THE FIRST HURDLE



"Hello, my name is Paul, I've just met Jesus and I am blind. Jesus told me to come to this city--can you help me?"

"Of course son, come in-!"

"Pastor, is there anything God can do about my blindness???"

"No, I am sorry, God does not heal sickness anymore. Yes He did it in the times of the Bible, but not today. In this church we do not lay hands on the sick--we do not pray for God to heal."



Now, notice: We are sure that every Christian church has the love of God in it. Every church leader would invite, even their worst enemy, in. Every church follows after Gods' love and forgiveness and certainly every church would believe that Jesus can convert and save today.

BUT--the fact is that many Christian churches simply do not believe in or practice healing. They simply do not believe that Jesus heals today as He did in the past. Some may believe it is possible for God to heal, but they do not actively live it out and pray for the sick. God needs us to carry on Christ's mission, His Gospel, which includes HEALING. The bible says simply...

"Jesus Christ **the same** yesterday, and to day, and for ever." (Hebrews 13:8)

The plain truth is that Jesus is the same, but the church has changed.

So, in a church like this, the Biblical obedience of the church of Damascus is not held to.



So, Paul ends up a blind "church-goer".

Never healed, never released to his apostolic ministry.

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PAUL #2----A CHURCH WITH IT'S OWN "SCHEDULE"



"Hello, my name is Paul, I've just met Jesus and I am blind. Jesus told me to come to this city--can you help me?"

"Come let me pray for you brother. We know in this church, that Jesus heals"

"What next, pastor?"

"Well, you are invited to attend our church--but you need to be baptized. Our next scheduled baptism is in 6 months....."



Once again, our friend Paul comes to a modern-day church, and is, of course, welcomed. This church does believe, like the church of Damascus in the Bible, that God can heal. However, this is a church bound with schedules and rules established by human leadership and tradition. This church has a "secret government"---many rules and long-standing principles that come from past tradition and a hierarchy of authority.

In this church, a "new convert" is looked at suspiciously. Oh yes, Paul can "attend" the church service--and he will eventually be baptized--but it will only be a water baptism,--not the full and immediate baptism in the Spirit that Saul receives in the Bible narrative....

"And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even Jesus*, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." (Acts 9:17)

And, as far as "straightway" preaching the Gospel--Paul, in this church, has many many years of "scrutiny" and "proving" and "testing" to endure, before he can be trusted by leadership to preach. And the "proving and testing" that is done will include, not only his ability in preaching the Gospel, but also, his loyalty to the system of the church--his respect and compliance with all the established rules of the church--his "submission to authority".

The quick progression to ministry we see in the Bible, the simple understanding that the gift of ministry is for all believers, is not understood or taught in this church.

"For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch." (Mark: 13:34)

"Ministry" is a type of "nobility" within this church. "Ministry" has more to do with exercising authority over others, than serving others.....

The word "minister" means servant----and is specifically and clearly defined by Jesus thus.....

"But Jesus called them unto him, and said, **Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;** (Matthew 20: 25-26)

"But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, **Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:** (Mark 10: 42-43)

"And he said unto them, **The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.**" (Luke 22:25-26)

Jesus defined ministry as service toward others, and specifically NOT the exercising of authority over others. But this concept is completely ignored and not taught in this church. Rather, "rule" and format are what this church is all about.

The end result is that Paul #2 spends his Christian life waiting----waiting for release that will never come.



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PAUL #3-----A CHURCH THAT NEEDS TO WAKE UP!



"Hello, my name is Paul, I've just met Jesus and I am blind. Jesus told me to come to this city--can you help me?"

"Well brother Paul, Jesus heals in this place! Come in, and we will pray for you and baptize you right away!"

Paul #3 comes to a church which has many similarities to the church of Damascus. They believe in healing, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and want people to receive these things right away.....but.....

"Pastor, I'm not a very good speech-maker-- (2Corinthians 11:6) but very bold in writing. I want to work with others--as the Lord leads and directs--to carry the Gospel out to the world."

"Well, that's very unusual---uh---I'm sorry, that is not real ministry---you have to work at the pulpit and teach--that is what ministry really is all about."



The Bible tells us that ministry is a gift which is given "unto every one of us"...

1 ¶ I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,  
2 ¶ With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;  
3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.  
4 *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*  
5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,  
6 One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.  
7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.  
8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.  
9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?  
10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)  
11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;  
12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:  
(Ephesians 4: 1-12)

This church does not follow after new covenant ministry. Rather, it stresses something called "pastoral authority" which is based on the Levitical priesthood of the old covenant.

The tradition of a "ruling priest" within the church began 1700 years ago, when a Roman emperor (Theodosius the great) declared all the citizens of Rome to be "Christians". The church was re-defined. "Ministry" became the ruling and teaching of other believers. Being a "Christian" meant you were baptized by an official of the church (this is why babies were baptized)---attend mass every Sunday, and paid a tithe to the leadership.

The new covenant church in the Bible clearly did not follow any of these ideas. By doctrine and example, these old covenant principles were eliminated from new covenant church operation. The first believers understood that the blood offering of Jesus at the cross negated all the operations of the old covenant that forgave sin. They did not pay tithe, since it was a sin offering. They did not follow the sabbath rituals--since they also had the purpose of sin cleansing. They did not see fit to build a temple to worship in--but rather understood that all believers were now the temple of the Holy Spirit--and they met mostly in their homes as brothers and sisters in the Lord--without a "ruling house". And, they understood the new covenant gave a priesthood--a ministry--to every

believer. (1Peter2 calls all the church a "priesthood" and Revelation 1:6 and 5:10 calls all believers "priests"). The new covenant church thus understood that there was a new priesthood (Christ the High Priest of ALL believers) and the Levitical priesthood with all it's rules of authority was abrogated.....

"¶ If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need *was there* that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." (Hebrews 7: 11-12)

The church in the Bible, operated by apostleship as Jesus had demonstrated. Apostleship, is simply believers working together as brothers and sisters--serving God--and serving others--by carrying on the Gospel ministry of Jesus Christ.

"By whom we have received grace and apostleship...." (Romans 1:5)

In our example, Paul #3 speaks to the pastor about his calling--his apostleship. In the Bible, Paul almost always worked in a group with other believers (and when he did not, he is not called an "apostle"--since ministry gifts are functions--NOT titles of rulership as tradition would have us believe). In the Bible, Paul makes the statement that he was not very effective in his speech, but much more bold in his writing to the churches. He had found his place in the apostolic move of God--and worked as the Lord lead----in brotherly cooperation with his many "fellowsoldiers". (Wouldn't an apostolic move of God be interesting to participate in!) Unfortunately, the declarations of ancient Roman emperors, dark ages popes and protestant kings has set the "pastor/Levitical priest" as the "ruling operation" (ministry?) of most churches.

Now, the church in this example, believes in many many new covenant doctrines--and teaches them quite correctly. But, it's function, it's operational plan is enmeshed in the traditions of man, using "types and shadows" of old covenant principles. These traditions limit and re-define ministry, and thus hinder the Gospel. This church is focused on worship and teaching. Spends most of it's time, effort and money on itself---creating a pretty environment---an impressive church building---exciting music and teaching. Most of the church members were Christians already---simply lured in by these things--Christians seeking to "upgrade" their church experience.

This church, like most, omits apostleship in favor of the Roman system of operation.

The Bible tells us that within the church, apostles ought to be first priority.....

"¶ Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers....." (1Corinthians 12: 27-28)

Sometime, read and study 1Corinthians chapter 12, and Ephesians chapter 4. They teach clearly and plainly, that all Christians are called to serve God---but each in different ways. The church is described as a body--each member with a different function--yet each member needed (would you like to do without any part of your body?).

Christ and only Christ is the Head of this body. All of us, are brothers and sisters in Him--bondservants--

ministers--each with gifts that fall into categories (apostles--prophets--teachers).

The goal that is set, is to work this diversity, in unity, directly under the authority of Jesus Christ, the Head of the church.

The tradition of man in the church, clearly hinders this goal.

Love and brotherhood is meant to rule.

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PAUL#4---A SUCCESS STORY--?

"Hello, my name is Paul, I've just met Jesus and I am blind. Jesus told me to come to this city--can you help me?"

"Well brother Paul, Jesus heals in this place! Come in, and we will pray for you and baptize you right away!---  
And, we want ministers!"

"Pastor, I know that the Lord wants me to serve Him. I feel a strong calling....."



"Great! this is a growing ministry and we need more pastors! Here is the process.....First you need to submit to my authority. That means you must show up to church every Sunday--on time--dress right--do everything right so we can judge you--test you--prove you. You need to get in agreement with the doctrine of this church. You must serve within the church first--help out your leadership every way you can. Then, after a while, you can go to Bible school--and maybe--if the Lord wills and we who are in authority approve---you can become an associate pastor---and perhaps--eventually--you can gain your own pastorate. It's a long road, and it means a lot of work and study--but if you are tested and proved and can make the mark, you will eventually become a pastor, and have your own people to rule."



Is this truly a "success story"? In the Bible, Paul began to preach "straightway"--right? He only needed to spend a few days with the believers at Damascus, and the rest of his ministry was spent as an apostle. He worked in small groups carrying the Gospel of Jesus Christ out to the world. Simple, direct apostleship.

Well, it seems our goals and definitions of the way ministry should operate certainly have changed from the times of the Bible---right? We spoke earlier about the changes that the Roman empire made to the system of the church. Read these quotes from catholic history book...

["MASSES OF PEOPLE JOINED THE CHURCH. THEIR REGISTRATION AND CARE REQUIRED COMPLETELY NEW FORMS OF ORGANIZATION AND MINISTRY...." \(click here to read more about this subject\)](#)

Very far back in history, an idea came into the Christian church--the concept of a "Christian nation". Theoretically--everyone was a Christian (since the new rules stated that being a Christian meant church attendance and baptism by an official of the church) and so there was no more need for apostleship. The organization of the "ministry" of the church suddenly had the connotation of "rule" over others....(remember what Jesus said in Matthew 20:25-29, Mark 10:42-45, and Luke 22:25-29!) ...the "kings of the Gentiles" (certainly the Roman emperors!) and their system of "exercising authority over others" became enmeshed in the operation of the Christian church. Since everyone was a Christian the format of the church became worship and teaching (by official church teachers only--of course).

What about the reformation? didn't the church change at that time? Yes, in certain ways--but not structurally at the local level...

["HENRY MADE FEW CHANGES IN THE CATHOLIC RELIGION, THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND WAS ESTABLISHED BY LAW, A UNIFORM SERVICE WAS PREPARED, AND ALL PEOPLE WERE REQUIRED TO ATTEND." \(to read more, click on this link\)](#)

A study of history shows that at the time of the protestant reformation, many nations turned away from the authority of the pope, but at the same time, the kings of these nations became the "head" of the church---a prime example is that of Henry the 8th of England. (Lord, will anyone ever allow Jesus Christ to be the Head of the church?!---the Bible tells us how to do this--just be brothers and sisters in the Lord and do not exercise authority over one another!).

The most influential translation of the Bible in the English language is of course the King James version. This Bible is genuinely a very accurate translation--however it was translated for King James (study who he was some time!)--who was a "ruler" who had "subjects" who were "under" his "rule" and "authority" and were expected to "submit" to his "authority". These words and concepts were jammed into the king James Bible wherever possible. For example, the word translated as "submit" (greek: hupatasso) has 2 meanings, one being "military like submission to the commands of a leader"--the second meaning is "brotherly cooperation and

bearing of one another's' burdens in love". The translators of the KJV very definitely pleased God--but also, they had to please the king and support his monarchy. King James (like the monarchs of his day) believed himself to be "God's voice and rule" over the people in his nation. Everything he said--every order--was as if it were from God Himself. Now, we don't believe in this kind of human authority any more (thank God!)--yet we suffer with a Bible which contains many phrases and words which seem to say that God has put "rulers" with "authority" within the framework of the church.

["CHURCH MONEY WAS NEEDED WHEN THE KING WAS IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES; ABOVE ALL THE BISHOPS WERE PART OF THE HIERARCAL STRUCTURE OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT OF WHICH THE KING WAS THE HEAD.." \(read more about king James here\)](#)

The result in the local church was that the format of operation made little change from catholic to protestant. The priest of the catholic church became the pastor of the protestant church---along with all the rights of "rulership". The protestant nations were still (theoretically) 100% Christian--therefore again, no need for apostleship or witnessing of the Gospel.

The concept of a Christian nation carries through history all the way to the 20th century. The emphasis on the convoluted idea of "ministerial authority" (a clear contradiction of terms--since a "minister" is by definition a servant) certainly has carried through to our churches of today. The USA began with a unique problem. It was a mix of many many Christian denominations. Thankfully--our founding fathers--(who were good Bible readers and realized that God made people to be free!) came up with the idea of freedom of religion. They wrote into our constitution that there would never be any one official "brand" of Christianity--and the leaders of our nation would not be rulers of the church.

The fact is, that we, the church, need to wake up and realize that we are not living in "Christian nations" today! The enemy is winning big-time on the home front! Young generations are being raised devoid of the Gospel, while 90% of Christians sit in churches that spend very little or no time, effort or money witnessing the Gospel to their communities. In our churches, a "success story" is the one-out-of-a-thousand who becomes a pastor. At the same time, we ignore what the Bible teaches about ministry--we have no idea what apostleship is, and in so doing we hinder God from operating fully.

In other words, people go to Hell, because of our tradition.

Saul #4, the "success story" never becomes the apostle Paul---he never preaches the Gospel out to the world as Paul and his fellow laborers did in the Bible.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?....." (Romans 10: 13-15)

The Gospel is not fully preached--unless someone is "sent"--("apostello")!!!



PAUL #5---"EMPOWERMENT"--AS LONG AS IT LIVES UP TO THE SCHEDULE!

"Hello, my name is Paul, I've just met Jesus and I am blind. Jesus told me to come to this city--can you help me?"

"Yes of course--Jesus heals today and we believe firmly in the Spirit baptism--we follow what the Bible says!. We are a new covenant apostolic church. We know that all believers have a ministry to fulfill for the Lord--come on in brother Paul!"

"Apostolic church---sounds great! I know the Lord has called me to be an apostle. I want to work in a group with other believers and be "sent" as a the Holy Ghost directs. I want to work with others to carry on Christ's mission--to lead people to Him as Savior and to pray for the sick and cast out the devil"

"Well sir,we know that every believer has all those authorities in Jesus' name--to preach the Gospel, pray for the sick and bring deliverance to those in need. We want all believers to be empowered in those areas. BUT--did you say "work in a small group"?"

"Yes--that is what apostleship is, as Jesus demonstrated it to us in the Bible, and the church which followed after Him exemplified to us. They met daily--they had ongoing meetings in their homes--prayed for God's direction--and got people saved on a daily basis--Yes, apostleship is what I want to do--um--isn't that what the sign says on your church?"



"Well, I'm sorry, but we meet on Sundays and Wednesdays. We have praise and worship and Bible study. Now we do have some home Bible studies (although the pastor has to come in and break them up if they get too crazy and start to think they can accomplish anything) and we have outreach once a month. You can come to any of those if you like--?"

Today, there are many churches which very sincerely believe in empowerment for all believers and ministry for all. So many genuinely want "Gods' best" and genuinely want to spread the Gospel and see the Lord heal the sick and bring deliverance through every member of the church....AND YET...so many churches (though they call themselves "apostolic"--"new covenant"--"non-denominational") operate by the methods and rules established by churches of the past who did not believe in these ideas. It's as if they have to "live up to" the church establishment. Leaders of these churches may preach release and empowerment from the pulpit each Sunday--but they are still standing in the pulpit! (have we ever heard the term "practice what you preach"?!)

These type of churches are loaded with people who can witness the Gospel and pray for the sick and minister in big ways--yet--tradition keeps most of it inside the walls of the church, under the "holy-day-of" obligation rules set up by Roman emperors and dark ages church rulers. These churches genuinely want all the members of the church to minister--yet most of the time, effort, and money of the people goes into a building which is used once a week for an hour and a half! This church teaches that all believers have a priesthood (quite correctly)--yet the only "priesthood" that is apparent within the church is usually that of the leaders. Most of the people are not organized into ministry--but rather have to "go it alone" in serving God. Big gifts are recognized--but all the small gifts--all the "lesser" members of the body of Christ are often overlooked.

1 ¶ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.  
 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.  
 3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.  
 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:  
 5 So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.  
 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith;  
 7 Or ministry, *let us wait* on *our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;  
 (Romans 12: 1-7)---(Also--read and study 1Corinthians chapters 12-14 for a very similar teaching on this

subject)

Biblical, apostolic church operation would be to assemble all the church together occasionally--but on a daily basis--meet in small groups (usually in the Christian home--which the Bible calls "the pillar and ground of the truth"--1 Timothy 3:15). All the ministry of the church was apostolic. That is to say--teaching was done in groups--the prophetic word was operated by groups--and of course, the first direction of the church was the apostleship to carry the Gospel out to the world. The ministry of the church was much more direct and effective in this way--and quicker. This was the way that a new believer (like Paul) could be "brought up to speed" and walk into his or her ministry. Yes there was leadership (the bible talks of "bishops and elders"), but their job was to organize the ministry of all the church--not to "rule" the church with their "ministry".

Think of an example like this: A ministry that ought to be in every Christian church is that of feeding the poor. How hard is this to do? I am certain that within every church, there are folks who like to cook. How many kitchens are in your church? What if we divided up the job? Certainly there are some folks who might want to cook a pot of soup for the homeless once a month. Some others might want to cook for the poor once a week or more. (Of course some people don't like to cook at all--not everyone has to participate--remember we have "differing gifts"!). now, think--how hard would it be for a new believer to "put their hand to the plow"--to work in this type of ministry? Of course there are many other ministries within the church--but they all ought to operate in this same way--in groups! The witnessing of the Gospel (which is the Gospel of salvation--healing and deliverance--a lot of work to do!) should be organized like this. What if we had organized prophetic ministry meeting in this manner--and what if those prophets sought the word from God on the "where and when" of witnessing. In the Bible, the Holy Spirit directed the witnessing of the Gospel. In every church there are folks who like to pray, and would want to do it frequently. We should expect them to receive the specific instructions for where and when to carry out the Gospel. (read Acts 13:1-4 for a quick example of what we mean)

It would be the job of leadership, to organize these ministries--no small job! That's why we would need apostolic leadership as well--a GROUP of leaders!!

You see, apostolic church operation makes perfect sense. If it is our goal to carry on Christ's mission--the more ministry we do, the more people can be saved--healed--delivered--fed and released. God's kingdom can grow. The Bible tells us this is so.

In the Bible, the vision of the glorious church, is ministry flowing thorough every member of the body. We would grow into the "perfect man"....

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (Ephesians 4: 11-13)

This church that Paul #5 has come to, calls itself "apostolic" and "new covenant"--but doesn't really practice what it preaches. This church is really very close to true apostleship--most of the church understands it's ministry and empowerment--and yet the operation of the church is largely traditional. The time, effort and money of the

church is largely expended on operating a traditional church structure and format ("once-a-week--all-must-attend--worship/teaching--under authority")--instead of actively and directly witnessing the Gospel.

Isn't the Gospel what we are supposed to do?

But, when we are living up to the traditional church rules of meeting, Paul, who was an apostle in the Bible, ends up with the ministry of an usher.....



This is what an apostle looks like in our churches today.....!

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PAUL #6---THE CHURCH IN "REVIVAL"

"Hello, my name is Paul, I've just met Jesus and I am blind. Jesus told me to come to this city--can you help me?"

"Why yes, please come in---we know that God heals in this place."

"Uh, hello, it would be really helpful if I could talk to someone. I uh, really would like to talk to someone..."

"Hey man--just worship Him"

"Well, yes, I love to worship the Lord--but I would really like to talk to someone--to sit with someone--spend a few days with people who I could talk to--and maybe I could be released to preach the Gospel...."

"Hey man--just worship Him--God will move on you sovereignly--give you everything you need"

"But I really need someone to talk to--someone that can help me get started in my ministry..."

"Hey man--just worship Him---okay now--be quiet--the pastor is gonna talk"

"oh, yes, okay--I'll be quiet"



Paul #6 has come to a church which is "in revival". Unfortunately, "revival" as we call it today, is really an extended church service. It is not the apostolic revival which Jesus brought to Israel and which the church of the Bible operated in.

In a modern "revival"--yes, there is wonderful worship--and the Lord does much through our worship---(but of course He is limited to the containment of a building--since rarely does the revival break free of the church walls)--but the inevitable "pastoral control" is present--(although it is interesting to notice that the lessening of this "authority" does allow God to operate more freely!). Certainly the church in the Bible worshiped God--the followers of Jesus spent days in the upper room---and the assembling of all the church together (largely for worship and for receiving the empowerment of the Holy Spirit) was something which was done occasionally

(there was no "regular schedule" for worship in the Bible--it, like all things, was Spirit-lead!).

Also, it is recorded that occasionally, a large group of believers was spoken to--but again, it was not by rules or limitations. The Bible never says that "the pastor taught every Sunday". Certainly the Bible records that Peter spoke to the multitudes on the day of pentecost (but notice that he spoke to a large group of non-believers--and gave a Gospel message--something which makes perfect sense). Paul is recorded as speaking to groups within the church at times--but always with a specific purpose of God--and not as routine or format. But along with worship and teaching--the church in the Bible did something which is called "breaking bread together"--it simply means they talked with one another--directly--in a small group (again--usually in a home!--in an atmosphere where questions could be asked and answered directly and quickly.

Our traditional church format has a kind of "wall of formality". Even in a church which is "in revival" there is really no place for conversation. The idea we have is that God accomplishes everything He wants "sovereignly"--that is to say that we really don't need to ask questions or gain direct knowledge--somehow all our questions will be answered "magically" by God. If we read the Bible carefully we will see that God really does not work this way. Notice that Paul did not receive all of his instructions when he meets Jesus. He needed to go to Damascus--spends a few days talking with the believers there. In fact the initial instructions for Paul's ministry came to Paul through Ananias. In the apostolic revival of the Bible, God certainly contacted people (just as He does today). Yes the people in the Bible were worshipping---but also, there was a daily place of speaking with one another---teaching in groups--on a common level with one another. This common basis of brotherhood was operational. People met in small groups often (not under any authority but God's!) and were instructed by the Lord directly--and worked their gifts and ministries together--to carry on Christ's mission and witness the Gospel out to the world. The church of our day and age still clings to dark ages concepts of human rule and man's authority, concepts which have given us a somewhat cold and impersonal format. Now, our very personal God works through this format as best He can--but what if we simply added (in place of authoritarian and repetitive teaching) the "breaking of bread together" that the Bible describes as a fundamental operational plan? In the Bible, Paul needs only to spend those few days with the believers in Damascus (probably taken directly into someone's home) and he is quickly discipled--quickly released--and straightway preaches the Gospel.

Paul #6 walks into a "revival"--and gets "shepherded" into line with everyone else. The format of the large assembly hinders him from speaking personally with anyone in any real terms--and so once again he does not become the apostle that he is called to be. In a "revival" we say that we want God to have His way--and that certainly is a step in the right direction--yet our traditional format overrides this freedom. People in a revival feel a lot of freedom (thank God at last!) yet this "release" does not often play out into apostleship and ministry--as is the example in the Bible.

In the Bible, they worshipped and were filled in the upper room---but they understood Jesus' instructions to allow that Spiritual empowerment play out into apostolic operation--and the witnessing of the Gospel.....

**"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)**

Going to church or revival is not just supposed to be about "getting filled". We are supposed to "get filled 'til we spill"--we are supposed to release the empowerment of the Spirit to others by witnessing the Gospel!



### Part 7---What About Anannias of the Church of Damascus??

As you are reading this challenging area of scripture--perhaps many of you are saying--"Yes, it's true that Paul "straightway" preached the Gospel--but--THIS IS PAUL--this is one of the great founders of the church. God acted in a special way with him--God did special miracles in those days--to begin the church. We today are the already established church--we have a different set of rules. God works in different ways than He did back then."

Okay--these may seem like logical arguments--BUT--if we do operate the church by a different set of rules--specifically about "ministry" and "authority"---why aren't these rules in the Bible? Have we really had the right to "change the rules" that the Bible gives us? This is why we urge you to study the history of the church. It is clear that people--hundreds of years ago--gave very different definitions to Christian "ministry" and "authority"--and clearly operated the church differently than the example in the Bible. (Have you ever heard of "saint Augustine of hippo"? He lived in the 4th century--and wrote much about the idea that God had withdrawn miracles and healing from the church--now that the church was "established". This eliminated apostleship--the prophetic gift--and brought the authority of man into place in the church--which, rather conveniently makes room for church leadership to collect money and rule over people. You may not believe what the people of the 4th century church believed, but you may be following their ideas of church operation!)

Now, today, there are many many good church leaders--who are very much wanting to be obedient to the word of God--in a very pure sense. But what if, people who lived in the dark ages, made changes---based on "half-scriptures" in the Bible---and strictly enforced those rules over the ages--so we have a format of church operation which is very very well established and followed, but which is in many areas different from the operational principles of the church in the Bible? This is simply the question that we hope this study challenges you with. This study is a challenge--not a condemnation of anyone. It is a challenge to the church to strive toward the principles of the glorious church the Bible describes. (to put it simply--the glorious church of the Bible is a group of believers--working on a common level--as brothers and sisters in Christ--with ministry in every member--reaching out with all the Gospel of Jesus Christ--who is the Head of the body--the church)

Some of you might be saying that Paul was "specifically chosen"--since Jesus Himself spoke to him. WE suggest you take a closer look at your Bible--look at Acts chapter 9. Do you have a Bible with the words of Jesus in red? Count the red words--notice something. Jesus spoke more instructions to Ananias than to Paul! The Bible mentions many many "little people"--folks who were only mentioned once in scripture--yet operated with

the same authority and gifts that any of the people who are spoken of more often--case in point--Ananias of the church of Damascus. The fact is that in the church of the Bible, the move of God was operating through many many people--not just specific leaders.

Anannias is described as a "disciple"--which is simply a student. He was a "regular Christian"--no one "special. (Again--look through your Bible and notice the many many people who are mentioned--especially in the salutations and endings of Bible books. You will find women who operated the church in their homes. You will find a man named Epaphroditus in the book of Philippians.....

"Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, (Greek: apostollos) and he that ministered to my wants." (Philipians 2:25)

Paul makes the statement that Epaphroditus was the apostle to the Philippian church and NOT he! You see--ministry was not a title of rulership--but an action that people carried out. It was not an official--"life-long title" as many have said. It interesting to notice that the translators of 500 years ago in the KJV tried to protect Paul's "official" apostleship by not given the title of "apostle" to Epaphroditus. He is called a "messenger"--but the Greek word is "apostollos" the same word which is translated (or should we say not-translated!) as "apostle" when in reference to Paul or Peter or the other "official" apostles.

So once again let's update the story. What if--Jesus spoke the very same instructions to a modern-day Ananias?---someone like you or me--just a "regular" Christian.....

11 And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for *one* called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his sight.....

Our Ananias receives the same instructions from Jesus---but what does he do? Of course, with something important like this--he goes to the pastor--right?

"Pastor! Jesus spoke to me! Do you know the man named Paul, who has been persecuting Christians--well, he's in town, he's met Jesus, and he is blind. Jesus told me that this man will do many great things for Him!"



"Well now Anannias--are you sure that Jesus *spoke* to you? (many teach that God does not speak at all to us any more--and since we believe in a "pastoral authority" which establishes the doctrine for all the church--!)-"

"And, Anannias--don't you think that God would tell *me*, the pastor of the church--the person who is in authority--this important information?" (Yet another roadblock! Many believe that God tells the pastor everything for the rest of the church. The "common people" will not hear from God--especially not with regard to important matters such as ministry and "promotion")

(--another point of trouble---In the Bible--it seems as if Ananias baptized Paul---of course no pastor would "allow" a common person to baptize anyone---right??)

(p) "Paul is blind! I must go and pray for his healing--since I'm the pastor!!

There goes "super-pastor" off to the rescue!--Many pastors believe it is their job to do all the ministry in the church. These guys have really good hearts--but they are suffering from not including release in their ministry (which is what the Bible says the "pastoral anointing" is supposed to be!!). These "super-pastors" run wild to do the will of God when called---and do it "over" the other folks in the church. These are the pastors who have nervous break-downs after a while. We should read the BIBLE!--Remember--Jesus told Ananias to lay hands on Paul--NOT a pastor or leader of the church of Damascus.

At any one of these roadblocks to ministry Paul could easily end up stranded at the pew--or waiting by the clock--waiting for the "official minsitry" to have time to act--and instead of walking directly into his ministry



So what? Who cares? **GOD CARES!!** Since the Bible tells us that it takes apostleship to get people saved (Romans 10:15)--the fact is that without apostleship in all the members of the church--people end up in HELL--Satan wins--the Gospel is not spread.

The mission of all the church is the spreading of the Gospel.

Why can't we just do it together---and let God lead???