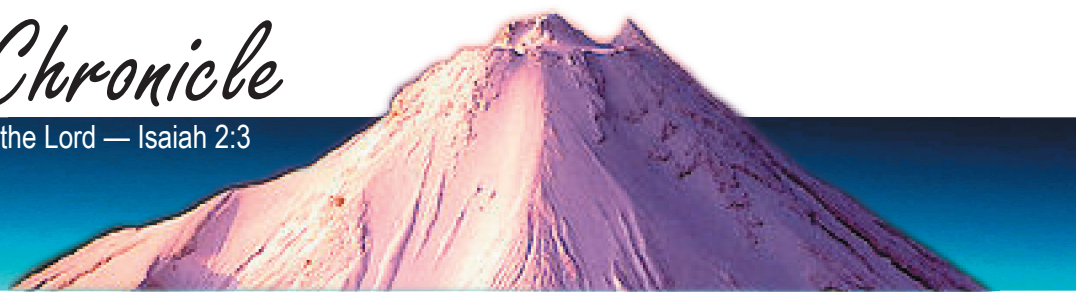


# The Summit Chronicle

Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord — Isaiah 2:3



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### **Scripture of the Month**

**"Remember your Creator in the days  
of your youth, before the evil days  
come and the years draw near when  
you will say, 'I have no delight in  
them'"**

— Ecclesiastes 12:1

### **Contact Us**

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## **FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM**

by Edwin S. Jones

Church growth has to do with the way the church survives from generation to generation. If there is no evangelism, there will be no earthly manifestation of the church. If we find no evangelism, we realize that there will be no salvation. There can therefore be no doubt but that there is a great need for evangelism. The only real question for our consideration is the one that makes inquiry into the specifics of this fulfilling this need. Just what must happen for evangelism to thrive in the Lord's church?

### **HAVE WE SEEN WHAT THE BIBLE REVEALS?**

When we see the various ways that evangelism is promoted and defined among us, we ought to ask ourselves why the New Testament does not address evangelism the way we commonly do? Where, for instance, do we find the rhetoric of today in the New Covenant record? Where are all the verses urging

us to remember to take the gospel to our friends and neighbors? Where are all the "deathbed" stories? And where do we find that inspiration's favorite inquiry is, "If you died tonight would you be lost?" Odd, do you not think, that such things, and many more modern areas of emphasis, are conspicuous by their absence in the Bible? What will we discover when we take a fresh look at Scripture?

We need to take another look at the Bible and see what is actually there. Surely we would agree God's word is the very place we would expect to find the plan for evangelism. It is in Scripture that we will learn what we need to do in church growth.

When we leave behind our preconceived notions about evangelism and take a close look at the inspired truths of the Bible, we see a picture of evangelism that is both personal and practical. We discover that the most basic needs in evangelism are not for

more programs, better methods, bigger and fancier campaigns, or an increasing reliance on mass media. The main need, the most central component of evangelism, is found in our daily living out the tenants of Jesus. It is the daily practice of biblical Christianity that the Scripture emphasizes.

God's goal for the church has always been that Christians would be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29). It is therefore no coincidence that the Bible gives us "the knowledge of the Son of God to a mature man, the measure and stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). We have, consequently, "the mind of Christ" revealed in the New Testament (I Cor. 2:16).

The "mind of Christ" is, however, not intended to be something that is found only on the printed page. We are to have Christ's mind in us (Phil. 2:5). Paul's prayer for brethren was that they would have Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith (Eph. 3:16-

17; cf. Rom. 10:17). Paul intended that every Christian would be a living epistle (II Cor. 3:1-4)!

The “process” of this transformation is most significant. We learn in our studies that it is a daily walk with Christ that changes us from the inside out. As we look to the Lord as the model or pattern for our change, we become transformed. “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit” (II Cor. 3:18; cf. Rom. 12:1-2). In this process, we are to “in humility receive the word implanted,” and “prove [y] ourselves doers of the word and not merely hearers” (Jas. 1:21-22).

Paul could well relate to this process of transformation for he was a zealous participant: “I have been crucified with Christ; and 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 up for me” (Gal. 2:20). Paul practiced what he preached, but we must also realize that the preaching of this process of transformation was not a lesser concern—it was central to Paul’s message.

In Colossians 1:24-29 we find the Apostle relating the plan he used when he worked with newly formed congregations. We are more accustomed to thinking of Paul as a congregation starter. However, we need to see the rest of the story—how Paul worked to bring congregations to maturity. This methodology is vital to understanding our need for evangelism.

In Colossians, Paul pointed out that Christ “in” a Christian was a believer’s hope of glory (Col. 1:

27). Paul saw his ministry to the saved as being one of presenting them “complete in Christ” (Col. 1:28). It was for that very purpose that Paul would “labor and strive” (Col. 1:29). This work or labor of developing Christ in a Christian was what Paul engaged in after he planted a church (cf. Acts 20:17-35).

This plan that Paul pursued with such diligence is reflected in his striking remarks to the churches of Galatia. The brethren in Galatia were being led astray by Judaizing teachers who sought to take them into a legalistic, Old Testament oriented manifestation of Christianity. Paul knew that their only real hope was in bringing them to maturity in Christ. His words still ring with passion, “My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you” (Gal. 4:19). Paul well understood that if the Christian life was to be lived successfully, people had to be brought to maturity. The maturing process would not only provide great preventive medicine against false teachers and false doctrine; it would equip the saints for their work of service (Eph. 4:12).

It is with the positive aspects of Christianity that we find the Bible’s central teaching about evangelism. As we “grow up in all things unto Him who is the head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:15), one of those “things” is evangelism. As we become more like Jesus, we become better able to relate to the lost in Jesus’ own way.

In taking another look at the way of Christ concerning evangelism, we must be careful to understand the seriousness of reviving this vital pattern of evangelism. We would be most remiss if we saw the value of the pattern for becoming a Christian, organizing the church, and worshipping God,

but did not esteem God’s pattern for evangelism. Even as Moses was instructed by God to “make all things according to the pattern” (Heb. 8:5), so we must give “much greater attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it” (Heb. 2:1). There is a great need for the church to return to God’s pattern for evangelism.

### **THE CHRIST-CENTERED EVANGELISTIC PLAN**

The New Testament pattern for evangelism is what the church needs. This pattern centers in personal Christ-likeness. All through out the record of the New Testament the church is constantly and passionately admonished to live in a manner compatible to the nature of Christ. That is what walking in the light and fellowship are all about. “If we walk in the light as He, Himself is in the light; we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son, cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

Consider the wisdom of this plan. Who could do a better job with God’s work than a person who sought to live like Jesus? Is there a better plan than that? Of course not! There could be no better way of conducting the Father’s business. Whether the service to God would involve benevolence, edification or evangelism, the best way to conduct the business of God is to do it as Christ would do it. Jesus’ entire earthly mission was followed by a singular devotion to the will of the Father (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10). We cannot do better than to follow His example.

As we come to see the significance of the Christ-centered New Testament plan, we come to see certain well-known techniques

in a broader light. For instance, consider the Bible's teachings on Christ as the head of the church (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:19; I Cor. 11:3). We realize that this means that there is only one head and thus only one church. This is devastating to modern denominationalism, but there is more to this teaching than just what it rules out. There is much that is ruled in.

By studying the headship of Christ as it relates to the need for the church to practice biblical evangelism, we readily think of a number of applications. One example is how a body cannot function unless it receives instructions from the head. Likewise, the church cannot carry out God's will unless it understands the thinking of the head, Christ. Without a strong connection to Jesus, the church is capable of only spasmodic movements that cannot accomplish God's purpose.

Remember the slogan for the United Negro College Fund, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste"? That memorable phrase has an application to our subject. The church has been given the mind of Christ (I Cor. 2:16) and it is to take up that mind in each Christian (Phil. 2:5). What a waste it would be if Christians looked to themselves and their own devices in evangelism, rather than to the thinking of Christ.

Another thing in this evangelistic rethinking of ours concerns Christ as the Master Teacher. We readily acknowledge that Jesus is the master teacher, the greatest teacher that ever lived. Are we, however, really using what we know about this in our evangelistic efforts? To what extent are our evangelistic patterns compatible with the practices of Jesus? Do

we traditionally begin with a look at the Christ, or with a look to something manmade?

When we think of personal evangelism, a number of things come to mind that are associated with commonly used methods. These would include: The Open Bible Study of Ivan Stewart, the Fishers of Men approach, and the film strips/video method developed by Jule Miller. All of these have good things about them and many have been converted through them, but what do we first learn from Jesus about methods? Would not we expect to learn something very important about approaches by looking to Jesus before we searched elsewhere? All profitable methods are legitimate only to the extent that they honor the methods of Jesus.

What we do learn from Jesus is that He did not have any one-size-fits-all method. While He was always seeking to get people to arrive at the same place, Heaven, His methods were as numerous as the people, circumstances and situations He faced. The truth never changed, but the way Jesus addressed the many conditions He encountered was forever changing. Is that not one of the main reasons we call Him the "Master Teacher"?

I realize that Jesus' approach requires maturity and growth before a Christian would be able to go at personal evangelism in such a flexible way. I also know that the various program methods available can be helpful in getting us to a more confident, mature, flexible approach. However, I even more significantly know that we rarely give priority to the flexible teaching example of Christ. We speak of Christianity being a lifestyle, yet rarely see the obvious connection

with evangelism being a lifestyle. We might go as far as to say that Christianity is God's plan for evangelism.

Methods can sometimes get us in a rut. A thing that might help us to grow can, at times, actually become a crutch. Studies have shown that the most effective means of study is one person sitting across the table from another with an open Bible between them. Good, old fashioned Bible studies that use the Bible as the "equipment" most closely approximate the pattern of the New Testament. This approach takes more effort, but it offers a higher quality return on the investment. Let us learn from Jesus, the Master Teacher, about how we can be more flexible and personable in our teaching of others.

### **ACTS OR EPISTLES?**

When it comes to learning about evangelism, we all know that the book to go to is Acts, right? I do not think so. I really do not think that Acts is where most Christians will learn the daily evangelism we are asking for in this study. Let us think about this together. Acts primarily deals with preachers preaching to crowds who are unbelievers, many of whom have never heard about Jesus. Few Christians will preach to crowds who do not know about Jesus. Few Christians are preachers. Not even many preachers commonly preach to crowds of unbelievers. As great as the book of Acts is, it does not major on the local congregations outreach into its community.

Additionally, Acts centers on the response of faith that adds a person to the church (Acts 2:47, etc.). Christians can use Acts to marvel at the early growth of the church, to show people how baptism is part of



the response of faith in becoming a Christian, and to be encouraged at how God opens doors for the gospel. Christians, however, already know what to do to be saved—they have already done it. What we do not primarily learn from Acts, we do learn from the Epistles. In the Epistles we see how to live before a lost world.

It is the Epistles that develop the Christ-like emphasis we have been developing in this lesson. In the Epistles we learn of the daily walk of faith that is the expression most applicable to the average Christian. It is the character of life that both equips the “person on the pew,” and presents opportunities for them to speak a good word for Jesus.

The verse that most readily presents this idea, and therefore the verse I believe most perfectly represents the evangelism emphasis of the Epistles is I Peter 3: 15. This verse reads, “But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”

First Peter 3:15 shows that it is the responsibility of every Christian to be able to defend their hope in the Lord. The context of this verse shows that such a defense may be required in front of those who are hostile to Christianity (vv. 13-14 and 16). Most brethren today state that they just cannot teach others. Inspiration says we must acquire that ability and that our ability must be able to function in adverse circumstances. We need to give more attention to God and less time for excuses. We need to practice New Testament evangelism.

To reinforce the point about personal responsibility, let us

have a look at Hebrews 5:11-14: “Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.” This passage pointedly reveals that Christians are to become able to teach within a certain reasonable amount of time. We are to progress from babes in Christ to mature, capable Christians (Eph. 4:14-15; I Pet. 2:1-2). No Christian is exempt, all are to “proclaim the excellencies” of God (I Pet. 2: 9). But let us not forget another element of our key text, I Peter 3: 21. The key of this key text is, “but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts.”

It is the very process of our personal transformation into mature Christ-likeness that readies us and prepares us for evangelism in the biblical way. The Scriptures know of no shortcut. There is no method, or apparatus, or machinery that will ready us God’s way. It is Christ that transforms us into useful servants as we are conformed to His image. We do not need to be browbeaten, put on a guilt trip, worked into an emotional frenzy, intimidated, frightened or any other such coercive activity to get us to behave like Jesus. If we have in fact come to be like Jesus, proper behavior will be present. It is the natural way of being our Christ-like selves that is the most powerful, personal ingredient in evangelism.

**NATURALNESS AND PRACTICALITY**

There are two books I have encountered that have put into words some of the biblical principles I have been discussing. One is a book by Rebecka Manly Pippert called Out of the Salt Shaker which emphasizes the

naturalness of effective evangelism. The other is Living Proof by Jim Petersen that gives practical understandings to the application of biblical principles. Both books are written by people in denominations, so there are aspects of both that I cannot endorse. Nevertheless, I have found both to be helpful in offering practical suggestions for personal evangelism.

Concerning the “naturalness” of evangelism, Pippert rather humorously shows how many people feel that evangelism is not something friends do to friends. She speaks of the unnatural, contrived, and manipulative tactics that many use to evangelize. These things only make people look weird and unnatural, hardly an engaging combination of characteristics for doing the work of Jesus.

Petersen develops the practical side of things and comes up with a very helpful concept he refers to as “mini decisions.” Petersen may logically and biblically show that people who make a commitment to Christ are most usually people who have made several smaller steps in that direction before they make the last big step. His list of “mini decisions” are instructive:

1. He’s okay.
2. I’d like to get to know him better. I feel comfortable with him.
3. He accepts me.
4. I’m going to find out why he’s so different.
5. It seems that he gets his outlook on things from the Bible.
6. He’s a Christian, but he’s okay.
7. Being a Christian sure has its advantages.
8. I like his friends. I envy their confidence.

9. It might be interesting to look at the Bible someday.

And then there are more mini-decisions:

Once the non-Christian has begun to examine the Bible with us, we can expect a new series of mini-decisions to occur. We might expect him to say, for example:

1. The Bible isn't impossible to understand after all!
2. The Bible says some important things.
3. What the Bible says about life fits my experience.
4. Jesus seems to be the key. I wonder who He really was.
5. Jesus is God.
6. I need to do what He says.
7. I will believe in him.

These steps well illustrate how daily decisions lead others toward Bible studies and beyond. By looking back at Jesus and His ministry I believe we will be able to see people going through a variety of individual steps on the way to making a final step of commitment. I believe we can also see in the Parable of the Sower that people's hearts are at different places of development and that most are not ready the first time they hear the gospel to do something about it.

Petersen also develops another useful way of describing a very biblical aspect of evangelism. He shows how evangelists like Paul would go about preaching the gospel and establishing congregations. He likens those congregations to "beachheads." From those "beachheads" Christians would be brought to maturity and then would move out into the surrounding world to win victories for Jesus. The victories would come through the vehicle

of their consecrated lives as they demonstrate the sanctification of Christ in their hearts (cf. Acts 8:4).

One last author, a brother in Christ, Flavil Yeakly, has contributed much to the practical application of Bible principles to evangelism. His statistical work has well illustrated a variety of important biblical teachings. Among them:

1. People feel most comfortable and respond most favorably and lastingly to a friendly Bible study where the Bible is the only tool.
2. Manipulative methods lead to resentment and dropouts.
3. Mere transmission of facts leads to little or nothing.
4. A study between friends accomplishes more in the long run than any other approach.
5. Growing churches emphasize the personal, friendship aspects of evangelistic methods.
6. Stagnant churches do little besides give out information in an impersonal manner.
7. Some of the churches that seem to be growing really aren't because they have high dropout rates due to their use of manipulative methods.

### CONCLUSION

Brethren, the need for evangelism is great, but evangelism needs to be understood by first listening to God. The slower, less sensational way of the New Testament is to be chosen over a supposed quick fix

that comes from mere men. We of all people, who stand for a pattern theology, we should make every effort to get back to the Bible to learn the old way of evangelism.

"Thus says the Lord, 'Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it'" (Jer. 6: 16a).

*Edwin and his family were very instrumental in the work in New Plymouth in the mid 80's. He is a teacher at the East Tennessee School of Preaching & Missions*



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# Preventing Divorce

by Kevin L. Moore

While our God is unquestionably a God of love (1 John 4:8), there are actually some things the Bible says He hates – among which is the termination of lawful marriages (Malachi 2:16). It goes without saying that God's people must never teach or practise anything that would condone, endorse, promote, or encourage that which God hates. But what positive steps can be taken to prevent divorce?

Divorce is prevented when spouses fulfill their God-given responsibilities toward each other. If every married couple respected God's marriage law and followed God's instruction manual, divorce would be non-existent. "Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband" (1 Cor. 7:3).

Husbands must love and honour their wives and be Christ-like leaders in the home (Eph. 5:23-33; 1 Pet. 3:7). Wives are to submit to, respect, and love their husbands (Eph. 5:22-33; Titus 2:4-5; 1 Pet. 3:1-6). Imagine how many marital problems would be resolved if every spouse was more patient, kind, humble, selfless, and trusting (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

Divorce is prevented when children are taught, by example and instruction, to respect the institution of marriage and to view it as a permanent union. The influence of television, the movie industry, and our worldly society must be superseded by the good examples of Christian couples, the faithful instruction of Bible class teachers, and the healthy environment

provided by Christian parents.

Divorce is prevented when we encourage our singles to be faithful Christians and to marry faithful Christians. Granted, marrying a Christian will not automatically ensure a successful marriage, but when both partners share the same faith and the same commitment to a divinely-governed marriage, the odds are stacked considerably in their favour.

Divorce is prevented when Christians study their Bibles diligently to understand the Lord's will concerning marriage. Ignorance is not bliss when it comes to the will of God (Hos. 4:6). When discussing controversial issues like divorce and remarriage, it's an easy cop-out to say, "Well, I haven't really studied it enough." While this may be a valid excuse for an immature Christian, there comes a time when a child of God must study this subject to the point he or she knows what the Bible teaches. It affects too many lives to be content with ignorance.

Divorce is prevented when church leaders have enough conviction, courage, and concern to take a firm stand and publicly teach and defend the truth on marriage, divorce and remarriage. Jesus and Paul did not remain silent on this issue, even though it was as controversial in the first century as it is today. Teachers of God's word will be held accountable both for what they teach and for what they neglect to teach (Acts 20:26-27; 1 Tim. 4:16; James 3:1).

Divorce is prevented when Christians refuse to compromise

with the world (Rom. 12:1-2). The devil succeeds when couples divorce and remarry contrary to God's will, when unscriptural marriages are tolerated in congregations, when the word of God is ignored or twisted to accommodate sinful unions, and when brethren are led to believe this issue is unimportant. By exhibiting lax attitudes toward God's marriage and moral laws, the church succumbs to the destructive influence of the world.

Divorce is prevented when Christians are united on what the Bible teaches concerning this matter. Accepting a wide variety of interpretations and applications does anything but prevent divorce. If the "agree to disagree" mentality is allowed to prevail, unlawful marriages will continue multiplying in the church, generating more conflict and putting more souls at risk. Divided scholarship must never be used to justify disunity among brethren.

In our attempts to prevent divorce – compassion, patience, and kindness must always be shown (2 Tim. 2:24-26). Confronting sin must never be done in a mean-spirited way, nor should our love for sinners induce us to tolerate or condone sin. We must speak the truth in love and restore the erring in a spirit of gentleness (Eph. 4:15; Gal. 6:1), while being careful not to forget our primary aims of obeying the Lord and saving souls.

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# The Canon of the Old Testament (Part 1)

by Rex Banks

## Introduction

Scripture contains many stern warnings against adding to, distorting or taking away from the Word of God along with numerous promises of blessings upon the faithful in every generation, and clearly such warnings and promises make sense only if there exists a permanent body of divinely-bestowed Truth which is identifiable as such and distinguishable from merely human productions. That's why it is important for believers to know something about the "canon" of scripture. Our present discussion relates to the Old Testament canon.

## "Canon"

In present usage "(the word 'canon') signifies a collection of religious writings divinely inspired and hence, authoritative, normative, sacred and binding" (ISBE). The word "is of Christian origin, from the Greek word *kanōn*, which in turn is probably borrowed from the Hebrew word, קֶנֶן, *kōāneh*, meaning a reed or measuring rod, hence, norm or rule" (ibid).

The apostle Paul tells us that in the pre-Christian era the Jews were entrusted with "the oracles of God" (Rom 3:2) a designation for "the utterances of God given through Moses and the prophets ... (1:2)" (James G. Dunn, Romans Word Biblical Commentary). Evidently this usage "is already established in the Septuagint (Deut 33:9; Isa 5:24; Psa 12:6 [LXX 11:7]; 18:30 [LXX 17:31]; 107 [LXX 106]: 11; ...)"

(ibid). Clearly then our study of the OT canon is concerned with that body of sacred writings which was entrusted to the nation of Israel, the covenant people of God in the pre Christian period. This is an important point to keep in mind throughout this study.

At an early date the Jews divided their OT writings into three groups:

(1) The Tōrāh, or Law consisting of the five books of the Pentateuch.

(2) The Nəbhī'im, or Prophets consisting of the "former" prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) the "latter" prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve Minor Prophets.)

(3) The *Kethūbhīm*, or Writings (Greek *Hagiographa*) consisting of Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah and 1 and 2 Chronicles.

The arrangement may seem arbitrary but upon examination it becomes evident that in each division there is narrative covering three successive periods (creation to the death of Moses, the death of Moses to close of the monarchy, exile and the return) as well as literature of a different kind. Because of the arrangement of the Masoretic Hebrew Bible the Jews reckoned the number of books at twenty four (or twenty two by combining certain books) but these

books are identical to the thirty-nine OT books found in the so called "Protestant canon." According to Norman Geisler "Evidence indicates that the Protestant canon, consisting of the thirty-nine books of the Hebrew Bible and excluding the Apocrypha, is the true canon" (Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics). He explains that "The only difference between the Protestant and ancient Palestinian Canon lies in organization."

## The Development of the Old Testament Canon

Although Scripture does not give a detailed account of how certain writings came to be accepted by the Jews as part of an authoritative body of truth, Bible believers take seriously the implication of many OT statements that the formation of the canon was directed by God, and that the divine source of certain writings was recognized from the moment these documents were produced. As Milton C. Fisher explains:

"The Church, in both Jewish and Christian eras, has served as custodian of and witness to the contents of the inspired Scriptures, but the latter do not derive their authority from any ecclesiastical body. Canonization was not a matter of the closing of a list of entries, partial or final, but recognition of the inherent canonical quality and qualification of each portion as it became available. Thus canonicity, an innate

authenticity by virtue of divine inspiration, may be viewed as antecedent to canonization, the acknowledgement of the authenticity of the writings by the community of believers" (The Canon of the Old Testament, Expositors Bible Commentary vol 1).

Orthodoxy strongly affirms that "The Spirit of God that inspired these compositions also worked in the hearts and minds of the chosen people to testify to them that the writings were in fact the divine Word" (R.K. Harrison Introduction to the Old Testament). But this is no mere circular argument. Orthodoxy insists that since there is sound internal and external evidence for the supernatural origin of certain documents, these documents can be trusted when they affirm that an identifiable, distinctive and divinely authorized canon exists. In a word, evidence that certain writings are inspired is also evidence that a divinely authorized canon exists because the existence of such a canon is implied by these writings. Ultimately this is a non-circular argument grounded upon Christian apologetics.

Now this is a very important point and it must be kept in mind throughout the rest of this discussion. True, the secular records cited below (e.g. Josephus, Philo, Ecclesiasticus) provide helpful insights into the OT canon, but belief in the existence of a collection of authoritative, inspired writings distinguishable from all other writings cannot be grounded upon the testimony of Josephus, Philo or Ecclesiasticus. No, belief in the existence of such a body of material is the corollary of belief in inspiration, and in turn this belief in inspiration is firmly grounded

upon the evidence supplied by Christian apologetics. This is a very important point because discussions of the OT canon must avoid circular arguments and appeals to uninspired secular records as final authority.

With these thoughts in mind we will consider some of the Biblical evidence for an OT canon.

#### (a) Moses and Genesis

Scattered throughout the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus Leviticus Numbers and Deuteronomy) are many explicit statements that Moses wrote a book at the Lord's command. In Ex 17: 14, following the defeat of Amalek we find the first of five notices in the Pentateuch where Moses wrote down something at the Lord's command:

"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Write this in a (the) book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.'"

Since the definite article occurs before "book" this may indicate (but need not) that an already existing book is in view. Perhaps we have here a reference to documents which make up the Genesis account. Anyway since there is good evidence that Moses wrote the other books of the Pentateuch, (below) and in light of solid Jewish tradition that Moses wrote the book of Genesis, it is reasonable to regard the great lawgiver as the one responsible for the first book of the Bible. Regardless, it is clear from the various NT references that the book of Genesis was regarded as an inspired document which took its place alongside other canonical

books of the OT. Archaeological discoveries may well provide an insight into the structure of the book of Genesis.

The work of P. J. Wiseman in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century provides a very good example of the real contribution that archaeology can make to our understanding of Scripture. Many believe that Wiseman's knowledge of Near Eastern literary activity enabled him to supply the key to the structure of the book of Genesis, and in doing so Wiseman provided a satisfying alternative to the so-called Documentary Hypothesis of Julius Wellhausen. Wiseman's primary idea was a very simple one, and it had the great advantage of harmonizing with well - attested ancient literary methods.

In 1977 Donald J. Wiseman, P. J.'s son presented his father's studies in a single, easy-to read volume entitled Clues to Creation in Genesis. In his Introduction, Donald Wiseman submits that the following explanation, which summarizes his father's central thesis, "unlocks the door to (the) literary structure" of the book of Genesis:

"The book of Genesis was originally written on tablets in the ancient script of the time by the Patriarchs who were intimately concerned with the events related, and whose names are clearly stated. Moreover, Moses, the compiler and editor of the book as we now have it, plainly directs attention to the source of his information."

Wiseman reached this conclusion after extensive study of Near Eastern antiquity revealed to him that most of the clay tablets from



antiquity which he examined had what are called “colophon phrases” at the end. These “colophon phrases” contained the name of the writer or owner of the tablet, words to identify the subject and some kind of dating phrase. Often they contained a “catch line” to connect several tablets in correct sequence, frequently records related to family histories and beginnings. This observation helped him to discern a pattern in the book of Genesis which hitherto had not been recognized.

Wiseman suggested that the phrase “these are the generations (toledoth) of...” followed by a name (e.g. Terah, Isaac, Jacob) which occurs 11 times in the book of Genesis, was a “colophon phrase.” He concluded that as such, the expression “these are the generations of” had originally occurred at the end of a clay tablet. He further concluded that in keeping with ancient practice, the name mentioned in each colophon (e.g. Terah, Isaac, Jacob) was the name of the writer or owner of the tablet. This makes sense because it is clear that in the book of Genesis the section preceding the phrase “these other generations of” contains information with which the person named would have been familiar. Thus according to this theory

“(The) book of Genesis consists of a set of tablets, each of which was written by an actual eye-witness to the events described therein. These tablets were finally compiled by Moses” (Curt Sewell, Bible and Spade 1994)

So, for example, Terah was the writer or original owner of the tablet containing the information

found in the section immediately preceding 11:27, Isaac was the writer or owner of the tablet containing the information found in the section immediately preceding 25:19 and so on. Moses, under inspiration, used these tablets to put together the Genesis account. Accordingly the pattern of the book of Genesis is as follows:

Tablet	Owner or Writer
1. Gen. 1:1 2:4a	God Himself (?) He alone knows this directly.
2. Gen. 2:4b - 5:1a	Adam-His account of naming animals, Eve.
3. Gen. 5:1b - 6:9a	Noah.
4. Gen. 6:9b - 10:1a	Shem, Ham and Japheth.
5. Gen. 10:1b - 11:10a	Shem.
6. Gen. 11:10 - 11:27a	Terah.
7. Gen. 11:27b - 25:12	Ishmael.
8. Gen. 25:12 - 25:18	Isaac.
9. Gen. 25:19b - 36:1	Jacob.
10. Gen. 36:2 - 36:9	Esau through Jacob.
11. Gen. 37:10 - 37:2	Jacob’s 12 sons.

We said earlier that ancient clay tablets were observed to begin and end with the repetition of significant words and phrases and Wiseman points out that such repetitions are found in appropriate places in the book of Genesis: 1) Genesis 1:1 Genesis 2:4 God created the heaven and the earth; 2) Genesis 2:4 Genesis 5:2 When they were created. 3) Genesis 6:10 Genesis 10:1 Shem Ham Japheth. 4) Genesis 10:32 Genesis 11:10 After the Flood. 5) Genesis 11:26 Genesis 11:27 Abraham, Nahor and Haran. 6) Genesis 25:12 Genesis 25:19 Abraham’s son. 7) Genesis 36:1 Genesis 36:8 Who is Edom. 8) Genesis 36:9 Genesis 36:43. Father of the Edomites.

Wiseman’s eminently reasonable proposal strongly suggests that the sources of the book of Genesis are of great antiquity and that “critical” theories which assign a late date to the Pentateuch run counter to the evidence. The suggestion that Moses used these sources to compile the book of Genesis is quite realistic.

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# Ekklesia (Part 1)

## by Roy Bowen Ward

### INTRODUCTION

Following the earthly ministry of Jesus, there arose an institution<sup>1</sup> in response to his person and his mission. This institution was a community of persons who sustained a certain relationship to Jesus Christ, and it existed by virtue of that relationship. The most common term used to describe this institution was *ekklesia*, which we translate, *church*.

To determine why this particular Greek word came to be chosen and how it was used is the purpose of this article. We shall attempt to see the history of the *ekklesia* and what it meant to the mind of Greeks and Jews across the Mediterranean world of the first cent., A.D., when this term was first applied to the new institution of Jesus Christ. We shall attempt to see the significance of this term and parallel expressions as they are used in the N.T. And we shall attempt to follow some developments in the understanding of this term in the history of the primitive church.<sup>2</sup>

### GREEK BACKGROUND

The most common classical usage of *ekklesia* and its cognates was as a political term, meaning an assembly of citizens. In the Greek city-state the citizens were called forth by the trumpet of the *kerux* (herald) summoning them to the *ekklesia* (assembly). The *ekklesia* was the ultimate power in the constitutional government of the Greek city-state, whether it was a monarchy, oligarchy, or democracy. Of the general assembly of the citizens in or before the time of Dracon (codified laws in 621 B.C.) nothing is really known—though the people must have had some power. Later Aristotle applied *ekklesiai* to the Homeric assemblies of the people.<sup>3</sup> Most of our references to the use of this word concern the *ekklesiai* of Athens.<sup>4</sup>

The *ekklesia* in Athens enjoyed a long life from 508 B.C. until the early fourth century, A.D., in the time of Diocletian. But only from 508 to 322 B.C. was it a strictly democratic institution. In this time it was the general meeting of the people—all Athenian citizens could attend, excluding only aliens, females, and those disenfranchised (*atimoi*). What portion of the citizens actually attended we do not know, though Gomme suggests that 6,000 was perhaps one-seventh of the total in 431.<sup>5</sup> A specially appointed council, the

*Boule*, summoned the *ekklesia* and prepared its agenda. By law the *ekklesia* had to be summoned at least four times each 36 or 37 days, that is, forty times each year. One of each four meetings was more important than the others, this one being called the *ekklesia kuria*. The president of the *ekklesia* was a particular member of the *Boule* who [165] could serve as president at only one *ekklesia* in his lifetime. Any citizen might speak in debate and initiate amendments or administrative motions. Voting was normally by show of hands, a simple majority deciding most issues.<sup>6</sup>

It should be noted that in ordinary usage, *ekklesia* meant the assembly, and not the body of people involved. The *Boule* existed even when it was not actually in session, but there was a new *ekklesia* every time they assembled.<sup>7</sup> The *demos* (people) assembled in an *ekklesia*, but when they acted, it was said to be the action of the *demos*, not the *ekklesia*.<sup>8</sup>

Further, it should be noted that the principal meaning of *ekklesia* is simply, “assembly.” Lexicographers give as the primary meaning, “assembly duly summoned.”<sup>9</sup> But it is doubtful that in usage “duly summoned” was remembered. At Athens the extraordinary assemblies were called *sugkletei*, in distinction to the ordinary *ekklesiai* which met on fixed days.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, it should be noted that in classical usage *ekklesia* was, among Greek words for assembly, the most inclusive word in existence.<sup>11</sup> *Ekklesia*, being derived from the verb *ek-kaleo*, “to call out or forth,” has often been interpreted as an exclusive term, connecting its etymological meaning with the Biblical doctrine that Christians are those “called out of the world by God.”<sup>12</sup> However, F. J. A. Hort, in his classic work, *The Christian Ecclesia*, reminds us that in usage this exclusive meaning—a calling out from a larger group does—not have support.

There is no foundation for the widely spread notion that *ekklesia* means a people or a number of individual men called out of the world or mankind, . . . the compound verb *ekkaleo* is never so used, and *ekklesia* never occurs in a context which suggests this supposed sense to have been present in the writer’s mind.<sup>13</sup>

In usage *ek-kaleo* meant only, “to call forth,”

and not, as this interpretation would require, “to call out from a larger group.” *Ekklesia*, in turn, meant only “that which is called forth, an assembly.” As Campbell comments, “as so often, etymology proves to be here misleading rather than helpful.”<sup>14</sup>

In the Hellenistic period *ekklesia* retained its usual, classical meaning of an assembly of citizens. The *ekklesia* continued to be held in Athens, though not as the democratic institution it had once been, and the term is found in other settings with the same meaning.<sup>15</sup>

There are indications that in this period the term may have developed a certain quasi-technical significance, though this does not rule out widespread non-technical usage as simply an assembly. Deissman has pointed out that the Latin-speaking people of the West borrowed the term *ekklesia*, rather than translate it. This was not due to a scarcity of Latin words for assembly—*contio* and *comitia* were often translated into Greek by *ekklesia*. As examples Deissman cites [166] the letter of Pliny the Younger (61/62-113 A.D.) to Trajan in which the Latinized term, *ecclesin*, is used,<sup>16</sup> and the bilingual inscription of the year 103/104 A.D. at Ephesus where *ekklesia* in the Greek half becomes *ecclesin* in the Latin half.<sup>17</sup> Deissman concludes, “There must have been some special reason for borrowing the Greek word, and it lay doubtless in the subtle feeling that Latin possessed no word exactly equivalent to the Greek *ekklesia*.”<sup>18</sup> The reason may have been that a certain dignity had attached itself to this word due to its political context.

Finally we must note that *ekklesia* was never used in the Greek world as the title of a religious group. About the beginning of the first century, B.C., it is found used in connection with a society of Tyrian merchants and shipowners in Delos which worshipped Heracles.<sup>19</sup> But here it is used only in its classical sense: the assembly or meeting of the society. It was fitting that the term should be used since these societies were modelled on that of the city-state.

### JEWISH BACKGROUND.

*Ekklesia* occurs 80 times in the canonical books of the Septuagint translation (LXX) of the Old Testament, and where the Hebrew original is available for comparison,<sup>20</sup> it always translates *qahal* or words from the same root.<sup>21</sup>

Two important Hebrew words were used in the Old Testament to denote a gathering or assembly: *qahal* and *'edhah*. But when applied to Israel, *'edhah* came to indicate the society itself, whether assembled or not. In particular, *'edhah* is used of the children of Israel, whether assembled or not, during its journeying from Egypt to Canaan.<sup>22</sup> Thus *'edhah* assumes quasi-technical status as the People of God, but *qahal* continues to denote only the actual assembly or meeting.

Though *ekklesia* is nearly always a translation of *qahal*, on the other hand, *qahal* is also translated by other Greek words, especially by *sunagoge*. In 35 passages *sunagoge* stands for *qahal*, 19 of these passages being in the first four books where *ekklesia* is never used. But though *sunagoge* does translate *qahal* in certain passages, it is usually the LXX translation of *'edhah*.

It is often asserted that the LXX added to the word *ekklesia* a religious connotation, the People of God, because of the association with the *qahal*, and especially with the qahal YHWH (the assembly of the LORD). Thus Johnson writes, "Knowledge of the LXX is vital for understanding its New Testament meaning. . . ." It signifies the people met for religious ends, especially worship. . . .<sup>23</sup> Schmidt states,

That the *ekklesia* is the People of God, the Congregation of God, becomes clear first through the addition of kuriou: *ekklesia kuriou* = *qahal YHWH*. . . . In the rest *ekklesia* without the addition is the Congregation of God. . . it must be regarded as a technical term.<sup>24</sup>

J. Y. Campbell has taken exception to this idea: "It might therefore be expected that in the Septuagint *ekklesia* would acquire a [167] specifically religious connotation, but of this there is, in fact, no evidence whatever."<sup>25</sup>

The critical point concerns the meaning of qahal YHWH, and the consequent acceptance of the position that *qahal* used alone stands for this full phrase. There are only five O.T. passages where *qahal YHWH* is used. The first two cases—Num. 16:3 and 20:4—may be discussed because the LXX translates these by *sunagoge*. In Deut. 23 :2-4, 9, qahal YHWH is repeated five times, each time being translated by *ekklesia kuriou*. But here the context indicates that the phrase refers to an actual meeting, the assembly, not to the people itself.<sup>26</sup> In 1 Chron. 28:8 the *qahal YHWH* refers to an actual assembly at Jerusalem. In Hebrew this phrase is in apposition to "all Israel," but the reading in the LXX omits "Israel" and

reads: "Now therefore before all the assembly of the LORD and in the hearing of God." In Micah 2:5 again there is no indication that it is more than the actual assembly to which the phrase refers; the expression *en ekklesiai* is quite classical.<sup>27</sup>

If the Hebrew reading in 1 Chron. 28:8 is correct so that qahal YHWH is in apposition to Israel, then there may be a development in its meaning toward the People of God; yet the LXX does not understand it this way, omitting Israel and leaving *ekklesia* in its classical usage: the actual assembly. The scarcity of this phrase, qahal YHWH, the fact that it is not used of such significant assemblies as that which gathered at Sinai as described in Exodus, and the fact that where it is used an actual assembly can be pointed to diminishes the probable technical significance commonly alleged to it. Thus, even if the word, *qahal*, stood for the full phrase, it would still not add anything new to our understanding of the word nor its LXX counterpart, *ekklesia*. Furthermore, if *ekklesia* had come to mean, People of God, or Israel of God, through the Hebrew *qahal*, it is difficult to understand why N.T. writers do not use it as evidence when trying to prove that Christians are the People of God; Paul does not use it in Rom. 1-15, nor does Peter in 1 Pet. 2 :4-10. There is no good evidence in the O.T. to show that *qahal* or *ekklesia* ever meant anything other than the actual assembly, be it a religious assembly (as in most cases), the assembly gathered when David slew Goliath, an assembly of prophets, etc.<sup>28</sup>

In the non-canonical LXX books the usage of *ekklesia* is generally the same. An exception can be noted in certain of the twelve passages in Ecclesiasticus where *ekklesia* is used.<sup>29</sup> Campbell comments:

But in Ben Sira's book there is at least a suggestion that successive meetings of the same group of people are really the same *ekklesia*, not *ekklesiai*. . . . But if *ekklesia* is on the way to signify a regular meeting of a religious kind, there is still nothing to suggest that it has come to mean (as *sunagoge* did) the body of people who meet regularly in one particular place.<sup>30</sup>

Philo (fl. A.D. 39) uses *ekklesia* 30 times: five as in classical Greek, and 25 in LXX quotations, especially from Deut. 23. He [168] sometimes qualifies *ekklesia* by an adjective: *theia*<sup>31</sup> or *hiera*,<sup>32</sup> and he also uses it with the genitives *theou*<sup>33</sup> and *kuriou*.<sup>34</sup> In these passages there is still no evidence that the word alone (without descriptive adjectives or

genitives) has a distinct religious connotation. On occasions he uses *sullogos* interchangeably with *ekklesia*, and he modifies this word by *hieros*.<sup>35</sup> There is one passage where Philo might have used *ekklesia* in a technical sense. "For when the whole multitude came together with harmonious oneness to give thanks for their migration, He no longer called them a multitude or a nation or a people but a 'congregation'."<sup>36</sup> Aucher's Latin translation has *Ecclesiam*.<sup>37</sup> But unfortunately all this is based on an Armenian version, and there is no real clue as to whether Philo used *ekklesia* or *sunagoge* or another word.<sup>38</sup> Philo's usage must be seen in the light of his own conception of the ideal state,<sup>39</sup> and therefore it is questionable as to whether he can be of major importance in the understanding of the common usage.

Josephus (37-c. 100 A.D.) uses *ekklesia* 48 times, all according to strict classical usage. 18 of these passages may represent LXX allusions, and in nine cases he substitutes *ekklesia* for *sunagoge*. Hort reminds us, "Josephus's ostentatious classicalism deprives us of the information which a better Jew in his position might have afforded us."<sup>40</sup>

Conclusion. In the light of this study of the existing evidence concerning the pre-Christian history of *ekklesia*, the following may be noted: (1) *Ekklesia* meant an assembly. (2) It was familiar both to Gentiles by political usage and to Greek-speaking Jews through the LXX. (3) Its Greek history associated with it a certain dignity, with possible ideals of freedom and equal-membership playing a part. (4) It could be used of a religious assembly—Pagan or Jewish—but it did not become the title of any religious group, Pagan or Jewish. (5) Negatively, no evidence is found that in usage it meant "the called out"—despite etymology—nor that it came to mean "the People of God," nor that, in general, it was applied to any other than an individual assembly (though Ecclesiasticus shows a new trend: several assemblies being called the same *ekklesia*).

Part 2 will continue on the February issue of *The Summit Chronicle*.



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# Questions & Answers: Jesus

by Kevin L. Moore

Was Jesus denying that He was “good” in Mark 10:18?

Jesus was responding to a wealthy young Jewish ruler who had just addressed Him as “Good Teacher.” Before answering his question, the Lord gave him something to think about: “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.” Jesus was not denying that He was good. He merely asked a thought-provoking question followed by a statement of fact.

The implication is: “You call me good, and since only God is good, you are therefore (unwittingly) acknowledging that I am God.” A similar situation is found a few chapters earlier. In Mark 2: 5-7, when Jesus had forgiven the sins of a paralytic, some scribes asked: “Why does this man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” When Jesus went on to claim the power to forgive sins anyway (v. 10), the implication is clear. Jesus is God (in essence), and is therefore infinitely good.

In the New King James Version John 3:13 reads: “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.”

Why are the last four words omitted in the New American Standard Bible?

If this phrase should be in the text, how could Jesus have been in heaven while He was with Nicodemus on earth?

The phrase “who is in heaven” is not found in some Greek manuscripts (primarily Egyptian texts), so the NASB translators left it out. However, most other Greek manuscripts include these words. Because this phrase somewhat complicates the verse, there is no sensible reason for it to have been added by later copyists.

The phrase may have been removed from the original account (in some manuscripts) in order to alleviate the difficulty. How, then, can the apparent discrepancy of this statement be harmonized? Keep in mind that John was writing from the perspective of an inspired historian, and his Gospel was written a number of years after Jesus had ascended to heaven.

At the time of John’s writing, Jesus was “in the bosom of the Father” (1:18). Remember also that John’s original text was not a “Red Letter Edition.” The phrase (“that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven” or simply “who is in heaven”) was probably meant to be parenthetical (i.e. an explanatory statement in parentheses), inserted by John to clarify to his readers that Jesus was referring to Himself (cf. 1:38-42; 2:21-22; 4:1-3; 9:7; 12:32-33; 18:8-9; 20:16).

The New American Standard Bible refers to Christ as “the one” [lower case] in John 1:33, but as “One” [upper case] in Luke 3:16 -- why the difference?

The primary reason seems to be in the preference of the translators. This difference does not appear

in other English versions. In John 1:33 the phrase is *houtos estin ho*, literally “he it is who.” The phrase in Luke 3:16 is *erchetai ho*, literally “he comes who.” The word *houtos* is a demonstrative pronoun meaning “this” or “he” or “this one,” used to draw attention to someone in particular.

The word *ho*, when used as a demonstrative pronoun, means “this” or “the one” or “this one” or even “the one who.” Each of these possibilities essentially communicates the same meaning. Whether or not the word “one” is used in the translation and whether or not it is capitalized does not alter the intent of the passage.

A possible rationale of the NASB translators is that “the one” in John 1:33 is used as a predicate nominative (telling something about the subject), whereas “One” in Luke 3:16 is used as a subject. The 1975 edition of the NASB renders Luke 3: 16, “but He. . .is coming,” whereas the 1977 edition changes it to, “but One is coming. . .”

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# The Challenge of Biblical Christianity

by Allan G. Fowell

## The principle of restoration:

In contemporary Protestant Christianity the reformation led by Luther and Calvin receives considerable attention, even now. While we freely acknowledge that we owe a debt to these men for their work in their time it is with deep conviction that we truly must be convinced that a restoration, rather than a reformation, is what is needed, more so than a mere renovation thus we believe a fresh start was required.

While the term '*biblical Christianity*' may seem redundant and out of place in our post modern world, there are many *forms* of Christianity based on the philosophies and religious theologies of men rather than on the Bible. Many years ago you could listen to the T.V programme, Credo or read Lloyd Geering to know that biblical Christianity is not what a large majority of people in our community associate with being a Christian. For this writer, if Christianity is to be believed and to have real meaning and impact it must be tied to the Christ of the bible; as one once stated, "The principle of restoration rests on a renewal of Biblical ideals and norms".

When we think of the restoration principle the thought of such a movement is challenging indeed! Imagine being a part of an effort to restore the simple yet profound pattern of mature biblical Christianity. In our efforts to do so we must be reminded that by searching the scriptures and

making those daring, courageous applications of those biblical norms to our lives, God will definitely bring success to the effort. The mature church that is pictured in the New Testament will continue to grow and thrive even on into our 21<sup>st</sup> century, (Ephesians 4:11-16).

But, you may ask, is the restoration principle of which you talk a biblical concept? Well, yes it is truly a fundamental concept and there is, indeed a classic example of such in the Old Testament. It is found in the account of King Josiah's reign in (II Kings 22:1-23: 3).

As you read this account you will find that Judaism had lapsed into a dreadful apostasy due to the *Book of Law* having been lost. When the lost book was found, Josiah insisted that the people return and restore the patterns of the Book of the Law and return to proper biblical religion.

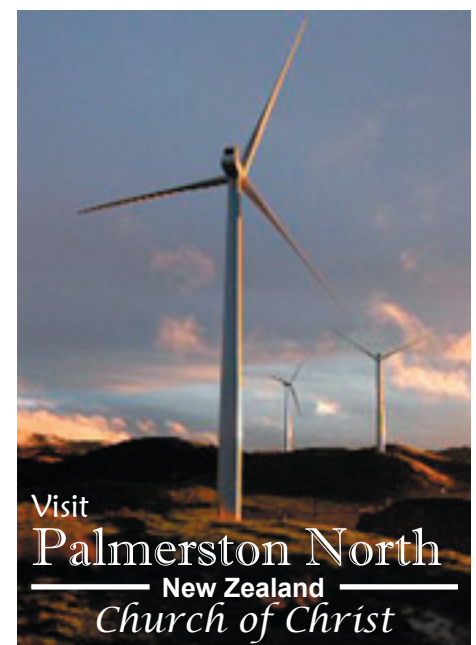
In our day, due to liberalism, humanistic philosophy, emotion, formalism, post modernism, traditions of men and total indifference the bible has been lost to many in our New Zealand society and beyond. It has been lost, as a true guide to salvation and the Church.

I submit to those who read this article, that by renewed efforts in study and a commitment that the Bible can be found, as if it was ever lost anyway, and restored into the hearts and minds of people and biblical norms restored.

## The New Testament concept

Through miraculous means Christ equipped the 1<sup>st</sup> century Church with all the tools necessary to grow on to full maturity, (Ephesians 4: 7-16). Today unity and maturity is absolutely possible when people turn to God and apply the TRUTH to their lives. Paul in Ephesians 4:15 say's, "*But speaking the truth in love may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.*"

The living and abiding word of truth, Hebrews 4:12 that Jesus promised would be fully given through the apostolic ministry and fully confirmed by God, (John 14, 16) and now stands as the 'once for all' given guide for the Church, (Jude 3). This is the only truth that must be lived before men so that God will be glorified in and through the Church in Christ Jesus, (Matthew 5:14-16, Ephesians 3:21). The principle of restoration is still as vital today as it was yesterday and so much the more.



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