

Viewing the Shift

By Ron McGatlin

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The goal of the ministry of the church.

The primary goal is not a bigger group, more activities or better services, it is not even benevolent acts, nor greater prosperity, and not even more and better evangelism, neither is it healing or emotional healing and deliverance. All of these and more are the results of the goal of the "ekklesia" (assembly of called out ones). **The goal is Christ formed by the Holy Spirit in a people becoming His character and His nature in the world producing the kingdom of God and His righteousness.**

This is the work of the Holy Spirit in the humble and not a work of man's prideful efforts. The Holy Spirit brings the life of Christ within replacing our dead self-life. It is Christ being formed within by the same Spirit that raised Christ Jesus from the dead.

Romans 8:11 *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*

The major fruit of the Spirit flowing from the Christ within is love. Unconditional love flowing from a pure heart leads to all the other fruits of the Spirit including joy, peace and faith to name a few. (*Galatians 5:22 KJV*)

The love of Christ flowing from a pure heart is the most powerful world changing force. Fear, pride, lust, greed, envy, and every evil work can be overpowered by love from a pure-hearted ekklesia touching and changing our household and those who abide within then spilling out to the world.

Paul spoke clearly the goal of ministry to Timothy.

1 Timothy 1:5 NIV ***The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.***

The Church is moving to embrace the goal expressed in the early church.

For a number of years the prophets have proclaimed a coming paradigm shift and the return of functioning apostles to help lead toward the new landscape. Many in the past have also added that they had no clear picture of what the new landscape of church would look like.

Now that the shift is in process and the new landscape is coming into view many are extremely surprised and even astonished. Some doubt that it is God doing the shifting. In reality we are all in a state of transition and are at different places in the journey of transition. And some have not yet taken the first step toward following this movement of the cloud and pillar of fire.

Some key words of this season are: intimacy with God, Father's love, "Christ in you", Holy Spirit saturation, soaking, God's manifest presence, transformation, reformation, church without walls and more. **Relationship is a major concept of the shift** – first intimate relationship with God and then with one another. The love and gifts flowing through relationship are becoming the

primary structure replacing institutional structure.

Without brokenness leading to real repentance and real humility it is impossible to relate to God intimately. Intimacy with God is primary. Without intimately relating with God through the Holy Spirit it is not possible to see what is shifting and how it will look. To begin to view some light on the shift it is absolutely necessary to get in close contact with the Holy Spirit and get out of the mindset that our particular flavor of religious system or structure is the final destination. The Spirit must reveal to us that our "system" is NOT the church. We do not go to the church nor join the church. **We are added to the church and we are the church.** The church is the "ekklesia" (assembly of called out ones). Most every Bible teacher has taught about the priesthood of the believer but it has not really been fully practiced in the past. The "clergy/laity" system made it impossible for the full reality of the priesthood of the believer to come forth.

The church is NOT passing away - the systems are passing away.

In the confusion of the transition some think that anarchy and rebellion are coming against the church and attempting to throw off the leadership of apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd and teacher. If there are any such people out there I personally have not come into contact with them and they are definitely wrong. Let me assure you that **the new paradigm will bring forth many times more gifted leaders than we ever had in the passing systems.** The Holy Spirit will have freedom to bring forth multitudes of gifted men and women who have in the passing systems been relegated to pew sitting, or limited jobs within the system.

In recent decades many have become discouraged and have left religious systems in search of more reality of God. Often these pilgrims have spent years in a wilderness type experiences. Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness before joining with others to fulfill his purposes. Moses spent 40 years in the desert before joining with others and moving toward the fulfillment of His life ministry. Paul also endured a wilderness season. Many scattered wilderness dwellers that had left the old are beginning to re connect and find their place in the ekklesia. For the most part they never wanted to leave God but had to leave the life limiting traditional clergy/laity structure. **It is not the way of God to remain isolated from the rest of the body forever** though the wilderness experience may have served a purpose and seasons of separation alone with God are often significantly used of God.

We are now coming to understand the difference between leadership and headship.

There is one head of the ekklesia. There are no people to stand as head over the ekklesia or to represent the head to the mature believers. The head is Christ Jesus flowing through the Holy Spirit and living in all his people.

Then you ask, what is leadership?

Leadership implies being in front of a moving group that is following. It simply means those further down the road. They are all on the same road. The mature lead the immature until they are matured and then they lead other immature in turn. **Spiritual maturity is being able to clearly hear God and then being able to fully obey.** If we are childish and yet have a self-life – if we are plagued by unhealed inner wounds and inner needs that drive us, we will not clearly hear God and will lack the ability to fully obey or carry out the instruction or direction from God.

Another word for "mature" is "elder". Now, we need to lose our understanding of an elder from the passing system of church offices. We also need to lose our understanding of apostles, prophets, evangelist, pastor and teachers as church system offices. Elders lead by example

training and assisting the immature. They shepherd and oversee. They allow the maturing disciples to watch them and their lives. Then the elders release the maturing disciples to do the work while they watch. Then they leave them doing the work and relate to the mature ones no longer as sons or daughters but as grown brothers and sisters who are themselves now mature or elder.

The servant gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd and teacher are already in the people while they were yet immature but cannot flow out to others until they are mature (elder). Therefore elders may be by their gifting apostles, prophets, evangelist, shepherds or teachers. The practical reality of the masses flowing and exercising their spiritual gifts greatly multiplies the leadership of the ekklesia. This greatly increases the discipleship and evangelism of the Body.

All this takes place in a multitude of generic family style groups and public gatherings where Christ in the people by the Holy Spirit connects with the manifest presence of Christ from the throne by the Holy Spirit and the true Head is joined to the Body.

This living Body of believers released to function as priests and kings will provide millions more leaders to lead the immature in multitudes of local groups and to flow from group to group bringing the gifts God has given them.

The Holy Spirit will guide everyone who can hear and obey.

Those who cannot yet hear and obey will be led and trained by elders who are matured through much affliction, humbled and purified by the love of God experience, to the point that they can clearly hear and obey. This is God's original design to bring forth the Body and Bride of Christ into the world. Christ being formed in many bodies networked together by the Holy Spirit as the one Body of Christ. It is Christ in you that is the hope of glory and the method for the kingdom of God to function on earth as it is in heaven.

Be careful not to be misled.

It can be easy to be misled by the fierce reactions of those who do not yet understand the shift and are fearful of the loss of the systems that have served us for so long. Also do not be misled by those who would attempt to hijack the developing movement with a repackaging of the passing system practices with new labels.

The shift is not all about how or where groups come together. You can have the old system traditional church in a house or at work and simply continue the traditions of men in a different venue. Or you can have a Christ led first century style assembly in a house or a red brick building. The move is about Christ truly becoming the head in a practical real way and not just in word only.

Consider the timing.

This shift is a work of God through the Holy Spirit and is occurring over a period of time. This will NOT all happen today or tomorrow. **It may be years or it may be hundreds of years before this transition season is over.** It would be a huge mistake to get into the flesh and try to bring about by human effort what God is doing. It would be equally problematic to try to run ahead of the work the Holy Spirit is doing. Feeding from the tree of knowledge of good and of evil led us into the perversions of the past. Partaking from the tree of life of intimate relationship with God to clearly hear Him and fully obey His direction will cause us to walk precisely in His will and

timing. For today and the near future it is certain that the presentation of church will have many and varied transitional models that God will use as much as he can.

Many factors will affect the transition including world political conditions. In increasing parts of the world, the true church is underground because of governmental and religious extreme persecution. While in other places freedom and favor for the church may be increasing.

The Early Church (Ekklesia) Model

In the early church the gifted but humble apostolic servant leaders lived among the people and taught them publicly and from house to house. They ate together with gladness and simplicity of heart. A multiplicity of elders (spiritually mature leaders) cared for the city church that met in houses and gathered publicly daily on occasions.

Acts 2:46 *So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,*

Acts 20:17-20 *From Miletus he¹ sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house..."*

**Pursue love, it never fails
and His kingdom never ends.**

Ron McGatlin

basileia@earthlink.net
www.openheaven.com

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1 - i.e. Paul