

GROWING IN GOD'S WORD

NOVEMBER 2014



WELCOME TO LEARN & LEAD!

We're thrilled to have you participate in Learn and Lead. Our prayer is that the next three months would help you develop as a leader, and in turn, your local church would be blessed, and ultimately the nations would be blessed.

Here's an overview of the programme:

WHY?

1. Strengthen future leaders' theology and relationship with God through the Word
2. Prepare leaders and future leaders to understand & function within an apostolic environment

HOW?

1 initial 3 month term (September - November 2014)

- Teaching takes place once-per-month, 8am-12pm on a Saturday at a host church in the northern Gauteng region

Homework

- Homework is for the purpose of getting learners into the habitual, regular study of God's Word, and specifically into scripture which deals with the upcoming month's subject;
- Learner's should plan ahead and schedule time (i.e., daily) to pray and read through material;
- Given 1 month in advance of the Saturday teaching sessions;
- Homework will be the notes from the speaker(s) of the upcoming Saturday sessions. All points in the outline will include exhaustive scripture reference supporting the point being made, which learners will look up.

No tests, per se (this is leadership development, not academia), but rather simple feedback papers:

- Each week in the homework notes will conclude with a question, which the learner must answer in the answer page provided;
- Additionally, after the Saturday teaching, learners will answer the following questions, and email all answers together with the homework answers:
 - What 3 main things have you learned through the material this month?
 - For each of these three learnt concepts, state how they will practically apply to your life as a disciple of Jesus.
 - For each of these three learnt concepts, state how they will practically apply to your present role as a leader in the church.
 - Please describe any other way in which truth you have learned through Learn & Lead this month will apply to your life and/or leadership function.
- Learn & Lead is a complement to the leadership development done by local church elders. An elder from each learner's church will receive the learner's feedback in order to stay abreast of the learner's development.

WHAT (SUBJECTS) & WHEN?

13 September - "Growing Deep in the Word"

25 October - "Biblical Leadership, Eldership & church governance"

22 November - "Apostolic Church and Model"

HOW TO DO HOMEWORK

One of main reasons for the homework is to simply kick-start a **daily, habitual dependence on the Word of God** (this is a needed habit of all future church leaders!!)

Therefore it is not simply "homework," as in mere reading, mental assimilation of information. Treat it as intimate time with God. Spend at least 15-20 minutes daily:

- Reading the material
- Meditating on the material, especially on any scripture references
- Talking to God about the material, seeking grace to make the truths taught real in your own life

Pace yourself as you wish (i.e., anything from splitting each week's material evenly over six days, to reading the entire week each day for six days...whatever works best for you)

You will find questions at the end of each week's materials. Kindly answer them on the Word document provided.

Engage your faith: don't approach this as more work to get done in your busy schedule. Approach this as your lifeline, and trust God to use your Learn and Lead studies to accomplish a deep and significant work in your life development as a leader in His Church.



LEARN & LEAD!

MONTH 3: APOSTOLIC CHURCH & MODEL

MONTH 3 OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand the trans-local call of the church
2. To gain a passion and desire to be a part of reaching nations with the Gospel
3. To receive practical input on how to become effective in partnering with your local church to build trans-locally

Well done! You are now on the final stretch of Learn and Lead! In many ways, everything before now culminates into this month. We've seen the importance of regular and deep relationship with God through His Word and have implemented steps to facilitate that as a reality in our lives. We've sought to align ourselves properly with the church leadership figures God has given to us so as to build together and allow the leadership gifts within us properly rise to the surface. Now, it's time to get active. This month, we look at the ministry that we are actually called to do as the Church.

WEEK 1: 27 OCTOBER – 1 NOVEMBER

1. THE TRANS-LOCAL CALL OF THE CHURCH

From the beginning, God's intent for His "Called-out ones," His Church, has been one of trans-local scope

Genesis 12: 1-3 The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. **2** "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. **3** I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

- A** The above verse depicts God's call to Abram. This represents the origin of God's calling out a people of faith to be His own people in the earth, and therefore contains key ideas of God's intention for His people of faith:
- i "I will make you a great nation...I will make your name great": God intends for His people to collectively become a force of which the world must take notice
 - ii "I will bless you....and you will be a blessing": God's blessing of His people is to be a channel through which others are blessed
 - 1 For example,
 - (a) the nation of Israel were the only nation blessed with the laws and ways of God, to be a light to other nations;
 - (b) The nation of Israel ultimately brought forth the Messiah, the greatest blessing to the nations that ever will be;
 - (c) The nation of Israel became the birthplace and launching pad of the Church, the custodian of the Gospel of the Kingdom which blesses the nations with salvation;
 - iii "and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you": the scope of the blessing that is to be delivered by the church is all nations;
 - iv If the Church is made up of many local churches, then local churches are to have a thrust beyond their own geographical spheres into the nations in order for the collective Church to fulfill its mandate of blessing "all nations"

2. TO BE AN "APOSTOLIC CHURCH," AND AN "APOSTOLIC BELIEVER," IS TO BE PASSIONATELY ACTIVE IN SPREADING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM FURTHER, BEYOND YOUR LOCAL SPHERE

Isaiah 2:2-3 In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, *and all nations will stream to it.* 3 Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will *teach us his ways*, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the *word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

a) "all nations will stream to it" – the scope of the Church is "all nations"

b) the Church is to bless the nations with the revelation of God through Christ

Isaiah 49:6 He says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a *light for the Gentiles*, that my salvation may *reach to the ends of the earth.*"

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the *whole world as a testimony to all nations*, and then the end will come.

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and *make disciples of all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

Mark 16:15 He said to them, "Go into *all the world* and *preach the gospel to all creation.*

Luke 24:46-47 He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name *to all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the *ends of the earth.*"

Revelation 7:9 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from *every nation, tribe, people and language*, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

Revelation 14:6 Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to *every nation, tribe, language and people.*

3. ONE OF THE PRIMARY WAYS THAT A LOCAL CHURCH BECOMES APOSTOLIC IS BY RELATIONSHIP WITH "EQUIPPING GIFTS" AND/OR PARTICIPATION IN THEIR MINISTRIES

A The local church invites input from trans-local Equipping gifts into the church

B The local church sends Equipping gifts, along with other believers, from the local church to go help build other churches

C The local church partners with other trans-local Equipping gifts to help plant and strengthen churches in other regions and nations



4 EQUIPPING GIFTS

We have said that Jesus builds His Church on revelation (Matthew 16:18). One of the primary ways in which this is done is through anointed, revelatory preaching & teaching from the “5-fold ministry gifts” or “Equipping gifts” of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers

Ephesians 4:7-11 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. 8 This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.” 9 (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions(c)? 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) 11 So Christ himself gave the *apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers*, 12 to *equip* his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

- A The Ephesians 4:11 gifts are gifts of Christ, Himself. HE is the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher (vs. 8 & 11)
- B These gifts “equip His people for works of service” (or, for “the ministry” KJV). 5-fold gifts do not just do the work, but equip the Church to be apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and didactic
- C The ultimate fruit of this design is that from the equipping done by the Equipping gifts, the Church grows up into a representation of Christ, Himself to the earth!
- D Let’s look at each of these gifts, and see:
 - i) what are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers
 - ii) What it looks like to have been truly equipped by each of these (eg, what it means to be apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and didactic...)
- E In this way, we see what we are labouring together to build as an apostolic church

5. APOSTLE

A How was Jesus an apostle?

- i) **Matthew 10:40** He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent (Greek: apostello) Me.
- ii) The Greek word in the New Testament for Apostle is ‘Apostolos,’ literally meaning, “set apart, sent, delegate”
- iii) Jesus was *sent* to *represent* the Father, & Jesus *sent others* to *represent* Him
- iv) Representing heaven to earth is the crux of the Apostle

B What is an apostle?

- i) The key to the Apostolic is the idea of being "sent" –
 - (1) Mission, purpose
 - (2) Delegation: apostles exist to see the church represent the King & Kingdom to the world

C Apostles are "wise builders"

- i) I Corinthians 3:10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a *wise builder*, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care.
- ii) As a builder, apostles see the design, and ultimate purpose/destiny of the Church, and build accordingly
- iii) Apostles labour for the Church to become God's house on the earth
 - (1) Ephesians 2:19-21 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, **20** built on the *foundation of the apostles and prophets*, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. **21** In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. **22** And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

D Apostles labour to lay foundations in the Church

- i) Ephesians 2:20 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, **20** built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone
- ii) For example, laying foundational doctrines (Jesus, Lordship, governance, faith & grace) into the life of a church

E The apostle looks at the church and sees: "God's house" to be built

F What does it look like to be apostolic? What is an apostolic believer?

- i) Spiritually mature (lead/governed by Word & Spirit)
- ii) Living on mission, not self
- iii) Pioneering –
 - (1) Being participants in spreading the kingdom further
 - (2) Being on the cutting edge, restoring truths
- iv) Living a lifestyle of "God is with me"
- v) Team & Governance: accounted for & living in corporate context (not independent, "lone-rangers")

6 PROPHET

A How was Jesus a prophet?

- i) John 4:16-19 Jesus said to her, Go, call your husband and come here. :17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said to her, You have well said, I have no husband :18 for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband. In that you spoke truly. :19 The woman said to Him, Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.
- ii) Jesus operated in prophetic insight
- iii) His prophetic ministry lovingly brought conviction of sin
- iv) His prophetic ministry drew people to Him so as to be healed from sin and its effects

B What is a prophet?

- i) "Foreteller" – discerns what is happening and is going to happen
- ii) Purifying & preparing the Body – conviction/repentance
- iii) Foundations (Ephesians 2:20) – like apostles, prophets also deal with foundations, however, usually "uprooting" (error and sin)
- iv) Intimacy with Jesus

C The prophet looks at the church and sees: the bride to be prepared for the bridegroom (Jesus)

D What does it look like to be a prophetic believer?

- i) Intimacy with God
- ii) Separated in the heart (singleness of devotion)
- iii) Intercession
- iv) Regularly hearing from the Spirit for life & for others
- v) Developed spiritual beings (aware/skillful in spirit realm, aware of spiritual realities)

7 EVANGELIST

A How was Jesus an Evangelist?

- i) **Luke 7:22** And answering, Jesus said to them, Go and tell John what you have seen and heard; that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the gospel is proclaimed to the poor.

B What is an evangelist?

- i) "proclaimer of Good News" – take the message to unbelievers
(1) Equip believers to do the same (every Equipping gift equips the Body to do what they are particularly gifted to do)
- ii) Salvations – the primary motivation of the evangelist
- iii) Often accompanied by healings & miracles

C The evangelist looks at the church and sees: an army to be rallied

D What does it look like to be an evangelistic believer?

- i) Burdened by lost souls/urgency
- ii) Active in evangelism (various forms)

8 PASTOR

A How was Jesus a Pastor?

- i) **Matthew 9:36** But seeing the crowds, He was moved with compassion on them, because they were tired and scattered like sheep having no shepherd.
- ii) What is a Pastor?
(1) "But seeing the crowds, He was moved with compassion on them" – the pastor notices and has compassion on the present state of followers



- (2) "they were tired and scattered" – pastors are particularly aware of specific hurts/struggles
- (3) "like sheep having no shepherd" – pastors desire to get dirty & help – to have personal involvement in the lives of the "sheep"
- iii) The pastor looks at the Church and sees: sheep (individuals) to be cared for
- iv) What does it look like to be pastoral?
 - (1) Care about the struggles of people
 - (2) Go after the "stray," bring back to fold
 - (3) Involved in intricacies & details (not just big picture)

9 TEACHER

A How was Jesus a Teacher?

- i) **Matthew 5:1-2** And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain. And when He had sat down, His disciples came to Him. And He opened His mouth and *taught* them, saying...

B What is a teacher?

- i) Brings clarity/understanding
- ii) Functional/applicable truth

C The teacher looks at the Church and sees: Disciples to be taught

D What does it look like to be didactic?

- i) Solid understandings w/ corresponding skills (ie, prayer, tithing, etc)
- ii) Passion for truth & scripture
- iii) Helping others in application of truth

Question 1:

Would you be interested in either going with or resourcing work into other nations? Why or why not? If yes, what would you like to do and where?

Question 2:

Answer each of the following with explanation:

- As a believer, have you been mostly equipped to be apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral or didactic?
- From which gift do you most need more equipping from?
- Do you feel that you are called to one of the Equipping gifts and, if so, which one?

WEEK 2: 3 – 8 NOVEMBER



GROWING IN OUR UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION OF APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY

What is Apostolic Christianity? What is a base church? Are all local churches called to be base churches? How does the local church fulfil its God given mandate in partnership with the Apostolic as it relates to Eldership teams working with Ephesians 4 equipping gifts? In order to find the answers to these questions, we have to first look at the person and work of Jesus Christ, as the Apostolic finds it's full expression only in Him.

"The life of Christ is the fountainhead of apostolic Christianity, just as the apostolic age is the fountainhead of the Christian church. The apostolic age was the age of the Holy Spirit, the age of inspiration and legislation for all subsequent ages. It holds up the highest standard of doctrine and discipline, it is the inspiring genius of all true progress. Christianity can never outgrow Christ, but it grows in Christ, theology cannot go beyond the word of God, but it must ever progress in the understanding and application of the word of God." Phillip Schaff

The word apostolic comes from the Greek word *apostolos*, which means 'sent one'.

Hebrews 3:1-2 1 Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, 2 who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.

Jesus the Apostle, our example as sent from the Father

At the beginning of His ministry Jesus called twelve disciples and He called them "apostles" - ones who would be sent out to preach the good news. (Mark 3:14)

Jesus said in John 17:18, "As you sent (*apostello*) me into the world, I also have sent (*apostello*) them into the world." Here we see that the mission that the Father gave to His Son was entrusted to those for whom He was praying, the early apostles. Jesus then gives the great commission to His followers in Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Apostolic Christianity is the quest to see the Church reflect the lifestyle and practice of Jesus and the early apostles. The planting of churches in every town, village and city is of vital importance to the apostolic church in advancing its witness. We see this both in the early church and the fulfillment of the great commission of Jesus to go and make disciples of all nations. (Matt 28:19)

The motive and response of the local church must be born out of deep conviction and desire to see Jesus glorified throughout all of the nations of the world.

Apostolic/Prophetic Christianity finds it's expression through a church that embraces the prophetic purposes of God in every age, a church that has the ability to see the future as God sees it and prepares to become the future. Apostolic Christianity has a God-inspired zeal to go and not to gather, to send and not to stay. This is a people who will give everything, without compromise, to be what God calls them to be and to do what God calls them to do. Someone once said, "mission exists because worship does not."

Visit the following site www.bible-history.com/map_jesus and follow the life and work of Jesus. Click on the numbers on the map and see the information on the top of each page, after you click. For the exercise of understanding how Jesus, our Great Apostle, fulfilled His mission here on earth, start with #8 and move chronologically through to #37.



HERE IS AN OVERVIEW OF THE MANDATE TO OUR GENERATION

Why ↓	Prepare the bride (Luke 8:1)	Marriage ↑
By ↓	Advancing the Kingdom (Matt 24:14)	Motive ↑
Where ↓	Discipling the Nations (Rev 7:9; 19:7; 21:9)	Mandate ↑
What ↓	Planting Churches (Matt 28:19; Acts 1:7-8)	Model ↑
Who ↓	Developing The Priesthood (Matt 28:19)	Means ↑
How ↓	Preaching the Gospel (Acts 8; Acts 13:1-3)	Message

Many people have seen their lives as their kingdom, which should not be. Our lives are in the context of the local church. The local church is in the context of the great commission, which keeps us focused on the bigger picture. The great commission is in the context of the Gospel. The Gospel is not about us. The Gospel is in the context of the kingdom. The kingdom is made up of two things: king and subjects.

Preach the kingdom and it will bring bigness into all that we do.

The church

Growth
Get
Restrict
Giff personality
Introspective
Method
Business
Gimmicks
Breath of fresh air
Show
Happy
Superstar
Friends
Shakable
Make happen
Defensive
Small
Do
Us
Make us look good
Giff
Event
Excellence.
Fill the building.

The kingdom

Impact
Give
Release
Jesus
Kingdom minded
Results
Life
Truth
Breath of life
Reality
Joyful
King
Family
Unshakable
Let happen
Secure
Large
Done
Him
Make his name great
Gifts
Lifestyle
Authentic
Fill the earth

"Most people know how to serve in the church but not how to minister in the world".

WHAT IS A BASE CHURCH? IS EVERY CHURCH CALLED TO BE A BASE CHURCH?

Every local church should aspire to be a base church in its attitude of equipping its people for greater ministry of the global church and to be a "sending church." The grace on one church to the next will differ with some churches having a particularly strong calling to be a resource base church to impact not only its immediate surrounds but other towns, cities and even beyond that.

A base church is a church that exists not only for itself, but which has caught the wider vision, and that has a desire and capacity to give a high priority to the corporate (trans-local) endeavour and not only to its own local work. It is a resource centre, pouring concerted, sustained prayer, finances, equipment and personnel into the togetherness of a local church in partnership with a trans-local team.

A base church reflects an Apostolic/Prophetic understanding of New Testament lifestyle. With respect to its vision and values, it shares these with an Apostolic/Prophetic team with which it has a primary relationship. A base church thus builds according to a model that results in all of the shared values and vision, filtering into every aspect and department of the local church.

Some of these values could include: covenantal relationships, liberty, stability, team ministry, generosity, and equipping God's people.

A base church does not merely accommodate, but cooperates with the team it relates to. It backs the team, supporting its vision both financially and sacrificially as it participates in the areas to which they are called to penetrate and plant. It exists primarily for others and not for itself.

In the New Testament we see some examples of base churches, the church in Antioch is such a church. In The book of Acts we read about the church sending some of their best leaders to go.

Acts 13:1-3 Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

The first base church was the church in Jerusalem, which took shape under the leadership of the apostles. (Acts 2:42). The church was strongly established in The Lord and great favour was upon the church. (Acts 2:47) Luke records that from the outset the church was rich in resources where believers shared "everything in common" (Acts 2:45). Not only were they well resourced in material possessions, but also were rich in spiritual gifting with the presence of apostles, prophets, evangelists and many teachers, many of whom went out to evangelise and plant churches. An early example of this was the sending out of Peter and John to Samaria to pray for the believers there (Acts 8:14).

The following are some of the outstanding features of early base churches. As we look at each one, study the book of Acts and follow along Paul's missionary journeys. Make your own notes, taking care to note how Paul went about fulfilling the great commission. Also pay close attention to how different towns and cities opened up through so many different types of people from all walks of life.

The church at Antioch

One of the features of this church was that they were generous. They sowed some of their best gifts to the wider church. (Acts 13:2).

Another feature of this church was that it was rich in spiritual gifting, not only was it blessed with several apostles, Luke tells us that there was a number of prophets and teachers as well, a clear indication of the presence of the fivefold ministry about which Paul would teach about in Ephesians chapter four. The Antioch church was a praying, worshipping church, and as a result, sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. In a time of worship and fasting, the Holy Spirit instructed them to,

"Set aside for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2).

They responded with immediate obedience and laid their hands on them and sent them off on their first apostolic ministry trip.

They were a "sending church." They had grasped the essence of the great commission 'to go into all the world' instead of holding on to such gifted men. They were willing to release their best to the greater work of going into the entire world with the Gospel.

A base church is able to sustain its own growth as a local church as well as minister to the wider church. For those coming back from ministry trips it is a place of refreshment where they are strengthened for further missions into the world with the Gospel.

Paul and Barnabas gave the church feedback from their travels. This illustrates that they saw this local church as partnering with them into the nations.

● The church at Ephesus

The planting of the church at Ephesus was a story of great importance for the early church. According to Peter Wagner, it was "the most outstanding success of his (Paul's) career and the "third or fourth largest city in the Roman Empire after Rome". Adolf Harnack adds to this by saying that "Paul's labours made Ephesus the third capital of Christianity."

Ephesus was the occult headquarters of the then-known world. But by the faithful preaching of the Gospel and with signs following, this powerful stronghold was broken, and Ephesus became one of the most powerful church plants in the whole of Asia.

Ephesus became an effective base for the training and sending out of workers to preach the Gospel. FF Bruce points out that, Paul stayed in Ephesus, but a number of his fellow workers carried on missionary activity in the neighbouring cities as well. It was during these years that the churches in the Lycos valley, those at Colossae, Hierapolis and Laodicea were founded (Col2:1, 4:13).

Paul's sustained period of teaching at the hall of Tyrannus in Ephesus was of great significance. Peter Wagner says that this was a clear example of formalized leadership training that we have in the New Testament, where the main focus of what was taught were likely to have been evangelism and church planting.

● The church at Philippi

Philippi was well situated, not only for the coming and going of apostolic ministry, but the mix of converts would make it a very cosmopolitan community, which would touch people of many nationalities with the Gospel, who in turn would go out and touch their various nations with the Gospel.

As Lightfoot notes, "it was a thoroughfare for the traffic of nations and would reasonably represent the civilized world in miniature, and the phenomena of the progress of the Gospel in omits wider sphere were thus anticipated on a smaller scale."



What is of importance is that Philippi was, by the standards of Antioch and Ephesus, a much smaller church. Yet this did not disqualify it from acting as an important base for the facilitation of apostolic ministry. In spite of it's being a poor church it became a significant church that served as a resource centre for the on-going work of the apostles. Even though it was not a rich church, the members were generous, Paul reminded them that, No church **entered into partnership** with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. (Phil 4:16,17)

● The church at Thessalonica

Once again we note the strategic setting of the church at Thessalonica.

Donald Guthrie points out that the city of Thessalonica was important not only because it was the capital of Macedonia, but also because it stood on the Via Ignatia, the Roman highway to the East. Its position would make for easy access and the sending out of workers. The church at Thessalonica was also mature and strong in faith, according to Michael Eaton.

The church stood firm and became a centre of further outreach (1 Thessalonians 1:8). Judging from 1 Thessalonians 1:9, many Gentiles were saved at the time.

He goes on to describe how the Thessalonians found ways to make sure that the surrounding areas heard about Jesus and soon the entire area had heard about Jesus through what had happened to these Thessalonian Christians. This is a good example of a church affecting its immediate surroundings with the Gospel.

Ian Mckellar speaks of the church at Thessalonica as being a model church.

It had both an internal and an external focus. They became imitators of the apostolic team and welcomed the message with joy (1 Thessalonians 1:6) they also became outwardly focused and reached out to their own city, town or province (Macedonia) and the province next door (Achaia) and then beyond (1 Thessalonians 1:7-8).

Question:

Based on this week's study, do you believe that you should in some way be involved in advancing the kingdom in other places? Why or why not?

WEEK 3: 10 – 15 NOVEMBER

14 KEY STRATEGIES OF THE APOSTOLIC PATTERN

Read through each point, and meditate on each scripture referenced.

- 1 Preparation – Acts 1:14-2:4 (cf. Luke 24:49-53): praying for and seeking the outpouring of the Holy Spirit for the new task;
- 2 Priesthood of all Believers – Acts 2:42-47: releasing the priesthood of all believers;
- 3 Power Evangelism – Acts 8:5-14: signs and wonders, which can be catalytic to the saving of many;
- 4 Purity – Acts 8:20-23: purity of motive and deed; not self-righteousness nor legalism, but a passionate love of the Lord;
- 5 Prayer – Acts 13:1-3: finding the heart of God;
- 6 Participation – Acts 15:40-16:5: team ministry and discipleship;
- 7 Prophetic Direction – Acts 16:1-2 (cf. 1 Timothy 1:18; 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6): prophetic inspiration and impartation;
- 8 Potential Doors – Acts 16:9-10: great doors opening for effectual work (with opposition); breaking into areas where the Gospel has not been preached;
- 9 Praise – Acts 16:25-26: opens people's hearts, which opens the way for God to move;
- 10 Planting – Acts 17, 18 and 19: Apostolic/Prophetic teams training new leaders and planting new churches;
- 11 Provision – Acts 18:5 (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:9 and Philippians 4:15-18): financial release to support the work;
- 12 Preaching – Acts 19:8-10: proclaiming God's truth to a confused and dying society;
- 13 Pattern of Apostolic Ministry – Acts 19:10: trans-local teams involved with local churches; building a model to multiply, i.e. base churches;
- 14 Pastoral Leadership – Acts 20:28-35: servant leadership, i.e. shepherd heart.

By studying the Book of Acts, we can clearly see the Paul's heart and the pattern that he used in fulfilling the great commission through partnership with local churches.

The pattern for the Book of Acts is summarized in Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." The whole of Acts is laid out according to this pattern. This is also Paul's strategic pattern for ministry.

A brief overview of how Paul the Apostle worked with local churches

We encourage you to read through the below material and scripture references with new eyes, considering Paul's pattern and how it should impact upon how we should function as churches and as believers today...

Initially Barnabas & Paul worked together with a team and they were instrumental in setting up a base in Antioch, which was a multicultural community (Acts 13:1-2).

The church there was a community that was full of grace, where people were being saved (Acts 11:22-27) and leaders were being trained and released (Acts 15:35).

From this base in Antioch, they reached out and preached, taught and appointed elders in the surrounding provinces (Acts 14:23).

They were involved in planting new churches - Philippi (Acts 14:23) Thessalonica (Acts 17), Berea (Acts 17), and Corinth (Acts 18) and in returning to existing churches to encourage the believers (Acts 14:21-26; Acts 18:23). One of Paul's teams stayed in Philippi (Acts 16:40). Paul continued to work from this base in Antioch for a season after he and Barnabas had parted ways.

Once Paul reached Corinth, which was situated on the outer limits of Antioch's sphere of influence, he wanted to plant a new base. He thus stayed in Corinth for 18 months and some time (Acts 18:11,18). The church in Corinth never became a base though, in spite of the fact that it was in a wealthy city and was not lacking in spiritual gifts (1 Cor 1:7). It seems that this church had the 'wine', but not the 'wineskin', in other words the gifts of the Spirit but not the right structure: the apostolic/prophetic pattern.

Paul then moved his base to Ephesus, where the local church became both the 'Bible College' and the 'Mission station', in other words, the training centre and the sending centre (Acts 19:9-10; 11:26 and 13:1-3).

These accounts shows us how Paul used these key strategic locations to establish base churches that could influence the surrounding areas with the Gospel of the Kingdom.

The bible teaches that the elders of a local church are the highest governing authority and that no apostolic team should supersede them. There is, however, a biblical precedent that these elders have a primary relationship with an apostolic/prophetic team to which they voluntarily make themselves accountable through relationship.

This team then works with eldership teams into their churches to equip the people for the work of the ministry. The elders, together with the people, work out of their churches, with the team, into the nations.

As we read Ephesians 4:9-16 we see that three very clear aspects are brought to light with regard to these gifts:

"It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of service."

● The Persons (vs. 8-11)

● The Purpose (vs. 12-15)

● The Plan (vs. 16)

Larry Tomzack said the following about the **persons**: "All of these gift ministries are expressions of Jesus Himself. Our Lord -the great Apostle, great Prophet, great Evangelist, great Pastor and great Teacher has distributed the ministry that He alone embodies to the church He so loves."

● The apostle is needed to **govern**.

● The prophet is needed to **guide**.

● The evangelist is needed to **gather**.

● The pastor is needed to **guard**.

● The teacher is needed to **ground**.

The apostle is an architect (wise builder) and strategist. In an atmosphere of accountability (which is necessary for ALL believers!), the prophet is anointed as a seer, who brings necessary revelation and insight to keep the house of God pure and on the right track. The evangelist, contrary to his stereotyped image, does more than simply herald the Good News to the unconverted, but also equips and motivates the church to become evangelistic in lifestyle. An Evangelist also trains other gifted evangelists into their high calling. The pastor and teacher, at the grass roots level, labour with other leaders in providing personal care for the flock, instructing the people by teaching and example in the word of God, and in serving the apostolic-prophetic ministries by implementing their strategy and vision.

Those of carrying recognised Ephesians 4:11 gifts, each based in a local church, should labour together in a trans-local team to establish new churches and assist in the rebuilding and on-going development of existing churches. Such a team should seek to establish New Testament churches, where God's redeemed people, under the loving oversight of a plurality of elders, would be are built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. (Eph 2:22).

The purpose of these Ephesians 4 gifts is to:

- Equip (V12) - "to prepare God's people".
- Edify (V12) - "build up".
- Enlist (V12) - "for the work of the ministry."
- Enlarge (V15) - "causes growth".
- Unify (V13)
- Bring to maturity (V13)
- Bring stability (V14)
- Bring honesty & integrity (V15) - "the truth in love".
- Strengthen (V15) - "grow up"
- Bring to availability (V16) - "priesthood of all".

How long will we have all five? "Until we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

The plan involves:

- Growing up (v15) "speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, that is Christ."
- Involvement (v16) "From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

From the Ephesians 4 portion of scripture we can clearly see that it is God's intention that the work of the ministry is done by the whole church and not just by the 'paid professional'.

We live in a very exciting day and age where this truth of apostolic Christianity is being restored to the church in a real way, and when every single person has a role to play in seeing the great commission of Jesus fulfilled. We cannot all go all the time but we can all participate in some way: going when possible, giving in some way, or praying for those that go.

Jesus came into the world on a mission to see the human race reconciled back to the Father. Paul responded in obedience to the call of Jesus and lived out his call even to the very end of his life. The great commission given to us by Jesus (Matt 28:18-20) is for each and every believer today and although this will be lived out differently by each of us, we all have a part to play in seeing this glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ go out into all the world.

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Question: Asses your life to see how is this happening in your life right now...How are you employing your time, talents and treasures to see this great commission fulfilled through your own life?

WEEK 4: 17 – 21 NOVEMBER

OVERVIEW

The only Biblical concept of this life we live with Christ is an Apostolic one.

There is a sense of expansive movement in all of Scripture, of God making an appeal to mankind everywhere to turn to Him. Apostolic Heartedness is buying in to this cause in such a way that it changes our lives, deals with our baggage, and makes us useful to the Kingdom and to the local church, in partnership with my leaders to the nations of the world.

- God the creator searches out His creation and meets with Adam & Eve.
- Throughout the Old Testament we see God's people leaving home and going where God leads them. Even as the chosen nation, they reached out to foreigners among them, and provision was even made for non-Jews in the Law.
- Jesus leaves the splendor of divinity and is sent to earth to reach out to man. He gives up all He had that we might have all He offers.
- From Jesus into the New Testament we see, on purpose or because of persecution, all believers going to other places and spreading the gospel as they go.
- In basic Biblical Christianity, we must embrace a call to disciple the nations.
- We are all called to live out and be grounded in Apostolic Christianity.
- Any idea or expression of Church that does not at the same time embrace the local and the trans-local is at best a vague shadow of what God intended her to be!
- Who we are must affect the nations and the nations must effect who we are.

Any nation that thinks more of its ease and comfort than its freedom will soon lose its freedom; and the ironical thing about it is that it will lose its ease and comfort too. WILLIAM SOMERSET MAUGHAM (1874-1965)

Apostolic Christianity focuses as much on others freedom as on our own.

1 Thessalonians 1: 4 For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. ⁶ You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. ⁷ And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸ The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere.

1 Thessalonians 3: 8 For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord

Apostolic Heartedness

1 THE BOOK OF ACTS.

This book is often termed "the Acts of the Apostles." This is far from the truth! As we look into the Book of Acts we see Luke's true intention was to focus attention on "the acts of the Holy Spirit, from neighbourhoods to nations," in society and in a growing scope of communities.

Acts is more than an historical account of the church, answering questions of "what happened."

To get an accurate understanding of this book we must also ask, "What was the purpose in selecting and shaping the material of Acts in the way that it was?"

As with all books we must first *ask ourselves what the writer intended* the message and meaning of a passage to be, and to not just apply our own subjective interpretation. (I.e. A Devotional vs. an Exegetical interpretation (critical explanation of the text))

Luke's intent in Acts is to show the early church and its movement, orchestrated by the Holy Spirit taking the gospel from its Jerusalem-based, Judaism-oriented beginnings, to becoming a worldwide, Gentile-predominant phenomenon.

This is supported by what he doesn't tell us - vital hermeneutical principal. (For more information on hermeneutics, go to the last section of this Learn and Lead manual).

We see no interest in the biographies of the Apostles, nor church organization or polity.

A Acts as a model:

Luke never intended acts to standardize or even bring uniformity to the church. He leaves out too much detail for us to create exact orders of service, structure and practice. If he had, surely the church would have institutionalized the life we see in Acts and have lost the organic, Spirit-led nature God intended.

Acts is intended as a model but not so much in the specifics as in the overall picture. In the spontaneous, triumphant, joyful and forward-moving expansion of the Gospel, empowered by the Holy Spirit, resulting in changed lives and communities as God's intent for the continuing church.

The key verse in **Acts 1:8**. With emphasis on **Gods power** through the **Holy Spirit** and the resultant **spread of the church, numerically, geographically and culturally**.

CF Act 8:1!

Luke provides the following development of God's dealings in Acts.

We see six panels or sections:

- From the Church's Jewish setting with Peter leading,
- to a predominantly gentile or cosmopolitan church with Paul as the spearhead and the target being Rome.
- We also see a multiplying of teams, Paul to the Gentiles, Peter to the Jews, and others taking shape. E.g. Apollos, Pricilla & Aquila, Timothy & Titus begin to travel without Paul

Jewish to cosmopolitan, Peter to Paul, ministering alone to building team, one Apostolic Endeavour / Trans-local Team to many.

B Overview of Acts in 6 Panels:

Each panel ends with a brief summary verse. Read each reference from Acts as you go along!

i Acts 1:1 - 6:7.

A description of the early church, its preaching, common life, spread and initial opposition. Note how Jewish the flavour is – with much contact with the temple and synagogues.

“So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.”

ii Acts 6:8 - 9:31.

With Stephen’s martyrdom as the key, we see the first spread of the church by the Greek speaking Jewish Christians (Hellenists) to the Samaritans, who were a mixed race, part Jewish (Diaspora Jews), because persecution broke out against it.

Very important, these were the *believers* – the Apostles stayed in Jerusalem and the priesthood of believers carried the gospel wherever they went!

“Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.”

iii Acts 9:32 - 12:24.

With Cornelius’ conversion as the catalyst, we see the first expansion to the Gentiles. God uses Peter, the one most trusted among Jewish believers to break into the Gentile world. We also see the church in Antioch where Gentiles are targeted for evangelism.

“But the word of God continued to increase and spread.”

iv Acts 12:25 - 16:5.

Here we see the first **geographical expansion under Paul’s leadership**. The Jews now regularly reject the Gospel because it includes Gentiles. The church council meets and decides not to reject their Gentile brothers and sisters, nor to impose Jewish law on them.

“So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.”

v Acts 16:6 - 19:20 NB 16:6-10

This section describes the further, westward move of the church into the Gentile world, now into Europe.

The Jews repeatedly reject and the Gentiles welcome the Gospel.

“In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.”

vi Acts 19:21 - 28:30.

A description of the events that move Paul and the Gospel to Rome, with emphasis on Paul’s trials in which he is declared innocent of wrong doing three times.

“Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Summary:

Luke, the author of the Gospel of Luke, here presents **volume two of his record of Christ's life and ministry**. In Acts, the central figures become Christ's apostles who carry His Gospel to all people. Acts is structured around the key verse of Acts 1:8, where Christ tells the Apostles to go to Jerusalem: their own city; and Judea: their own province; and to Samaria: cross culturally to neighbouring countries; and even to the ends of the earth: all Gentile peoples.

Saul, the converted Jewish scholar, becomes Paul the missionary Apostle who takes Christ to the **Gentiles**. Peter leads the effort of continuing to evangelize **Jews**, both in Palestine and those dispersed in other countries as well. Acts records the **Spreading of the Gospel**, and the building of the **Church**, throughout Asia, lower Europe, and as far west as Rome.

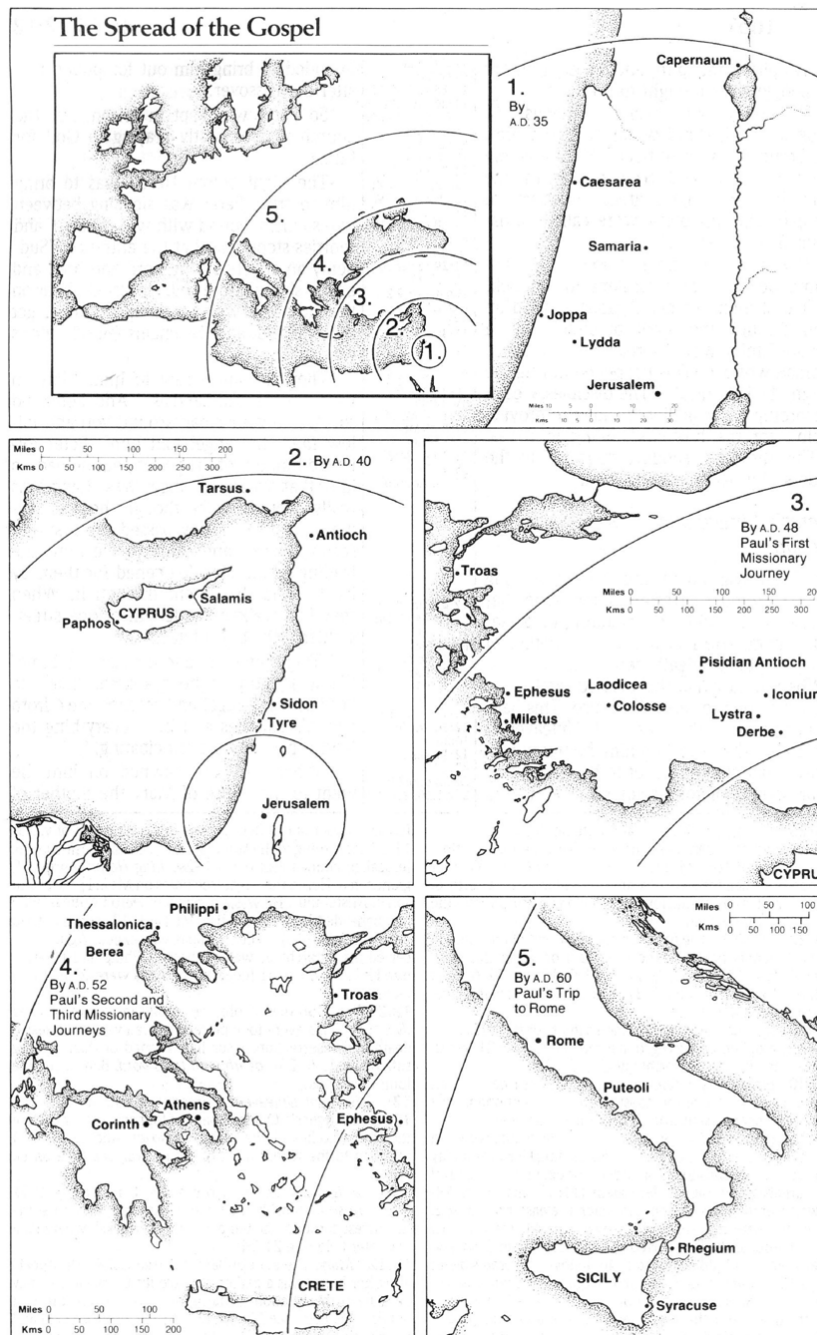
Apostolic Strategy

Your Town, Suburb, City

Your Province,

The Province Next Door.

As in Act 1:8, not chronological, but complimentary. (see map)



2 APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY - WHAT ARE WE CALLED TO?

Chris Wienand – The Church God has in Mind – pg. 8.

Mandate to our generation – overview.

God's grand plan is that we would know Him and make Him known. But how will we do this?

A Prepare the Bride

Rev 19:6-8, Eph 5:27

Luke 8:1 After this, Jesus travelled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him,

B Disciple the Nations

Matt 28:18-20, Act 1:8

Matt 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

C Plant New Testament Churches

Act 13-14

Act 13:42 As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath

They preached the Gospel, saw many saved, gathered these believers in to local church communities, left and returned to see the churches set in order.

D Raise Up Leaders

2 Tim 2:2,

cf Acts 1:7-8 He said to them: ...8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

E Develop the Priesthood

Gal 5:1, 1Pet 2:4-5, 9

Setting & keeping God's people free with His word, disciplining them & building them in a real, living relationship with Jesus.

F Seek & Save the Lost.

Lk 19:10

Acts 8:1 And Saul was there, giving approval to his death. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Acts 13:1-3 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. 2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Summary:

Apostolic Mandate throughout Scripture:

Genesis 12:1-3; Psalms 2:8; Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; 8:1; Revelation 22:1

3 WHAT IS MY ROLE IN APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY?

A Small “a” Apostolic Christianity.

You might say, “But I’m not an Apostle, how can I be part of Apostolic Christianity?”

There are many examples in scripture where what God requires of those with special responsibility is to a measure required of all. For example the qualifications of Elders and Deacons in 1 Tim 3 and Tit 1, are mostly universal: good reputation, not a drunkard, hospitable, full of the Spirit etc..

Lets look at the Ephesians 4 gifts.

Prophet vs. prophecy:

Some are given the office of Prophet, while others the gift of prophecy – but all Christians should be used to “speak for God,” either foretelling, or forth telling the word of God.

- All may prophecy, some are called to be prophets.

Equally with all of the Ephesians 4 gifts, while some are gifted with the office of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, or Teacher; we all should see some fruit of each these in our “everyday” Christianity. Is any believer exempt from being sent, proclaiming, witnessing, caring, or discipling?

“Big A” and “Small a” offices & gifts are vital in and though each local church. Every local church must be a base for Apostolic ministry. (i.e., having big “A” Apostolic, as well as every believer seeing themselves as sent to those around them).

Short or long term:

Some will have their workplace as their field of ministry, some will go to a neighbour in their suburb, some on a holiday or business trip to another city, province or nation, some will go and work with a church somewhere else.

Some will set a few weeks aside with the specific intent of extending the Gospel, others a few months, some will relocate and support or plant a church.

If all of our life is Apostolic-Hearted, then everything we do has a Gospel edge to it, and who knows what the outcome could be!

Act 18:19 While Paul was waiting for the next ship to continue his journey, he preaches and the beginnings of the church at Ephesus are formed!! That’s Apostolic Hearted waiting!

Cf Act 16:6-10

Thessalonians: a Model Church, and Basic Apostolic Heart & Strategy

1 Thess 1, cf Acts 17:1-9

Though Paul, Silas & Timothy’s stay was short, it was a model church.



Small 'a' Apostolic Christianity:

1 Thessalonians 1:6-8a CF Acts 1:8

You Became...

- i. Own City
- ii. Own Province
- iii. The Province next door and beyond.

Even though they were a young church, they lived "small 'a' apostolic" Christianity as basic Christianity.

B Small 'a' Apostolic Pattern:

1 Thess 1:6-7

- 1. Vision imitators of us NB 1 Cor 11:1
- 2. Team: Us
- 3. Relationship: welcomed message with joy.
- 4. Discipleship: model to all believers.

4 PRACTICAL OUT-WORKINGS OF APOSTOLIC HEARTEDNESS.

Paul was one of few "professionals" who had been trained and set aside for ministry, albeit in the Jewish system. Most of the major players whom we admire in the Scriptures, were not employed by a church, nor did they have much to offer in terms of pedigree. Much like us!

1 Corinthians 1:26 Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

A Order your life more around involvement in local church endeavours.

- i. Get a passport
- ii. Master your money so you can afford a trip
- iii. Train your kids to go out at night, sleep on the floor, eat what is set before them.
- iv. Be sacrificial with your time, talents and treasures

B Adopt a "Theology of Place" (i.e. that God has called you to your suburb, job, school and sent you there on mission for the Gospel's sake, not just to pay the bills, get an education...)

- i. Apostolic Heartedness sees every area of life as a potential opportunity for the Gospel.
- ii. Not just going to work, etc, but going on mission, as much as Paul was going to Ephesus or Thessalonica.

C Prioritise local/national NCMI events and plan to be involved in similar events over the borders, too.

- i. Let your leaders know that you are available to go with them or on behalf of your local church.

D Pray for your city and the nations in your own devotions and with your local church.

E Keep yourself informed of what is going on in the churches with whom we partner, and in the countries God has placed on your heart.

F Offer more. Become more sacrificial in your service of the Gospel.

- i. This could be making yourself more available for meetings, ministry, babysitting, hosting, making meals, facilitating others going...

G **Champion the cause of another: church, city, or nation, with a heart submitted to your leaders.**

H **Plant a Life Group. Either as the leader or part of the team. Church planting is very similar to starting a Life Group from scratch. Practise in the safe country and trust for new areas!**

- i. Together with your elders consider investing yourself into another partnering church in your city for 3 or 6 months. You probably wouldn't even need to move house, jobs, schools – just drive in another direction for church events!!
- i. Tithing
- ii. Being at all the meetings you can
- iii. Adding momentum
- iv. Being visible, active and faith-filled
- v. Befriending, supporting and serving the leaders of that church.

J **Together with your elders, consider relocating.**

- i. For a season to support a church plant or strengthen an existing plant. Possibly through a work opportunity or new job, even in retirement or extended leave.
- ii. Permanently to support. Many churches could richly benefit from just a few solid, on board, purpose filled, Apostolic Hearted members.
- iii. Permanently to Plant. It could just be that God is preparing you so that one day He would say "Set apart for me..."

Question: What can you do locally to be apostolic? What about regionally or internationally? What specific goals should you make towards these things for 2015?

AN ADDITIONAL NOTE ON HOW TO READ THE BIBLE FOR ALL ITS WORTH

Hermeneutics / Interpreting the Bible Overview.

One half of correctly interpreting Scripture is, of course, all about the illumination and guidance of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26, 16:13, 1 John 2:27).

The other half is all about learning to apply carefully certain principles of interpretation.

Hermeneutics should be one of the first things we learn: i.e. Discipleship 101!

A Writers intent.

Ask yourself what was the writer's intended meaning and message, and through that what was God saying into the writers context before we try to apply it to ourselves today.

Who wrote,
To **Whom**,
Why writing,
When writing,
Where writing.

B Historical distance.

Bridging the Time and Space gap. Understanding the culture, geography, politics, economy, etc. of the day and not being blinded by our own.

C Context

The meaning of a text will always be clarified or confirmed by its context. Phrase; sentence; paragraph; passage; pericope; book. Most misinterpretations arise because a phrase or verse is ripped from its context. The old adage is all too true: a text without a context is a pretext.

D Genre & Usage

If a literal reading is nonsensical, or no amount of widening the context seems to clarify the meaning, then look at literary genre'. There are many different genres and usages in Scripture, each one with its own rules of interpretation. E.g. Hebrew poetry; wisdom literature; apocalyptic literature; various conventions and features of prophetic utterance; psalms; proverbs; types; parables; allegories; Hebrew sayings and idiomatic expression; and various figures of speech.

E The Self-Interpretation of Scripture

"Let Scripture interpret Scripture". If the meaning of a text seems obscure or difficult to accept, look to see what the position is of other texts on the subject. The total truth about a matter is gained only from all the texts dealing with that matter.

Three corollaries of this principle are: **the whole clarifies the part; the plain clarifies the obscure; the new clarifies the old.**

F Corporate Reading / Helps.

Avail yourself of the interpretative knowledge and skills of others.

First, to draw upon the knowledge and appreciation of Scripture of respected scholars.

Second, guards against a purely subjective reading of Scripture.

Summary:

When we read the bible accurately, first understanding the message God intended to the first recipients, we can then understand how to apply that message to us in our day.

In Acts the key is not to develop a style of church service, but to see Gods heart and strategy in getting the Gospel out by the power of the Holy Spirit and using all kinds of people to do so!