

Establishing unity in the body of christ



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SPIRIT OF UNITY

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All Scriptures used are from king James Version of the bible, except otherwise stated.■

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David o. Oshin

CONTENTS

➤ Introduction	5
➤ What Unity is	7
➤ Unity and the Church	17
➤ Early Church and Latter church	29
➤ Importance of the local church	35
➤ Unity and the offices of the ministry.....	39
➤ Common Errors I have observed in Ministry Offices	47
➤ Intruding the offices of the ministry	70

INTRODUCTION

We are in the last days of the church and that is no more news because the last days began right from the day of Pentecost when the Holy Ghost came down to the earth to officially take over from Jesus. That however was not the first time the Holy Ghost will manifest himself on the earth, he has been manifesting himself right from the re-creation of the earth and all through the old testament in different forms and names, but that day of Pentecost announced officially the “dispensation of the Holy Ghost” and since then the last days officially kicked off, but here we are in the latter day of the last days and the coming of Christ is just so close but before Jesus comes the Church needs to come into the full reality of this dispensation and fully manifest his realities, this can only happen when Spirit of **Unity** takes over the church of God. Brethren please understand this, we are no where yet near God’s best for our lives and this best will only come into reality when the church comes together in Unity.

Ps 133:1- 3

*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in **unity**!*

2. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garment.

3. As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing even life for evermore

There is so much power in Unity, David compares it to the anointing that flows from the head to the body, the anointing therefore flows from the head (JESUS CHRIST) to the body (Body of Christ – the Church). The anointing the whole body is enjoying today comes from the head, and until there is a unity of the whole body we can't manifest the fullness of the Head. When the body comes together in unity we will manifest in the fullness of the capacity of the anointing Jesus Christ.

We cannot overemphasize the power of unity in the body of Christ, so we are still manifesting in drops. Oh! What a deluge when the body comes together in unity.

CHAPTER 1

WHAT UNITY IS

Unity according thesaurus dictionary means “the state of being one; oneness” or “a whole or totality as combining all its part into one”. Jesus Christ introduced the concept of unity to his disciples when he was about leaving the earth, right before his arrest. It is common adage that the last words of a man before leaving the world should be taken very seriously, these were part of his last words and not just words but prayers for his disciples. This shows the weight of unity, unity is the desire of Jesus for his disciples and this is the ultimate desire of the father for the church.

John 17:11, 20-21

*And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be **one**, as we .*

20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

*21. that they may all be **one**; as thou, father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be **one** in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

There is something so striking in this scripture that cannot be overlooked.

- Jesus repeats the same prayer of oneness to God twice in the same passage of scripture.
- It is important to observe that Jesus didn't just pray for the disciples alone he prayed also for those who would be his disciples in the future and that is us now.

This is how much oneness means to Jesus, and it takes a deepness of understanding to really get an insight into what Jesus is communicating to the church now. Let us look at verse 23 in the New International Version.

John 17:23 (N.I.V)

I in them and you in me- so that they may be brought to complete **unity**.

God wants to bring us his children into complete unity and the unity here as painted by Jesus Christ is in two Phases.

- Unity with God
- Unity with Man

UNITY WITH GOD

Right from the re-creation of the earth, the lord had a perfect plan to bring Man(who is in his image and likeness) to complete unity with him. It was the fall of man that brought the separation and disconnection from God.

Gen 1:26

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image and likeness, ..."

God created man and made him to be in complete unity with him, the spirit of man was **united** the spirit of God. Man looked like God and could function like him (in his capacity). At this point man could accurately know the mind of God and do exactly what he would do at any point in time. Adam proved it by naming all the animals that God gave him accurately (Gen. 2:20). We said earlier that thesaurus dictionary tells us that unity means "oneness". So the spirit of man was one with the spirit of God. There was such a oneness that Adam could fellowship with a God that he couldn't see, and we know from scriptures and particularly through the words of Jesus that *no man hath seen God at any time* and this includes Adam because he was a man (Jn. 1:18). Did God appear to Adam in the garden? Yes he did, but as a voice. (Gen. 3:8), they heard the voice walking in the garden, they didn't see him. Now, the point is that Adam could maintain a perfect relationship with God because the unity of his spirit. One of the things the devil succeeded in doing through Adam's fall was to

disunite God and man. Unity is so paramount in the heart of God that he had to send Jesus to be the bridge, the bible calls him the mediator between God and Mankind- the man Christ Jesus(1 Tim. 2:5). So it was one key assignment Jesus had, that was why he prayed it twice in the same scripture (Jn. 17:11, 20-21). He was to mediate mankind and the God head, he was to bring back the unity that man lost back in the garden, so it is safe say that Jesus is the initiator of the message of Unity, and he was the first to preach it. Salvation is the major channel through which our spirits gets united with God, so salvation is not just getting saved from your sins,it is also being united with God. The bible tells us that he that is joined to the lord is **one spirit** with him (1 cor. 6:17), so our joining to the lord through salvation is our point of **unity** with God. It is however important to understand it is not just our unity with God that matters, much more importantly is our unity with men and this is all contained in the prayers of Jesus for the disciples.

Jn. 17:21

*21. that they may **all be one**; as thou, father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be **one** in us.*

The key words in this scripture are highlighted “all, one”

Two very important statements in this verse

- All be one
- They may be one in us.

Now, the question is who are the “all”? All believers. God expect all believers to be one. The next statement is “they may be one in us”. Oh God! what a template. Jesus didn’t just pray for us to be one; he gave us a perfect template of oneness and what better template than the God head. So the God head expects all believers to be one as they are one. What an expectation! And it is my prayer that their expectation shall not be cut short.

Think about that, one as the God head .Can that be? If it weren’t possible Jesus wouldn’t have prayed for it and remember Jesus said *all things are possible to them that believe* (Mark 9:23).

Another important question is How united are the Godhead.

1 Jn. 5:7

*And these are three that bear record **in heaven**,the **father**,the **word** and the **Holy Ghost**: and these three are **one**.*

Here the keywords are also highlighted, “in heaven”, “the father” , “the word” “ the Holy Ghost”, “one”. There is a perfect unity of the God-head in heaven, there has never been a disunity between them,

right before the beginning of beginnings to eternity even when Jesus the son of God (the word became flesh) came to the earth, they were still perfectly united.

Paul gives us the account in his writings to the phillipi church that Jesus never *thought it robbery to be equal with God, though he took of his glory and became like a normal man* (Phil. 2:6-8). So Jesus never saw a status change, he humbled himself, this is the beauty of unity, nobody taking the glory except God..

Even in the recreation of the earth, God said *let us make man in our image and likeness,...* (Gen. 1:26). There was unity in creation of man, let **us**. That word us represented the Godhead, so we were created in the image of the Godhead and to look like the God Head. Every time they worked, they worked together in unity. When Jesus was on earth, he once said *I and my father are one* (Jn. 10:30).

UNITY WITH MAN

Before the spirit of a man can be united with the spirit of another man, his spirit must first be united to God. so unity with God comes first before unity with man, it is important we establish this point so by implication it is impossible for unbelievers to unite with themselves or with believers. So ,we can never have a **United Nations** until all members of these nations are believers first and

understand the concept of unity. We must understand that unity is not just for power and anointing, it also promotes interaction and interrelation between believers of different continents, states, regions not minding ethnic and racial differences. So in essence only biblical unity can end racism forever.

Unity of a believer is two basic dimensions

- Intra-Unity
- Inter-Unity

INTRA UNITY

Intra unity comes before inter unity. Intra unity is a unity within a man(believer). When a man gives his life to Christ, his spirit is instantly reconnected to God, his spirit was dead because of sin, but comes alive after salvation, then after his soul is renewed by the word of God and his body his submitted to God. So salvation affects three major aspects of man – His Spirit(first) , then his Soul and his Body. So the concept of intra unity is the unity of his spirit, soul and body. This however can only come after salvation. So the first real work of unity is inward and not outward, most believers expect an inter unity when there is no intra unity and that will be impossible. The question now is “is my spirit, soul and body united?” we need to answer this question before we can talk of a unity of the body of Christ. Is there no perpetual conflict between your spirit, soul and body? Off course you can't be living in sin and disobedience and

expect unity between you because your spirit will be conflicting with the soul and the body. After intra unity has been settled we can now talk about Inter- unity.

INTER UNITY

It is very crucial we drive this point home there can never be a true biblical unity between a believer and an unbeliever. It is scripturally impossible.

2nd Cor. 6:14 (N.I.V)

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers...

This is a specific instruction from the lord, so an unbeliever cannot be your best friend (check yourself if you are still standing in the faith). Because paul calls the believer light and the unbeliever darkness, and that is the truth. There can never be a unity of spirit unless perhaps you are both darkness together, does it then mean we hate them ?no. we relate with them but not unite with them, we are free to tell them about the lord and win them to Christ, but never to carry the concept that a good , well behaved muslim is even better than an ill mannered Christian, so it is better I relate with muslims, that will be wrong and extreme, love him as brother (the believer) and correct him in love and if he is not changing, then better relate other believers. It is important we understand our company.

So once intra unity is in place, there can be effective inter unity. This is unity of spirits and souls. There can only be unity of bodies for

married couples that are believers.

So we are expected to unite in 2 major compartments of our being – Spirit and the soul, and for married believers, they are expected to unite in three major compartments – Spirits, souls, and bodies.

This is God's expectation (Spirit – Spirit, Soul – Soul) so unity in two major phases except for married couples that unite in the three phases, and this unity talks about a oneness, agreement.

Phil. 1:27

*... I may hear your affairs, that ye stand fast in **one spirit**, with **one mind** striving together for the faith of the gospel.*

This is important for us to understand, standing fast in **one spirit**, **one mind**, **striving together** for the faith of the Gospel. If this is a reality in the body of Christ, there will tremendous release of unction and the gospel will spread faster and bring more results.

The church is called the family of God, and the bond of family is love, every family thrives on unity. Unity is a mystery, and this is one of the fundamental reason why the lord instituted marriage, to bring complete unity among believers and thereby bringing unity in the body of Christ as a whole. If every nuclear family is united, then it is safe to say the extended family(which consists of nuclear families of believers) will be united and that is the church(the body of Christ in general).

Eph. 5:31

*For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be **one flesh**.*

So when two bodies come together only in marriage, they become one flesh and that is the unity of the body. I said specifically only in marriage because outside marriage the coming together of two believers is either fornication or adultery, it is not unity but rather dis-unity to the body of Christ, and *he that joins himself to an harlot is one body with her*(that is a unitement with sin and defilement of the body)(1 Cor. 6:16).

CHAPTER 2

UNITY AND THE CHURCH

We defined the concept of unity in the first chapter with the thesaurus dictionary as “the state of being one; oneness” or “a whole or totality as combining all its part into one”. Unity has two basic definitions

- Oneness , state of being one
- A whole or totality combining all its part into one

These two basic definitions have specific relevance to the church.

The church of Jesus Christ is a deep Mystery, it is one of the most misunderstood concept in the body of Christ. One of the greatest blessings I have received from the Holy Ghost is the revelation of the church, what the church of Jesus Christ is, that inspired an Holy Ghost meeting we had titled “*one lord, one church, one spirit*”. Oh! What marvelous revelations I received from the Holy Ghost about this meeting, I pray I don’t recover from it forever. The bedrock of the church forever is *revelation*, I tell you the truth brethren, without revelation the church is not different from a holy cemetery (dry and dead).

God’s marvelous plan for his church is unity. God wants his church to be utterly united in all things. There is such an enormous revelation God is bringing to his church in these last days and it is to properly position us for his end time move in his church. The true

concept of the church needs to be understood so we can understand the place of unity in the end time move. Traditionally we know church to be a building and we carry a mentality of the church being a structure, and we have so engrossed ourselves in this mentality that we don't feel we are in a church when there is no building.

For us to be properly balanced on the truth, we need to look at the true concept of a church from the word of God.

The word church comes from the root word "ekklesia" which means "called out ones". Thayer's definition of the transliterated word "ekklesia" means a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly.

Jesus used the direct word "ekklesia" in describing the church.

Matt. 16:18

*And I say also unto thee, thou art peter, and upon this rock will I build **my church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

Jesus officially declares his ownership of the church. So Jesus owns the church and he builds it and not man, he has the pattern and determines the operations of the church. There are basic concepts we must keep in mind from all of these

1. Jesus owns the church
2. Jesus builds his church
3. The church is not a building, but rather a gathering of believers that are "called out".

4. Lastly ,The church is also called the body of Christ as a whole and individually.

The two basic definitions of unity comes in now

- The state of being one ; oneness

The church (gathering of believers- called out) is to be in a state of being one; oneness.

- A whole or totality combining all its part into one

This second definition is the most crucial, The church as a whole or totality should combine all his parts (gifts, callings, graces) into one.

These two basic definitions are very deep; God is expecting the body of Christ (the church) to be united in spirit and soul. He expects us to have one spirit, one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and then he also expects us to combine our gifts, callings, graces to be **one** thereby bringing forth the majestic beauty of God, bringing down his glory in a heavy dimension. We discussed a little about the unity of spirit, soul and bodies in the earlier chapter (both intra and inter unity), but unity is far deeper than that, there is a real working of the Holy Ghost in combining all of the graces and gifts in the body to become one and this is where the work of the Holy Ghost is most misunderstood.

DISPENSATION OF UNITY

We are right in the core of the dispensation of unity, this is why the message of unity is so important at this hour. It is no more news God

is raising a new army, this is an army that has their messages centered on unity of the body of Christ. If you observe very closely the young generation of ministers called into the ministry offices all have their messages pointed towards this direction, but like Kenneth Hagin always say, the body of Christ have not learnt to stay balance on any topic on the Christian faith and in every move of the spirit, extreme is always the order of the day. This is what I have personally observed in the messages of unity I have heard from most of these young preachers, I sense this is one of the major reason the Holy Ghost graciously revealed to me Unity in biblical balance, opening my eyes to see the extremes of young preachers and how they are gradually running off into error.

The dispensation of unity really began with the dispensation of the Holy Ghost and moreso because the Holy Ghost is the spirit of unity.

Eph. 1:9 -10

*Having made known unto us the **mystery** of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:*

*10. That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in **one** all things in Christ,...*

In this dispensation of the Holy Ghost which is the last days there is a dispensation of the fullness of time and that is the latter part of the last days right before the coming back of Jesus, oneness will be the emphasis of the church. God is gathering into **one** all things in

Christ.NIV uses the word unity.

Eph. 1:10 (N.I.V)

*To put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment- to bring **unity** to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.*

The lord is bringing unity to all things and not just the church. God wants everything to be united before his coming, he is not coming for a disunited and weak church but for a united and perfect church without blemish.

When the Holy Ghost came officially on earth, unity began from his disciples . The dispensation of the Holy Ghost began the dispensation of unity, but we are right now in the fulfillment of all things and this is when the message of unity should be at its peak, because unity of all things will precede the coming of Jesus and will even usher in the coming of Jesus.

UNITY OF THE EARLY CHURCH

Unity began in the early church. In the *King James Version*, the words “unity” and “accord” are used interchangeably. The meaning of “accord” in the following verses from Acts is “being one in spirit, purpose, aim, and so forth.”

Acts 1:14

*These all continued **with one accord** in prayer and supplication. . .*

The Apostles and disciples of Jesus waited together in one accord waiting for the Holy Spirit , they were with one spirit, one mind and

when the Holy Ghost came, he met them in one Accord, and separated upon them powerfully. Unity Heralded the coming of the Holy Ghost on the disciples and the power came so heavily upon them and only unity will keep the power of the Holy Ghost so strong in our midst.

ACTS 2:1

*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all **with one accord** in one place.*

ACTS 2:46

*And they, continuing daily **with one accord** in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart. . . .*

They didn't just begin in one accord, they continued in one accord. This is in addition to the new converts about 3,000, they all continued in one accord (unity). After the miracle at the gate – beautiful in chapter three, there is every possibility they had additional new converts, because the bible tells us that they were all amazed and filled with wonder at what happened to the lame man and peter preached to them immediately , so there is every possibility of new converts again but still they continued in one accord even in prayers. When they were persecuted by the chief Priests , and the elders they still maintained their unity despite the persecution, even in their prayers.

ACTS 4:23–24, 29–32

*And being let go, they went to their **own company**, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.*

*24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God **with one accord**, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea. . . .*

29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

*31 And when they had prayed, **the place was shaken where they were assembled together**; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*

*32 And the multitude of them that believed were of **one heart** and of **one soul**. . .*

The trouble with believers these days when they are persecuted is that they go every where except **their own company**, but these believers were a company together and with one accord lifted up their voice to pray and the power of unity came on display. There were minimum above 3,120 believers and they prayed one prayer point, they lifted up their voice and they didn't plan to say that but everybody at the same time was inspired by the Holy Ghost to say these words. We know that is not possible in the natural but they

just received the Holy Ghost in chapter 2, so I believe they all spoke in tongues and with unity of heart and the interpretation of what they collectively said was recorded for us here, and as they prayed not long after there was a supernatural manifestation of the power of the Holy Ghost that the building started shaking and they were refilled with the Holy Ghost, mighty and un-imaginable things happen when believers pray together in unity, David described it as the anointing that runs from the head to all the garments (Ps. 133:1-2), the supernatural happens when believers come together in unity and the secret of the building shaking manifestation of the Holy Ghost is in the intra unity of the believers then their inter unity.

Acts 4: 32

*And the multitude of them that believed were of **one heart** and of **one soul** . . .*

The multitude of the believers were of one heart(one spirit) and of one soul and that is intra unity of each believer and inter unity of all the believers (the multitude). We need more of that today multitude of believers with one heart and one soul.

Kenneth Hagin said in his book "***the key to the supernatural***" ,
"The reason the supernatural power of God has not been demonstrated as God would have liked in years gone by is because

believers got in unity only at times. I believe in this last day before Jesus Christ comes again there is going to come a unity among the Body of Christ that the world has never seen before, and the power of God is going to be demonstrated as never before!

WE ARE LABORERS TOGETHER

The last days battle war is not a one person's war or one denomination war, it is a together war against the onslaught of the devil and his demons who are against the church of God and against the work of God. We can't win the battle in disunity *for a house divided against itself cannot stand* (Matt 12:25). We need to unite ourselves on the Word of God to fight this last-day onslaught of the enemy. Satan is going to bring every power from the depths of hell against God's people and all humanity in these last days. The Word of God says he has come *"to steal, and to kill, and to destroy"* (John 10:10). Satan knows his time is short, and he's going to give it everything he's got. As we band together, however, in the unity of the word of God, the Body of Christ will rise in triumphant power over Satan—*because he already has been defeated!*

Most of the young generational preachers have the right message but many of them have the wrong approach and it is not doing the body of Christ any better, they are preaching the message of unity with a mouth of disunity so the message is not getting across. Most of them stand on the pulpit and practically insults ministers of God

in denominational assemblies, that is not a message of unity, the bible says "*speaking the truth in love*"(Eph. 4:15), they speak with so much envy and hatred that is so visible and the members of this denominations are vexed rather than blessed. I find the words of Kenneth Hagin prophetic especially in this time and age in the body of Christ.

These were his words

"One person may say, "Oh, I'm a follower of Hagin." Another may say, "I sort of follow Copeland." Still another may say, "I like this one or that one." That reminds me of what the Apostle Paul wrote in First Corinthians 3:

1 CORINTHIANS 3:3-9

For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

The Lord Is Your Shepherd Paul is saying. "It doesn't matter who brought you the Gospel as long as you were saved by the blood, power, and Lordship of the Lord Jesus Christ."

No matter who brought you into the faith—Kenneth Hagin, your pastor, or some other minister—you are not following a man. You are not following man's doctrine. You are following the Word of God—the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul also said, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8). Notice that Paul even includes himself in that statement. Too many people have things out of perspective. They have taken a revelation God gave to one man, grabbed a portion of it, ran off, and perverted it. Forget about human personalities and lift up the Word!

Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me"

(John 12:32). Not if Kenneth Hagin is lifted up. Not if you are lifted up. But if Jesus Christ is lifted up. That is part of the unity we must come into. We must forget about our own ministries and fellowships. We must forget about who we are and what we want to be. We must unite ourselves around the Word of God. As we do, we will see ourselves ushered into an age of the supernatural power of God. Jesus promised:

JOHN 14:12

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and GREATER WORKS than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

We have yet to see all these greater works to be accomplished, because the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ has failed to unite, and therefore the power of God has been unable to move. Where there is unity, every gift of the Spirit and every fruit of the Spirit will be in operation. Then and only then can the supernatural power of God move. Do you know why most people are not in unity and harmony? Because they don't have enough of the Word of God—enough power—in them. How can the gifts of the Spirit or the fruit of the Spirit operate in them?

Galatians 5:22–23, where the fruit of the 17 Spirit is listed: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. All of these need to be in demonstration”.

Chapter 3

THE EARLY CHURCH AND THE LATTER CHURCH

There is a fundamental difference between the early church and the latter church, and the work of the Holy Ghost is progressive from the early church to the latter church. The early church began from the day of Pentecost but the operations of the Father in the early church is slightly different from his operations in the latter church that is why it will be wrong for us to say the church of today should go back and do things the way it was done in the early church, we can imitate the unity, the dimension of power but we cannot emulate their church government because the church was a baby church. The early church was a planting church – they were to plant the seeds but the latter church is a harvesting church, and the latter church is the church that precedes the coming of Christ. The truth is that there is nothing new under the sun except you are new under the sun, there is nothing happening in the body of Christ now that didn't happen in the days of the apostles. Although the early church began in unity but soon enough disunity started crippling in. I have discovered that it is the easiest thing to get into error doctrinally even without knowing if you don't carefully examine your assertions in the light of scriptures. I have been around many brethren who carry a passion for the unity of the body of Christ and many of them if not all are of the opinion that denomination is of the devil, that the

devil brought this to divide the body of Christ. They say that there should just be one church that denomination is a division of the body of Christ. This assertion is very tempting to believe in the natural stand point because they have some facts to back that up. After much meditating and searching God opened my eyes with Hagin's book on "*He gave gifts unto men*". I will quote some vital words from that book. For purpose of clarity and understanding the word "denomination" means the branch of Christian church. A denomination is also called the *Local church*, while the whole body of Christ is the *Universal Church*. We will see it from scriptures if it is God's will for there to be local churches or denominational churches. Let us look at the origin of the early church

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

The only way to get a scriptural perspective of the error that is being taught in the body of Christ today about denominational churches or the local church, is to study the development of the local church in the Book of Acts. What was the origin of the local church, and how did the local church evolve?

You see, at first the only **local church** was the church at Jerusalem. We have no record of the Church in its earliest days even evangelizing outside of Jerusalem. The local body was confined to the Jerusalem church. But before Jesus ascended, He had told the disciples they were to be witnesses of Him in Jerusalem, Judaea,

Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). In other words, the gospel was to be preached and works were to be started in other areas as well. However, years later the Early Church still hadn't done that; they had just stayed right there in Jerusalem. So for a period of time, the Jerusalem church was the only church in existence.

Therefore, for some years preaching and teaching in the Early Church was done by the Apostles of the Lamb, and initially all ministry was confined to the Jerusalem church. But when persecution arose, the Early Church went out witnessing. Although the apostles stayed in Jerusalem when the Church was scattered, later the apostles began establishing works in other areas. The first record we have that believers left Jerusalem to evangelize is in Acts 8:1, and that occurred some years after Pentecost.

ACTS 8:1

... And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all SCATTERED ABROAD throughout the REGIONS OF JUDAEA and SAMARIA, except the apostles.

It was only after the persecution that believers went out witnessing, and works began to be established in other areas. It says the Church was "scattered abroad" preaching the gospel. The Early Church finally obeyed what Jesus had told them to do in Acts 1:8 by

spreading the good news about Him to others. As new works were started outside of Jerusalem, when doctrinal disputes arose, the disciples would return to the Jerusalem church to settle these issues. The early church were in unity from the beginning up to this point where we started seeing traces of disunity in one of the denominational churches or local churches(the church at Antioch). The question was it God's will for the denominational church? Yes, but was it his will for disunity ? No. Because people get disunited when they form denominations doesn't mean it isn't God's will, it means people are not just working in accordance with his word. This church was planted by Paul and Barnabas and they appointed the pastors there.

DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH DOCTRINE IN THE EARLY CHURCH

ACTS 15:1,2,4-6

And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, EXCEPT YE BE CIRCUMCISED AFTER THE MANNER OF MOSES, YECANNOT BE SAVED.

2 When therefore PAUL AND BARNABAS HAD NO SMALL DISSENSION AND DISPUTATION WITH THEM, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to JERUSALEM [the mother church] unto the APOSTLES and ELDERS about this question....

4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the APOSTLES and ELDERS, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

6 And the APOSTLES and ELDERS came together for to consider of this matter.

The church had a disunity in doctrine, some of the Pharisees who had become believers were still saying that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. It caused a great dissension to the point that they had to take the issue to the mother church at Jerusalem. What was funny to me was that it was Paul and Barnabas that brought them the gospel and the believers were still arguing with them. The bible said they had no small dissension and disputation, it was a very big quarrel. The saving grace here was that there was a mother church to put them to order, but if it is in our days the other group will go and form their own denomination. This is where it is not the will of God, because they refused to be under authority and follow the truth, so it will wrong and extreme to judge because of what some few people are doing wrong. The truth is that there are still many denominational ministries that embrace unity and are in oneness.

What causes disunity in most denominations and among denominations is doctrines.

The early church was the planting church while the latter church is the harvesting church, the early church was a baby church , the latter church is a matured church.

Chapter 4

IMPORTANCE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

One of the major challenges the body of Christ is experiencing today is excesses, inability to stay in the middle as regarding any biblical truth. For all who think God is putting an end to the denominational churches, that will be scriptural off tangent . It is saying God is putting an end to pastoral office.

There are two primary organizations or institutions that God has put His approval on. Number one, the home and family. He instituted that first. Number two, the church. And really, the local church is like a family; it is a church family. Have you ever noticed that the family and the church are the two things the evil attacks more than anything else? People are always asking, "What is God doing today?" as if God is going to do something new every day. One of the main things God is doing today is emphasizing the local church. But that's not new. God has always put his blessing, approval, and emphasis on the local church, but because some of these things have gotten out of balance, He is reemphasizing the local church to let us know it is a priority with Him. Actually, God is just directing us back to where we ought to be. I'll tell you exactly what God wants to do in the Body of Christ today. Number one, He wants to build strong local churches or denominational churches united in one spirit and one soul. Number two, he wants members of

local churches to learn to flow in the Spirit. We need to realize that Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, is the One who instituted the local church and *set* the pastoral office in the Body of Christ. Notice something Jesus said about the pastoral office in Matthew chapter 9.

MATTHEW 9:35,36

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, AS SHEEP HAVING NO SHEPHERD.

In this passage, the Bible doesn't say that when Jesus saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion because the people fainted as sheep without an *apostle* or *prophet* or *discipler*. It doesn't say the multitude fainted as sheep without an *evangelist* or *teacher*. No! It says that they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep without a *shepherd!* Sheep need a shepherd.

Jesus knew the sheep would be scattered without a pastor.

The evangelist and the teacher don't have the same anointing on them to take care of the sheep and nurture them.

NO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

There are some teachers or disciplers who downgrade the local

church and encourage folks to be independent from a church body. They leave the impression that brethren don't need the local church. This is going extreme, I am not against disciplers or discipleship classes but things need to be kept in proper positioning to avoid error, a discipler is not a pastor unless he is called into the office of a pastor.

Every sheep needs shepherd and not a discipler. They need a pastor — a shepherd. The shepherd holds a unique place in the fivefold ministry because he is the one who has been set in the Church by Jesus to nurture and tend the Sheep.

To bring a balance to it, there should be a fundamental harmony between the local church, non denominational assemblies and inter denominational. Everybody stands in his place of assignment without crossing his boundary. For example a discipleship school cannot replace a local church, but it has its own place too in grooming the body of Christ into maturity, but to be safe about it the school can be partners with a local church. A mentor/ discipler trains his/ her student adequately but must also understand the place of the pastor (that is if he is not) in his / her life and partners with a local church also. The bottom point all of this is that the local church stands supreme and above any group any where in the body of Christ and must be adequately respected. ***I believe if every member of the body of Christ does what God sends him to do specifically***

without any excess of any kind or without being extreme on any issue of the faith then the body of Christ will be in perfect unity, the body of Christ has always had the problem of extremity.

CHAPTER 5

UNITY AND OFFICES OF THE MINISTRY

Ephesians 4:8, 11

... When he [Jesus] ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and GAVE GIFTS UNTO MEN. . . .

And he [Jesus] GAVE some, Apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

1 Cor. 12:28

And God HATH SET SOME IN THE CHURCH, first Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

The Lord Jesus stands as the head of the church, and he determines that administration of the church. He is the head of the offices of the ministry because he walked in all the offices in the highest degree of anointing, I don't mean here that he functioned as the son of God, he functioned as a man under the anointing of the Holy Ghost but the bible tells us that he had the spirit without measure or limit (Jn. 3:34). Nobody called today in any office of the ministry will be able to function in the degree of anointing Jesus functioned within the period of time he functioned. Jesus's ministerial exploits was just within three and half years and the bible tells that the miracles that happened in his ministry if it were to be written in a book, there is no book in the whole world that will be able to contain it even if the

whole world was a book (Jn. 21:25). So nobody today in any office of the ministry is as anointed as Jesus was but the body of Christ (universal church) carries the individual anointing on Jesus that is why there needs to be *unity* in the *universal church* so we can manifest the full measure on the anointing on Jesus, but someone is saying didn't Jesus say "*we will do greater works than he did*", Yes we will! Jesus was not talking here about us having a greater anointing than he had or as much as much as he had , he was talking about the dispensation that is about to come which is the dispensation of the Holy Ghost and greater works that will happen in his dispensation. Please let us understand this, there are greater miracles and signs in our days -the latter church than the early church ,but without Jesus we can do nothing. So it is Jesus still doing the works today but through us the body of Christ, so it is Jesus doing the greater works , it is not us. He owns the church and not us, he administrates the activities of the church not us, we don't have an anointing on our own, and we received all we have from him. We all have grace in measure (Rom. 12: 3) , he gave every one grace according to the gift of Christ, and the total graces of each one member of the body of Christ as a whole is equal to the measure of grace on Jesus, so it is not just an individual thing we need each other to maximize the best of God's grace.

Ephesians 4:8, 11

... When he [Jesus] ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and GAVE GIFTS UNTO MEN....

And he [Jesus] GAVE some, Apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

Jesus gave gifts unto men, what gifts did Jesus give? The gifts are apostles, prophets, evangelist, pastors and teachers. These gifts are ministry gifts and a ministry gift is resident within a person who is called by God to the full-time ministry to stand in one of these five ministry offices: apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher.

These ministry office is called the five-fold offices, a ministry gift is a *divine call*, nobody sets himself into these offices, it must be a definite call from God and not just a passion or a burden to fill the gap. Jesus gave these offices to men as a gift, so every one called by God into the offices of the ministry is a divine gift of God to whomsoever he is sent to, so your pastor is your gift and you must treat him as such.

We must understand what these ministry gifts are and how to maximize them, see, when you don't recognize the ministry gift of God sent to you, you can't maximize the grace they carry. When you despise the divine call of God on a man's life you depreciate the grace of God in your life without you knowing, please if you have been doing that, Repent! Stop it! It is very risky to your glorious destiny. The body of Christ always go extreme on any subject of the

christian faith, for example because we are told in scriptures to honor ministry offices some take it to the extreme by worshipping their pastors or prophet, that is extreme. Some also because of this tell themselves they don't need a pastor, they are also called – that is also extreme.

Everybody is called of God, everybody is called to preach, and even teach also(in the sense of discipling people) , also everybody has a specific call in the body of Christ and everybody should recognize his call, but it will be extreme for you to say you don't need the ministry offices because of extremes you have observed in some.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE OFFICES OF THE MINISTRY?

EPHESIANS 4:12,13

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect [spiritually mature] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

These verses tell us three reasons ministry gifts were given to the Church:

1. For the perfecting of the saints.
2. For the work of the ministry.
3. For the edifying of the Body of Christ.

Actually, the Greek indicates that the meaning is "perfecting of the saints so the saints can do the work of the ministry, resulting in the edification of the Body of Christ."

Another translation says that God gave the fivefold ministry gifts "in order to get His holy people ready to serve as workers"

(The New Testament in the Language of Today, William F. Beck).

The *Godspeed* translation says God gave ministry gifts to the Church *so the saints can "reach mature manhood, and reach that measure of development found in Christ."*

How long will ministry gifts be in the Church? Ephesians 4:13 says, *"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect [spiritually mature] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."*

We need the ministry gifts to grow into maturity.

Don't let the words "perfecting" and "perfect" in verses 12 and 13 throw you. We will never be perfect or perfected in the flesh. As long as we are in these mortal bodies, we will not reach perfection in the sense that most people think of perfection. Actually, the word "perfect" here means *mature* or *full manhood*

The Bible is talking about *spiritual maturity*. The Church will always need ministry gifts — those called to the offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher because as a body of believers, we are always in the process of growing toward the full stature of

Christ. Even when Jesus returns, there will be those in the Body of Christ who just got saved and are still spiritual babes.

There is an anointing that goes with every one of these fivefold ministry offices. And as ministers of God stand in these different offices, the anointing of the Holy Spirit is distributed in different measures and works differently in each office. But all the ministry gifts are for the edifying or the spiritual building up of the Body of Christ.

There is an anointing upon each ministry gift — the full-time minister — that is *not* on the layman. No layman can take the place of these ministry gifts that God has set in the Church. Of course, laymen can witness for God and do much further the growth of God's Kingdom. And in that general sense everyone is in the ministry to serve as workers in the Body of Christ. But the ministry gifts are those people called to the full-time ministry, who are anointed by God to help equip and mature the saints. Unless we have the manifestation and operation of these ministry gifts in the Church, the saints will not mature, nor be equipped as they should to do the work of the ministry.

Every body has a ministry, and the word layman means someone is not called into any of the fivefold ministries, it is the job of the offices of the ministry to mature the saints (believers) so they can be more effective in their ministries. Every ministry needs each other,

no ministry is independent of one another, the Apostle needs pastors, teachers need pastors also, every ministry gift will need each other for the work to grow and progress maximally.

Notice something else about the ministry gifts. In Ephesians 4:11, it says that Jesus *gave* these ministry gifts unto men. In First Corinthians 12:28, it says that God *set* the ministry gifts into the Church. *God* gave ministry gifts to man, and *God* set them in the Church — not man. There is a vast difference.

You do not enter any phase of the ministry just because you want to, because someone told you to, or because someone prophesied to you. No man calls you to the ministry; it is a *divine* call. God alone *sets* men and women into ministry gift offices.

Those whom God calls *to* the ministry, He equips *for* the ministry. God anoints those called to the ministry and gives them the *spiritual ability* to stand in whatever office He calls them to.

As important as education and ambition are to success, we need more than education or ambition if we are going to be successful in the ministry. We need a ministry equipped with supernatural gifts — supernatural *equipment*.

The ministry consists not in *name*, but in the *power* that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, bestows upon a person to stand in a ministry office. Kenneth Hagin once said “he gets amused at folks who go around calling themselves by certain titles. Putting a

label on something doesn't make it so. You can put a label on an empty can, but that doesn't put anything in the can!"

The major problem of the body of Christ till tomorrow is still extreme and excesses.

CHAPTER 6

COMMON ERRORS I HAVE OBSERVED IN MINISTRY OFFICES

➤ Exalting one office above the other

We must have the understanding deep within us that God doesn't bless offices or reward offices, he rewards faithfulness. It will be wrong to exalt any office above another, they all have their separate functions. It is good to honor the offices because the bible says we should but we should have the mentality that one office is better than another office. Some people called into the prophetic or apostolic offices are most times despise the other offices and that is extreme. God doesn't see it that way if you are faithful as a teacher, he will reward much more than an unfaithful Apostle, after all Judas was an apostle and he still went to hell(by committing suicide) .

One of the things the lord is doing as prophesied by Kenneth Hagin in this end time is teaching believers how to flow with the spirit, everybody must hear from God for himself, nobody needs a human access to determine the will of God for his life. It is a privilege to lead and guide people but most times people abuse it and get into error.

The office of a teacher is not more important than the office of an evangelist, or a pastor. I have critically observed that disunity begins when people exalt the offices they are called into than any other offices and inculcate same habit in their followers, they literally despise people in other offices and those who have other messages,

for example if God calls you to preach on faith, don't believe someone preaching on grace is preaching heresy. People have the attitude that if you don't listen to my message, you are going to hell, you are off track or something. Infact God can call two people to teach the same thing with different approaches, don't say if you don't use my pattern what you are doing is false, I believe the result will speak for itself if God is involved. Some people are just too proud to admit the work of God and finger of God in people, they have not learnt how to celebrate the glory of God in people, it will reduce the grace of God in your life, sometimes I begin to wonder is it not the same kingdom? Why are some people so critical of other people because they don't believe in what they preach, the body of Christ won't unite that way. We have to look above our belief, doctrines and pattern given to us by God and appreciate grace on people and even covet the grace you need.

➤ PULPIT ATTACK

I have observed among some denominational ministers and especially non denominational ministers. See, nobody grows any ministry by destroying the image and integrity of another minister. One thing we must understand is that every kingdom divided against itself cannot stand (Matt. 12:26). Not everybody can preach your doctrine because not everybody is spiritually mature, God starts with ministers according to their level of maturity, it is

absolutely wrong to speak against any church of the living God, of course there can be some fake ministers- pastors, apostles, prophets, they are all over the world. That is not new, there were also fake apostles during the time of Paul (2Cor. 11:13) and by their fruits you shall know them. That is not what I am talking about, if you teach people the truth they will recognize them (fake ministers) and avoid them, I am talking about true churches of Christ, every church of the living God should be appreciated and not condemned because we don't agree on doctrines, and for some I have observed it is plain envy.

Phil. 1:15 (N.I.V)

It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of good will.

Some denominational ministers publicly insult some ministries on the altar, just out of envy and that is not the way to go up. It is natural wisdom to understand that *"you can't be ahead of someone you envy and criticize"*.

Criticism is a limiting force of the devil, and it is now very rampant among young generational preachers, who preach on unity of the body of Christ. You can't unify the body by tearing down some parts, criticism is a spirit of division. It is a sure sign that you are not grown and mature in spiritual things (Eph. 4:29, 1 pet. 2:1).

Some ministers can be wrong and sincerely wrong but the bible tells

us that are spiritual to correct with a spirit of meekness, so that you yourself won't be tempted (Gal. 6:1) and that is what is happening now, they are guilty of the same message they are preaching.

Have you forgotten that the bible says every joint supplieth and the whole body builds itself together in love (Eph. 4:16), the body can only be built in love and every joint has to supply, both denominational and non denominational and the others, so if you disjoint the denominational and say everybody should be nondenominational, how will the body build up?

I have been in several meetings where this non denominational ministers will just begin to criticize to the point it becomes annoying, and I wonder don't they have any message to preach. I was in a conference sometimes ago and the minister started speaking against the churches with universities and said all manner, even brought out some scriptures to support his point and all of those things. The problem is not even what they said but the message they passed across because amidst the congregation are young and mostly ignorant people and the seed of criticism has been planted in them, he said all of those things and proffered no solution, it just complicates the issue.

One young minister sent a message on a whatsapp group, and he listed the names of so many universities owned by churches of God in Nigeria and the prices of their institution, in addition he said the

ministers are living fat on the tithes and offerings of the members while the members are suffering. You see, if that was from an unbeliever, it would have been better, but a believer it is disappointing because if the spirit of criticism gets hold of you, its ultimate plan is to completely destroy you. I responded and said, sir, there is enough to preach in the word of God than singling ministers of God and insulting them.

Point 1 – The universities are expensive and missionary schools that came are free.

My Response: His point will be justified to me, if he builds free university and employs the staffs and pay them standard salaries.

Point 2 – Ministers are living fat on the tithes and offerings of members while the members are suffering.

My Response: The wealth of any church determines the wealth of the Pastor who is living on welfare of his members, the ministers cannot be living fat if the members are not living fatter. For example, you cannot give a pastor your car, if you have only one. You need to have at least minimum two or three. The blessing of God on any life is according to his faithfulness, so if the people are ministering to him it is only because he has been faithful in ministering the word to them and God cannot be mocked.

My own take on this is simple, be faithful in whatever God calls you

to do and stop envying others, the bible says everybody should mind his own business and be quiet(1 Thess.4:11). If you are faithful, he will bless you and you will lend to nations.

➤ ERROR OF DOCTRINE

Doctrine error has being a major issue in the body of Christ , it has caused many separation of churches to form their own denominations, while others non denomination. The major challenge of this has been the level of spiritual growth of some people called into ministry. If we study carefully the revivals that has come to the nation Nigeria in the past, we would see that God is taking the church on a journey to a destination, lack of understanding of this has brought many problems to the body especially in doctrines. A person's faith and his doctrines are two different things, a person can have a strong faith and a weak doctrine. Most of the revivals that came in the past are with men who had very strong faith but many of them didn't have a biblical sound doctrine, God started with them at their level and they were the ground breakers, they were at such a time of revival of healing and miracles, but the operation of the lord has changed now, because we are in a teaching revival, so many young believers who are catching the light of the truth instead of going to sit down and understand how these people succeeded are rather insulting them and saying all manner.

A standard bible doctrine should have at least two or three witnesses from the word of God, either from the old testament or new or both(2nd Cor. 13:1) .

Let's look at some common doctrines in light of scriptures

➤ Doctrine of covering of Head (1 Cor. 11: 2-16)

This has been a constant argument in the church for ages now and sometimes it is best we don't argue with people who hold strong to these beliefs, we just show them the word and keep quiet because arguing brings strife and increases ungodliness(2nd tim. 2:16)

Important things to note in that scripture

- Paul was talking about authority, order and leadership
- A woman being submissive to her husband, as the man is submissive to Christ.
- Paul constantly referred to a woman's head to be covered and not her hair (1 Cor . 11:4)
- The hair is given to the woman as a covering (1 cor. 11:15)
- The covering of the head is a sign of honor to her husband who is her head.
- The custom of their day is against a woman's head being open (a woman's hair shaved) and even till this day, it is glorious to see a woman with long hair and that is her God given covering.

➤ The point is that it is a totally wrong concept to insist a woman covers her hair in the church for God to move, that is basic ignorance, you can cover your hair if you want to but it is not a sin to have your hair open.

➤ Lastly, covering of head cannot stand as a doctrine in the church of Jesus Christ because it lacks sufficient witnesses.

➤ Doctrine of Wearing Trouser is a sin

This is another extreme teaching in the body of Christ, because their point is not validated in scriptures with adequate witnesses.

Deut. 22:5 (N.I.V)

A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear a woman's clothing, for the lord your God detest anyone who does this.

Important things to note in that scripture

➤ The scripture is self explanatory, why should a woman put on a man's cloth?

➤ There are other laws given to the isrealites, why was this scripture selectively picked and others laid aside

➤ That same scripture in verse 8 says you must not plant two kind of seed in your vine yard, and verse 11 says do not wear clothes of wool and linen together. Why are those scriptures not used to form doctrines because people are more guilty of that today and it is written in James 2:10 that *"he that keeps the*

whole law and offends in one is guilty of all"

➤ So the condition to keep the law is to keep the whole law and not offend in one, so if I should follow this doctrine then as a woman, if I wear only women's clothing and I wear women's clothing that has a combination of wool and linen then I am also guilty.

➤ You see that is why Christ died to redeem the Jews from the law, because it is impossible not to stumble at any point, the weight is more than you can bear. There is no point going back to live by the law, and establishing a doctrine on it.

➤ There are no substantial witnesses to make this a doctrine, so it is not a debate about whether men's wear is trouser or not. A Woman should dress as a woman and a man should dress as a man.

➤ Man is not a Spirit being.

The reason the growth of most believers have been inconsistent is largely because of diversities of doctrines. I will strongly advise believers who desire spiritual growth, don't just follow what people say because they are anointed develop an attitude of checking up all the say in light of scriptures, and I trust the Holy Spirit will guide you into the truth if you have a sincere heart about it. I don't mean checking up scriptures to see their errors, but checking it up for further explanation from the Holy Spirit. I

said this because I had a startling experience in one conference I was privileged to attend, a respected non denominational teacher who was vast in the word said that Man is not a Spirit being in the sense that man is a spirit that has a soul and lives in a body and growing practically under the teachings of Kenneth Hagin, I saw that man is a spirit that has a soul and lives in a body, now who is right about this?

He said believers hide under the fact that man is a spirit to commit sin, claiming that it is their body that sinned and not their spirit. So he opened the scriptures to explain that man is spirit, soul and body using the scripture

“But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding” (Job 32:8)

That teaching is from a sincere heart but it is extreme, because people hide under a teaching to do what they like doesn't make the teaching wrong.

Let us examine the scripture he used.

“There is a spirit in man” means that the spirit is a component that makes up a man, the other components are the soul and the body. The real man which is called the inner man is the spirit, It is also called the inward man.

Gen. 1: 26

And God said, let us make man in our own image, after our

likeness... The question is in what image is God?.God is a spirit
(Jn. 4:24)

After God had created him as a spirit being, he then formed him from the dust (body) and breath into him and he became a living soul (Gen. 2:7). Adam was already created before God gave him a body made from the material of the earth that he was to live in (because it is illegal to operate on the earth without a body). God gave Adam a body, he was not a body. God encased Adam into a physical body, so it was Adam inside a body and not Adam as a body.

When Adam died after he sinned, what died in Adam was his spirit(the real man).When you give your life to Christ what comes alive in you is your spirit (the inner man). That is the real you, your inward man.

Eph 4:24

And ye put on the new man(the real you) which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

As a believer it is your inner man that carries the true nature of God in righteousness and holiness, your soul is gradually transformed by the word of God(James 1:21b) and your body is submitted to God.

Rom. 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye

present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God...

The question is who is presenting the body? If you are a body who will do the presenting. It is the inner man (the real you) who will present your body as a living sacrifice.

I Cor. 9:27

But I keep my body, and bring it into subjection :lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Who is the I that Paul is referring to here? Look at that statement “ I keep my body” the I is the real me, my spirit. So it will be extreme for me to say when I fornicate it is my body and not my spirit, the three was involved. The spirit should keep the body under control, and that can be best done if the soul is adequately renewed. The spirit, soul and body needs to be in unity for there to be spiritual growth and maturity, and that means the spirit must always be in charge. God is expecting the blamelessness of your spirit, soul and body.

To be balanced on the truth, man is a whole, a compact being, spirit ,soul and body ,but the real man is the spirit, and that is what connects you to the spirit realm.

1 Thess. 4:23

... and I pray God that your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our lord and savior Jesus.

Lord Jesus is coming for the whole, spirit, soul and body because he

paid for the whole and we are to keep it blameless and holy for Jesus. This scripture does not infer that man is spirit, man is soul and man is body. It means that Jesus expects us to be blameless in the three compartments of being and that connote a spiritually grown and matured believer, a believer who is blameless in his spirit, his soul is uncontaminated by the corruption of the world, and his body is expressing the glory of God.

So in conclusion, man is a spirit that has a soul and lives in a body, the body is his earthly tabernacle (2nd Cor. 5:1). When he dies, the body decays but his spirit remains, if he was a spirit, soul and body, he would have to go to heaven or hell with his body. If he gets to heaven, he is given a new body that means that former body was not him, it was only his earthly dwelling.

Heb. 10:5

Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he(Jesus) saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared for me.

So Jesus was not a body, a body was prepared for him(his spirit- the real man), because it is illegal for a spirit to dwell on earth without a body. So you are a spirit, that has a soul, and your body was prepared for you to be a legal citizen on earth and when you live, you drop it and take up a new body, but there is no time throughout eternity you will drop your spirit, because it is eternal and the real you. Spiritual things are best explained by the word of God first then

we can use an example people in our contemporary times, to bring it home, the reason is because people can have any experience in the spirit, but as long as it does not line up with the word of God it is null and void.

Kenneth Hagin explained his out of body experience and this perfectly explains man as a spirit having a soul and living in a body.

These were his words from the book *"I believe in visions"*

Went to Hell

"I gave my heart to the Lord and was born again then very first night I became bedfast. That was Saturday, April 22, 1933 at 7:40 p.m. in the south bedroom of 405 North College Street in McKinney, Texas.

Earlier that evening, my heart had stopped beating and the spiritual man who lives in my body had departed. When death seized my body, my grandmother, my younger brother, and my mother were sitting in the room.

*I had time only to tell them "goodbye." Then the inner man rushed out of my body and left my body lying dead, with eyes set and flesh cold.**

I went down, down, down until the lights of the earth faded away. I don't mean I fainted — I don't mean I was unconscious — I have proof that I was actually dead. My eyes were set, my heart had stopped beating, and my pulse had ceased.

The Scriptures tell us about the lost being cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 25:30). The

farther down I went, the blacker it became, until it was all blackness — I could not have seen my hand if it had been one inch in front of my eyes.

And the farther down I went, the hotter and more stifling it became. Finally, far below me, I could see lights flickering on the walls of the caverns of the damned. The lights were caused by the fires of hell. The giant, white-crested orb of flame pulled me, drawing me as a magnet draws metal to itself. I did not want to go, but just as metal jumps to the magnet, my spirit was drawn to that place. I could not take my eyes off of it. The heat beat me in the face. Many years have gone by, yet I can see it just as clearly today as I saw it then. It is as fresh in my memory as if it just happened.

I came to the entrance of hell. People ask, "What does the entrance of hell look like?" I cannot describe it, because if I tried, I would have to have something with which to compare it. (Similarly, if a person had never seen a tree in his life, it would be impossible to tell him what a tree looks like.)

Coming to the entrance, I paused momentarily, because I did not want to go in. I sensed that one more foot, one more step, one more yard, and I would be gone forever and could not come out of that horrible place! Upon reaching the bottom of the pit, I became conscious of some kind of spirit being by my side. I had not looked at him, because I could not take my gaze off of the fires of hell. But when I paused, the

creature laid his hand on my arm to escort me in.

At that same moment, a voice spoke from far above the blackness, above the earth, and above the heavens. I don't know if it was the voice of God, Jesus, an angel, or who. I did not see him, and I do not know what he said, because he did not speak in English; he spoke in some other tongue.

When he spoke, his words reverberated throughout the region of the damned, shaking it like a leaf in the wind, and causing the creature to take his hand off my arm. I did not turn around, but an unseen power, like a suction, pulled me up, away from the fire, away from the heat, and back into the shadows of the absorbing darkness. I began to ascend until I came to the top of the pit and saw the lights of the earth. I saw my grandparents' home, went through the wall back into my bedroom, and it was just as real to me as it was any time I had entered through the door (my spirit needed no door).

I slipped back into my body as easily as a man slips into his trousers in the morning. It was the same way in which I had gone out — through my mouth. I began to talk to my grandmother. She said, "Son, I thought you were dead." My great-grandfather had been a medical doctor, and Granny had worked with him. She later told me, "I dressed many people for burial and laid them out in days gone by.

I have had much experience with death, but I learned more about death in dealing with you and your experiences than I ever knew

before. You were dead. You had no pulse or heartbeat, and your eyes were set.

I felt myself slipping. I said, "Granny, I'm going again. You were a second mother to me when Momma's health failed. I appreciate you. Now I'm going, and I won't be back this time." I knew I was dying, unprepared to meet God. I kissed her on the cheek and said goodbye.

My heart stopped beating for the second time. It's almost as real to me today, nearly half a century later, as it was that day. I felt the blood cease to circulate. The tips of my toes went numb — then my feet, ankles, knees, hips, stomach, and heart. I leaped out of my body and began to descend: down, down, down. Oh, I know it was just a few seconds, but it seemed like an eternity.

I began to descend again into the darkness until the lights of earth had faded. Down below, the same experience occurred. The voice spoke from heaven and again my spirit came up out of that place — back into my room and back into my body. The only difference this time was that I came up at the foot of the bed. I began to talk to Granny again. I said, "I will not be back this time, Granny." I asked, "Where is Grandpa? I want to tell Grandpa goodbye."

She said, "Son, you know your Granddad went down to the east part of town to collect rent off of some of his rent houses."

Then I left a word for my sister and two brothers, and my heart stopped for the third time. I could feel the circulation

as it cut off again — and I leaped out of my body and began to descend. Until this time, I had thought, This is not happening to me. This is just a hallucination. It can 't be real! But now I thought, This is the third time. I won 't come back this time! Darkness encompassed me 'round about, darker than any night man has ever seen.

I wish I had adequate words to describe the horrors of hell. People go through this life so complacently, so unconcerned, as if they will not have to face hell. But God's Word and my own personal experience tell me differently. I know what it is to be unconscious — it is black when you are unconscious — but there is no blackness to compare with outer darkness.

As I began to descend in the darkness this third time, my spirit cried out, "God, I belong to the church! I've been baptized in water!" I waited for Him to answer, but no answer came — only the echo of my own voice as it came back to mock me. It will take more than church membership — it will take more than being baptized in water — to miss hell and make heaven. Jesus said, "...Ye must be born again" (John 3:7).

Certainly I believe in being baptized in water — but only after a person is born again. Certainly I believe in joining the church — but only after a person is born again. If you merely join the church and are baptized in water without being born again, you will go to hell!

The second time I cried a little louder, "God! I belong to the church!

I've been baptized in water!" Again I waited for an answer, but there was no answer, only the echo of my own voice through the darkness.

It would frighten a congregation out of their wits if I ever imitated the way I screamed the third time, although, if I could scare them out of hell and into heaven, I'd do it! I literally screamed, "GOD! GOD! I BELONG TO THE CHURCH! I'VE BEEN BAPTIZED IN WATER!" And all I heard was the echo of my own voice. I came again to the bottom of that pit. Again I could feel the heat as it beat me in the face. Again I approached the entrance, the gates into hell itself.

That creature took me by the arm. I intended to put up a fight if I could to keep from going in. I only managed to slow down my descent just a little, and he took me by the arm. Thank God that voice spoke. I don't know who it was — I didn't see anybody — I just heard the voice. I don't know what he said, but whatever he said, that place shook; it just trembled. And that creature took his hand off my arm.

It was just as if there was a suction to my back parts. It pulled me back, away from the entrance to hell, until I stood in the shadows. Then it pulled me up headfirst. As I was going up through the darkness, I began to pray. My spirit, the man who lives inside this physical body, is an eternal being, a spirit man. I began to pray, "O God! I come to You in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I ask You to forgive me of my sins and to cleanse me from all sin." I came up beside the bed. The difference between the three experiences was that I came up on the

porch the first time; I came up at the foot of the bed the second time; and I came up right beside the bed the third time. When I got inside my body, my physical voice picked up and continued my prayer right in the middle of the sentence. I was already praying out of my spirit”.

In this encounter that Kenneth Hagin had, you will discover that his body was his contact with the physical world, outside his body he could still talk and reason. Is this experience scriptural, yes it is! Paul also had an out of body experience

2nd Cor. 12:2

I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago,(whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)such an one caught up to the third heaven.

Paul was explaining his personal experience he had outside his body, and Paul said something very crucial to ponder on, you can't tell the difference whether you are in the body or not because there is no observable difference apart from the fact that you can no longer connect to this world. People who die don't feel dead, it is we that cry for them, because they don't see the difference.

Your spirit is **you**, and when you step out of your body, you don't stepping out, you can do everything you could before except that it will lack expression in the physical world.

Pst. Chris shared story of a wonderful out of body experience of his relative had, he was admitted in the hospital and he died for some

moments before he came back to life, his family members were crying that he had died, but when he gave his experience it was startling, ***he said he just slipped out of his body but he was still in the hospital and he was telling his sister to stop crying, that he wasn't dead, so he tried to hold his sister but his hand went through her body, he couldn't lay hold of her, he was screaming am not dead but nobody could hear him***, that is it, our contact to this physical realm is our body, so we can do without the body but the body cannot do without our spirit, that is the real us , without a body we can still talk and communicate.

God speaks to your spirit and not your body, your spirit is your access point to the spiritual realm, your soul connects the intellectual realm, and your body this physical realm.

There are many other doctrines of extremity and error, we can't discuss about all of them in details for example "*paying tithe is not compulsory in the new covenant, while others saying how can you give God 10% of your increase that you should give him all*". That is an extreme teaching and the devil has carved out plan to rub you of the benefits of it. Tithing is very important and to stay balanced on this truth , we consecrate and dedicate all that we are and have to God, any time any day, we also dedicate all our resources because he owns them and any time he makes demand for whatsoever in our hands we should turn it over to him cheerfully, but this doesn't still

take away the covenant of tithing, although you can give God all your resources if you like, but still dedicate 10% to God as tithe unto him, then you can decide to give him the rest, and it is very important to do it, because it is God's command. It is non optional because of the blessings that accrues tithing, it is far beyond financial the benefit of tithing includes

- Protection against devourers of your resources (Mal. 3:11)
- Floodgates of ideas and insight (Mal.3:10)
- And many other fringe benefits which include long life.

Someone is asking can I not give the 10% to the poor, orphans or financially disabled, No. He said bring it to my storehouse (Mal 3:10). You can give to the poor out of the remaining 90% but preserve that 10% for him and understand who collects the tithe. It is not your pastor that collects the tithe, he may collect it physically but it is Jesus our High Priest that receive it (Heb. 7:8), if you don't carry that covenant understanding you don't enjoy the benefits, if you think it is your pastor who collects and eats the tithe then, it is better you don't pay at all because there is no difference if you pay at all. No, it is not a pastor but Jesus the head of the church. You can give God 20,40,50,60 or as much as 90% for tithe but, the 10% is the obligation others are additions and they have their blessings too.

Someone else may be asking, ***where can I pay my tithe?***

Pay your tithe where you receive spiritual nourishment constantly,

any ministry that nourishes you constantly can receive your tithe. Any ministry that feeds you constantly and you are continually nourished by them is eligible to receive tithes, and I know why am saying this, don't be rigid in your spiritual walk, the lord may lead you at any point in time to pay tithes into ministries that have of spiritual benefits to you, that is specifically by the leading of the spirit but if you have a local church, you can pay tithes there. The point is just be balanced in your walk with God.

Chapter 7

INTRUDING THE OFFICES OF THE MINISTRY

This is very dangerous, one of the problem of unity in the body of Christ has been people who are called into offices of ministry called themselves in it, or were prophesied by some great minister of God or some just see a need and get into the office.

The purpose of the office is majorly three fold

- Perfecting of the saints or maturing the believers
- To do the work of ministry
- Thereby edifying the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-13)

Those called carry a special unction while doing their assignment faithfully to produce these three. So a man who calls himself is causing a major havoc on the body of Christ because the body won't edified. You can go into ministry because of passion, see, passion has its place and everybody called must have passion for the work for effectiveness and maximum productivity. It is dangerous especially for your life to work in office without the accompanying grace, some people die and most will face Judgment when if they get to heaven. Lord Jesus will ask you who sent you, and commissioned you and you can't say it is my pastor, because the race of life is individual.

Those ministers who prophesy people into offices and lay hands on them don't know the gravity of what they do, Kenneth Hagin calls it "*laying empty hands on empty heads*". You can come into ministry

because they lay hands on you, you might have needed to fill the gap for some time and they lay hands on you but always understand when time is up and get over to what God has called you to do. Please don't envy any office and don't covet an office, you can covet the gifts you see in an office but the office itself. Everybody has a call into ministry, everybody has a call in the body of Christ but you alone and not somebody else must understand your own specific call. Pst. Chris Oyakhilome says that everyone of us has two destinies – a physical destiny and a spiritual destiny and it is the absolute truth. We were all called by God to do physical things in this world to better humanity, that is why he allowed you go to school and get educated to any level, that has its own purpose and he was behind the courses you picked in school, it wasn't without his knowledge and at the same time, everyone of us has a spiritual destiny, we are called to do specific things in the body of Christ. It all depends on the grace of the calling. Some into children ministry, some others music departments- these are all under the ministry of helps (I Cor. 12:28, rom. 12; 5-8), don't despise your calling and envy other ministries. Every ministry is great in the sight of God and God doesn't reward offices but faithfulness, so if you are faithful as a toilet cleaner, or as a Sunday school teacher you will be more rewarded than an unfaithful pastor. The call into the offices of the ministry is specific and personal, it is real and tangible. If you are saying God is calling

me but am not really sure, then I don't think he is calling you, the calling of God is unmistakable into any office. Don't let unnecessary title fool you, ***“that people call you pastor doesn't make you one”*** hear from God yourself because the voice of people most times is not always the voice of God and moreover if you are a decent person who dresses in corporate wears especially with tie and suit, people start calling you pastor, don't be fooled.

WAIT ON GOD

Most people were deceived into the offices of the ministry by popular titles people call them, although if you are manifesting in an office people will recognize it, but you need to wait on God to know what God is saying.

Campus Fellowships are waxing stronger to the glory of God, God is using various youths in different capacities for his work, when I say campus fellowships, I particularly mean university fellowships and sincerely I appreciate God for what he is doing through young believers, BUT, please be very careful of titles, that you are ordained an evangelist coordinator doesn't mean you have been called into the office of the evangelist, or that you are ordained a bible study teacher does not mean you have been called into the office of a teacher and I am particular about this, ***that you are ordained as a fellowship president doesn't mean you are called into the office of a pastor***, I knew some fellowships that call their presidents pastors,

some call them papa. Don't let people **papa** you into hell o, hear from God yourself after leaving the position.

2nd Tim. 4:4

... do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of your ministry.

It is possible to do the work of a ministry but that doesn't call you into the ministry. Understand this, and I am particular about coordinators of campus fellowships, God is using you at the time of your schooling to fill a void, and he determines if you continue from there. It is possible to have a desire to fill a gap in the work of God and from there God can call you fully into the office of the ministry.

You can be ordained as the president of a fellowship and you are faithful with the work, and from there you may have begun your calling but note that you are still doing the work of the ministry until you hear the call or sense it so strongly. After all, nobody just begins his call (call into the office), he starts the work of the ministry and from there with faithfulness he is separated unto his call. A calling into the office of ministry is a divine separation unto the work of God and it is mostly full time, so **wait on God** and hear him before taking any major step.

SEMINARY SCHOOL

It is common these days to see people go to seminary school and come out as pastors. Know that the calling of God is before the foundation of the world, you may just discover it but it was before the

world was made, so it is not a school that called you. I am not against seminary school, it is great! And if you sense a leading into a seminary school, why not? But, know you have been called before you went there, coming out of the school is not an ordination into the pastoral office or any other office, you must hear from God and don't intrude another man's office. There have been many seminary graduates that have no calling into any office assume offices because they feel they have to seminary. If you are called, with time it will be visible, you can't manifest a grace you don't carry no matter how long you fast and pray or any seminary school you go.

This is another common error, God doesn't speak all at once, walking with God can be very rough and disheartening if you are not patient because God is a patient God, you can't rush him nor force him, it is line upon line and precepts upon precepts, so even ***when you sense the call of God be patient to know what kind of call it is, sit and know the nature of the call before you start jumping around, for it is not by power nor by might but by the spirit. It is better to wait to receive instruction and direction than to run and be a nuisance to the body of Christ.***

Some people sense the call of God and the next thing is that they open a church, God may not be calling you as a pastor.

There are some basic things we need to understand about ministry before we start jumping about.

- The specific office or offices of the call
- The nature of the call
- The specific thing he has called you to do
- The placement of the call(location, starting a ministry, or be under somebody's ministry)
- Then the mentor, discipler, or instructor he has appointed over you.

In ministry there is no assumption whatsoever, whatever is not clear ask and ask and ask until you receive answer.

Some people are called but their calling is fulfilled under another ministry, some are called to pioneer new works, the Holy Ghost determines all of this and that means the person called must have a hearing hears to hear what the spirit is saying.

Striking a balance, some people can be appointed as deacons, it is scriptural (I Tim. 3:1-13) and also some can be appointed as overseers over a fellowship like cell fellowship, and it can be in district or zonal level, that is still within the confines of scripture because they are helpers of the called(the sent man over ministry) like the pastor of the local church and it is not a full time job.

Stay within the confines of scriptures and you won't get into error, begin with the revelation the Holy Spirit shows you and be faithful with it, the spirit and the word agrees. Learn to listen to the Holy Spirit and learn to put the word first before the spirit and demand

that the Holy Spirit shows you what he is saying from the word and you will be in safe hands.

The summary of all of this is the body of Christ has suffered so much from extremity of all kinds, ***no matter how small don't promote excesses or extremity, this should be you own personal contribution to the unity of the body of Christ.***

Eph. 4:13

*Till we all come to the **unity of the faith**, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man (mature man), unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

This is God's mandate for every member of the body of Christ, so let us start working at it, he said unity of the faith and not unity of doctrine so even though we don't have the same doctrine as long as your doctrine is from the word, let us grow above doctrines and grow into maturity (Heb. 6:1), let us unite in **the faith**, let us unite in the knowledge of the son and grow unto the stature of the fullness of christ.

How can we achieve this?

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up in him in all things, which is the head even Christ: From the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

PRAYER FOR THE BODY OF CHRIST

“Father, hear our cry, we are your children, your dearly beloved sons and daughters. Lord, we repent for not walking in love to one another in spite of our differences, lord we ask that you forgive us in Jesus name.

Lord, we make a commitment today, to lift you up and not man, recognize your grace upon each and every one member of the body, and we partner together not minding who is taking the glory because the glory belongs to you.

Lord, as for those who have not yet seen the light of unity of the body of Christ, shine the light in their path and disturb them continually until they begin to walk in the light of unity.

We thank you oh gracious father because you have heard us, and when we meet in heaven, we pray to see your face smile at us for job well-done in the name of your precious son Jesus.”

Hallelujah!

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It is no more News that the greatest battle confronting the church today is "Disunity", but where did we get it all wrong? How can we Right these Wrongs and and get into God's perfect plan for his Church? This book explains in details the true biblical stand point of unity, addressing the key issue in a sublime manner and it is set to spark a spiritual revolution that will usher in the second coming of the Our Lord Jesus

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