

THE CHURCH OF THE CITY

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There are a few additions by E. Ken Bassett, "ekb", in [---], hopefully to make the notes clearer. The emphasis is added by ekb.

God is not into filling up buildings but is into **filling up cities with His presence**. *Act 5:28*. Paul's epistles are written to **the church of a particular city** not to individual congregations within a city. *1Cor 1:2*. **The churches of the New Testament were city wide churches** and there was only one church in a city.

It is not about me and my church but it is about **us and our city**. *2Pet 3:9*, **God is patient** towards us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Ps 133:1, How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to **dwelt together in unity** and harmony. The Body has a unity of many different parts. You can only have unity when there is diversity. Like a marriage, the unity of the Body is based on commitment. We choose unity because unity has a purpose. Unity is like the precious oil, *Ps 133:2*, lots of it. **The oil is the anointing that comes when the Body dwells together in unity, so that we can go out into the market place and give out the Good News of the Gospel to the unsaved.** [Added by ekb: *Ac 1:8, Ac 2:1-4, Ac 8:4, Phil 2:2*]. The anointing and the gifts are for the market place and to take the Gospel to the unsaved. *Ps 133:2*, the anointing was upon Aaron the High Priest. He took the needs of the people to God. **Unity brings the anointing, which brings authority to take the needs of the people to God in prayer and to take the Word of God to the people.** **When there is unity between the leaders and churches of the city, it brings the anointing and authority of God as a mantle over the city. When the leaders meet and pray, God gives them the strategy of how to pray and how to take the city for God.**

Prayer is the basis of evangelism. When the united leaders pray to God for lost people and the needs of the city they **create a climate for evangelism**. The unity of the leaders and the church brings the anointing and the authority to take the people needs to God. God will hear and answer and give the strategies of how to take the gospel to the people. The leaders can mobilise their people to pray for their neighbours, visit them, ask them what their needs are, and pray for those needs to be met. As God meets those needs, the door is opened to introduce those people to the Lord.

In the book of Acts, the church was in unity, [Added by ekb: *Acts 1:14, 2:1, 2:46, 4:24, 4:32, 5:12*], under a strong anointing, carried a powerful authority **and went out among the people** with the Good News of the Gospel. Today we tend to seek to draw people into a building to hear the preacher instead of thrusting the saints out among the multitudes. [Added by ekb: *Acts 8:4, 11:19,20,21.*]

Reaching the city for God, usually starts with the pastors of the churches gathering together to pray.

The first phase of this is often **conviction of the Holy Spirit and repentance of sin**, e.g. the Holy Spirit may convict the pastors of indifference towards one another and the needs of the city. As they repent, they may take the Lord's Table, wash one another's feet or bless those among them who are

financially in need. In one city in South America, the pastors visited the mayor and found that he was more concerned for the needs of the city than they were. They repented to the mayor and asked him what he would like them to pray for. As they ministered to the mayor and the city in humility and prayer, doors of opportunity opened for the Gospel.

In *John 13*, Jesus told His disciples that He was about to leave them and where He was going, they could not follow. He would no longer be with them, and show Himself to the people with His teaching and miracles. However He said, **“If you love one another as I have loved you, then everyone will know that you belong to Me and are My followers.”** *Jn 13:33-35*.

In His last prayer, *Jn 17:21-23*, Jesus said that through the unity of His disciples, the world would believe and know that the Father sent the Son.

Eph 4:3 urges us to be intentional about bridging the gaps and broken relationships in the Body of Christ. [Added by ekb: This is especially true for leaders. The church will follow the leaders.]

Satan has blinded the minds of those that do not believe, *2Cor 4:3,4*. The unified praying Body of Christ **causes a breaking up of the clouds of blindness** over the people so that they can hear and receive the Gospel. [Added by ekb:*Is 25:6-9*.] The praying unified church has the power to change the spiritual climate over the city.

The Bible teaches that there is **one church in the city** made up of many congregations. [Added by ekb: *1Cor 1:2, 2Cor 1:1, 1Thes 1:1, 2Thes 1:1, Rev 2:1,8, 12, 18, 3:1,7, 14, Rom 16:1, Col 4:16, Acts 8:1, 11:22, 11:26, 13:1, 15:4, 18:22, 20:17*]. There is only one church and Jesus is the Pastor, *Mat 16:18*. Jesus said, **“I will build My Church”**.

The first call of the pastor is to his city, or to the whole Body of Christ, then to his congregation. What is the gift that God has given to the pastor for the city? And every believer has a part of the ministry of the whole Body. [Added by ekb:*1Cor 12:18, 27*.]

The truth of prayer evangelism is clearly seen in *1Tim 2:1-8*. Pray for all people, pray for the Government, that we will live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all people to be saved.

Pray for your street, the people in the 5 houses to the right, 5 to the left, and 11 across the street. [Added by ekb: Ask the Lord for boldness, words, opportunities, compassion, prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit. He will give it to you. Be prepared with tracts, words and look for opportunities.]

In *Lk 10* Jesus sends out 70 unnamed ordinary people to preach the Word. He sent them out two by two and said to them, “The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the Harvest that He would send forth labourers into His Harvest.” He did not say, **“Send out more labourers.”** **The labourers for the harvest are at hand but they are busy doing other things. They need to be thrust out.**

The labourers are sent out as lambs among wolves, *Lk 10:3*, gentle, unprotected, with no purse, no bag, and told not to greet anybody on the way, *v4*. They are told to bless the house and the people and their blessing disarms the wolf in whose house they are staying, *v5-7*. The lamb is to stay in the wolf’s house eating, talking and blessing. **They are to heal the sick, meet felt needs and tell them that the Kingdom of God is come to them and share the Gospel, *v8,9*.** As the servants of Christ, we have the order around the wrong way. We start by preaching the Gospel, whereas Jesus says to go as lambs, bless and meet felt needs **before you preach**.

[Added by ekb: It is possible to see a video of David Thompson’s ministry in Whangarei.]