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EXPLAINING



Building a New Testament Church

DAVID PAWSON

BIBLE TEACHER

www.davidpawson.org

This booklet is based on a talk. Originating as it does from the spoken word, its style will be found by many readers to be somewhat different from my usual written style. It is hoped that this will not detract from the substance of the biblical teaching found here.

As always, I ask the reader to compare everything I say or write with what is written in the Bible and, if at any point a conflict is found, always to rely upon the clear teaching of scripture.

David Pawson

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EXPLAINING Building a New Testament Church

DAVID PAWSON

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EXPLAINING
Building a New Testament Church

UNIVERSAL AND LOCAL

Whether we build according to the New Testament pattern or not, we pastors are called to build churches. We begin with two short passages in which Jesus used the word "church". It was his idea — he came to build a church. The first is on the memorable occasion when he asked the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" which is the most important question of all.

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." He was the first person ever to say that.

Jesus replied, "Blessed are you Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome. I will give you the keys of the kingdom. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

That is in Matthew 16. Then in Matthew 18:15 we find this:

"If your brother sins against you go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them tell it to the church. If he refuses to listen even to the

church treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector."

You notice that Jesus uses the word "church" twice but in very different ways. The first time, he says, "I will build my church", which he has been doing ever since. The second time, he tells us to report something to the church. They cannot be the same thing. It is clear that the first time he used the word "church" he was referring to the universal church to which every Christian belongs by virtue of belonging to Christ. Because you belong to Christ you belong to his Body; you are part of it. You are already in the church. But then he says: if you have a dispute with your brother, *tell* the church. Well, if you tell the whole church you would spend the rest of your life flying from one place to another, telling the church. It is very obvious that he uses the word "church" now in a local sense.

So, there is in Jesus' mind both the universal church and a local church. He expects all his followers to belong to both, but I am meeting people all over the world now who want to belong to *the* church but not to *a* church. That is quite dangerous for them, and certainly not Jesus' will. They say, "Yes, I belong to the Body of Christ, I belong to Christ, I belong to his church." But they decline to join a local church. Therefore, they can't apply to themselves the second passage of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 18. They don't belong to a church that they can talk to, a local church, which can deal with the problem for them if they cannot deal with it themselves.

HOME FOR THE FAMILY

So that is the first most basic thing: all Christians belong to the church but too many don't belong to a local church. But Christ came to build both, and the church is made up of local churches and we need to belong. Now of course everybody knows that the church is not a building, but we have so fallen into a habit that we point to a building and say, "That's the church I go to." The church is *people*. Whether it meets in a building or in the open air, that is the church, a local church.

One day in Guildford, England, where our church was, a whole busload of young children arrived one Wednesday morning with their teacher. The teacher said, "The children are doing an exercise on local churches. Please can we come in and see your church?"

"Well, I'm sorry, but they're not here," I said.

The teacher looked rather puzzled and said, "But isn't this the church?"

I replied, "No, most of the church is up in London today so you won't be able to see them."

The teacher looked quite upset. "Well, can I bring the children in?"

They came in, they all sat down, and I was asked, "Would you answer their questions?"

Each child had a pen in hand and a piece of paper, poised for the answer. They began to ask things like, "What does that thing on the wall mean?"

"Well, that's a ventilator and it lets fresh air in."

"Oh," they said. "What does that thing in front of you mean?"

"That's a little light to see my notes when I'm preaching. I'll switch it on and off for you."

They kept saying, "What does this mean?" "What does that mean?" I realised that they had been looking at other

churches where everything was symbolic and everything had a meaning, where even at the end of the pews that people sat on there were three overlapping circles carved into the wooden end of the pew and they had been told, "That means the Holy Trinity." So, they had been told the meaning of everything in the other churches and I just didn't have a meaning. Finally, since they had written nothing down, I took pity on them. I went forward, lifted up sections of the floor and showed them the baptistry pool. That really got them and they were furiously writing. I said, "That's where we baptise people," and they thought that was very exciting. They hadn't seen one of those in any of the other churches.

When you fill a church with symbols it is really quite a distraction. We don't need a church with symbols. I will tell you a secret: I design church buildings in my spare time. I have designed over a dozen now, and you can see them scattered all over Britain. Not one of them looks like a church. They look like a large family home because they are not a "house of God", therefore they don't need a very high ceiling. That is what so many "houses of God" are designed like, with very tall ceilings, as if God can somehow get under them. But mine looked like family homes, with lounges, toilets and everything a family needs.

I say that the buildings I design are not to be a "house of God" but a home for God's family. Yet still people come and pray at the beginning of a service, "Lord, we've come to your house...." But it is a home for God's people — his family. The more like a large home it is, the more a family will feel at home. It means that if you now no longer need the buildings you can sell them as good community centres, then they are not tied in any way to the Christian faith. We put outside the building a notice that the church meets here every Sunday morning, and that kept it before the public eye.

Nor is the church a *denomination*. Jesus never built a

denomination. The word means a name, and we denominate a church or a group of churches by giving it a name. Denominations denominate a church and distinguish it from others. It is a name that men have given to a church, not a name that God has ever given to a church. Men think up a name to distinguish their fellowship from others. Church names are for people and not one of them is from God. They are simply denominating a church.

The church is not an *organisation*. One of the most damaging features of some churches today is that they are modelled on a business, usually copied from America, which is one gigantic business country. Therefore, the pastor is the managing director of the business and sits in the biggest office somewhere in the building and behaves as if he is the boss. But the Church is not a business. It needs to be business-like in its handling of finance and in many other ways, but a church is neither a business nor an organisation — it is an organism, a body.

Above all, the Church is not a *club*. Some churches I go to seem more like a religious club than anything else. With a club you join it, you pay your membership subscription, you attend the business meetings, you keep the rules, you vote at the business meetings. But that is not a church, it is a religious club.

The Church is not the *clergy*. It is amazing how many people think that the clergy form the church. In my country, people say, "The church ought to do something about this," and they mean the clergy, as if the professional Christians are the church — and people blame the church for doing things. They don't blame all the people who go to church, they blame the clergy. But they are not the church.

FAMILY, FLOCK, FELLOWSHIP

So, the church is not a building, not a denomination, not an organisation, not a business, not a club and not the clergy. So what is it? Well, let us think of some other things that the Bible calls the church. First of all, three words beginning with "F". It is a *family*. It is the brothers and sisters of Jesus. It ought to convey that meaning to everybody who comes. We are a family together. The next word the Bible uses is *flock*. We are a flock of sheep and we are under shepherds who are themselves under the Good Shepherd. Sheep are not the most sensible animals. They have a pattern of going their own way, and they need a shepherd to keep them together and guide them in the right way. When you study a shepherd's life in the Middle East, you find that it is totally different from a shepherd's life in England, for example. A shepherd in England chases the sheep from behind, usually with a dog. I have been a shepherd and I had a sheepdog for many years after I left farming. But shepherding in England is quite a different job. My first job as a shepherd was to take a needle and thread and sew lambs' eyelids open. This is because many lambs are born blind with a dropped eyelid and you have to take a needle and thread and sew their eyelid open until their muscles take over and the thread rots and drops out. But can you imagine my very first job — a little lamb in my arms, and needle and thread? I am amazed they allowed me to do it. But I was giving lambs sight.

In the Middle East they don't use dogs and they don't chase sheep. They walk in front of them. They give every sheep a name. The shepherd just walks in front and says, "Come on Black Legs. Come on White Wool," and they immediately respond. I remember watching two shepherds in the Middle East coming together, each with a flock following them. Then they suddenly met and the two flocks mixed up.

Now in England that would be a crisis; we would spend the next hour and a half separating them again. But they didn't, the shepherds just walked on, turned around, and just called their sheep. They just separated into two flocks again and they went on. All this is very meaningful when you read John chapter 10 for example. "My sheep know my voice" — and he calls them by name individually. A shepherd in the Middle East has to walk a long way because the grass doesn't grow everywhere, unlike in England. There are not green fields. There are little patches of green among the hills, so he has to walk the sheep a long way every day.

He walks them through a valley where there are wild beasts lurking in the shadows. Therefore, he carries two weapons. One is a crook with a curved top, by which he can grab his sheep by the neck and pull it to himself. But the other is a short, sharp cudgel. With that he beats off the wild animals, the lions — for there were lions in the Middle East. So: "The Lord is my shepherd." He has both a crook and a cudgel. Shepherds go through these dark valleys to find grass and there are wild animals lurking there. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of deep shadow...." It does not use the word "death". It simply says: when I walk through the valley of deep shadow you are with me, with those two things in your hands.

Another very interesting thing about sheep is that their nostrils and their mouth are much closer together than ours. So they cannot drink from rough water. Therefore, they are led by still water. A good shepherd knows where there is still water that they can drink without drowning, without sucking up the moisture into their nose. Then at midday, in the heat of the sun, if they went on walking they would suffer from heatstroke. I have seen the good shepherd in the Middle East tie the legs of the sheep together with a short piece of rope. He ties their four legs together and pushes them over

so that they are not tempted to run around in the heat. "He makes me lie down...." It is all there in the Psalms and it is quite wonderful.

Thinking about this gives you so many aspects of how the Good Shepherd looks after his flock and what he does for them: seeing that they get food and that they get rest; making them lie down when they need to; fighting off wild demons that want to attack, and pulling the sheep closer to himself when they are in danger. It is all very vivid.

So, the church is a *family*, a *flock* and it is a *fellowship* of the Holy Spirit. Now that word "fellowship" is much stronger than the way it is often used. I remember one pastor who always used to say at the end of a service, "Come and have some fellowship over a cup of tea." I had visions of all the people crowding around one cup of tea and I thought that was a strange thing to say. But fellowship is the word "*koinonia*". It is a very unusual word. It is used of Siamese twins — who are born joined together, sharing the same bloodstream, sharing even the same organs. One of the most difficult surgical operations is to separate them. Indeed, some cannot be separated and must spend the rest of their life together. Siamese twins are *koinonia*; they can't do without each other. We have *koinonia* in the Spirit, which means the same Holy Spirit is flowing through all of us. It would almost take a surgical operation to separate us — we are that close. It means to share the same life. That is not just friendship. We often use the word "fellowship" in place of "friendship". But it is a much stronger word and it exists only between people who have the same Holy Spirit flowing through them both. That is why Christians who have received the Holy Spirit, when they meet each other, within five minutes are talking as if they have known each other all their lives. It is a most unusual thing. I know three words in Indonesian and the language of Sarawak. These are three words that

are the same in every language: “Hallelujah”, “taxi” and “Coca Cola”. So, wherever I go in the world, if I am thirsty I shout out “Coca Cola!” If I need to go somewhere I shout “Taxi!” But if I want fellowship I shout “Hallelujah!” and whoever turns around and smiles is my brother or sister in Christ and we can have fellowship immediately. It is one of the most astonishing things that happens between those who share the same Spirit.

BODY, BRIDE, BUILDING

There are three lovely words that describe the church and they can be used in no other connection together. But there are three other words that are used beginning with “B” in the New Testament. The church is a *body* — the Body of Christ on earth. Therefore, a Christian, a lone Christian by himself or herself, is like a little finger running around the floor by itself. It is almost silly to imagine. If you lose a member, the church has been dismembered. It is not that you have lost a member of the club, you have lost a member of the Body. They have been a vital part of the Body and they have been a function within the Body, but the Body has many members.

Some people lose members of their body in real life and many still carry on amazingly. The Olympics for those in wheelchairs and for those who have lost limbs are amazing. The Olympics are followed by the Paralympics. It is remarkable what they can do and yet they are handicapped. A church, which is a body, will lose something — will be handicapped — if they lose a member. A member is not someone whose name is on the books. It is someone who is functioning towards the other people, towards the other members, and providing a function that they cannot provide for themselves. That is a unique concept of people coming

together; a club is totally different.

Then also the Church is a *bride*. When you become part of the church of Christ you are part of his Bride. You are not married yet, you are betrothed to Christ in this life and one day the marriage will take place. The Bible ends like every good romance, "And they got married and lived happily ever after." That is the end of the Bible. It ends with a marriage. My relationship to Christ at the moment is that I am betrothed — engaged to him. I am looking forward to the consummation of that relationship, to the marriage itself. Therefore, a bride-to-be will spend her time getting ready for the wedding. We are told in the Bible what that means. It means to be developing good deeds, which are the equivalent of the bridal dress, and most brides in this country want to be dressed in white. That was a symbol of virginity — that she kept herself pure for her bridegroom.

The final "B" that is used of the church in the New Testament is of a *building* — not the kind of building we call a church, but a building of living stones of which Christ is the chief cornerstone — a building that is a temple in which God can live. It is a building not of bricks or stone, but a building of people, which together allow God to live on the earth because God dwells in his holy temple, and the church is a temple for God to live in.

Those are all unique descriptions of a church in the New Testament, making it quite different from every other organisation on earth.

CALLED OUT TO COME TOGETHER

A comment about the words used of the church: the basic word is *ekklesia*, from which we get the word *ecclesiology* or *ecclesiastical*, meaning "churchy". That word *ekklesia* means, literally, "out-called". We are the out-called assembly of God. That word was used in ancient Greece of the political assembly, when representatives of the people came together in a democratic form of government. That is not the church — we are not a democracy. But we have been called out of the world to come together. The Greek word for "come together" is *sunagoge* — *sun* "together" and *goge* "come". A synagogue is a "come together" of God's people. So, we are called out to come together.

That word "synagogue" is very important because the churches of the New Testament were modelled on the Jewish synagogue before them. The synagogue developed in Babylon when they were separated from the temple. They had no temple to come together in so they developed local synagogues. The whole New Testament church pattern is modelled on the synagogue, because, for us, the real temple is in heaven. The temple in Jerusalem was a copy; the tabernacle was a copy before that. Those who designed them were shown glimpses of the real temple, the real tabernacle — in heaven.

Both temple and tabernacle were designed on the same basic layout, with the Holy of Holies in the middle, and outer courts for people to come and worship. Both the tabernacle, which was virtually a moveable tent, and the temple, which was a very solid stone building, were modelled on the same plan. But we don't need a temple; we don't need a priesthood. We don't need sacrifices and altars, because all that has been done, and transplanted back to the heavenly reality. We have a High Priest up there who has made every sacrifice needed

for us. That is why we don't turn up at church with a lamb, a dove or something to have its throat cut, to worship the Lord. In the Old Testament, when you worshipped the Lord it was a bloodbath, an abattoir; it was a sacrifice with blood flowing everywhere. It was an amazing sight. But we don't have any of that. We don't need all the things that the law of Moses told us to have because they have all been fulfilled in Christ. He has entered into the real temple on our behalf, presenting his own sacrifice to God the Father for our sins. Therefore, we only need synagogues. We make a big mistake when we try to build temples on earth, and a number of churches have done that — modelled on Greek temples. It is amazing how many churches look like Greek temples with pillars at the front.

I am reminded of a unique experience I had when I first went to New Zealand. It never dawned on me that we would cross the dateline. I left Hawaii and I was going west to New Zealand (I went via Los Angeles and then Hawaii). I left Hawaii on a Thursday night at about ten o' clock. I was squeezed between two huge South Sea Island ladies. They had so many rings of flowers around their necks, it was like being in a greenhouse! Then I thought, "Now I won't get to New Zealand for another twelve hours. I'm going to go to sleep because I know I'm preaching at three o' clock on Saturday afternoon, so I'll get a good twenty-four-hour sleep and get over the flight." Then the pilot said, "It is now one o' clock on Saturday morning." I said, "It can't be. We've just left Hawaii and it was ten o' clock on Thursday night." We crossed the dateline. I got out of the plane, into a car, and half an hour later was preaching in the biggest church in Auckland, New Zealand. I had gone in by the back door and had not seen the front of the church. I don't remember most of what I said, and nor do they. But I do remember vividly that the Lord gave me a vision halfway through my

preaching. I saw a huge ship, an ocean-going liner that was stranded and unable to move. Just a week or two earlier, the QE2 had been stranded with a broken oil pipe to the engine. They had disembarked the passengers into little boats and taken them to the nearest port. I saw these passengers on this large liner being taken off in little boats and being taken away to that port. But the funny thing was that the bridge of the ship was missing and in its place was a Greek temple. You know what they look like, with columns holding up the triangular bit at the top. I thought: "That's strange." I told the congregation this and they were shattered, because the front of that church was a Greek temple, and for months people had been leaving the church and going to a bigger Pentecostal church in the town hall. The church had been shrinking and shrinking as little families and groups of people were taken away. It led to an amazing revelation to all of us.

ELDERS

The first thing we want to tackle is this: what shape is the leadership in the New Testament church? Because we should model our leadership on that. The first thing I want to say is very important, but it will come as a shock to some. The leadership is never one man, therefore you never hear of "Mr So-and-So's church". A local church in the New Testament was never led by one man. There is no such thing as "the pastor" in a New Testament church. Modelled on the synagogue they were led by a group of men, and I underline the word *men* — not a group of men and women, but a group of men, and they are called the elders of the church. That does not mean that they were elderly, it means that they were ahead of the others spiritually; that the others could look up to them — a group of elders who shared responsibility.

We are told in 1 Timothy 2 what the qualifications are. One is that they be married to one wife. I don't think that means that there was a lot of polygamy that went on, I think it means that they had been married to one wife and never divorced. Of course, if a wife died, then a person was perfectly free to remarry. But nobody was free to be divorced, remarried, and be an elder of a church. They could not be lovers of money because that would be a very bad thing to be as an elder of the church. It did not mean that they didn't have money, but they were not to be *lovers* of money. These were essentially supervisors of what went on in the church. Every New Testament church, as soon as possible, had a group of mature men who supervised all that the church did.

We are going to look shortly at the discipline in a New Testament church, and that cannot be achieved by one man. I am afraid that may be why in many churches that are led by one man there isn't any discipline, because if one man tries to discipline a church he will very quickly make enemies and make life very difficult for himself. But if a group of men do it together then discipline is very much easier to apply. So, on the one hand, elders — male elders — were chosen out of the Christians gathered together as soon as they showed more maturity than the others.

One of the qualifications was that they had to have a good report from outsiders. When we were choosing an elder in our church we would go to the employer of a candidate we were considering and say, "What do you think about this man?" I remember going to the electricity board, because the man we were considering as an elder was a manager of landlines that take electricity around the country. I went to his boss and I said, "We're considering John to be an elder of our church. What do you think of him?" This electricity board man (not a believer) said, "He's a very good man, you'll be lucky to get him." Now we don't believe in luck,

but that was what he said. We reported that to the church: we have a good report from an outsider about this man. He actually became one of the best elders we had. So, we are told in 1 Timothy 2 how to choose them, what kind of men, and above all a man who manages his own family well, because if he can't manage his own family he is not going to manage the family of God very well. So the proof is in his home and in his family life.

DEACONS

The other group of people you need to have a full church structure is deacons. It seems to me clear that the deacons can be men or women, and they are called to be servants of the church in practical ways. So, we have elders to supervise men, and men and women who serve the practical needs of the church. Deacons, again, are chosen for their quality. Both elders and deacons need spiritual qualities. Don't think that because a man or a woman is good at practical things that you should make them a deacon. They need to be spiritual people as well, but who have a gift for some practical area. So, in our church we had a finance deacon who looked after the money, we had a catering deacon who looked after the food, we had a music deacon who looked after the music, and we had the building deacon who looked after the building fabric. Each of these had a practical service to the church and each of them had a team around them who helped them with that task.

We were trying to build a New Testament church. So we had elders, of which I was one. There was a mixture among the elders of full-time, spare time, and part-time, but they were all equal elders. I was a teaching elder. We had counselling elders. We had an elder who looked after widows

pastorally, but he also did a wonderful job practically because he was a builder. He could mend their broken windows and things that widows need. But his main task was looking after them spiritually. So, we had elders and deacons. I believe that is the order of the synagogue. It was taken into the early church by a straight transfer. So, a church needs first elders, a bunch of mature men, and then deacons. It then will not centre on one man. There will not be "the pastor". There will be teaching elders and pastoral elders.

There will be some who will do evangelism as well. Some will be paid by the church — that is very clear. Concerning an elder who both preaches and teaches (meaning preaches to unbelievers and teaches believers), since he is engaged in a double task, Paul said, "He's worth a double honorarium." That is his word. Paul clearly teaches in Galatians chapter 6 that if you are benefiting from someone by his spiritual contribution, then he should benefit from a material contribution back from you. So, a paid elder is clearly seen. Or, if he is part-time, a half paid elder. When the money is available, that is valid expenditure. But the money should not be in the elders' hands. Let a deacon look after your finance for you and keep it independent of the elders, then there is no temptation for one man to be putting it into his own pocket.

At first, elders are chosen by the one who is planting a church and starting it. By the way, apostles, who were called to plant churches where there were none, never planted a church by themselves. Always, in the New Testament, at least two went to plant a church, not one. So right from the beginning, it is not a one-man outfit and not one man and his wife, but two men. They may take with them some women, they may take with them a whole team, but they never go to plant a church by themselves. Once again, if only we had followed the scripture we would have avoided so many problems.

After the first appointment by an apostle they needed elders as soon as possible and got on with the job. Paul wrote to Titus and said, "I left you in Crete to appoint elders in every city", because already there were groups of converts meeting. But later, when the apostles had gone and were planting churches somewhere else, the church had to appoint the next elders. How did they do that? I am convinced from reading the New Testament carefully that the whole church was involved in choosing the next elders, because the word used is, "They raised the hand to appoint elders". They needed elders as soon as possible and got on with the job, which means that they consented. They voted, to put it crudely, and so did we for our elders because we believed it was right. Not that anybody who got fifty-one per cent of a vote would be an elder – far from it. We said they had to get at least four out of five members recognising them as shepherds. The elders might bring a name to the church and might therefore recommend, but it was the *whole* church. We asked the sheep if they recognised the shepherd because they were going to follow a man they recognised. If the elders are self-appointed by the elders, they are imposed, and people might or might not accept them as shepherds. But if the people have been asked, "Do you recognise this man as a gift of God to you as a shepherd?" then they will follow him. They have recognised him. We did that.

We believed in open government. By that I mean that the elders brought everything to the sheep, to the flock, to the family. Matters of discipline were brought to the whole church because Paul never told elders to discipline. He told the whole church to discipline a man who was misbehaving. We practised that, so that every member had a share in the responsibility of the family. We found it really paid off.

THE MEMBERS' MEETING

We had a business meeting every month for members only. That was a legal requirement in Britain. The laws of libel and slander did not apply to a church business meeting if there was not a single member of the public present. Then we could discuss a person freely and frankly without any fear of legal comeback, because it was a private meeting of members only. We did discuss people. We discussed potential elders, we discussed potential members, but the whole church shared in that. It led me to the conviction that you have got to have a membership and have regular meetings for members only if you are going to be a New Testament church. We will come back to that. It is a very important point.

There is one text I would like to revise in your mind. It has been used mainly by elders about themselves. It is in Hebrews 13:17, which in some Bibles reads like this: "Obey those who rule you and submit to their authority." Elders have sometimes used that text to impose their will on the members, and that is a naughty thing to have done. I will give you a surprise. The word "obey" is not in the Greek, the word "rule" is not in the Greek, the word "submit" is not in the Greek, and the word "authority" is not in the Greek. Otherwise, it is a good translation. It does not say "Obey those who rule you and submit to their authority." Not one of those four words is there. It is a mistranslation by people who wanted to give elders too much authority. It actually says: "Be persuaded by those who lead you and give way to them" — not to their authority but to them. It is asking for co-operation from members with those they have recognised as leaders. It is saying, "Be persuaded by them, listen to them. Listen to their reasons for doing something until you too are persuaded that it's the right thing." It is not those who "rule" you, it is those who "lead" you. They

are under-shepherds for the Good Shepherd, and they lead you. They don't push you. They don't chase after you, they don't use dogs. They lead you. "And give way to them" — let them lead. It is a very gentle statement that should have been properly translated. Again, you will have to take my word for it, but if you know someone who knows Greek you could go and ask them.

MINISTRIES

Now let us come to the *ministry* of the church. What was the ministry of the New Testament church like? Well, there were special ministries, five of them actually: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Some people think that pastors and teachers are one gift, therefore they talk about four special ministries. I am convinced it is five because I have met some great pastors who couldn't teach and I have met some good teachers who couldn't pastor. So, I am prepared to believe they are two. Sometimes you get a man who is both, but not always. Usually a man is better at one or other of those two things.

But their task is to multiply their ministry in the church. It is to coach other people into that ministry. They are given to the church to make the church an apostolic church. A prophet is given to the church to make it a prophetic church. An evangelist is given to the church to make it an evangelising church. A pastor is given to a church to make it a caring church. A teacher is given to a church to encourage others to take up teaching. They are not exclusive ministries to themselves. Their ministry is that their job is to multiply that ministry, to share it, and to get others in the church doing it. Not, "I'm an exclusive apostle and you must not touch my ministry," but, "I'm here to help you to be apostolic." That

is the concept of special ministry as I understand it.

Now some of those ministries are probably better travelling from one church to another. They get a bit heavy if they stay around. Pastors and teachers are better staying around in a church, but some prophets are better moving on. I knew one pastor in Australia who was clearly a prophet. I said, "You shouldn't be a pastor. You are heavy. Every week you are bringing a heavy word from the Lord on the people straight from God, and either they will get used to it and not listen to it any more or you will so depress them that they will just collapse under the weight of your prophetic utterances." In fact, in the early church, the practice was for a prophet to stay only two or three days in a place and then move on. Then the people were not subject to heavy prophetic messages at every meeting.

Apostles are certainly mobile. Their job is to move on when a church is established and settle another one somewhere else. They have the job of breaking open virgin territory and planting churches where there are none. It is not an apostle's job to stay around and become a bishop or archbishop (I mean by that, having founded churches he then stays around to supervise them), his job is to be on the move and go somewhere else.

Paul was an apostle. When he got a church going here he moved on to the next town and got a church going there. So, apostles and prophets are usually best moving around, and evangelists too, moving from church to church to get those churches evangelising. But pastors and teachers are probably better staying and helping to build up the flock: after the apostles founded it, the prophets brought the word of God, and the evangelists helped to increase their numbers — let the pastors and teachers carry on.

I shall tell a story to illustrate two of those ministries. There were two men in Canada who went hunting bears.

They borrowed a wooden cabin in the forest from someone, which was their base. One day, one of the men was preparing breakfast in the cabin and he looked out of the window and to his horror he saw the other man running out of the forest chased by a seven-foot black grizzly bear. He thought, "Oh, what can I do to help him?" He couldn't do anything; he just urged him to keep running as fast as he could. He ran and ran and kept ahead of the bear, got to the front door of the cabin, opened the front door, and then neatly sidestepped around the bear, pushed the bear through the door, and shut the door. He called through the window, "You deal with that one and I'll get some more." Now that is the difference between the evangelist and the pastor. The evangelist goes out and gets more, pushes them into the church, and then says to the pastor, "Now you deal with them and I'll get some more," and they push all kinds of people through the door. Some of them need an awful lot of help, but you can imagine what happened inside the cabin after that. Well, you see, some are go-getters, getting more, and getting them in; and then some (it is the more difficult task) have to present them mature in Christ Jesus — starting with them where they are and building them up.

So, all these special gifts fit together and it must be recognised that each is a gift of God. Nobody can say, "I'm going to be an apostle" or, "I have an ambition to be an evangelist." Most people discover their gift by vibrating in response to a gift. For example, when Billy Graham was in England, quite a lot of young men felt, "I should be doing that." We did have some young men who simply had an ambition to be like Billy Graham. But others were vibrating inside and began to think, "Does God want me to be doing that?" and found that that vibration inside their spirit was the beginning of a call to be an evangelist. I vibrated when I heard two people really teach. Something in me responded

to their teaching, not just because of what they taught but because of what they were doing. I began to think, "Does God want me to do that?" And here I am. It is the fifth of the special gifts, not the first, the second, the third or the fourth. I am quite happy.

Years ago, I said to the Lord, "What is my gifting now? What is my ministry? I'm not quite sure what I'm doing."

He said a funny thing to me: "David, I have made you an underliner."

I thought, "Well that's not in the Bible. What's an underliner?"

He then said, "You won't say much that is new to people, but you will underline what I'm already telling them to the point where they'll do it."

I thought, "Well, hallelujah! I'm an underliner for the Lord."

Again and again, it has happened. Someone told me, "The Lord is already telling me that," and I had underlined it. That is quite a wonderful ministry, I think, underlining what God is telling people already in their hearts so that they will do it.

I don't fit any of these New Testament categories but I know what the Lord wants. That is how we discover our gift: by listening to someone exercising that gift, by vibrating inside and feeling, "I should be doing that" — and finding you can.

That brings me to my next point. In the New Testament, every person is a minister. There is no such thing as clergy and laity in the New Testament, everybody has a ministry of some kind. In the early days of the Pentecostals in Scandinavia, someone said to the leading Pentecostal evangelist, "How many members have you now?" He said, "So many hundreds." They said, "How many ministers do you have now?" He said, "Same number," and that should be the answer of a true church, where every member is in

the ministry of one kind or another, where every member is active and functioning in some way towards all the other members. It is a very active church.

We will come in a moment to the problem of the size of a New Testament church, because the bigger the church you belong to, the fewer gifts are needed. A church of ten thousand still only needs one preacher. If you are not careful, the size of a church produces lots of spectators but not so many ministries, because they are not needed. Furthermore, a large church needs a very developed ministry. You can't let loose an amateur on a very large crowd or they will soon grumble. So those who have developed gifts to a highly professional standard finish up running the huge church, and amateurs find it very difficult to develop their gifts in such a church.

APOSTLES

We have mentioned apostles. Some people think that apostles are limited to the Twelve, the first apostles, and that we shouldn't use the name for anybody today. But when you look at the word "apostle" in the New Testament, there are at least five kinds of apostles, three of which were unique but two of which are still found. The word "apostle" means "somebody sent" — a sent one. *Apostelien* is the Greek verb "to send". It is the same as the word *mittere* in Latin, from which we get "missionary" and "missile". A missionary is an intercontinental ballistic missile — same word — sent from "A" to "B" to do something.

Jesus was called an apostle because the Father sent him from heaven to earth to save sinners. He was an apostle, a sent one, and he was unique. He chose twelve men, one of whom failed, but he chose twelve men to be first disciples

— which mean they were to learn from him — and then to send them out as twelve apostles. They went far and wide. Thomas went to south India and there is still a church named after him there. I have been to his grave in the southern state of Tamil Nadu.

The other apostles were scattered throughout the world. They were sent by Jesus directly and no one is sent by Jesus directly like that today. They had to have known him before his death and after his resurrection to be one of his personal apostles. That is why when Judas betrayed him they had to choose another and it was someone who had known him before his death and known him after his resurrection so could be a personal witness to the truth of the resurrection, which was a key to spreading the gospel at first.

The third kind of apostle was Paul, and he was the only one of this kind. He was the last of all the apostles, the last of the special ones. He didn't replace Judas. Many people have taught that he was number twelve. No, he said himself he was number thirteen. He acknowledged the twelve apostles of Christ and then he said, "I was like someone born at the wrong time." He was the only one *commissioned by the risen, ascended Christ*. That sight of the risen, ascended Christ in his glory blinded him for three days until he was healed. He said that he had a unique apostleship. In fact, he says, "Without boasting, I've worked harder than all the others, than all the twelve." So those are the special apostles we find in the New Testament.

But we find others. We find, for example, that the church at Corinth had its own apostles, its own sent ones. They sent out missionaries and preachers from there and they called them "apostles" — sent ones. Any church that sends one of its members out to preach — it is right to call them an apostle. Then, finally, we have a unique apostle in Epaphroditus, mentioned in Paul's letter to the Philippians, sent by the

church at Philippi to be Paul's housekeeper in Rome while Paul was under house arrest. He wrote a letter thanking them for sending Epaphroditus as their apostle. The title is there in the Philippians letter but too many translators have got the idea that there weren't such apostles and have mistranslated the word. But it is the word "apostle" — thank you for your apostle Epaphroditus who is cooking my meals, making my bed, and looking after me under house arrest.

We had a marvellous church caretaker. I mean by that he looked after the building. He was a brilliant carpenter and many of the things in the building he had made with his own hands. He kept the building spotless and he did more than that. He would take in tramps, wash their clothes, put the tramp in the bath, get him cleaned up, give him a meal, and send him on his way. My, you are happy if you have got a churchwarden or church caretaker like that. So, do you know what we did? We sent him to Nazareth to help build a hospital for the Arabs. He was our sent one to Israel, to Nazareth. He had never been overseas. He had never been in the air in an aeroplane but he became our apostle to Nazareth. He was our sent one, sent from "A" to "B" to do a job — that is all an "apostle" means. So, it depends on who sent them, where to, and what job for. But they qualify for the word "apostle" if they do that.

So, there are apostles today, but they must be sent by the church somewhere else to do a job. There are too many self-appointed apostles around who are false apostles. They are really acting as bishops, and they are overseeing churches, which is not New Testament.

BISHOPS

The word "bishop" is used in the New Testament as a translation of the word *episkopos*, which is another word that applies to elders. In the New Testament, there were many bishops to one church. It was only later that the Roman Empire hierarchy of officials was adopted by the church and we finished up with one bishop over many churches. That is a huge difference and should never have happened. But a bishop in the church of the New Testament was simply an elder.

There were three words used. *Episkopos* was used of overseers. The second word, *diakonos*, was for a deacon, but there is another word, *presbuteros* which was used for elders. So, elders had two titles: *episkopos*, which means "overseer" and *presbuteros*, which means "elder" and then there were *diakonos*, deacons. Now here is a little puzzle for you. There is one man in the New Testament of whom those three words were applied. He was called an *episkopos*, a *presbuteros*, and a *diakonos*, and he is one of the most prominent figures in the New Testament and he had all three titles. Can you guess who he was? It was Judas. Judas Iscariot was an *episkopos*, a *presbuteros* and a *diakonos*. All three are applied to him in Acts 1, when they said: We'll have to replace him. They had those jobs to fill again. He is the only man in the New Testament called all three names. Isn't that interesting? But he failed in all three and had to be replaced.

Well now, there we have a picture of ministry, and the object of all ministry is to equip the saints to do the same job, to equip a church to be apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, caring, pastoral and teaching. That is how God works. So, these tasks don't set ministry above membership. They are given to serve and to train the members. In fact, Jesus was very much against hierarchy in which some people are higher

than others. That is when there is a structure like a pyramid. This gifting is over that gifting, another is over that, and they finish up with the pastor at the top of the heap. That is not New Testament structure. Jesus said, "Don't ever lord it over people. That's what the Gentiles love to do. The Gentiles like power and control, but not you. Whoever is least among you will be the greatest. You are to serve people not to boss them about."

That is why to build a church on a business model is to be a failure. We need to be businesslike, especially in relation to our money —to have our accounts audited and to keep really careful control of how the money is spent. But if you have a good deacon who can handle finance, and if he is responsible to the elders for how the money is spent, you should never find yourself in court for financial reasons.

SIZE, SHAPE AND RELATIONSHIPS

We come to an unusual subject now: the size and shape of a congregation —not just the size, but is it the right shape? I am going to write as an architect here. What about size? Some churches are too small and some churches are too big to be New Testament churches. The essential thing about a church is its *relationships*. A family must have relationships or it is not a family, it is an audience. Every Christian needs three sizes of group to be balanced. I am going to call them *cell*, *congregation* and *celebration*. We worked out these three sizes by experience as the church grew. I am very glad now that the idea of these three different-sized groups were picked up and are now being taught in places like Fuller Seminary in the USA. But we came to this quite independently as our church grew. The basic fact is that the average person can only know two hundred other people by name. Professional

people like doctors and lawyers train themselves to learn more names, and some politicians can get up to four figures and still remember names, and that helps votes enormously. But the average person in church can recognise two hundred other people and call them by their name. That is a figure above which churches become anonymous. You are sitting in church next to someone and say, "Are you visiting us today?" and they reply, "Oh no, I've been a member twenty years." You think, "Dear me, I've put my foot in it again." But the fact is that in a church that is too big you can be forgiven for that kind of remark, but your relationship with that person is not a New Testament church relationship. You don't know them enough to help them, to minister to them. You are just a crowd gathered together anonymously. That is the big factor.

There are three levels of fellowship that we need. We all need a *cell*, which is up to twenty people. Twenty is getting too big and it is better to split into two cells of ten. But we all need an intimate fellowship with a few other Christians where we can really build each other up. Call them "house groups" or call them what you will. The ideal shape for that number is a circle where they can see each other. It is the natural grouping in a small cell – so as to be able to talk to each other, pray for each other, minister to each other. It is usually in a cell that you discover your gifting and develop it, and find yourself doing something towards the other members of the group.

Then you need also a *congregation* where people know each other. That takes us up to about two hundred, and then it begins to get anonymous to most people. So, a congregation up to two hundred is the right size, and the right shape for that is half a circle. That combines being able to see each other and relate to each other with a stronger centre to keep it together. If you are designing a new building, design the

new meeting place in a half circle. Or arrange your chairs in a half circle, even if it is an oblong building. That would mean putting the centre of the congregation halfway along one side. If you are in an oblong building you can put the chairs in half a circle. It is vital to be able to see other's faces. In a small circle of under twenty that is straightforward. In a half circle of up to two hundred you still have contact with each other as well as with the leaders of the meeting.

Over two hundred it becomes an anonymous *celebration*, and there is a place for that. It is inspiring to meet in a good-sized group and realise there are a lot of people who belong to Christ in your area. The ideal size for that group is anything up to twenty million because it is anonymous. It doesn't suffer from that – it is essentially inspirational to be in a large group. So, a celebration can be any size, but it needs to be led by very mature gifting. Therefore, it needs to be led by fewer people. It needs to be led from the front with stronger leaders to keep it as one group. Therefore, the ideal shape for that is a quarter circle, which is easily done in a square building.

This is not the ideal shape for a church by any means. It is lovely for *teaching* because the speaker can see all of you, including your face — and you can see the speaker easily without having to lift your head or lower it. The speaker is just about level with the middle of the group and that is an ideal teaching situation. But this would not be an ideal church situation—far from it, because all people can see (mostly) is the back of heads. You can see the speaker's face and that is about the only one you can really see. So, for a church meeting it would be bad. In a square room I would design a quarter circle because that would enable people to see each other as well as the speaker, under good leadership from a central focus. So, all the churches I have designed for more than two hundred I have designed for a quarter circle so

that there is a concentration of viewpoint to the leadership, which is important with a large crowd. But there is still the ability to look across and see each other.

If you are in a building where you can only see the backs of heads you will never see the glory, because glory appears on the front of people's heads, not the backs. I am quite serious. When the glory descends on a congregation and the only person that sees it is the preacher, what a miserable situation. So, a quarter circle is the ideal combination of strong leadership from the front and the ability still to see each other across. We are talking about the ideal, I know, and we have got to make use of what we can in the buildings available, but if you are in the happy position of being able to design, that is how you should set about it.

MUSIC AND TALK

The key is to be able to see each other to see the glory, and therefore to be able to minister to each other as well as be ministered to from the front. But as you get bigger and bigger, the leadership has to be stronger and stronger. I don't think the music should follow, but I am afraid that it usually does — great big amplifiers are needed to boost the music and throw it out at the people. I had better not say any more about that at this point. I will do when we come to the matter of worship, but nevertheless that is what happens when you have got a huge crowd — the amplifiers boost the leadership so that everybody can hear it.

Since most fellowships are now spending enormous sums on electronics and most platforms I preach on look like telephone exchanges, with all the wires flying about I have to be careful where I walk. I am afraid the electronic age is with us to stay, but churches need to be wise in what they use. As a

tip, speaking and music require quite different acoustics and therefore a church should have two amplification systems: one for the music and the other for speaking. The ideal echo for speaking is under one and a half seconds. You gauge that by clapping — and this is really quite low. This would not be so good for music because the reverberation is quite low. But it is excellent for speaking. Whereas for music anything up to five seconds' reverberation is ideal. A big cathedral will have a very high reverberation.

In the early days before electronics, someone would go into a big cathedral that had just been built and they would sing up the scale, and on one note the building would vibrate. From then on, they would do all the prayers in the one note and they would only vary it at the end. You may have heard that. That was done for acoustic purposes and was ideal for that. But when someone talks like that through a microphone it is ridiculous. It is not needed. But they were using the whole cathedral as a reverberation, as an amplifier, and it is a very good idea. That is how chanting began in churches. Once they had found the right note on which the whole building reacted, that was the ideal note to pray in and the ideal note to preach in, right until the very end.

Now we laugh at this. It is totally unnecessary today but it has become a high church tradition for Sung Eucharist. But that is how it began and it was very sensible. Now we can make our buildings acoustically perfect, but usually for one or the other. A room may not be a good room for singing in, for which you need a big echo that will multiply the singing and rebound with it. Actually, the ultimate acoustics now can be altered with a knob in the sound control room. Some of the theatres in London now have a room that can be changed, the speakers so arranged, and the volume so arranged, that either you can set the whole theatre for music or for speaking. But, since that is a very expensive system, usually the simplest way

for a church is to have two systems. Normally I find myself having to speak through the music system. That is awful. For speaking you need little speakers all the way around the church at low volume and then everybody feels that the preacher is within two or three metres of them. That is ideal for speaking.

We had two systems in our building. One used speakers all the way around at low volume. The second was for the music: big speakers at the front with high volume that could get near to imitating the echo of a large building. I am just throwing this out because if you are going to spend hundreds of pounds on amplification do get the right systems if you can. It pays in the long run. The speaking becomes normal. Speaking and singing are quite different. If you want them to be heard naturally, you will need those double systems.

I notice that drummers are now usually shut off from the congregation. I am glad of that improvement. If I had one law I could pass it would be to banish drums altogether. But I won't get on to that. That is my private bee in my bonnet because the drumming so dominates the music that you are in the hands of the drummer. If it is slightly faster than your heart you will be manipulated into excitement.

To return to our main theme, you begin to discover your gifts in a small cell. But you need a bigger group than that to develop your gift. That bigger group needs to be congregational in size, where you are known and loved. Most of us began developing our gift in a larger group than a cell but one that was small enough for people to know us and therefore understand. You would never put a person learning a gift in front of ten thousand people. You really need to develop a very strong, controlled gift, and an ability to project your person to lead a large celebration. That is why if the church you belong to is only the huge celebration and little cells there is not much chance to develop gifts.

We got to that stage when we had about a thousand adults

coming. We realised that you could not let loose amateurs on a thousand people. They did not have the strength of confidence yet, or the personality to do it. A thousand people had crossed that anonymity line. When they don't know the person, they will react critically to someone learning. Two hundred people who know a person will react sympathetically to a man struggling to develop his preaching. They will encourage him to go on. But a large crowd will just say, "What did you think of the preacher?" or, "What did you think of the singer?" They will become highly critical unless the gifting on the platform is quite professional.

So, we realised there was no ladder up which people could climb with their gifting. They could exercise the gift in a small cell but that was too small. They were not ready to be exposed to a huge crowd. Therefore, we quite simply divided the thousand people into five congregations. We gave each congregation two of our elders to look after them. We still had an eldership over the whole; we still had celebrations of a thousand or more people. But we had congregations of around two hundred. That meant that people could develop their gifting among a couple of hundred people who knew them, loved them, and would encourage them to go on using that gift and developing it. So, we had now developed a ladder with three rungs that a gifting could climb.

Interestingly enough, some developed a gifting mature enough to let loose on the big celebration, but they developed it in the congregation. The New Testament church life was in that middle group. That is where the baptisms took place. That is where people were brought in to membership. That is where the normal activity of a New Testament church took place. I became convinced that we all need those three levels. The celebration is anonymous. It is big, it is exciting and it is inspirational, but the fact that it is anonymous means that it is not a church. But we do all need from time to time

a big crowd to realise that God is big, his people are big, and the church is big. That is good. But if you don't have a congregation small enough for people to know each other, and to minister to each other, you are missing a vital New Testament church pattern.

So, we developed the threefold pattern. Rather than pack a person's diary with meetings, we had to decide how to balance the time between the three levels. Therefore, we didn't have weekly cell meetings, we had fortnightly cell meetings which eased the diary a little. We had congregational meetings on Sunday evening in separate parts of the building. On Sunday morning we had our celebration. Now how often you have for each — this you have to work out according to what the people can cope with, and not overload Christians with a diary full of meetings.

My three children had a swear word and it was "meeting". We did a bit of research to find out how it had become a swear word for them and it was because one of them would say, "Can we go and play in the park, Mummy?"

"Well, I'm very sorry but mummy's got a meeting."

"Daddy, can we go and do this?"

"No, I'm sorry. Daddy's got a meeting." The children picked this up and it ("meeting") became their swear word whenever they were frustrated. But I think some of the adults had "meetingitis" as well. Don't overload people. We said: out of six weeknight evenings, give two to church activities, two to your family, and two to other things. But don't come to church more than twice a week. Of the twice a week you come, come for one that you take in and for one that you give out. Keep it balanced there between feeding yourself and serving other people.

You see, the New Testament worship was led by everybody. You certainly can't do that in a huge crowd. The bigger the crowd, the fewer people you can minister to. In a large crowd

you can't afford to throw open the meeting to contributions from members because you will get exhibitionists who grab the opportunity every time. The same people will seize the opportunity to address a big gathering. So, you will notice that when there is a big gathering everything is controlled from the front and ought to be. You can't afford to say, "Now would anybody like to have a word?" You can do that in a congregation where people know each other, but you can't do it in anything bigger than that.

So, if you are going to have New Testament worship where anybody could bring a contribution it does need to be kept to a limited size. When you have reached two hundred you are probably better thinking: let's divide that again into two of one hundred and let them grow. Growth comes by division— and by multiplication. Therefore, when a cell reaches twenty, divide and let two cells of ten grow. When a congregation reaches two hundred, divide and let two congregations grow. Then let them all come together from time to time and be a big celebration. Yes, to hear the Word of God, to praise God, to have a big kind of worship that everybody can be a part of, which today usually seems to demand a lot of amplification.

I hope I have explained enough to make it clear that we do need fellowship at three levels, not two. A huge church must consider how to build congregational life under the big celebration. If you are going to develop people's giftings, a cell is not enough. A cell of even up to twenty people is too small to expect all the gifts to be in it. A congregation is big enough to expect all the gifts we need to appear because we need all the gifts. We don't all have the same gifts. But a cell is usually not enough to have a balance of the spiritual gifts. You need a congregation for that. But the exercise of spiritual gifts can't be done in a celebration. That will depend on a few people exercising mature gifts.

CHOOSING THE PERFECT CHURCH!

Admittedly, what we are talking about now is the ideal. You may ask, "Where is there such a church here?" I don't know. My advice is very clear: if you find the perfect church don't join it; you'll spoil it. That is advice that has been given everywhere around the world. There are some "butterfly" Christians who are going from one church to another all the time, looking for the perfect church because they think they are perfect and they need a perfect church. There is something a little wrong with that.

When it comes to choosing a church, alas, most of us have too much choice. We fall into the consumerism of the world. We flit from church to church, looking for one that suits us. If you have a car you will have a choice of many churches. How do you decide? We used to give our people this sort of guidance: essentially a local church should be local so that the people in it meet each other during the week, so that they are near enough to each other to be neighbours to each other outside the church gatherings. If people come from all over to one church, they are not likely to bump into each other regularly in between. Now of course we have a place of work and the place where we live. We need contacts with other Christians in both. But we used to say to people, "If you come more than two miles to this church, you are probably coming to the wrong church." We were very reluctant to receive into membership people who came from a distance. The rule is that the further you go to church the more you will receive and the less you will give. The nearest church to you may be a church where you can give a lot and may receive little. We need a balance of a fellowship in which we both give and receive. We need to stay with that balanced church and let that be our local fellowship.

Concerning size and shape, I think it is essential that

pastors or leaders of different churches have regular contacts with each other and play the game properly. We would never receive a person from another church into our membership without asking for a letter from the other church about them. That saved us endless heartache, especially from butterfly Christians. We insisted on contacting the leaders of the church they had been at and asking them about the people. Yes, it created problems sometimes, and sometimes we got a letter from the other church saying, "We're glad to get rid of them" — in which case we weren't glad to receive them. It saves you that kind of heartache. Sometimes we got a letter saying, "They got fed up with us after six months and they'll get fed up with you after six months." That warned us to watch them carefully. But normally we got a letter saying, "They've been good members here and for various reasons we feel they'll be better members with you."

In fact, on one occasion I noticed that quite a lot of people (up to thirty) from the main Anglican church in town started attending our services. Since they were all public services and you couldn't stand at the door and give anybody the right boot of fellowship, I had to let them come. But what I did was this. I went straight to the vicar of the Anglican church and said, "I've come to you because I'm concerned that so many of your people are coming to our church. I can't stand at the door and kick them out. But I want you to know that I'm concerned."

He said, "Well thank you, David, for that concern, but I think I ought to tell you that I sent them." I said, "You did what?" He said, "I sent them. Your church has something that our church needs, so I've sent that number of my people to you for six months. I told them, 'Go and learn what they have and come back and do it here.'"

"Well," I said, "I confess now that I've never thought once about sending my people to you. That was very generous of you." After six months they all went back and took some of

our members with them. But we were glad.

In fact, at one of our church business meetings where we did business the Lord's way, it was one of the most exciting meetings of the month, and at one of them somebody gave us a prophetic word: "I want you to give your members to other churches in the town." Now it is rare for a church to do that, but it was from the Lord, so we did it. I told you we had divided the people into five groups. So, on Sunday nights we asked one group each Sunday to go to another church. We would telephone and tell the other church we were sending some of our members to them. Invariably they put on a meal for them. Thus a fifth of our people were going somewhere else every Sunday night. We became known as the church that gives people to other churches. I was quite proud of that reputation. We stopped being called the church that pulled people in from other churches.

One strict Baptist pastor said to me, "You just pinch people from other churches."

I replied, "No we don't."

He said, "Well you've taken two of my people."

I responded, "Yes, they are coming to us now, but I'll give you the names of four or five people that are coming to your church now. So, we got two and you got four. Is that fair?" That simply killed the rumour. We wanted to be a church that was known for giving people to other fellowships rather than taking them. We didn't want to build an empire ourselves. We wanted to produce Christians who would go and serve elsewhere. Let us get our priorities right.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline was a clear mark of the early church. The Protestant reformers Luther and Calvin said there were three signs of a New Testament church. Number one: where the whole Word of God was faithfully preached. Number two: where the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper were duly administered. Number three: where discipline was duly exercised. It is interesting that they put it third. In most churches today, there is no discipline whatever. One reason is that they don't have a proper membership; they don't have a committed list of the people who have accepted the elders as their shepherds, and the shepherds don't really know who they are responsible for. If you just have open public meetings and anybody can come to those, then you never know and you won't be able to discipline.

There are two particular areas of discipline that are needed: inclusion and exclusion—who you take in and who you kick out. The New Testament church practised both. That is why it is important to have members' meetings regularly — meetings for members only. These are covered by British law against libel and slander. You cannot be prosecuted for libel or slander if the meeting was members only and not a single member of the public was present. We made use of that. We would have done that whether it was the law or not by having strictly members only meetings, when the family met to discuss its own business and met with the elders to decide things.

The first discipline that needs to be exercised is who comes in — not to the church, because your meetings are public and have to be, but who comes into your *membership*, into your recognised family of God in that place. It is very important that you take in the right people, which means this: what are the basic requirements? Well, according to my book *The*

Normal Christian Birth, those four basics should be the basic requirements that they have repented, that they have believed in the Lord Jesus, that they have been baptised, and that they have received the Holy Spirit. I have yet to meet a church that makes those four simple requirements. Many churches don't even make baptism a requirement. Most churches make faith a requirement but they usually go on professed faith rather than faith that has acted. Amazingly, some churches don't even ask, "Have you repented?" That is just bringing into your church half-born Christians and you are going to have problems later. Deal with those four things before they come in because it is much more difficult to deal with them after they have come in. If you are going to have members' meetings you surely want people who have received the Holy Spirit or they are going to bring their own prejudices or their own lobbying to the meeting and it will become a disaster. So, it is very important who you take in.

For example, let us take the issue of divorce and remarriage. According to Jesus, that couple is living in adultery. Almost every church I speak in today is condoning adultery among the members. It is an extraordinary situation. They have just been taken into membership without even being faced with the need to repent of adultery. That has only happened in the last thirty years really, but it is happening on a grand scale, particularly in America and Britain. Britain has the highest divorce rate in Europe. There are now so many people inside churches in Britain who are living in adultery, and that is robbing the church of its moral authority to speak out. That is just one example. Would you take into membership someone who is regularly stealing—a burglar? No, you would say, "You need to repent of that first. It's wrong; it's against the law of God." There are so many sins that are being overlooked as people come into a church's membership. We need to go very carefully about that and say,

"Yes, the church is for sinners, but it is for sinners who have repented and who have started the Christian life properly."

The amazing thing about Revival is that when it broke out (in Pensacola in America, for example) it was Christians who were repenting of things they should have repented of in the very beginning. It is because churches had taken in people who were living in sin. Yes, it should have been unbelievers who were repenting, not believers. That was the case for very simple crude sins which everybody knows are wrong. They should not have been taken into church until they had repented. Well, I am throwing it out — that is the very first exercise of discipline: who you take in. It involves carefully interviewing people who want to be a member of your church. It is not trying to keep people out; it is trying to get the right people in. This is because the New Testament church was made up of people who had repented, believed, been baptised and received the Holy Spirit. If any of those was missing they took immediate steps to put the deficiency right.

Then there was discipline all the time — mutual discipline, where you know each other well enough to help each other to deal with anything that is wrong. Many marriages would never have reached divorce if other members of the church had known they were in trouble with their marriage, had prayed for them, advised them, and ministered to them. It would have saved so much trouble. But you can only do that in a congregation where people know each other, know something is going wrong with that couple, and care about that, and do something about it. It is not just the elders who need to do that, it is members. We are members of one another. If one member suffers, we all suffer. If one member rejoices, we all rejoice. There is quite a bit of mutual rejoicing going on in churches — celebrating each other's birthdays and things like that. But there is need for a good deal of mutual suffering going on, so that it is noticed when someone is missing.

In a huge church, how does anybody know who is missing that Sunday, much less why they are missing? Yes, they may be away visiting or something but when they don't appear for weeks on end the other members should have noticed and should see there is something wrong. Why aren't they coming now? Go and visit them and find out. That is how the New Testament church operated. You can't operate like that if your church only has a big celebration. You need that middle level that is small enough to notice when somebody hasn't turned up. How they notice in some of these big churches I don't know. Somebody could be missing for months and nobody would have noticed. We care for one another and there is a limited number that you can care for and really relate to, so that when they show signs of trouble you can go and help them. Marriage troubles are quite frequent even in church, and we need to notice when it is happening and help them quickly. There are so many exhortations in the New Testament to get Christians back on their feet when they are backsliding, to care for them, to know them well enough to know when things are slipping. This is New Testament churchmanship. So, the discipline goes on.

But then there come serious matters in which a church member is causing scandal to the gospel as well as the church, living in such a way that people can criticise the church, call it hypocritical. They are ready to do that. If there is serious sin in a church which gets known by the public, that must be dealt with quickly and radically, not only by the elders but by the members. This happened in Corinth, and a man was having sex with his mother (it might have been his stepmother but it certainly was illicit sex) and it was widely known. It was reflecting poorly on the Lord and on the local church. Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, says, "You must all deal with this and remove the scandal so that it doesn't become an offence to the world." Then in the second letter to the

Corinthians he says a fascinating thing: "A majority of you put him out of fellowship. Let all of you welcome him back in now that he's repented," which means they took a vote on it in the members' meeting. They acted together.

Of course, that is not the first stage. The first stage is that if there is a scandal, you who have noticed it go and tell them. If they listen, you have won your brother. If they stop doing it after one visit from one member, great. If they still don't listen, you take two or three others with you and appeal to them from representatives of the body. If he still doesn't listen, you take that matter to the whole local church. The local church tells him: "This is wrong. You repent of it or I'm afraid we'll have to put you out of membership." That means not sharing the Lord's Supper with them until they have repented. If he still doesn't listen, Jesus said, "Let him be to you as a pagan or a tax collector." Both were out. Not that there is anything wrong with collecting taxes, but in those days a tax collector was collecting taxes for the Romans; he was a traitor to his people and he was lining his own pockets at the same time. So, tax collecting was out. It was not like working for HMRC, our tax office. But there comes a point where the members have to exclude a member. A church that does that is doing the person a favour. It is bringing home to them what they are doing, until they repent.

Now that is not the last thing a church can do. There is an order of how the discipline is applied and exclusion is the second last thing. There is one more thing they did in the New Testament and that was to deliver a man to Satan. Paul urges them to do that. What does it mean? It means to let Satan do his worst with a person, to remove the protection of the church from him. That means, in normal terms: physical illness and death. I have known that done by churches in England today effectively—sometimes effectively the wrong way, sometimes effectively the bad way. There was a church

members' meeting in one town in England where the church solemnly committed a man to Satan. As he left that church he had a heart attack and died. Very few churches today would even dare to do such a thing.

In another church I know there were three men in the church who were wrecking it for everybody else. Again, they were delivered to the ultimate and they consigned them to Satan. One fell off the end of a pier into the propeller of a ship and was cut to pieces. A second was a window cleaner who fell off his ladder on the top of spiked iron railings. The third died in another way. But great fear came upon the church. They didn't play games with God any more.

That is exactly what happened in the New Testament to a couple called Ananias and Sapphira. A husband and his wife were slain in the Spirit — what a horrible phrase but it was appropriate there, because Peter said, "You lied to the rest of the church. You gave money to the church and said that's all you got for the sale of property and it wasn't all you got. You put some of it in your own pockets. That's lying to the church and it's also lying to the Holy Spirit." Literally, they were slain in the Spirit, killed in the Spirit, and were carried out dead. The next verse says, "Great fear came upon them all." We could do with a bit more of that fear in church. It was a healthy fear; it was a good fear. It is the sort of fear that is the beginning of wisdom. But why are you doing it? You are doing it in the hope that he will realise that he could die. The man in Corinth did realise, and then Paul said, "Let all of you welcome him back. The majority of you put him out, but all of you say, 'Come back to the fold, you've repented.'"

Now all this is so strange to the contemporary church that even Christians have reactions like, "I don't want to belong to a church that does that." Well, that was the New Testament church and it didn't play games with God or with people. It said: this is serious and we will do everything we can to

save you from going on sinning because that is not giving God the glory in your life. So, a church needs to exercise discipline in taking people in and discipline in putting people out, and a lot of discipline in between. Every member should be involved in that discipline. If they are not, and the elders have put a person out on their own authority, you will find the church may well rise up against the elders and rebel saying, "We knew those people. We were friends with those people." But if they have contributed to the discipline, and the church has put someone out (and not just a few elders), then the church will back it up. It is the church that puts someone out of their membership, not the leaders.

WORSHIP

Now let us come to the worship of a New Testament church, both in general and particular terms. It was corporate worship —worship together. Most of the choruses we sing are what I call choruses of personal devotion. They are "I" songs instead of "we" songs. Corporate worship is to worship together. Most of the choruses we sing were written in private devotions, then put in a new songbook, then put on a screen for us to sing, and we sing about "Myself" and how "I" feel about God. Corporate worship is to come together and tell God what "We" feel and, even more important, to sing about what God feels about us. Corporate worship should be corporate, not a lot of individuals telling God "I love you." We love him and we express that in worship together.

We had three children and they had a ritual. Once a year they would come into my bedroom, stand in a row at the foot of the bed, sing a song to me and then they would give me a bag of their favourite sweets. The song they sang to me was, "Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday to you.

Happy birthday dear Daddy," and then they would give me the sweets which I knew were their favourite ones. I knew what I should do with them. I would share them out straight away. It was a bit artificial, wasn't it? It was standing in a row. Wouldn't I have rather they had come individually and said, "Daddy, I love you"? No, I wouldn't. I wanted them to be a family, to do things together, as well as individually for each other and me. Got the picture? God enjoys it when we stand in a row and sing together to him, artificial though it may sound. It is what he would love. It is not artificial, it is real because we are recognising that we are a family.

I am afraid I react quite violently when a worship leader says, "Just do whatever you each want to do. If you want to sit, you sit. If you want to stand, you stand. If you want to dance, you dance." What he is doing is dividing the people and each of them is doing their own thing. "If you want to come out and wave a flag wave a flag." "If you want to do this, if you want to do that...." That is not corporate worship. A good worship leader leads the people to do things together, to stand up together and sing together. Corporate worship is quite different from private devotions and we need to come together to worship together.

There are six essential ingredients in a good act of worship. I am putting together many texts in the Bible now, but without some of these things worship is lacking. They are, first, *adoration*, where we simply tell God we love him for what he is — we adore him; second, *thanksgiving* — saying thank you for what he has done for us; third, *confession* of the things we have done that we shouldn't have done, and the things we haven't done that we should have done; fourth, *petition*, asking him to bless us; fifth, *intercession*, asking him to bless other people, other Christians first and foremost, but people in need — to pray for them is an essential part of worship; sixth, dedication, to give him yourself for another

week, to dedicate that week to the Lord. You thank him for the past week; you dedicate yourself for the next week. A good act of worship contains all those six things and they can be done in so many different ways. You can do them in singing, but if all your worship is singing, that is not balanced worship. I am afraid that is a trap we have fallen into now: that worship is singing. So, we have worship leaders who, frankly, are not worship leaders, they are song leaders. That is all they can do. I say to some of them, "Put your guitar away and try leading worship without it. You will find out then if you can lead in worship." But we have now got so tied particularly to the pop concept type of worship; I even call it "disco worship". It troubles me that we have got into such a rut that you can tell what the worship will be before you get to a church. You can tell how long they will spend on each. They will start with loud, happy songs for about ten to fifteen minutes, then move into quieter songs, and so it goes on. In between songs you might get a twenty-second prayer. That is all the prayer you will get. This is not worship, it is catering to youth culture and it is more like a pop concert, with its lead singers and guitarist. Have you ever noticed how few of the musicians on the platform actually sing? You watch it next time. They are not worshipping, they are just strumming or banging. Let us get back to some real worship and get those six things into the worship.

Worship is essentially dialogue between us and God. He speaks and we speak. He sings and we sing. God is a singer. He rejoices over us with singing. Here is a fundamental thing which we did in our church, which I don't meet in many other churches: we took the Word before worship. The tradition the churches got into is worship before the Word. But, in fact, in Jesus' day every synagogue (and to this day, every synagogue) starts with the Word and then worships. I believe that is sound theologically and it is sound in manners. If you

met Queen Elizabeth in our country you would not start the conversation. It is only right for subjects to wait for the Sovereign to speak. That means that the Sovereign guides the conversation and you must wait until the Queen speaks to you before you speak to her. That is courtesy. The same is true of God. We should begin our worship by letting him speak and then our worship comes as a reply, a response to what he has said to you.

The result of that is that worship is very different each week. Instead, so-called "charismatic worship" is so boring. I really am bored with it. It is the same every time. But when you have listened to the Word for an hour you are ready to worship and that worship will sometimes be exuberant, joyful, and celebratory and other times it will be quite sober, majoring on confession. Now this means a good worship leader, while the Word is being preached, will watch the congregation and will know what they want to say to God. A worship leader won't come with a fixed list of choruses we are going to sing. But he will come with choruses that he knows and he will ask which of these should we sing in response to God's Word.

It has also this great advantage. When people first come to church they are not ready for worship. I have timed it and it usually takes twenty-five minutes to get people to worship. That is because you only really begin to worship when you think more about the Lord than you think about yourself or the people around you. Then you begin to worship. People don't do that in the average service. The worship leader is struggling to help them into worshipping the Lord. That is because most people have been so busy right up till the time they came to church that they are not ready for worship. After they have listened to God they are ready to worship immediately. So, often, after they have listened to the Word it is announced: "Now we'll sing a last chorus and you

can go home." Or they don't even allow a congregation to respond to the Word but send them home. Tragedy! Now you can save that twenty-five minutes by having the Word first. Then at the end of that they are thinking about the Lord, they have heard from the Lord, and they are ready to respond and reply to him.

That is why every synagogue has that order of worship and the early church, we know, had the same order of worship. It was built on the synagogue pattern. I plead with you to try that. But it puts more responsibility on the one giving the Word because they must give it to prepare people for worship, and it puts more responsibility on the worship leader to sense what the people want to say. You can't prepare for worship by having a list of choruses we are going to sing. You have to say, "What could we sing that would express what the people are now feeling?" But if you do it properly it is a far better way to worship: Word first; worship second. I commend it to pastors to think about. But you will need to get your preaching in order and you will need to get your worship leader in order.

I think it is tragic that church after church hands over its worship to the youngest and the least mature of the people in the church, so that the worship of everybody is led by young people. They will turn it into a disco — that is their culture. The old people will just have to fit in. That is not New Testament worship. I am sorry, but it is a dead end and people will be getting tired of it too quickly. Ritualism is one enemy of worship but *rut*ualism is the other. The only difference between a rut and the grave is the depth. We have got into a terrible rut. It is universal. Every country I go to it is the same — the same routine, the same musicians, the same lead singers, the same choruses, same-ish. Worship should be exciting, stimulating, and it is *after* the Word.

FINANCE

Let me now come on to finance. The New Testament says more about money than about prayer, salvation, heaven or any other subject. Jesus was always talking money. Go through the Gospels and underline "money" when it appears. What we do with our money as individuals is important, and what a church does with it is very important. I emphasise that we are not taxed in the New Covenant. There is no biblical basis for teaching Christians to tithe. That is a very important point. We are told to give —to give regularly, to give sacrificially, to give proportionately relating to our income, and above all to give cheerfully. Which doesn't mean grinning like a Cheshire cat when the collection plate comes to you. It means voluntary, eager giving. The word is "cheerful". In other words, God doesn't want your money unless you want to give it. But Christians have far more reason to want to give it than any Jew who had to tithe. He had to tithe twice and then give more, so that the average Jew under the covenant of Moses gave twenty-five per cent of his income. We need to remember that when preachers say you should tithe.

Well, the church should never be in debt, which is stealing money from those to whom you owe it, and the church may use tax refunds from the government if you are in a country where that applies. In England, we can claim tax back on money given to the church. Too many churches are relying on that tax refund. I tell them, "Don't use the tax refund for your running expenses. Use it for capital expenditure on new equipment or new buildings because there is going to come a day very soon when governments no longer refund tax for churches." Then those who have relied on that for their running expenses are going to be in trouble. So, I am trying to get British churches to prepare for that.

But we are not to give all our giving to the church. We are to give to missions; the poor, widows particularly, should be our concern, and orphans, those who don't have a man to look after them. God the Father is very concerned about widows and orphans but apparently has no concern for widowers. Isn't that interesting? That is because the man has the duty to provide for his wife and children in scripture. Widows and orphans have no man to look after them.

In our church business meeting on one occasion, a little lady got up and said, "Thus saith the Lord, 'I want you to give money to other churches in this town.'" That came as a bit of a shock. We had never given a penny to other churches in town. They can raise their own money; we'll raise ours. We gave thirty-five percent of our income as a church to various causes: the poor, missions and a lot of other deserving causes. But giving to other churches in town? That was ridiculous. Besides, if we start giving them money that sounds patronising, as if we are saying: "We're the rich church so we'll help you, the poor churches." People aren't going to respond to that.

Anyway, we believed it was the Lord. I went to our bank manager who was called Julius Caesar. I am telling you the truth. He was the manager of the National Westminster Bank, with whom we banked. I said, "We want to open a new account."

"Oh," he said, "who's this for?"

I said, "The other churches in town."

He opened this account and we poured money into it. It got bigger and bigger and we didn't know how to deal with it. Hundreds of pounds were in it and still it was lying there, doing nothing. We thought about how we could take this to other churches without insulting or without patronising them. Then we had a tornado in our town and the roof of the Roman Catholic church (a modern building) was blown right off.

That presented us with a problem. Did God want us to give that money to the Roman Catholic church? He did. So, I went to the Irish priest who was in charge of that church, gave him a big cheque and said, "That's to put your roof back on." If he'd had a weak heart, he would have been a goner. He staggered backwards and said, "I have never heard of Baptists financing Roman Catholics." He could hardly believe it. He said, "Why are you doing this?"

I replied, "The Lord told us to. I don't think we wanted to, but the Lord told us to. So there's your cheque."

Then he said an interesting thing: "You're the Bible church, aren't you?"

He said this because we had just read the Bible right through, non-stop, from Sunday evening to Thursday morning without a break. We had read it aloud. We didn't know what would happen, but two thousand people came and we sold half a ton of Bibles. It was an amazing time. Of the things that happened, I will mention just two. There was a mayor of our town who was a nominal Roman Catholic. He was a little man called Alderman Sparrow, which was quite a neat name for a little guy. He wore a gold chain of office with the arms of the town. He heard about this and he said, "Could I come and read for you? I've never heard of anybody reading the Bible right through, but as mayor of this town I'm interested and I would like to represent the town council and read." We were dividing up into fifteen minutes for each person and we said, "Tuesday afternoon at 3.30 is still free. You could come and read then. Are you free?"

He said, "Yes. Oh, I'll bring my wife as well. We'll both come and I'll read for you." Then he said, "Do you mind if I wear my gold chain of office?"

We said, "Not as long as you wear something else with it."

He came and he read. But he came without his wife. We asked, "Where's your wife?"

"Oh," he said, "we've got unexpected visitors. She was up at dawn, cooking, mending, doing the beds and getting ready for these visitors. So, she sends her apologies. Where do we read?"

I replied, "I don't know. Just get up at three thirty, take the Bible and read on." He read Proverbs 31. He read about the best wife of all, who gets up at dawn, looks after the family, makes the bed, cooks, and he thought ... he began to smile. Then he read this sentence: "Her husband is well-known for he sits in the council chamber with the other civic leaders." When he had finished reading he came over and sat by me and said, "I'm reading about myself in the Bible. Could I buy a Bible and take it home to read?" We gave him one and he took it home to read to his wife.

Another lady who was taking part had not told us beforehand but she was finishing reading and then rushing off to an appointment with a lawyer to institute divorce proceedings against her husband. She read Malachi: "'I hate divorce,' says the Lord." She never went to see the lawyer. Her marriage was put together again and she is still happily married. So many people were touched by nothing else than reading the Bible all the way through.

The Catholic priest had heard about this and so he said, "You're the Bible church, aren't you? My people don't read the Bible. To tell you the truth, I don't. I give them a little homily each Sunday, tell them what the Pope said recently, but really, we're not a Bible church. Would you send some people from your church to teach the Bible to mine?" We leapt at it and we carefully chose ten people who went to that church, week after week, to teach them the Word of God. You can guess the result of that. It all happened because in our monthly business somebody had heard from the Lord: "Spend your money on other churches." Little did we dream what it would lead to.

Every December 31st, if we had any money in the bank we took it out and we gave it away. So, on January 1st we began with nothing. We had to begin with faith for the budget of the new year. That is how we lived by faith as a church — by starting with nothing every year. I am not saying this is the only way, but we wanted to be known as a giving church rather than a taking church; not a church that built up its own balance but a church that spent its money as God wanted us to. Finance is very important to a church.

EVANGELISM

Let us turn to evangelism. The church is the only society on earth that lives primarily for its non-members. Every other society is a group of people living for its members. It is devoted to obeying Christ, and he said, "Go into all the world, baptise people, and teach them to observe all that I've commanded you." That can't be done in five minutes. But people try to say, "Repeat the sinner's prayer. You're in." Here is a challenging question: how many sinners would call you their friend? Because the best method of evangelism is friendship evangelism. More people come to Christ through a friend than through all the big crusades put together. Usually it is because a friend is a Christian that people start coming with them to church or start asking them questions. We are called to fish. Sheep fishing — it boggles the mind! But that is what we are called to do. We are the flock of God, but we are the fishers of men.

Now for some very practical tips. Not all the people in any church are gifted in evangelism. Probably about ten per cent of your membership have a gift of evangelism. They are the people who bring others to your church. They are the people who, when you go to their home, have unbelievers

there with them. Some people have a real gift of evangelism. They should be set free from any other job in the church to go out and fish. That is the first thing I want to say: find the ten per cent of your people who are really good at fishing and send them fishing. Don't load any other job in the church on them. So often I have seen people who have a gift for fishing who are made the church treasurer, or a deacon, or a Sunday school teacher, or what have you. Set them free to go out and fish for the church.

Secondly: every new Christian is a good evangelist for about the first three years of their Christian life. They still talk the language of the world; they still are able to communicate with the people that they work with and play with. Matthew collected a whole lot of tax collectors to meet Jesus — he was able to, because he was still one of them. Unfortunately, the longer we are Christians the more we model ourselves on other Christians. I find that very sad. It comes out especially in our prayers. I am sad when people stop praying like they prayed when they were first Christians, when they didn't know how to pray. But they have heard other people pray, and they pick up the jargon so quickly. Have you ever heard of "just" prayers? "Lord, we just come and we just ask you to just bless us." Every other word is "just". It is a habit some Christians have and other Christians pick it up. It is amazing.

There was one man who came to our church and he said: "Lord [cough] we come to you tonight and we just [cough] ask you to bless this," and I thought, "The poor man's got a frog in the throat — plague of frogs from Pharaoh. He can't get it out." Then the next man came to our church and the same thing happened and he got a frog in his throat. He said, "Lord [cough] we're so glad to be [cough] here tonight," and I thought, "That's the second." When the third came I got suspicious. I found they were all Exclusive Brethren, and that the leader of that movement had a dry throat. They had

all copied him and thought this was the way to pray.

When someone first prays as a new Christian, it is delightful. "Lord, we bring Mrs. Smith's leg to you." But it is *real*. We had a gardener in our church who never ceased that kind of prayer and he put us all to shame. He would break out in the church service and say, "Lord, I've just had a Victoria plum and that's the best fruit you made. I've really enjoyed it." It was not the kind of prayer you expect of Christians. But it was so fresh and so real.

You see, when we are young Christians we talk naturally —and then, alas, we begin to accept Christian culture. Therefore, new Christians are great for evangelising others. Their theology may be dreadful but they can go and win others. So, put together the ten per cent of your people who have a gift for it with all the new Christians, and let them go and fish. You don't need to wait until the Christians mature, become too much like you; but while they still speak the language, while they are still able to communicate, use them. New Christians make great evangelists. They can learn their theology later but they will go out and talk about Jesus to someone else in a real way.

You need a model evangelist among the leaders of the church to lead that group. A vicar of a Church of England parish said to me, "I've preached on evangelism; I've given out books on evangelism, but my people don't evangelise. I just can't get them to go out and fish."

I said, "Well, I'll tell you why. It is because you don't."

He said, "Well, I'm not really an evangelist. It's all I can do to keep the church going, to preach every Sunday, and keep the programme running."

I replied, "Well, your people will not evangelise until they see someone doing it. You'll have to bring an evangelist into the church to let them see it happen. Then those who have that gift will vibrate with him and join him." That is what he did.

That is why it is so important to have more than one leader in a church, because no leader has all the gifts and therefore cannot bring out all the gifts in a church. The church will reflect his strengths and his weaknesses if he is the only leader. That is why you need a corporate leadership, and among them have an evangelist who can teach the people how to evangelise by letting them see it done. Most of us learn what skills we have not by reading books but by watching someone else do it. I am not an evangelist; I praise God for the hundreds of people who seem to come to the Lord through my teaching. But nevertheless, when I discovered I am not an evangelist, having tried to do it for a year full-time, I praised God that I know what I am not. That is freedom. So, I don't try to be what I am not. I get on with what I am and what I can do. It was teachers in the church whose example I followed because they taught clearly, they taught well, and my little heart said, "I want to be like that." That's how I got into it.

The first few times I taught in church I was so nervous that I drained the water in the glass underneath the pulpit. I was terribly nervous; I suffered from diarrhoea for days before and after—literally. But I had to learn how to do it. Some of those glasses of water in the pulpit were an interesting study in pond life — they had been there so long. Yet I drank them dry just to keep going. But I learned, and now I praise the Lord I have found out what I am and I shall go on using that gift as long as he gives me strength and health, and to him be the glory.

Let us build New Testament churches that provide the Lord with what he wants from us. Amen? I shouldn't have said that! "Amen" is not a word to put a question after —it is an affirmation. Amen!



ABOUT DAVID PAWSON

A speaker and author with uncompromising faithfulness to the Holy Scriptures, David brings clarity and a message of urgency to Christians to uncover hidden treasures in God's Word.

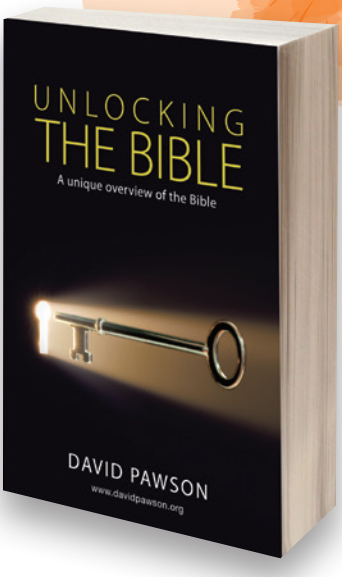
Born in England in 1930, David began his career with a degree in Agriculture from Durham University. When God intervened and called him to become a Minister, he completed an MA in Theology at Cambridge University and served as a Chaplain in the Royal Air Force for three years. He moved on to pastor several churches, including the Millmead Centre in Guildford, which became a model for many UK church leaders. In 1979, the Lord led him into an international ministry. His current itinerant ministry is predominantly to church leaders. David and his wife Enid currently reside in the county of Hampshire in the UK.

Over the years, he has written a large number of books, booklets, and daily reading notes. His extensive and very accessible overviews of the books of the Bible have been published and recorded in *Unlocking the Bible.* Millions of copies of his teachings have been distributed in more than 120 countries, providing a solid biblical foundation.

He is reputed to be the "most influential Western preacher in China" through the broadcast of his best-selling *Unlocking the Bible* series into every Chinese province by Good TV. In the UK, David's teachings are often broadcast on Revelation TV.

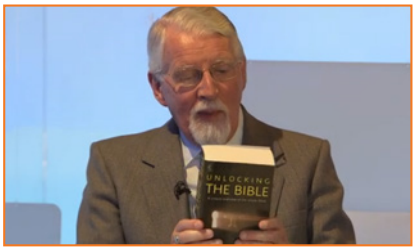
Countless believers worldwide have also benefited from his generous decision in 2011 to make available his extensive audio video teaching library free of charge at **www.davidpawson.org** and we have recently uploaded all of David's video to a dedicated channel on **www.youtube.com**

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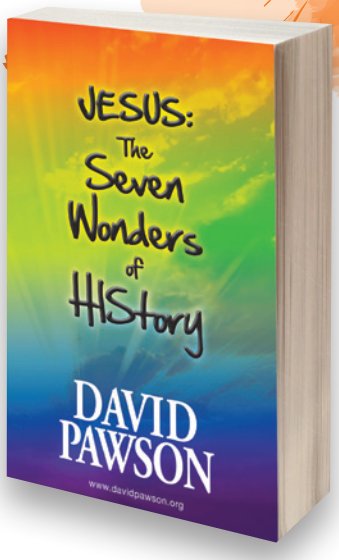
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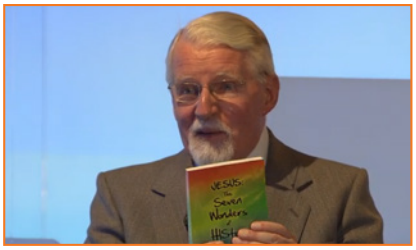


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David Pawson's vision is that his teaching library should be made available to as many people groups as possible around the world, in their own languages, for the lowest possible cost whilst maintaining the highest possible quality.

In 2011 the Trust started the work of transcribing and translating David's Teaching Library into other languages. Including Mandarin, Spanish, and Russian as well as many other international languages most recently we have started translating into Arabic, Portuguese, Bahasa Indonesian, Tamil, German and Polish and there is much more to do.

The aim of the Trust is to provide free Bible teaching to the global church. David and the Trust have chosen not to build and invest in an organisation, nor to continually make requests to the general public or other sponsors for financial support. The Trust has no full-time workers and all of the Trustees support the work on a voluntary basis whilst performing professional roles in the marketplace.

Every time we meet we seek earnestly to pray that God will direct us and supply our needs and the resources required to faithfully spread His Word.

If you have been personally blessed by David's teachings and wish to support the ongoing work of his ministry we would very much appreciate both your prayer support and any donations, no matter how large or small. Please only give if you can afford to do so. Any support will be received with genuine gratitude and will be used only for the work of distributing David's teachings.

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