

PATTERN OF CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

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Pattern of Church Development

INTRODUCTION

Lately, there has been a lot of talk about “church planting” and many organizations and ministries are trying to do it or trying to teach others to do it. The problem is that, in most cases, they don't have an understanding of the Lord's processes or methodologies for the development of a local church. Jesus is the one who is building His Church not us. If we are to be of help to Him in the building process, then we need to understand His methods. Only His Way will produce the correct result. Our way may produce a work, even one that helps people, but it won't produce a functioning body as the Lord intends.

In this season of restoration the Lord is restoring many truths to us that have been lost or buried in tradition and natural reasonings. As we study the scriptures and the Holy Spirit brings enlightenment and understanding, it is important that we implement that which the Lord has given. We must not only know the truth; we must do or apply the truth. We can't receive more truth until we walk in the truth that He has already given. The Lord doesn't desire to titillate our intellect. He desires for us to participate in fulfilling the Father's purpose in the earth. We do this by walking out each truth as He reveals it. This is part of the process of being conformed to His image.

What is “Church”?

We have taken the word *church* and given it a religious meaning which is different than its original usage. In order to remove from its meaning all of the tradition, which has been attached to the word, we need to establish its original meaning from the Scriptures.

The Greek word translated as church (in the English bible) is *ekklesia* and has a definite and specific meaning—an assembly formed by calling people out of a larger group. This Greek word is made up of two words, the preposition “ek”, which means “out or out of” and “kaleo”, which means “to be called”. Together, “ekklesia” means “to be called out of”. So, the “ekklesia” are the ones called out of the world by God; in other words, the New Covenant people of God.

This word was used in everyday Greek and had a meaning that was understood by all before it was used in the Scriptures. The Greek word is used three times in Acts chapter 19 (verses 32, 39, 41) with its secular meaning and is translated “assembly”. This assembly was called in the City of Ephesus to deal with the effects of Paul's ministry there. We can learn several things from the usage of *ekklesia* in this instance.

- 1) they went to gather in the theater; this establishes the fact that *ekklesia* is not a place but people, an assembly of a particular group of people.
- 2) not all people in Ephesus were allowed to attend, only those that met the requirements of citizenship and were freemen.

When the word, *ekklesia*, was used in the Scriptures, it followed the general meaning of the word as used in everyday Greek; therefore, the two facts that are stated above as applicable to the meaning of the word would also be true of the *ekklesia* of Jesus Christ.

Requirements for Participation

If we are to participate in the *ekklesia* of Jesus Christ then we, too, must meet the proper criteria. There are four requirements and we can find them in Matthew 16:15-18 in Peter's response to Jesus question about who He is.

He *said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. (Matthew 16:15-18 NASB)

First, there was a confrontation with Jesus over the issue of who He is. This is the first step—the issue of Jesus. Second, the Father revealed that Jesus is the Son of the Living God (this revelation does not come through people). Third, Peter acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God. And, fourth, Peter confessed Jesus as the Son of God before others.

It was this revelation of who He is that is the rock upon which the *ekklesia* of Jesus Christ is built

To participate in the *ekklesia* of Jesus, we must have a personal confrontation with Jesus for the revelation, acknowledgment, and confession of Him as the Son of the Living God. This makes us a member of the *ekklesia* universal; that is, a part of all who have become a part of Christ.

To become a part of the local *ekklesia*, we must reside in a locality. The local *ekklesia* is that part of the *ekklesia* universal which is resident in any given locality.

USAGES OF "EKKLESIA" (As translated Church in the KJV)

Church in a city	35 times
Church in a house	4 times
Churches in a province or region	36 times
Church universal	20 times
Church local, but not exactly defined	16 times
Church in the wilderness (O.T. Church)	1 time
Assembly (of the City of Ephesus)	3 times
<i>Churches (plural) in a city</i>	<i>0 times</i>
<i>Church (single) in a province (region)</i>	<i>0 times</i>
TOTAL	115 times

We can see from the way *ekklesia* is used that there are only two defining areas for a local

church: 1) city; 2) house. It is unscriptural to speak of two or more churches overlapping one another in any given locality. The use of the word is never plural for a city and never singular for a province.

Using the English word “church” incorrectly obscures the purpose of God and causes our understanding to deviate from the clear meaning of scripture. Why has this happened to us? It seems to me that our traditions are at fault. It begins with the King James translators.

Many times Greek words are simply transliterated into English without actual translation. An example is “baptize” with is a transliteration of the Greek word “baptizo”. When words are transliterated they will look and sound similar to the original word. We see this scenario for “ekklesia” in languages other than English. For example: “ekklesia” in Spanish is “iglesia”; “ekklesia” in French is “eglise”. Notice how similar in look and sound the words are. However, in English we have translated “ekklesia” as “church”.

It doesn't look or sound like anything similar. Does it? That's because “church” doesn't come from “ekklesia” but, instead, comes from the Scottish word “kirk”. How did this happen?

How “Ekklesia” Became “Church”

First, a little historical background. England, under the reign of Henry VIII (Henry Tudor), split from the Holy Roman Empire and the Roman Catholic Church and formed the Anglican Church, the Church of England. This was done mainly for political reasons, not religious differences.

Henry had married his brother's wife, Catherine of Aragon; however, she had been unable to provide him with a male heir, which he felt was necessary to maintain the House of Tudor and lead the armies into battle. To resolve this, Henry took Anne Boleyn as a mistress and got her pregnant. But, an illegitimate son would not be able to succeed him on the throne of England. Henry needed to divorce Catherine and marry Anne. However, the Pope denied Henry's request for an annulment of his marriage to Catherine.

To get what he wanted, Henry removed England from the Holy Roman Empire. He created the Anglican Church and installed Archbishop Cranmer who granted Henry his divorce. However, the expected child was not a son but a daughter who later ascended to the throne of England as Elizabeth I.

The only surviving child of Henry and Catherine was Mary, the wife of Philip II of France. In 1547 she sat upon the Scottish throne as Mary, Queen of Scots. During this time, John Knox had established Presbyterianism in Scotland, which was stirring the Scots into a growing revolution away from the Roman papal system.

Young Queen Elizabeth was fighting to maintain her kingdom against the growing power of Mary, who was supported by France. Elizabeth had Mary arrested and brought to the Tower of London and executed, creating a vacancy on the Scottish throne.

The son of Mary and Philip succeeded to the Scottish throne and was crowned James VI

of Scotland. When Elizabeth died in England, she left no heir to the throne. James VI of Scotland survived all of the intrigues and was crowned James I of England. His strong roots and much of his support came from Scotland and from the Presbyterians.

King James had to make a decision concerning Roman Catholicism. He could continue the reforms that were taking place or permit the resurgence of Catholicism in the British Isles. When an attempt was made to assassinate him, he decided to continue with the reforms.

A complete religious break (not just a political one) with Rome required an official English bible translated from the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. Prior to this time, the Scriptures used in England were the Douai version, which was French, or the Latin Vulgate by Jerome.

In 1603, King James convened the “Hampton Court Conference” (Hampton Court was one of his residences). He commissioned them to translate the Scriptures from their original tongues into the English language. The translation was completed in 1611 and is known as the King James version of the Bible.

When the King James translators came to the word “*ekklesia*” they used a Scottish word (“kirk”) as the translation. “Kirk” means a building, literally “the house of God”. That is how “*ekklesia*” came to be translated as “church”. The corresponding Greek word for “kirk” is “*kuriakos*”, which means “house of God”.

The meaning of “house of God” during the 1600's was culturally clear. For centuries they had built monasteries, cathedrals, and meeting places. Their natural frame of reference for “house of God” was the building.

The word, “*ekklesia*,” means “the called out ones”—people called out of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of God; people called out of darkness established upon the truth that He is the Christ. But the word, “church,” has never properly reflected that meaning. It has always meant a meeting hall—a place, not a people. Because of this, we have never had, in the English Bible, a proper rendition of what the Lord Jesus Christ said in Matthew 16:18. So, remember, every time you read the word, “church,” it is the word, “*ekklesia*”—the called out people.

THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

Therefore we have a split in meaning produced by the King James translators. Instead of the *ekklesia* (the people), they introduced “the house of God” (a place). Now we have to deal with the building as the house of God. Is there such a thing as “the house of God”? Look at what the scriptures say about the concept.

"David found favor in God's sight, and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. "But it was Solomon who built a house for Him. "However, the Most High does not dwell in *houses* made by *human* hands; as the prophet says: 'HEAVEN IS MY THRONE, AND EARTH IS THE FOOTSTOOL OF MY FEET;

WHAT KIND OF HOUSE WILL YOU BUILD FOR ME?' says the Lord, 'OR WHAT PLACE IS THERE FOR MY REPOSE? 'WAS IT NOT MY HAND WHICH MADE ALL THESE THINGS?' (Acts 7:46-50 NASB)

This says that God does not dwell in any physical house—one made with human hands.

A Spiritual House

The house of the Lord has always been in the heart of God. Just not in the way that we think. We tend to mix our desires and understanding with the purposes of God. The Lord has not hidden what He intends to do. Even from the earliest days He has spoken to us plainly. Look at the prophetic words of Samuel.

'But I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in My heart and in My soul; and I will build him an enduring house, and he will walk before My anointed always. (1 Samuel 2:35 NASB)

God has raised up Jesus, our High Priest, who has done all that was in the heart of the Father. God says that He will build Him an enduring house. This is where we get into trouble. God has to build the house and He builds it for Jesus and He doesn't build it out of bricks and mortar like we do.

God speaks prophetically to David and adds more details to His intention.

"When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (2 Samuel 7:12-13 NASB)

While David interpreted this word to mean his son, Solomon, the descendant that God describes is Jesus. He is the only one whose throne and kingdom is established forever.

Chronicles records a few more details of this word to David and makes it clear that it is Jesus of whom the prophet speaks.

"When your days are fulfilled that you must go *to be* with your fathers, that I will set up *one of* your descendants after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. "He shall build for Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. "I will be his father and he shall be My son; and I will not take My lovingkindness away from him, as I took it from him who was before you. "But I will settle him in My house and in My kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever."" (1 Chronicles 17:11-14 NASB)

David mixed his own desires concerning the house of the Lord with the word that he had received and passed these to Solomon with the exhortation to build the Lord a house. This was a mis-application of the word to David and resulted in something less than the perfect will of God even though God allowed and gave a measure of blessing.

The bottom line is that it is God's intention to build His house. Anything that we try to

do in terms of building for the Lord is vanity.

Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman keeps awake in vain. ([Psalms 127:1 NASB](#))

God is building a spiritual house for His Son. Only He can build it. For us to refer to a physical building as the house of the Lord is to insult the purpose and plan of the Father.

Construction Materials

It was not by mistake that under the Old Covenant God dwelt in tents. He did not want to confuse us about His purpose for His Temple that He would construct under the New Covenant.

God has His own design and layout for His Temple and we are the building materials. His dwelling place is in the hearts of Men and, as living stones, He is building us together as a spiritual house.

And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ([1 Peter 2:4-5 NASB](#))

Notice the verb tense, “are being built”. This is an ongoing process, which is not completed yet (in time, it is complete in Eternity). Today, the house of God is under construction. Paul also speaks of this in Ephesians.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. ([Ephesians 2:19-22 NASB](#))

Paul also identifies the problem that we have today. He describes the foundation of the house of God. Christ Jesus is the cornerstone of the foundation and the apostles and prophets complete it.

[Note: “apostles and prophets” is referring to the New Testament apostles and prophets for two reasons: (1) “apostles” are mentioned first, and, (2) the Old Covenant is always referred to as the “law and prophets”. In Ephesians 4 the ascended Christ gave gifted persons to us that included apostles and prophets to continue to equip His people for His work in the earth.]

The Western Church, especially the American version, has neglected to recognize apostles and prophets and their current function in the Lord. Without apostles and prophets, how can the foundation be complete? How can a building be built with an incomplete foundation? In our ignorance of His plan and purpose to build His house are

we actually hindering the Holy Spirit from doing His job?

The Lord did use the methodology of building Solomon's temple as a spiritual lesson for the way He is building His spiritual house.

The house, while it was being built, was built of stone prepared at the quarry, and there was neither hammer nor axe nor any iron tool heard in the house while it was being built. (1 Kings 6:7 NASB)

If we consider the quarry as the world and us as living stones being quarried from it then the spiritual application becomes very thought provoking. The ascended Christ has given us Evangelists to dig up the stones and Pastors and Teachers to clean them up and begin shaping them. Then Apostles and Prophets help build them together as they are laid in the proper place in the building of God. At least in my discernment, this appears to be the Lord's intention.

However, what appears to be happening is something different. The Evangelists are digging up the stones and throwing them onto the bank of the quarry. Then Pastors come along and start piling up the stones and washing the dirt off of them. They become very protective of "their" stones and become concerned that another Pastor will come by and take some of "his" stones. So, they build a shed (church) over the stones to help protect them. Then, the stones are piled up in the shed a few times a week and the Pastor sprays them with the water hose to wash them. Sometimes, a Teacher might polish them a little bit but all in all very little change occurs to the stones.

A pile of stones isn't worth a whole lot. The stones have to be built together in order to accomplish the purpose of the One who owns the stones. The Pastors and Teachers should be cleaning, shaping, and polishing the stones in preparation for them to be built together. As the verse above says, the stones were prepared before they were built together. A properly prepared stone fits into place without fuss or bother. It has been shaped for its proper place and function.

It is the Apostles and Prophets that bring order and structure to the building. They are part of the foundation upon which the stones are placed. Paul considered himself as a "wise master builder". In other words, he had the architect's viewpoint of the building.

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:9-11 NASB)

The Apostles and Prophets are the ones who see the "big picture". They have received the heart of the Father and have adjusted their perspective to His viewpoint. Paul saw his work (his function as an apostle) as laying the foundation of Jesus. Once done, others would build on it. The work of the apostles and prophets is to build people together so that they are placed and function according to the purpose and calling of God for them.

Those who are called to work are the ones who are building the house of the Lord as a dwelling place for Him. The worker must be careful about the building materials that he is using. God has established His own building specifications.

Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15 NASB)

Our work only has value if we are using the proper building materials. Improper materials will not stand the test.

For centuries now we have built bigger and more elaborate sheds to protect the stones; but the spiritual house has not been built. It is time that we return to the original specifications, the original design blueprints, which specifies the materials to be used and where and how everything is placed. It is time for the people of God to recognize those called as true Apostles and Prophets, who have received the Father's heart. We need to receive their ministry and yield to the process of being built together.

THE SEQUENCE OF DEVELOPMENT

We have seen that our church buildings on the corner are not the *ekklesia* of Jesus Christ and hopefully, we can now stop thinking of “church” as a building but think of it properly as the assembly of the Lord’s people wherever they may gather or as the spiritual house of the Lord that is being built from living stones. Now, let's look at the sequence of functions necessary to establish a functioning assembly.

And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, *various* kinds of tongues. (1 Corinthians 12:28 NASB)

God has set an order of importance (of function not value) in the Church, which puts the apostles, prophets, and teachers at the beginning of the list.

The meaning of “set some” (KJV) or “appointed” (NASB): Strong's #G5087, *tithēmi*; *to place, lay, set*: it is translated in the NASB as “appointed (6), assign (2), committed (1), conceived (1), destined (1), down *(4), falling (1), fixed (1), kept (1), kneeling *(2), knelt *(3), laid (22), laid aside (1), laid down (1), lay (4), lay...down (2), lay down (8), laying (2), lays down (1), made (4), make (4), offer (1), placed (4), present (1), purposed (1), put (15), puts (2), puts...away (1), putting (1), reached (1), serves (1), set...down (1), set down (1), sink (1)”.

This word is translated 22 times as “laid”, which is the predominate translation. When read this way “God has laid in the church...” it gives us a different understanding than we may have previously entertained. This fits with the idea of the apostles and prophets as

part of the foundation.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.
(Ephesians 2:19-22 NASB)

The Lord is building His Church, but it is not built out of bricks and mortar but out of living stones (people), which are being built together into a dwelling of the Spirit.

As with any building process, there is an order of construction. Some things have to be done before other things are done. It has nothing to do with value or importance, but simply with what has to be done first and then with what has to be done next. Which is more important if you are building a house—the floor or the roof? Which is the more important worker—the foundation man or the roofer? Or the plumber? Or the electrician? Or the framing carpenters? Or the finish carpenters? See how ridiculous that sounds? The truth is that each is the most important at the appropriate time during the construction process.

The same is true for the Lord's construction project. When a "church" is being built by the Lord, the order of ministry that is required to be laid in the "church" is first the apostles, second, the prophets, thirdly, the teachers, then miracles, etc.

These are worker functions of the local Church. The Lord has His own plan concerning the structure and function of His Body. We either comply with the Architect's plans and schematics or we build a different structure than what was intended.

We are told in Hebrews¹ that when Moses was given the instructions to build the Tabernacle that it was a shadow of something in the heavenlies. If Moses had changed any of the instructions, he would have built a perverted tabernacle that no longer reflected the heavenly original.

We are also told that under the New Covenant, we are the temple of the living God. We, too, in our corporate expression are a reflection or shadow of something in the heavenlies. Why should we have the right to change the Lord's building plans? He has already told us how to build: He is the foundation² and the chief cornerstone, the apostles and prophets complete the foundation³ and we are living stones fitted together⁴. We do not determine how the completed temple will look! That is the exclusive realm of our Lord.

Likewise, it is not our business to determine the order of construction. Jesus has called His workers and assigned them their work. That is also the exclusive realm of our Lord. Why do we seem unable to recognize that?

¹ Hebrews 8:5

² 1Corinthians 3:11

³ Ephesians 2:20

⁴ 1 Peter 2:5

THE CONTINUING PROBLEM

We have allowed worldly, natural thinking to influence our understanding. An organism, which is what the Body of Christ is, functions by each member doing its job without any thought to who is the most important. There is no hierarchy of authority only a sequence of functions. God creates organisms; the world system creates organizations.

An organization is structured by a hierarchical authority structure with the, supposedly, most important person at the top. This is not God's way but is the world's way. God's plans do not function by the world's way.

Instead of the Body of Christ growing and functioning as the organism that it is, we have tried to divide it into various organizational structures, each with its own authority hierarchy. These traditional organizations have continued so long that, even as the Lord continues to restore truth to His people, those who are seeing some of it can't seem to break the authority paradigm of the world system. This creates power struggles between leaders for the positions of authority in the various organizations.

Jesus told us that it was not to be that way. It upset the other disciples when the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus and asked that her two sons might sit on His right and left in the Kingdom. She wanted positions of authority for her sons. Jesus' answer contrasts His commands with the world system's authority structure.

But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them. "It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:25-28 NASB)

Among the people of God, it is not "positions of authority" that are important. It is those who are willing to do the work of service; who function in such a way that others are served. This is not true in an organization, which is why the authority structure and mentality of those who operate in it can never function correctly in the *ekklesia* of the Lord.

Those whose thinking is conformed to the world's methodology will immediately say that someone has to be in charge, otherwise nothing will be accomplished. Well, someone is in charge. He is called Jesus Christ, the head of the church. He was given the responsibility by the Father to build His church. Those who are willing to function in the manner of His calling and willing to be a servant will be involved in the building process.

THE WORK OF THE LORD

While Jesus walked the earth as a man, there were several aspects of the purpose of the Father that He was to accomplish.

Jesus came

- to destroy the works of the devil,⁵
- to offer Himself as the sacrifice⁶
- to preach the Kingdom of God⁷.

Jesus fulfilled the purpose of the Father in all that He did. He finished the work that the Father had set for Him.⁸ But, Jesus also told Peter that He had work that was uniquely His own—that of building His Church⁹. As we have seen, it was prophesied to David that his descendant (Jesus) would build a house for God as a dwelling place. In Eternity this was finished before the foundation of the world.¹⁰ However, in time this is still being completed. The building process is still being done today.

When Jesus ascended, the Scriptures tell us that He gave gifts of men to men to continue His Work.

Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." (Ephesians 4:8 NASB)

The gifts of the ascended Christ are then listed:

And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, (Ephesians 4:11 NASB)

The purpose of those given by the Lord to function in this manner is clearly stated in the next verse:

for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; (Ephesians 4:12 NASB)

The purpose of the so-called five-fold ministry is two-fold:

1. for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, and
2. to the building up of the body of Christ.

Equipping and building are the on-going purposes of the ascension gifts of Christ for the continuing and completion of His Work of building His Church as the dwelling place of God.

The beginning point of the building process is what Jesus told Peter “upon this rock I will build my Church”. That rock was the revelation of Who He is—the Christ, the Son of the

⁵ 1 John 3:8

⁶ Hebrews 7:27

⁷ Luke 4:43

⁸ John 17:4

⁹ Matthew 16:18

¹⁰ Hebrews 4:3

living God.

THE ORDER OF THE WORK

This brings us the central point of this teaching. In the building process, which functions and work come first and which ones come next? In other words, what is the order of the work necessary for the Lord to build His Church?

The First Step—the Foundation

The first requirement is revelation of who Jesus is. This revelation places Jesus as the cornerstone of the foundation. The foundation is completed by the Apostles and Prophets.

having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:20-22 NASB)

In an area the apostles and prophets perform a type of John the Baptist ministry of preparing the way of the Lord. As they preach the word and demonstrate the power of the Spirit, the Father draws those that He has called by revealing Christ.

And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father." (John 6:65 NASB)

The revelation of Christ becomes the cornerstone and the apostles and prophets continue the ministry of the Word further revealing the Lord and His purpose. They continue to lay a solid foundation of the elementary principles of Christ.

The Second Step—Flooring and Framing

Then the Teachers join the Apostles and Prophets and continue to build the believers with the Word. This is in keeping with the order of functions as we previously discussed according to this verse:

And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, *various* kinds of tongues. (1 Corinthians 12:28 NASB)

The stated order of first, second, and third are all functions related to the Word. Since the work begins with the revelation of Christ as the Living Word, it is not surprising the God puts the first emphasis on the Word. If the foundation of the Word is not complete then the building will not stand during environmental upheavals.

This emphasis is found even in the calling of apostles to their work. Our first example of apostles called through the Spirit is in Acts 13, which is a gathering of prophets and teachers. Paul and Barnabas are called forth as apostles from the assembled group, which

means that they were either prophets or teachers. Paul later in his writings identified himself as a teacher and Barnabas was considered a prophet. They both had proven ministries in the word before the Lord called them forth as apostles. In all of those in the scriptures who are called apostles after the Lord ascended (there are about 13 of them), it appears that all of them (to the best of my discernment) were either prophets or teachers prior to being called apostles. The Lord always keeps His Word pre-imminent.

The Third Step—Electrical

After the functions of the apostles, prophets and teachers comes the power hook-ups--"then miracles, then gifts of healings," (1 Corinthians 12:28). If the Word has been proclaimed, taught, and demonstrated properly, the result should be the empowering of the Holy Spirit distributing to each believer gifts for the common good according to His purpose¹¹.

The miracles and healings reveal the coming of the Kingdom of God. They provide demonstrable testimony that Jesus is alive and has been made both Lord and Christ¹² and established as King. Works of power would definitely gain the attention of others bringing them to a place to hear the Word.

The Fourth Step—Walls and Roof

After power comes "helps", literally, helpers who aid, succor, hold on to, relief. Most commentators seem to think that it is deacons to which the writer is referring. However, the original Greek word that is used here (only time in the New Testament) is not the word for deacon and has a different meaning than "one who waits on tables, server" (deacon).

If we remember that the Lord is building a house of living stones that have to be fitted together, then it would make sense that "helps" are those saints who have been equipped to do the work of the ministry (service) and that they are those who help others in the fitting together process. They "hold on to" the stones that the Holy Spirit is placing and render succor, relief, and aid so that those being fitted understand what the Lord is doing. They provide care and service to those moving from the acts of God (power) to the character of God.

The Fifth Step—Finish Work

After "helps" comes "governments", literally, steerings. These are the Elders who provide direction and order to the body of believers. Like a building where the trim work, painting, and cleanup present a clean and ordered look, the Elders provide the same to the Church. They administrate the details of the completion process and bring the "built together stones" into a place of unity where the "house of the Lord" can be indwelt by the Spirit.

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 12:11

¹² Acts 2:36

The Final Step

The last thing in the list is “various kinds of tongues”. This seems to be an odd item to list; however, the scriptures tell us that “tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers;”¹³. Tongues are a form of communication and expression, which, I think, makes the last step to be evangelism—reaching out to unbelievers. This is the final step because now there is a place for them, as they become believers, to be fitted together.

THE END RESULT

We are a Holy Temple

- that is being built up into the Head¹⁴ (Jesus is both the cornerstone and the capstone.)
- that is fitted and held together by the proper working of each individual part¹⁵
- that is being built for a dwelling of God in the Spirit¹⁶

The goal is that the corporate Church becomes a dwelling place for God in the Spirit. We see this pattern in Acts 4.

Peter and John were called before the Council for preaching Jesus as raised from the dead and healing the lame man. The Council let them go after telling them not to preach in the name of Jesus. They returned to the assembled believers and told them what had happened and then they prayed as a corporate group.

"And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." ([Acts 4:29-30 NASB](#))

As they prayed together in this manner, an interesting thing happened to them.

And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and *began* to speak the word of God with boldness. And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one *of them* claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. ([Acts 4:31-33 NASB](#))

These were people who had experienced the Day of Pentecost. There is no reason not to believe that each one had been baptized in the Spirit. Yet, they “were all filled with the

¹³ 1 Corinthians 14:22

¹⁴ Ephesians 4:15

¹⁵ Ephesians 4:16

¹⁶ Ephesians 2:22

Holy Spirit". The Greek word for "all" means "the whole". I think that what is meant here is a form of corporate filling rather than individual. I think that part of the Living Temple was indwelt by God through the Spirit.

The results of them being filled were awesome. There was instant community and care for one another. No one lacked for any need. There was evangelistic boldness with the Word. Great Grace was upon them and powerful miracles occurred.

In one sense of the word, I think that each City Church is a room in the Temple that the Lord is building. However, we don't have to wait until the entire structure is complete before the Owner takes up residence. I think the Lord through the Spirit occupies each room as soon as it becomes "livable"--a corporate filling of the Spirit.