

# Christ's Plan for the Church - Part 2

by William MacDonald

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*William MacDonald emphasizes the unity and function of the church as the body of Christ, highlighting the importance of Christ's headship and the role of each believer's gifts.*

**Duration:** 45:17

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 12:7-14, Ephesians 4:11-12, Ephesians 4:16

**Topics:** "Church"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his personal journey of discovering the importance of exercising spiritual gifts within the context of a New Testament assembly. He emphasizes the need for individuals to develop their own convictions based on the Word of God, rather than relying on the beliefs of others. The speaker highlights Ephesians chapter 4 as a revolutionary passage that reveals the purpose of spiritual gifts in the church. He explains that when every member of the church actively uses their gifts, the body of Christ grows and is protected from false teachings and cults. The sermon encourages believers to embrace their role as evangelists, Bible students, and active participants in the ministry of the church.

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## Transcript

Please turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 12, we're going to read a portion from there, beginning in verse 12, 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and verse 12. For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ. I'm just going to pause there and say that it really is so also is the Christ, that's a unique use of the word Christ.

Christ there means not only the head, but it means the head and the body. The Christ in that verse refers to the whole body of Christ. Astonishing, nobody but the Holy Spirit of God would ever put that in there.

But it's required by the meaning of the verse, for as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is the Christ. For by one spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and have all been made to drink into one spirit. For in fact the body is not one member, but many.

If the foot should say, because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them in the body, just as he pleased. And if

they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you, nor again the head to the foot, I have no need of you.

No, much rather those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. Those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor, and our unrepresentable parts have greater modesty. But our presentable parts have no need.

But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. First of all, let's review a little of the material we went over in the last session. We talked about the assembly of God, and we came first of all to the definition, and we realized that the word means a called out company of people.

And when you specify it concerning the church, it's always indicated so in the Scriptures. The word itself is quite a neutral word. It can be used of a heathen mob in Ephesus, or a mob of people traveling through the wilderness.

It means a gathered out company of people. We mentioned that assembly is really a better word to use than the word church, because when you think of an assembly, you think of people. When you think of a church, you think of a building, at least that's so in this country.

Definitions are important. Then we said that the church exists in two forms, the universal church and the local church. Universal church composed of all believers from Pentecost to the rapture, and the local church, a representation of the universal church.

It should tell to the world the truths of the universal church. We mentioned that there are various types of the church, or symbols, or emblems of the church, it's a body, it's a bride, it's a house, it's a household, it's a garden plot, and it's a temple for worship. We went through some of those things.

We closed our discussion with the importance of the assembly, it's important to God, it's important to Christ, it should be important to us. Now we want to think of some of the great truths of the church, Christ is the head. Christ is the head of the church.

Ephesians chapter 5 verse 23, Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 23, says, For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church, and he is the savior of the body. Christ is head of the church. Every declarative statement in scripture carries with it an imperative, you say, what do you mean by that? Every statement of fact in the Bible carries with it an obligation.

In other words, God doesn't just tell us Christ is the head of the church as a simple fact, he tells us that so that we can make it real in our lives and in our church fellowship. Headship speaks of administration and control, and Christ is the administrator of the church, he is the controller of the church. When you say that Christ is head of the church, that excludes any human headship.

It includes any pope, archbishop, president, it includes any one-man pastor or minister, and it even includes the elders. The elders are not the head of the church, Christ is the head of the church, and the elders are under shepherds in the church. How do we make this practical in our church life? Answer, by living in such close fellowship with the Lord that he can convey to us what he wants to do.

You say, well, how do you do that? Well, first of all, you do it by immersing yourself in the word of God, and I'm speaking particularly of the elders now. Their work would be to immerse themselves in the word of God, in which we have the general outline of God's purposes for us and for the church. Immerse themselves in prayer, seeking the mind of God, and then seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Will God reveal his will to you? Of course he will, and he will tell you exactly what he wants to happen in the church. I think Ray Steadman wrote very well on this subject. He says, all too long the church has acted as if Jesus were far away, leaving church leaders to make their own decisions and their own affairs, run their own affairs.

But Jesus said in the Great Commission, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age. He's present not only in the church as a whole, but in every local church as well. He is present not only in the church as a whole, but in every local church as well.

Jesus himself is the ultimate authority within every body of Christians, and he's quite prepared to exercise his authority through the elderhood. The task of elders is not to run the church themselves, but to determine how the Lord wishes to run the church. Much of this he has already made known through the scriptures.

In the day-to-day decisions, elders are to find the mind of the Lord through an uncoerced unanimity. In other words, the elders get together, they've sought the mind of the Lord, and the Lord is forming their intellects, emotions, and will as to his desire for the church. Thus, ultimate authority, even in practical matters, is vested in the Lord and in no one else.

The point is, no one man is the sole expression of the mind of the Spirit. No one individual has authority from God to direct the church. The title of the article from which that was taken was, Should the Pastor Play Pope? Should the Pastor Play Pope? So that's a great truth.

Christ is the head of the church, brought up very strongly in Paul's letter to the Colossians. He presented it in that way, perhaps in the most forceful manner. Second truth that we want to look at, great truth of the church, is that all believers are members.

Ephesians chapter 2, verses 11 through 22. Ephesians chapter 2, please, and verse 11. Therefore, remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision made in the flesh by hands, that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

But now in Christ Jesus, you were once far off, have been made near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us. Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, that is the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, that he might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and to those who were near. For through him we both have access by one spirit to the Father. Now therefore you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit. Paul is telling here how in a wonderful way, through the work of the Lord Jesus at the cross, he takes these believing Jews and believing Gentiles who are at enmity with one another. Many of the Jewish people believe that God made Gentiles as fuel for the flames of hell.

That's enmity. And it created a tremendous rift in humanity, that rift between Jews. It was actually established by the law, the law of God that set Israel apart as God's chosen earthly people.

But now in the work of the Lord Jesus, believing Jews and believing Gentiles are made one in Christ. And Paul is explaining how that has happened here in this marvelous passage of Scripture. What does that mean to us? We must recognize every indicative has an imperative.

We must recognize the unity of the body of Christ, that all true believers are one in Christ Jesus. This has to do with the reception policy of our local assembly. We must receive into our fellowship all of those who have the brand mark of redemption upon them, without regard to their color, race, nationality, color, I say, or culture.

Of course, there are one or two exceptions to that. We would not receive someone who's under discipline from some other Christian fellowship, would we? That has to be taken place, has to be taken care of at their own fellowship. A person really must be a believer, sound in doctrine, holy in walk, and not under discipline from some other assembly.

The truth of oneness in Christ means we should love all believers, love all believers. Any who've been in the armed forces know this in a real way, what a joy it is to meet someone who names the name of Christ. Perhaps you're far from home, perhaps you're in the war, and all of a sudden someone comes along with a witness for the Savior.

You realize there's a bond there, a bond in Christ, and it's very real. We should love all believers. And remember that in the New Testament sense, love is more a matter of the will than it is of the emotions.

We think of love in this country today as, you know, kind of something that comes upon you, some romantic idea that comes upon you like the flu or a cold or something like that, and you have no control over it at all. But that isn't the case at all. Love is commanded.

You say, well, how can I love? By giving. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Christ also loved the church and what? Gave himself for it. And we can show our love to people by giving ourselves for them, laying down our lives if necessary for the brethren. We need all other believers.

Because that's why I read that passage from 1 Corinthians 12, the members of the body. We need the members of the body, don't we, in order to function properly. And this is true in the universal body of Christ.

We need one another. And we can learn from other believers even if we don't agree with them doctrinally. Let me just pause on that for a moment.

All believers agree on the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. You say, what? Well, the inspiration of the scriptures. You know, if this book is not the word of God, we have nothing.

We might as well just eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die. That would be the proper philosophy of life if this book isn't the inspired word of God. All believers agree in the inspiration of the scriptures.

All believers, true believers, believe in the Trinity. That, of course, includes the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's absolutely fundamental.

Jesus Christ is God. The second person of the Godhead. All believers accept the substitutionary work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

That he died for our sins. That he died as a sacrifice for us. That he died as a substitute for us.

He died the death that we should have died because of our sins. All believers believe he was buried. He rose again.

The resurrection is fundamental. He ascended back to heaven. All true believers accept the gospel.

Salvation by grace through faith and apart from works. Fundamental. You start toying with that and you don't have the Christian gospel.

You start adding to that, you don't have the Christian gospel. True believers accept the gospel. Salvation by grace through faith apart from the works of the law.

All believers believe in eternal life through faith in Christ. And the eternal condemnation of those who reject Christ. These things are basic.

There are many other things that Christians might not agree on. Prophetic matters. We believe Christ is coming again, but sometimes the details we don't always agree on.

We can have very strong feelings on it, but the fact remains that others don't agree with us. I can love all Christians, I need all Christians, even if I don't agree with them on some of these other things. They might not have a leg to stand on in some of these doctrinal matters, but I can learn from their warmth.

I can learn from their zeal for the Lord. I can learn from their wonderful music. I can find good things.

I can see Christ in them and I try to do that. I don't think I've ever met a believer that I couldn't learn something from. And it has to be that way if we're all members of the same body.

And we should pray for all believers. In fact, as Paul says in 1 Timothy 2, we should pray for all men, all people. But we should certainly pray for all believers.

And that speaks very loudly to me today when I think of how believers in various parts of the world are suffering unto death for their faith. Sudan, Muslim countries in general, China, and so forth. The persecuted church today, I hope in your fellowship you're faithfully remembering them.

I hope you remember those three new tribes missionaries who are held captive in Colombia and have been held for over five years now. Imagine being away from their wives and family for five years and really their present status is unknown. We should pray for all believers.

We should rejoice when Christ is preached by other believers even if we might not agree with everything they do. Philippians 1, verses 15-18. Philippians 1, verses 15-18.

Paul says here, and this is written from prison, you know. Although there isn't the smell of a prison about this letter. It's victory and rejoicing.

He says in verse 15, some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife and some also from goodwill. The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bond. But the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.

What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached. And in this I rejoice. Yes, and will rejoice.

And we can rejoice when Christ is preached, even if we can't do everything that those people do. I think of a great gospel crusade in which converts are sent back to apostate churches, to Jewish synagogues. I can rejoice that Christ is preached, but I couldn't become a part of that.

It just would conflict with the principles of the word of God as far as I'm concerned. We have to draw a line. We speak about loving one another, needing one another.

It's true, but we have to be true to our own principles as well. Moody said, I wouldn't put live chicks under a dead hen. When people are saved, he wouldn't put them someplace where they weren't going to be fed the word of God and grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Savior.

I think C. H. McIntosh said it quite well. He said the idea is to draw a tight circle around ourselves as far as our faithfulness to the word of God is concerned. But draw a wide circle as far as love for the Christians are concerned.

That's good. Draw a tight circle around yourself as far as faithfulness to the word of God is concerned. Don't compromise.

Compromise is defeat. But then draw a wide circle of affection and love as far as other believers are concerned. All members of the body of Christ, there are brothers and sisters in Christ.

Not alone that, but all believers are gifted. All believers are gifted, and that's why I read that passage in 1 Corinthians 12, especially verses 7 and 14. If you're here today and you know Christ, he's your Lord and your Savior, you have a gift or gifts.

I will not embarrass you by asking you, if you know what your gift is, raise your hand. But I know that not all hands would go up in the meeting. We should know what our gift is.

How can you carry it out if you don't know what it is? It's very important. You say, well, how would I know what my gift is? Well, I think Bill Gothard said it's that service for the Lord in which you have maximum effectiveness with minimum fatigue. That's not bad.

Maximum effectiveness with minimum fatigue. You engage in various forms of Christian service, and some of them, it's just not your cup of tea. You realize that.

But others, yes, you feel quite at home, and the Lord seems to bless. Sometimes the advice, the counsel of elders is very, very helpful in a case like this. You might ask your elders, what do you think my gift is?

Sometimes elders are a better judge of that than a person himself.

A young fellow might think he's another answer to world evangelism, but his brothers might realize that it's not quite yet anyway. It hasn't developed to that extent yet. Every believer is gifted.

We should know what our gift is. It's not pride to say what your gift is. It's not pride.

It had nothing to do with it. It was a sovereign gift of the Holy Spirit. You didn't pray it in.

You didn't earn it. God gave it to you the time you were saved. And so I don't think there's anything prideful to say what your gift is, and most people would know anyway.

In the local assembly, there should be liberty for the exercise of gifts. Turn to 1 Corinthians 14 and verse 26. It gives you an interesting little insight into churches in the early days.

1 Corinthians chapter 14 and verse 26. How is it then, brethren, whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation, that all things be done for edification? It seems that in the early days of the church, there was a meeting at least, in which there was liberty for the brothers to exercise themselves in the ministry of the Word of God, in praise, in worship, in adoration of the Lord, in giving out a psalm, a teaching, or one of the gifts of the Spirit, to exercise it in that way. There should be liberty for the exercise of the gifts.

The gifts were given not for self-display, but for the benefit of the body. 1 Corinthians 12, verse 7. 1 Corinthians 12, verse 7. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all. It seems that in the early days of the church, people would have the gift of tongues, for instance.

Without ever studying Italian, a man could get up and speak fluent Italian. And sometimes they paraded that. Sometimes they paraded that, and they were saying in themselves, I hope these people will be impressed as I stand up here and speak in Italian.

They didn't care whether it was interpreted or not. In other words, friends, they were showing off. And that's why Paul says this in 1 Corinthians 12.

The gifts were given for the profit of all. Not for self-display, but for the benefit of the church. Good thing for us to exercise our gift for the benefit of others.

The names of the gifts are given three places in the New Testament. There's a list in Romans, chapter 12. There's a list in 1 Corinthians 12 here at the end of the chapter.

And also in Ephesians, chapter 4, there's a list as well. And I'd like to think with you now about that list in Ephesians, chapter 4. Ephesians, chapter 4. And this is very basic as far as I'm concerned, so we're going to dwell on it. Ephesians 4, 11.

He gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. For the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry. For the edifying of the body of Christ.

Till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. To a perfect man. To the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

That we should no longer be children. Tossed to and fro. And carried about with every wind of doctrine.

By the trickery of men. In the cunning craftiness. By which they lie in wait to deceive.

But speaking the truth in love. May grow up in all things to him. Who is the head.

Christ. From whom the whole body joined and knit together. By what every joint supplies.

According to the effective working by which every part does its share. Causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. Now when we read that at first to some of you that might just be a holy jumble of words.

But it isn't that at all. So I'm going to go back and see if we can clarify it just a little. Let's go back to verse 7. To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

If Christ gives you a gift and he does. He gives you grace to carry on that gift. It's very important.

God wants you to do something. He'll give you the power to do it. God's will never leads us.

Where his grace does not empower us. He wants you to do it. He'll give you the power to do it.

That's what verse 7 says. Therefore he says. When he ascended on high he led captivity captive and gave gifts to men.

This means that when the Lord Jesus. Ascended back to heaven. After his work at Calvary.

It was a tremendous victory. He passed through the atmosphere. Through the hosts of evil ones.

Satan and all his minions. He led captivity captive. It was a triumph over his foes.

And he gave gifts to men. Now it says in the psalm. Where this is quoted from.

Psalms 68:18. He received gifts for men. Apparently as one of the fruits of his labors there at the cross of Calvary.

God gave him gifts. He turned around and gave them to men. Paul elucidates that.

Here in this passage. Now this he ascended. What does it mean.

But that he also first descended into the lower parts of the earth. Here. It speaks about the ascension of Christ.

Well Christ had been in heaven from all eternity. How could he ascend. Well of course it presupposes.

His coming down to earth doesn't it. That's what happened at Bethlehem. The incarnation of the Lord Jesus.

When he took upon himself a human body. So Paul is saying here. Now when it says he ascended.

What could that mean. But that first he had to descend. But what does that mean.

Into the lower parts of the earth. That is a difficult thing. But if you'll turn to Psalm 139.

I think you get a little light on the subject. Psalm 139. Is one of the other passages in the scripture.

That uses that expression. The lower parts of the earth. And in Psalm 139.

David is speaking about. His birth. His conception.

And his formation. In his mother's womb. Psalm 139 is really one of the most beautiful psalms.

I think in the entire book. And they're all beautiful. Psalm 139.

So I say. Here you have the formation. Of the fetus.

In the mother's womb. Now he says in verse 14. I will praise you.

For I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are your works. And that my soul knows very well.

My frame. That is my skeletal structure. Was not hidden from you.

When I was made in secret. That's in the womb. And skillfully wrought.

In the lowest parts of the earth. Well now what does that mean? Well it means the womb. Where was the formation.

Of his body. Took place. It's a poetic expression.

It really helps. Sometimes in reading scripture. To have the soul of a poet.

Now I would never have. Put that together. I would never have put.

The lowest parts of the earth. Together with Mary's womb. But that's what it means.

That's what it means. In this passage of scripture. The lowest parts of the earth.

So it says here. When Christ ascended. What does it mean.

That he also first descended. Into Mary's womb. There.

And was born in Bethlehem. He who descended. Is also the one who ascended.

Far above all the heavens. That he might fill all things. And then he turned around.

And gave these gifts. To men. Apostles.

Prophets. Evangelists. Pastors.

Teachers. I'd just like to say. I don't think it means.

That every one of us. Here today. Has one of those gifts.

I believe these are special. Service. Gifts.

To be somewhat distinguished. From the lists. In Romans.

Chapter 12. And 1 Corinthians. Chapter 12.

These are special. Service. Gifts.

First of all. Apostles and prophets. Apostles were men.  
Who witnessed Christ. In resurrection. And whom he sent forth.  
The apostles. In the primary. Sense of the New Testament.  
Are not with us. Today. We don't have apostles.  
In that sense. Today. The prophets.  
Were men of God. In the New Testament. Period.  
Who gave us. The word of God. Gave us.  
The New Testament. The apostles. And prophets.  
Gave us. What we have today. In the pages.  
Of the New Testament. In the primary. Sense of the word.  
We don't need. Apostles. And prophets.  
Today. Because we have their ministry. Right here.  
Now. In a weaker. Sense of the word.  
We may have apostles. And prophets. We may have men.  
That go out. And God. Blesses their work.  
In a marvelous way. I mentioned some. Last night.  
That I would think of. An apostolic. Ministry.  
But not really. Apostles. Not with the.  
Power. And authority. Of apostles.  
We have men. Today. Prophets.  
Not men. Who give. The word of God.  
We wouldn't accept. Anybody. Who professed.  
To give us. The word of God. But men.  
Who expound. The word of God. Who explain.  
The word of God. Prophets. In a weaker.  
Sense. Today. But the other gifts.  
We certainly. Have today. Evangelist.

Evangelist. Is a man. Who goes forth.  
With the gospel. The parish. Is the world.  
Not the church. The parish. Of the evangelist.  
Is the world. Going into all the world. And.  
He goes. Where the fish. Are running.  
Pastors. I believe. In this sense.  
We're itinerant. Pastors. That is.  
And it's plural. You remember. I think.  
In that sense. That. Timothy.  
Was a pastor. He went. And ministered.  
Among the churches. Titus. Was a pastor.  
Certainly. Paul. At the heart.  
Of a pastor. And. Teachers.  
Men. Again. Who expound.  
The word. Of God. Now.  
Verse. Twelve. Is a crucial.  
Verse. Why did he give. These gifts.  
For the equipping. Of the saints. For the work.  
Of ministry. In the. In the King James.  
Version of the Bible. This is a little confusing. It says.  
For the. Edifying. Edification.  
Of the saints. Comma. For the work.  
Of the ministry. Comma. For the edifying.  
Of the body. Of Christ. Sounds like.  
Three different. Purposes. No.  
No. No. No.  
That misses the whole point. For the equipping. Of the saints.

For the work. Of ministry. Look.  
Carefully. At the verse. And to whom.  
Is committed. The work. Of ministry.  
Anybody. The saints. The saints.  
This is revolutionary. Not. To.  
A select. Group. Of clergymen.  
But. To. The saints.  
If you. Are a believer. In the Lord.  
Jesus. Christ. The work.  
Of ministry. Is committed. To you.  
You see. The problem. Is with that word.  
Ministry. Whenever you find. For instance.  
A young man. Today. And he.  
Has a special love. For the word. Of God.  
And he spends his time. Studying the word. Of God.  
And he's growing. In the things. Of God.  
People say. Well. He should go.  
To seminary. And study. For the ministry.  
It's completely wrong. That type. Of thinking.  
If he's serving the Lord. He's already. In the ministry.  
So are you. Men. And women.  
Saved by the grace. Of God. You're in the ministry.  
This is revolutionary. It really does away. With.  
So much. Of what has. Come down.  
Through the years. In the church. Of Christ.  
For the equipping. Of the saints. For the work.  
Of ministry. For the edifying. Of the body.

Of Christ. You see. The church.  
Let's say. Is young. And.  
How is it going to grow. Well. Think of that baby.  
In the crib. The baby. Is in the crib.  
And it's. Legs. Jumping all around.  
Flailing. Its arms. And it's yelling.  
Exercising. His lungs. And that.  
You say. What a waste of energy. No.  
That's part of the growth process. If he didn't use his arms. They would atrophy.  
By his side. He wouldn't be able to use his arms. And that's the way it is.  
With the church. Unless the gifts. Are exercised.  
In the church. They become. Atrophied.  
Too. And we have a lot of that. I'm sorry to say.  
In the church. Today. And.  
It goes on to explain that. So. We all come.  
To the unity of the faith. And the knowledge of the son of God. To a perfect.  
That means. A mature man. A grown up man.  
A well built man. To the measure. Of the stature.  
Of the fullness of Christ. God. Wants the church.  
On earth. To be a good representation. Of the Lord Jesus.  
That's what it means. He wants. Every believer.  
To be such. That when people. Meet him.  
They think. He makes me think of God. Unsaved people.  
They say. He makes me think. She makes me think of Jesus.  
Something about her. That makes me think of Jesus. How do you get this.  
By the exercise. Of the gift. In the church.  
Not by paying. Some man. To do it.

For you. That's what has arisen. In Christendom.  
Paying somebody. To do your religious duties. For you.  
While you go into the business world. And make a fortune. It's not Christian.  
Testament way. At all. The work.  
Of the ministry. Is committed. To every.  
Believer. In the Lord Jesus. Every believer.  
In Christ. Is in. The ministry.  
Notice what it says. In verse 14. That we should no longer.  
Be. Children. Tossed to and fro.  
And carried about. With every wind of doctrine. By the trickery of men.  
In the cunning craftiness. By which they lie. And wait to be.  
What it's saying. Is if you. If Christians.  
Don't exercise. Their ministry. In this way.  
They become prey. To every crazy cult. That runs along.  
That comes along. Somebody knocks at the door. And he's carrying a Bible.  
He's carrying a Bible. He must be good. He'd know better than that.  
If he was. If he knew his Bible. Better.  
And they're taken in. By cultists. By people.  
Who deny the deity. Of Christ. And they don't know.  
Any better. But speaking. The truth and love.  
May grow up. In him. Who is the head.  
Even. Christ. This is God's.  
Program. For the growth. Of his body.  
I think verse. Fifty. Sixteen is beautiful.  
From hold up. From whom the whole body. Joined and knit together.  
By what every joint. Supplies. According to the effective.  
Working. By which every part. Does it share.

Causes growth. Of the body. For the edifying.  
Of itself. In love. In a way.  
What it really means. Is. That the ideal.  
Church. Instead of having one man. Doing all the work.  
And all the rest of the people. Sitting in pews. Contributing their money.  
In the offering. And then just going. About their work.  
During the week. Instead of that picture. It's a picture.  
Of a church. Where every person. Is an evangelist.  
Every person. Is witnessing. For the Lord Jesus.  
Every person. Is a Bible student. Growing.  
In the knowledge. Of the Lord. Every person.  
Is exercising. His gift. For the good.  
Of the Lord. And that's why I feel. This is such a revolutionary.  
Passage of Scripture. This. Is the.  
This. Is. The passage of Scripture.  
More than any other. The reason. Why.  
I. Work. With. Simple.  
New Testament. Assembly. Today.  
When I was in the Navy. The question came to me. Why are you.  
In that assembly. Is it because your father was in it. Would you be just as happy.  
In a denominational. Church. And I said.  
I said. I said. I said.

as overseers in the church, under-shepherds in the church. But that is God's will. Not one man, but a group of elders exercising their gift and their work in the local church.

So we will go on and study this more. We're going to be thinking about the priesthood of all believers, and then we're going to listen to the voices of men who say, that's what this passage of Scripture means. And yet they themselves were ministers of churches when they said it.

It's going to be the great enigma of this conference. Lord, bless his word to our hearts. Father, we pray that your people might be a people of the book, that we might go back to the Bible more and more, not be guided by tradition, not be guided by centuries of practice of the church.

We might go back to the word of God and find your will for the church. Help us all to know, Lord, what our gift is, and live it out to the hilt for your glory, for the salvation of sinners, for the edification of saints, and for the progress of the work of God here on earth. We pray in the Savior's name.

Amen.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/27/SID27933.mp3>

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