

# The Local Church 1 - Part 5

by William MacDonald

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*William MacDonald emphasizes the significance of the local church as God's chosen unit for propagating faith and the importance of enthusiastic involvement in its growth and leadership.*

**Duration:** 8:38

**Scripture:** Isaiah 40:15, Matthew 16:18, Acts 15:14, Ephesians 3:10, Colossians 1:25, 1 Timothy 3:1

**Topics:** "Ecclesiology", "Church Leadership"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the significance of the church as a divine institution that will endure against all odds, serving as a witness to angelic beings and forming the capstone of scriptural revelation. The church is portrayed as a place where believers are refined and unified, fulfilling God's purpose to call people to His name and propagate the faith. The importance of elders in local assemblies is highlighted, showcasing God's deep regard for the church over worldly empires.

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## Transcript

Long ago, isn't it? He said, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. The church will endure, the only society on Earth to which the Lord has promised perpetuity. The importance of the church, secondly, can be seen in the amount of space that's devoted to it in the New Testament.

I think this is a valid test. How much time is devoted? A great deal. Ephesians, Colossians, all through the Old Testament, you find truth concerning the church.

The church is an object lesson to angelic beings. That's marvelous. The angelic beings are looking down, and they're seeing the manifold wisdom of God in the church.

That's a subject I can't go into in detail tonight, but just think of it this way. We're all kind of rough stones, in a way, and we need a lot of polishing. And God brings us together in the local church, and we're rubbing against one another and studying the word of God and seeking to obey the Lord.

And pretty soon, a lot of the roughness is gone. And we're melded and unified together and singing the praises of the Lord in unison. I think that's one way in which the church is a witness to angelic beings.

The church forms the capstone of scriptural revelation. In Colossians 1.25, Paul uses a strange expression. He says, to fulfill the word of God.

Colossians 1.25, to fulfill the word of God. Well, you'd think, well then, Colossians is the last book of the New Testament. But it wasn't, really.

He says, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God, which was given to me for you to fulfill the word of God. In what way does the truth of the church fulfill the word of God? Well, it's the last great truth to be added here in Colossians. And the church is the unit on earth that God has chosen to propagate the faith.

The church is the unit on earth that God has chosen to propagate the faith. Somebody has said, everywhere the apostles went, they planted assemblies. Everywhere we go, we start organizations, missions or organizations.

That's been the history of the church, hasn't it? Everywhere the apostles went, they founded assemblies. Everywhere we go, we establish missions or organizations. God loves the church.

God loves the assembly. His purpose in this age is to call out of the nations a people for his name. I take that very seriously, Acts 15.14. God's present purpose is to call out of the nations, the Gentiles, a people for his name.

Listen, if I'm going to be walking with God, that's what I'm going to be doing. If I'm going to be walking, if I'm going to be on the same wavelength as God, that's what I'm going to be interested in, seeing people saved and gathered into local New Testament. Christ loves the assembly.

God loves the assembly. Christ loves the assembly. A friend of mine wrote this.

If we could but realize that the dearest object in this world to our Lord Jesus is his church, we would spend less time on peripheral activities and concerns. Our efforts would then be directed toward the up-building of the local church, where we fellowship and our love would reach to every member of the body. Thus, we would be caring for that which he loves most in this world.

God loves the assembly. Christ loves the assembly. I love the assembly, too.

I've been attending an assembly long before I was saved. My father used to carry my brother and myself on his shoulders through snowdrifts to get to the assembly. My first memory is of a little assembly meeting in the living room of a home, a few elderly ladies, and maybe one or two brothers, but they knew God.

They knew God. And I tell you, they had a tremendous impression on my life. I love the assembly.

We should all love the assembly, and we should be enthusiastic about the assembly. I noticed down through the history of the church that men God has used in planting churches are men who were enthusiastic about it. I think of Bach Sing in India.

I don't want to exaggerate. I think that man saw at least 250 local fellowships planted. I think of Watchman Nee in China.

He was enthusiastic about the assembly. He saw great work done in China before he was imprisoned. I think of J.N. Darby, traveled for 23 years over the continent of Europe.

And everywhere he went, he left New Testament assemblies planted. His writings fill 34 volumes. A man whose life was all for God, and he was enthusiastic about it.

And in our own time, there are men like that who have the work of apostles in their hearts. I don't say they're apostles, but their ministry is apostolic, and they're going throughout the world, and they're seeing assemblies planted. We should all love the assemblies.

I want to tell you tonight, an elder in a local assembly means more to God than the ruler of a great empire. So why do you say that? Because I find more devoted in the New Testament to elders, 1 Timothy chapter 3, Titus chapter 1. I don't find chapters devoted to kingship, do you? To presidents? I don't see that in my Bible. An elder in the smallest, most despised assembly means more to God than the ruler of an empire.

Parents say, now eat your Cheerios, and someday you may be president. I say, eat your Cheerios, someday you may be an elder. And if we could see from God's standpoint, that's the burden of the emphasis we would have in our hearts.

I tell you tonight that the weakest assembly on earth means more to God than the greatest empire. God speaks of the nations as being a drop in the bucket. That isn't much, is it? But he speaks of the church as being the body and bride of Christ.

That's something, isn't it? That shows you God's view of things. But having said all of this, I just want to close with this, and you'll hear me say this again in our meetings. It isn't just enough to follow the divine pattern.

You have to have the divine power, too. It isn't just enough to go through the proper routine. You've got to have a living faith that's reaching out to others.

And we must never lose sight of that fact. Shall we pray? Father, tonight we feel that we've felt something of the heartbeat of yourself and of your lovely son. Forgive us, Father, for treating the church, the assembly, so lightly.

Help us to be renewed in the spirit, Lord, that we might have a desire not only for evangelism, to see people saved, but that they might be gathered together on New Testament principles, with New Testament power, to honor, glorify your great name. We pray in your purest name. Amen.

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