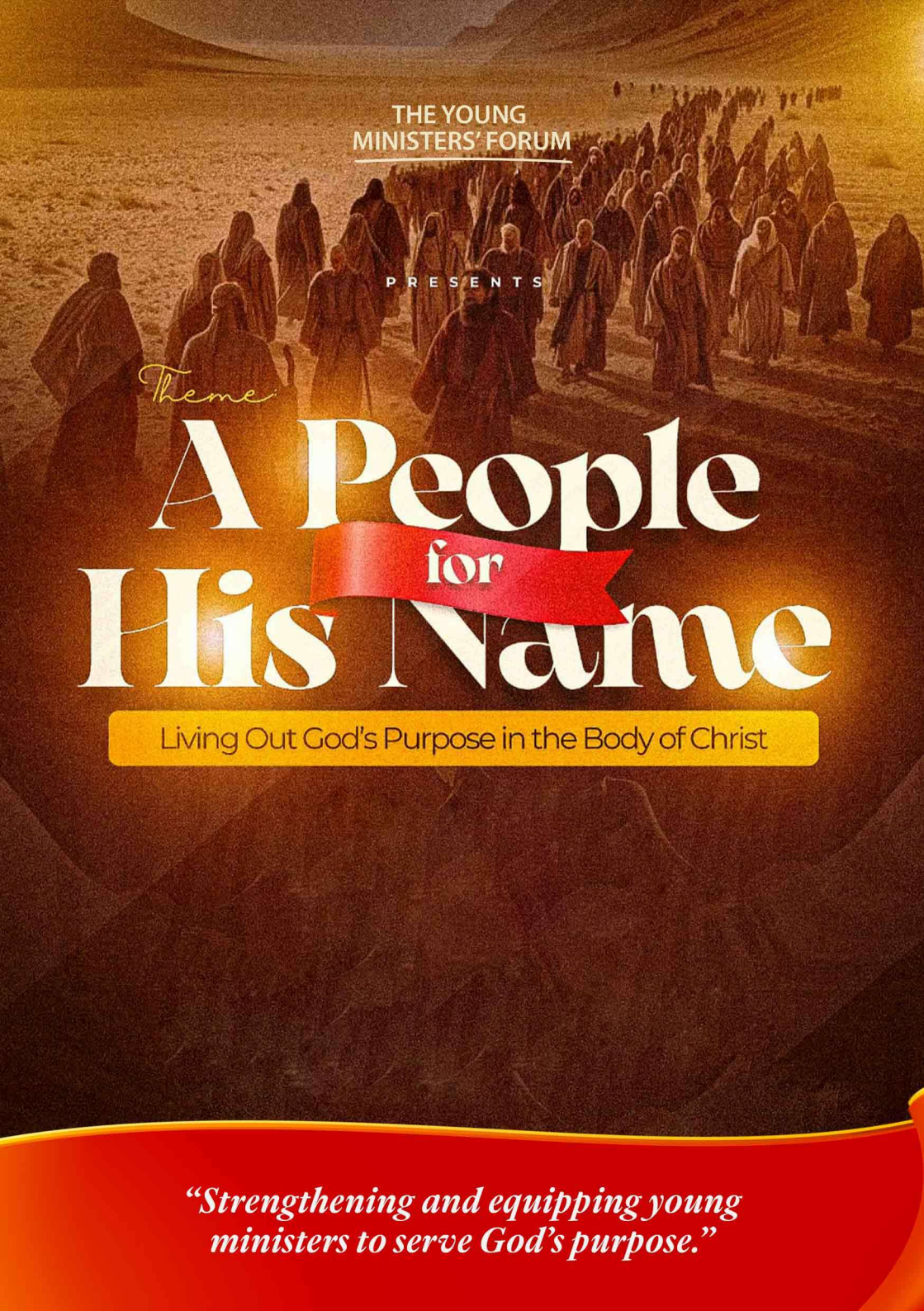




THE YOUNG
MINISTERS' FORUM

P R E S E N T S

Theme:

A People for His Name

Living Out God's Purpose in the Body of Christ

*“Strengthening and equipping young
ministers to serve God’s purpose.”*

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contact +2348089440040 or send a mail to:
theyoungministersforum@gmail.com

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ISSUE PAPER: A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME

Introduction

Extremes are common to man. We have always found ourselves swinging from one side of the hedge to the other. Some try to stay in the middle of the road, but human nature tends to gravitate toward extremes. And the body of Christ, historically and even now, has often done the same.

One of the major extremes we've seen is in how we view Christianity—either as solely a personal relationship with God or, at times, as only a community obligation. For a long time, many have emphasized that Christianity is personal—and rightly so. But the Bible teaches that Christianity is not only personal; it is also deeply corporate. In fact, the New Testament often emphasizes the corporate identity of the believer.

Unfortunately, ministry today is often rooted in individualism. Many serve God without any real sense of their connection to the corporate body. It's “*me and my calling*,” “*me and my platform*,” with little regard for how we are joined to and accountable to the body of Christ. But this is not the New Testament pattern. The New Testament teaches that while we do have a personal relationship with God, we are ultimately part of a people who share His life, His Spirit, His nature, and His mission. We are heirs together, servants together, and witnesses together.

This is a truth we must recover. Yet, even here, we must avoid the opposite extreme; where community becomes so emphasized that it turns into a kind of cult-like structure that overrides personal relationship and responsibility. The New Testament maintains both: we are individually saved and corporately joined. For example, Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit both individually (1 Corinthians 6) and corporately (1 Corinthians 3). It's not either-or; it's both.

For example, some practices in Scripture depend on personal maturity and individual conscience. Paul addresses this in Romans 14, where he urges believers not to despise or judge one another over disputable matters like food or holy days: *"Let each be fully convinced in his own mind"* (Romans 14:5). He reminds us that *"whatever is not from faith is sin"* (Romans 14:23), emphasizing that there is a personal aspect to our walk with God. Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 8, Paul discusses how some believers may eat food others tagged unclean with a clear conscience, while others may stumble because their faith is weaker. These examples show that personal faith matters. But even then, Paul instructs us to walk in love and avoid causing others to fall (1 Corinthians 8:9–13). Personal liberty is never an excuse for division—we are called to live together in unity, bearing with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2–3). We are a people who share the life of Christ, His nature, His Spirit, and His mission.

We now live in an increasingly individualistic culture—a mindset that is foreign to the biblical idea of the Church. As a result, many believers no longer understand the purpose of the Church or what it means to truly belong

to God's people. This issue paper aims to call us back to the central idea that God's goal has always been to have a people for His name—a people who reflect His nature, represent His authority, and fulfill His mission together.

This vision runs from Genesis to Revelation. Even when God calls an individual, it is ultimately to form a people. From Abraham to Israel, from Jesus to the Church, the plan has always been to raise up a holy nation—a people set apart for His name and His purposes in the earth.

God's eternal purpose is to take from among the nations a people for Himself—a people who will bear His name, reflect His character, call upon Him as their God, and make Him known in every generation. May we rise in this generation as such a people—for His name, for His fame, for His glory.

God's eternal purpose is to take out from the nations of the world a people for His name—for Himself, for His own fame and glory in all the earth. A people who will call upon His name as His representatives, and be called by His name—to identify with Him. A people who will bear His name as we herald His authority among the nations and pursue His purposes and plans in Jesus' name across the earth.

A People for His Name — An Exegetical Look at Acts 15:14

Acts 15:14 says, *“Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.”* This verse sits at the heart of a major turning point in Church history. The context is the Jerusalem Council—a crucial moment when the apostles and elders gathered to discern how Gentile

converts should be integrated into the Church. Paul and Barnabas had returned from their missionary journey among the Gentiles and reported the wonders God had done through them. But there was contention: some Jewish believers insisted that Gentiles must still be circumcised and keep the law of Moses to be saved.

In response, Peter (also called Simeon) stood up to testify. He recounted how God had sent him to the Gentiles—referring to his encounter with Cornelius in Acts 10—and how God had made no distinction between Jews and Gentiles, giving them the Holy Spirit and purifying their hearts by faith (Acts 15:8–9). Then James, the brother of Jesus, adds his voice by affirming that what Peter described is in line with the prophetic Scriptures: God is now calling a people out of the Gentiles for His name.

“Simeon hath declared...” “Simeon” is another form of “Simon,” referring to Simon Peter. James is appealing to Peter’s testimony in Acts 10, where God showed Peter in a vision that what God has cleansed, you must not call unclean (Acts 10:15). Peter’s preaching to Cornelius marked a turning point in salvation history—Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit without becoming Jews.

“...how God at the first did visit the Gentiles...”

The word *“visit”* (Greek: *epeskepsato*) means more than just going to observe. It is active. It means to go to see for relieve or care, it is to check up on the sick so as to show them care and work towards them getting well. It is used to indicate divine intervention, active help and relief. Same root used in Luke

1:68 – “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people.” Also in Luke 7:16 – “God has visited His people!” God moved first toward the Gentiles, not the other way around. How? Through the preaching of Peter! Wow! God can visit a nation, a territory, a whole race by the preaching of a man?

Acts 15:7-9 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

Peter said God made a choice to bring salvation to the Gentiles “by my mouth”. How does God visit a continent, how does God visit a man, or a woman? It is by my mouth, by your mouth, by the preaching of the gospel in the power of the Spirit. When we preach, He then bears witness by giving the Holy Ghost. The word of the gospel is the herald of God’s visitation! To see God’s move, we must preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus. Hence we must yield our mouth to the Lord, our hands, our whole being to the Lord. God works through men.

Acts 5:12 KJV "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people..."

Acts 14:3 KJV "Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands."

Acts 19:11 KJV "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:"

Take My Hands

*Take my hands,
Touch the sick through me with love and compassion,
And they shall be healed.*

*Take my lips,
Let me be Your mouthpiece to the world—
Fill them with utterance and fire,
That souls may be set aflame.*

*Take my body,
My whole being, Lord—
An outlet of Your Spirit to the nations,
A living shrine, revealing Your power and glory
To a world lost in darkness.*

*And there,
Wrought Your works upon the earth!*

Acts 10:44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

Again I see the power of the gospel of Christ, as Peter preached it the Holy Spirit fell! When we preach the Gospel, The Holy Ghost break out! God visits. When last have you preached the gospel, when last have you seen God's power unto salvation. The arm of God can be revealed when the good news is preached. The gospel is preached the arm of the Lord is revealed:

Isaiah 53:1 AMP Who has believed [confidently trusted in, relied on, and adhered to] our message [of salvation]? [Is 52:7, 10] And to whom [if not us] has the arm and infinite power of the Lord been revealed? [John 12:38-41; Rom 10:16]

God's desire is to dwell among men, to visit human kind and he does this by dwelling and moving in us by the Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel.

“...to take out of them a people for his name.”

In Greek, to “*take out*” (lambano ek ex) – means to select, choose, receive. It is to seize, lay hold, to get hold off, to select amidst a population, persons that are for His name, for His glory, for His honour, for His purposes and plan. How is God doing this taking out? Through the mouth of his servants. This brings to mind God's choosing of Israel: “*The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His treasured possession*” (Deut. 7:6).

The phrase “*to take out of them a people for His name*” is prophetic. The Greek word for “*take out*” implies separating or selecting—God is actively gathering a people from among the nations in our days, just as He did with Israel as prophesied by the Apostles. This phrase refers to God's desire as revealed in the scriptures, where God's desire was always to have a distinct people, called by His name, devoted to His glory, and separated for His purposes (cf. Deuteronomy 7:6–8, Exodus 19:5–6). This he started with Abraham (Gen 12:1-3).

James further supports his point by quoting the prophet Amos: “*After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David... That the residue of men*

might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called” (Acts 15:16–17, cf. Amos 9:11–12). He said what God was doing wasn’t Peters idea, it agreed with God’s word through the Prophet. God has known this from the beginning i.e., the Church is not novel in God’s mind. This confirms that the inclusion of the Gentiles was not a new idea—it was the eternal purpose of God. His goal has always been to gather a people, not just individuals, who would bear His name, reflect His nature, and fulfill His mission across the earth.

So when Acts 15 speaks of *“a people for His name,”* it is not referring to scattered individuals but to a corporate body, a new humanity in Christ, composed of both Jews and Gentiles, joined together in one Spirit (Ephesians 2:14–22). The Church is this people—called out, gathered, sanctified, and sent. We are not just saved from something; we are saved into something—into a people, into a body, into a shared identity, and into a global mission under the authority of Christ.

God’s Desire for a People — A Biblical Survey

"A People"

From the beginning, God’s intention was to call out a people to Himself—not just individuals, but a people who would be Holy unto Him i.e., separated exclusively to Him. God called Israel, to be a Holy people i.e., to be separated from the way, culture, manners, gods of other nations unto himself, His way, His plan, His standards. That’s the purpose of the Law, Separation unto God.

Obedience to God's law is the Holiness, the distinction of Israel from other nations. It is God's revealed law that sanctifies.

Exodus 19:5–6 *“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”*

It's in obedience to God's law that they will be “*a people*” from other people. “*A people*” implies distinction, separated, called out, different, special unto God. “*A people*” from all other nations. That's God's plan, an obedient people. It is not just cutting away from others by but separation unto God

Deuteronomy 7:6 *“For you are a holy people to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.”*

Out of all peoples, God chose “*a people*”. Why? To be His treasured possession on the earth.

Deuteronomy 14:2 *“For you are a people holy to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession...”*

Deuteronomy 26:18–19 *“And the Lord has declared today that you are a people for his treasured possession... and that he will set you in praise and in fame and in honor high above all nations... that you shall be a people holy to the Lord your God.”*

These verses reveal that God's covenant with Israel was not about mere national identity but about forming a holy, distinct people for Himself. A people among many people. Why a people? To be holy unto Him, to be

exclusively His as His treasured possession, to be the manifestation of His glory in the world

The Prophets Spoke of This Day

The prophets continually reminded Israel of their identity as God's people and the consequences of abandoning their corporate calling.

As God declared through Jeremiah: *“Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people.” - Jeremiah 7:23*

“You shall be My people, and I will be your God.” - Jeremiah 30:22

And through the prophet Hosea, the promise of restoration is declared even more strikingly: *“In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not My people,’ it shall be said to them, ‘Children of the living God.’” - Hosea 1:10*

“I will say to Not My People, ‘You are My people’; and they shall say, ‘You are my God.’” - Hosea 2:23

These prophetic declarations point to a day when God would restore His people—not by external conformity to the law, but by an inward transformation. As foretold, He would put His laws into their hearts by His Spirit, enabling them to walk in obedience and holiness (cf. Ezekiel 36:26–27, Jeremiah 31:33).

This restoration was not limited to Israel alone. The prophets hinted at a divine mystery: Gentiles—once alienated and without covenant—would also

be called “*My people*.” They would call upon God and be united with His chosen ones.

God delights in having a people set apart for His glory and praise across all the earth. In Christ, both Jews and Gentiles are made one people—redeemed and sanctified by the indwelling Holy Spirit—empowered to walk in the path of obedience and to live as a holy nation unto the Lord.

The New Testament Church as God’s People

The apostles pick up this Old Testament language and apply it to the Church, Jews and Gentiles who believe in Christ.

1 Peter 2:9–10 “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people... who once were not a people but are now the people of God.” (Directly echoes Exodus 19 and Hosea)

This is a direct quotation from Hosea and Exodus, showing how the apostles interpreted and understood God’s heart as revealed in the Law and the Prophets.

“I will say to Not My People, ‘You are My people’; and they shall say, ‘You are my God.’” - Hosea 2:23

“You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” - Exodus 19:6

These passages reveal God’s eternal intention: to form a people for Himself—a people who would bear His name, reflect His holiness, and walk in His authority.

God chose a generation to be kings and priests unto Him. As kings, they were to represent His authority—carrying the dominion of His kingdom among the nations, living as the head and not the tail, above and not beneath (cf. Deuteronomy 28:13). As priests, they were to represent His holiness—set apart to minister to Him and to be a living sign of His presence on the earth.

God’s purpose was to create a holy nation, a special people, a peculiar people for Himself (cf. Deuteronomy 7:6; 1 Peter 2:9). This is the work of new creation—not merely reforming individuals, but forming a community of the redeemed, holy unto the Lord.

This is the doctrine of the apostles: that the Church is the fulfillment of what the prophets foretold. The Church is not a break from Israel but the consummation of the prophetic picture—made up of both Jews and Gentiles, united as one people in Christ. If Israel was the culmination of the old covenant picture of God’s people, then the Church is the fulfillment of that vision in the new covenant reality.

Titus 2:14 “[Christ] gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works.”

The purpose of redemption through the blood of Jesus is to ransom us from sins and to purify us to be “*a people*” for His possession who are entirely given to good works i.e. his will and purpose. His preordained will and eternal decrees for our lives (Ephesians 2:10).

Revelation 5:9–10 “You have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God...”

“...For His Name”

What does this mean? It’s implication carries two ideas.

1. **Covenantal Identity** – God placing His name upon a people, as in Israel (Num 6:27, Deut. 28:10).
2. **Mission and Representation** – They bear His name to the nations (Isa. 43:7, Acts 9:15).

1. Covenantal Identity

“So shall they put My name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.” - Numbers 6:27

In this covenantal act, God instructed the priests to place His name upon the people of Israel. This was not a mere ceremonial gesture—it was a divine conferral of identity. To bear the name of YHWH was to be marked as His possession, to be identified with His nature, glory, and power.

To carry God's name meant carrying His signature—His authority and presence—wherever they went. It was a seal of divine ownership and intimate relationship. As a result, nations feared them, enemies fled before them, and they were set apart as a people totally attached to YHWH.

Their identity was not built on ethnic pride or national ambition, but on being the people upon whom God had placed His name—a people blessed, protected, and represented by the living God.

This was why Moses, in awe of their unique relationship with God, could declare: *“Who is like you, O Israel, a people saved by the Lord, the shield of your help, and the sword of your triumph!” - Deuteronomy 33:29*

“And all people of the earth will see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they will be afraid of you” - Deuteronomy 28:10

His name! His presence amidst them! His awe! His empowering presence! To be called by the name His to be a burning bush, God’s dwelling place, where He is actively present! Actively because there he walks, he speaks, he acts! A people for His name are those who know his presence, His active working, His name upon us is that we have become His dwelling place.

To be called by God’s name is to be identified with Him—it is a covenantal marker of belonging, intimacy, and divine purpose. This name-bearing identity was not symbolic alone; it shaped their destiny, their relationship with God, and their place among the nations.

“If My people who are called by My name humble themselves, and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” - 2 Chronicles 7:14

God’s people are described as those called by His name—a people whose very identity is rooted in Him. This divine calling not only defines who they are, but also forms the basis of God’s mercy, favor, and response to prayer.

“We have become like those over whom You have never ruled, like those who are not called by Your name.” - Isaiah 63:19

Here, the prophet laments the tragedy of disconnection from God’s name—equating it with a loss of essence, a severing from covenant identity.

“We do not present our pleas before You because of our righteousness, but because of Your great mercy. O Lord, hear... for Your own sake, O my God, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.” - Daniel 9:18–19

Daniel appeals to God's name-bearing covenant with His people as the very foundation of intercession. The name is not just a label; it’s a divine claim that binds God’s heart to His people with covenantal loyalty.

In the New Testament, this name-bearing identity expands to all believers in Christ: *“I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named...” - Ephesians 3:14–15*

In Christ, this ancient truth finds its fullest expression: that our identity is not self-defined but God-given. Every family—whether Israel of old or the Church today—finds its name, its identity, and its purpose in the Father.

Therefore, we must never forget that our identity is rooted in God. We are the objects of His covenantal favour, carriers of His presence, and dwelling places of His Spirit. We are His sanctuary, and we are covered by His glory.

We are His! We are not ordinary. We are a people whose life and identity the world has never fully comprehended. We cannot be defeated, for we are robed in His presence and upheld by His power.

We are the Church in a holy continuum—a divine lineage stretching from promise to fulfillment, from prophecy to glory.

And because He is with us, we can never be defeated.

A People for His Fame: Our Mission

Those who are called by His name are created for His Fame, for His glory in all the earth.

Isaiah 43:7 NIV “Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

Acts 9:15 KJV But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

NIV: “But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.”

MSG: “But the Master said, “Don’t argue. Go! I have picked him as my personal representative to non-Jews and kings and Jews.”

GNT: “The Lord said to him, “Go, because I have chosen him to serve me, to make my name known to Gentiles and kings and to the people of Israel.”

In the commissioning of Paul and in the vision of his ministry, he was called to “*bear the name*” of Jesus. To bear His name is to carry His authority, to represent Him, to go forth in His stead, and to make His name known—“*Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the*

children of Israel” (Acts 9:15 NKJV). This phrase captures both the identity and the mission of the Church.

To be a people for His name means we are joined to Him in identity, and we carry out His mission on the earth. James echoes this in Acts 15:14: *“God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.”* We are called to make His name known among the nations. This involves proclaiming His name (Acts 4:12), speaking His word (2 Corinthians 5:20), standing in His stead (John 20:21), and living as those who carry His authority (Matthew 28:18–20).

So, how do we carry His name before the Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel? We do so by fulfilling the great commission the gospel of Christ (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-18, Romans 1:16), by standing boldly as His representatives (Acts 1:8), by declaring the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness (1 Peter 2:9), and by being living witnesses of His resurrection and reign (Luke 24:47–49).

Hence, a people for His name are those who represent the mind, the passion, the interests, and the authority of Christ on the earth. We live in union with Him and work in alignment with His eternal purpose—to fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Habakkuk 2:14).

Representing God: The Example of Moses and the Calling of Believers

The art of representation reminds us of Moses, who went to Pharaoh and declared, *“The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Let my people go”* (Exodus

5:3). When Pharaoh asked, *“Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?”* (Exodus 5:2), it became clear that Moses' task was not just to deliver a message but to reveal the identity and authority of God. He came to deliver in God's name. He carried God's message, He also came with His authority. In the book of Exodus, Moses stood in God's stead, declaring His name, executing His will, and manifesting His power. He became a visible representative of the invisible God. God told him, *“See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet”* (Exodus 7:1).

This same principle develops later but in power and authority. Jesus said, *“These signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues... they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover”* (Mark 16:17–18).

Representing Christ comes with His message, but also with His presence and supernatural power. Just as Moses worked signs and wonders to showcase the God who sent him, we are called to be living witnesses of Christ's authority on the earth (Acts 1:8). Our ministry is not in word only, but also *“in demonstration of the Spirit and of power”* (1 Corinthians 2:4), revealing the living God we proclaim.

Never settle for a cold, powerless Christianity. Do not trade the fire of God for mere rhetoric, clever alliterations, or polished consonance. The men who bore God's name were not poets—they were men of power. Men who shook kingdoms, raised the dead, opened prison doors, and turned cities upside

down. Go for fire! Let nothing make you a skeptic or a doubter. Be a man of God.

Where is your rod? Will you die a mere man?

Will you perish in the valley of dry bones without raising the dead?

Yes, it is God who raises the dead—but He has chosen to do it through you.

Will you remain hiding from the Midianites while torrents of divine power lie dormant within you? Will you not rise? Will you not draw your sword and stretch forth your rod?

Will you not pray?

Will you not bring men to their knees in conviction through intercession?

Will you not at least pray for the sick?

Will you not cast out demons and establish the kingdom of God?

Never settle for a powerless, theoretical Christianity. Make up your mind to hate it all your life.

Now—like Elisha—contend for the double portion. If there is a portion of God's power I have not yet known by experience, but is available—I will run after it! I will covet it powerfully! Lord, I thirst after you, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is. To see your power and your glory! Yes Lord!

The Tabernacle of David and God's Purpose Among the Nations

This agrees with the words of the Prophet. In Acts 15, the apostles came to a divine realization: the gathering of a people for God's name from all nations

was not just a phenomenon of their apostolic era, but a fulfillment of what God had already declared through the prophets. When there was contention over whether Gentile believers should be circumcised and follow the Law of Moses, James stood up and declared: *“And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.”* - Acts 15:15–17 KJV, quoting Amos 9:11–12.

James was not disagreeing with the prophets; rather, he was affirming that what they were witnessing—the influx of Gentiles into the faith—was the fulfillment of prophecy. He quoted from the prophet Amos: *“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this.”* - Amos 9:11–12 KJV

The word tabernacle here could refer to:

1. The family line of David
2. The temple associated with David's city (Jerusalem)
3. Or more broadly, the place of God's dwelling, especially in worship and national identity.

When the prophecy says the tabernacle is *“fallen down,”* it echoes the historical fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. But God

promises: *“I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up.”* To build and to set up means that God Himself will raise it again—not merely in physical terms, but spiritually. This speaks of God's action to dwell once again among His people. So what is the reason for this rebuilding?

“That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called.” - Acts 15:17

The residue refers to the remnant—the faithful few. In the New Testament, this word is often used to refer to those Jews who first believed in Christ, the early church among the Israelites. Paul uses this term in Romans 11:5 KJV: *“Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.”*

This means the first believing Jews were the prophetic remnant. But now, the invitation is extended to the Gentiles—those outside the covenant—who are also being called by God's name. So, the rebuilding of David's tabernacle is not just about architectural restoration. It represents a spiritual house—a people of God—where both Jews and Gentiles come to seek the Lord. This spiritual house is the Church, *“the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth”* (1 Timothy 3:15).

The Gospel to the Jews First, Then the Gentiles

The book of Acts shows clearly that the Gospel was first preached to the Israelites. From the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), the message was directed at

Jews and Jewish proselytes. Some of them believed, and these early Jewish believers became the nucleus of the Church.

Paul affirms this in Ephesians 1:12–13 KJV, writing: *“That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation...”*

Here, *“we who first trusted in Christ”* refers to Jewish believers, and *“ye also”* refers to Gentiles who later believed. The Gospel was *“to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”* (Romans 1:16). Similarly, Paul refers to believing Jews as the remnant or residue—a prophetic concept deeply rooted in Old Testament language. He writes: *“Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.”- Romans 11:5 KJV*

So, the apostles and the early Jewish church seems to be the residue—the faithful remnant prophesied in the Scriptures. This is consistent with the language in Acts 15:17 KJV (quoting Amos 9:11–12) that speaks of: *“That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called...”*

The word *“residue”* means remnant, a prophetic term referring to the faithful believers—initially the Jewish remnant, but also expanding to include Gentiles. The rebuilding of the Tabernacle of David is so that men might seek the Lord. And where do men seek the Lord? In His dwelling place—His temple.

God is raising up His dwelling place upon the earth, a place where people from every nation will seek Him. This raised tabernacle is none other than the

Church, which is called: *“The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” - 1 Timothy 3:15 KJV*

This Church is the place where the God of Israel is disclosed—where He is revealed to those who desire to know Him, hear His message, and encounter His presence. It is a place where men comes to see His face, know His ways, have a holy and loving relationship with Him, it is where they experience His Presence, hear His voice, where they understand His plans and purposes, where they share His passion, His character, His desires and will. It's where there us pure bliss, joy unspeakable, where peace flows like a river, where Love is its pillar! It's heaven on earth, God with men! Men eternally united with their God!

The Scripture continues: *“...and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called.”*
— *Acts 15:17*

This ties directly to the theme of *“a people for His name”* (Acts 15:14)—a people who carry God’s identity and authority, who represent Him on the earth. The phrase *“upon whom my name is called”* implies divine identification—that God would now be identified with the Gentiles as well.

This was prophesied by Hosea: *“And I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.”— Hosea 2:23 KJV*

And quoted by Peter in the New Testament: *“Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” - 1 Peter 2:10 KJV*

Thus, the Gentiles, once alienated from God, are now called by His name and brought into the same family. This prophetic idea—that those who were not God’s people would become His people—is found throughout the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New. Paul emphasizes this in Romans 15, saying that the purpose of Christ’s ministry is so that the Gentiles might glorify God: *“And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.”* - Romans 15:9–12 KJV

“For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.” - Romans 15:9, quoting Psalm 18:49

“Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.” - Romans 15:10, quoting Deuteronomy 32:43

“Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.” - Romans 15:11, quoting Psalm 117:1

“There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.” - Romans 15:12, quoting Isaiah 11:10

This compilation of quotations Psalms and Isaiah shows how consistent this theme is in Scripture: that God’s plan always included the Gentiles—to bring them into the household of faith, to form one new man (Ephesians 2:14–16),

and to fulfill His promise to Abraham that *“in thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed”* (Genesis 22:18).

In Romans 15:15–16 KJV, Paul explains his own calling in light of this divine purpose: *“Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you... because of the grace that is given to me of God, That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.”*

This echoes Malachi 1:11, which prophesies: *“For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles... and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.”*

God’s name will be glorified among the Gentiles. His raised tabernacle—the Church—will be the place where His glory is seen, where people seek Him, where nations come to know the Lord.

Paul’s Mission to the Gentiles and the Unity of the Church

Paul taught that through the preaching of the gospel, the Gentiles would be able to offer themselves as an acceptable offering to God. He said: *“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the minister of the gospel of God to the Gentiles, I magnify mine office... that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.” - Romans 15:16 KJV*

Paul boldly declared: *“For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed,*

Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; So that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.” - Romans 15:18-19 KJV

His mission was clear: to preach where Christ had not yet been named, so that he would not be building on another man’s foundation. He explained this purpose by quoting Isaiah: *“But as it is written, To whom he was not told of, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand.” - Romans 15:21 KJV*, quoting Isaiah 52:15

Jews and Gentiles in the One Body of Christ

Paul declares in Ephesians 2 the incredible peace and reconciliation brought by Christ: *“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” - Ephesians 2:14-16 KJV*

Paul saw that the partition between Jews and Gentiles was broken through the gospel of Christ. By the death and sacrifice of Jesus, the wall of separation was torn down, and both peoples were reconciled to God in one body through the cross.

He continues: *“And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” - Ephesians 2:17-18 KJV*

This one body—the Church—is now the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ Himself as the cornerstone: *“Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” - Ephesians 2:20-21 KJV*

The Church is not divided into two separate entities but is one new man — a singular corporate entity, one body, one human. Just as Israel was a unified people with many tribes but one name—ISRAEL, so the Church is made up of many peoples, tribes, and tongues, but united in Christ as one body: *“That he might create in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross...” - Ephesians 2:15-16 KJV*

God’s eternal purpose is focused on this one body: *“That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.” - Ephesians 3:6.* The Church is not built upon one apostle or teacher alone, but upon the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ as the cornerstone. It is a corporate entity—one body, one new man, not two separate peoples but one singular entity.

Just as Israel was one people despite its many tribes, so the Church is one body made up of many members—Jews, Gentiles, different tongues and nations—all united in Christ. Paul says: *“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” - Ephesians 4:4-6*

This shows God's eternal purpose is focused on one people—the Church—as a singular, unified man, a living temple and habitation of God by His Spirit. Paul explains this mystery further in Ephesians 3:2–6, 9–11 KJV: *“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery... That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery... Which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

The church is more than a human institution; it is the eternal purpose of God revealed—a divine mystery hidden for ages but now disclosed through the Spirit to the apostles and prophets. This revelation even astonishes the principalities and powers in heavenly places—the spiritual realm.

God's plan is to bring together Jews and Gentiles as one body, as one people who will have access to Him by one Spirit (Ephesians 2:18), partakers of the inheritance of the saints and sharers in the eternal kingdom. Thus, the Church is the focal point of God's redemptive purpose on earth—the people through whom God manifests His manifold wisdom, eternal purpose, and glory to all creation.

This shows that the church is not an afterthought—it is the centerpiece of God's redemptive plan. The church is where God dwells by His Spirit (Ephesians 2:22), where His wisdom is displayed, and where His purpose is fulfilled. It is His temple, His household, His bride, His body. Colossians 1:25–27 captures Paul's mission well. He was made a minister to the church to *“fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations... which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”* This mystery was now revealed among the Gentiles, and Paul labored to bring it to maturity, saying he even filled up in his flesh what was lacking in Christ's afflictions—for the sake of His body, which is the church (Colossians 1:24).

In this cosmic vision, Paul saw the church not merely as a local gathering, but as a global, unified, spiritual body. From every tribe, tongue, and nation, God is raising one body, one new man, one corporate entity that reflects His glory. Just as Israel was one people composed of many tribes, the church is one people composed of Jews and Gentiles. This unity, achieved through the cross, is the focus of God's redemptive plan.

This is why Paul was tireless in his mission—to make Christ known where He was not yet known, so that the church would grow like a mighty tree in all the earth, and God's eternal purpose be fulfilled in all nations. You must capture the earth of Paul as a young minister. You must see this vision of what God is doing on the earth.

EKKLESIA

The Greek word translated “*church*” in the New Testament is Ekklesia. It is a compound word which has two segments: “*ek*”, a preposition meaning “*out of*”, and a verb, “*kaleo*”, signifying “*to call*” - together, literally, “*to call out*”. In classical Greek society, particularly in ancient Athens, this term referred to the political assembly of free male citizens who were called out to discuss legal matters, vote on matters of governance, war, and public policy. These gatherings were central to democratic life in Greek city-states and had no religious implications in Greek usage. The term denoted a civic body of people summoned for a legislative purpose.

When the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek in the Septuagint (LXX), the translators used ekklesia to render the Hebrew word “*qahal*”, which means “*assembly*” or “*congregation*.” This usage carried over the sense of a “*gathered people*”, particularly the congregation of Israel assembled before God. For example, in Deuteronomy 9:10, “*the day of the assembly*” (Hebrew: *yom ha-qahal*) is translated as *hē hēmera tēs ekklēσίας* in the Septuagint. Thus, even before the New Testament period, ekklesia had already acquired a sacred connotation in Jewish Greek usage, referring to the people of God gathered for worship and covenantal life.

In the New Testament, ekklesia appears over one hundred times and refers almost exclusively to the community of Christian believers. Jesus Himself first used the term when He said, “*And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*” - Matthew 16:18

ESV. This statement shows that Jesus intended to build a people, distinct from others, separated from the world unto God and His purposes —those called out from the common, the profane, the unclean to God, for His honourable use and purposes. They are a holy people.

The Ekklesia are those called out to serve a purpose. Jesus also referred to this assembly in Matthew 18:15-17 ESV, instructing how to handle sin among believers: *“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”*

This shows that the Ekklesia is a people gathered for discipline, restoration, and community life in Christ. The Church here is seen as God’s representative on the earth to permit what God permits and to forbid what God forbids. *Matthew 18:18-20 NIV “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”*

It's seen as a gathering of two or three in His name, asking and agreeing with His presence. So the Church gathers in His name for His Purposes with His presence and power with them.

The apostles, especially Paul, frequently use the word *ekklesia* to describe both local gatherings of believers and the universal body of Christ. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 1:2, Paul addresses *“the church of God in Corinth,”* pointing to a specific, local assembly of believers who gathered for worship, teaching, fellowship, and mission in that city. Similar references to local churches can be found throughout the New Testament—*“the church in Antioch”* (Acts 13:1), *“the churches of Galatia”* (Galatians 1:2), or *“the church that meets in their house”* (Romans 16:5). So the Church is not an abstract reality but a tangible, visible expression of God’s people in distinct locations through their faith in Christ.

At the same time, Paul also uses *ekklesia* in a universal sense, referring to the entire body of believers across time and space. In Ephesians 1:22–23, he writes that God *“placed all things under [Christ’s] feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”* Here, the Church is not just a local group—it is the universal body of Christ, united across cultures, nations, and generations by the Spirit of God. This universal Church is the spiritual community of all those who are saved by grace through faith in Christ, from every tribe, tongue, and nation (cf. Revelation 5:9–10).

The New Testament, especially in the Book of Acts, repeatedly describes the Church as an assembly of people who gathered daily: Here are the verses in the Book of Acts (KJV) where the word *“church”* is used: [Acts 2:47; 5:11; 7:38; 8:1; 8:3; 9:31; 11:22; 11:26; 12:1; 12:5; 13:1; 14:23; 14:27; 15:3; 15:4; 15:22; 15:41; 16:5; 18:22; 20:17; 20:28]

These references reflect both the local assemblies (like the churches in Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus) and the early recognition of the corporate Body of Christ. The Church grew as local assemblies—called Churches—were planted in places like Jerusalem, Antioch, and Corinth. Paul refers to them as churches: *“To the church of God that is in Corinth...”* - 1 Corinthians 1:2. The apostles devoted themselves to strengthening these local Ekklesiai (plural of Ekklesia) (Acts 15:41, Acts 16:5). They also ordained leaders in those churches and trained them (Acts 13:1 Acts 14:23, Acts 14:27, Acts 20:17,18)

The concept is not limited to the New Testament. Stephen, in his defense before the Sanhedrin, referred to the congregation of God’s people in the wilderness as a church or assembly: *“This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai...”* - Acts 7:38 *ESV*. Thus, the Church is the congregation of God’s people—those saved and called out of darkness into His marvelous light: *“Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”* - 1 Peter 2:10.

At its core, Ekklesia means a people who gather together. The Church is a gathering called to live, serve, and fulfill God’s purpose. In Acts, the early Church showed steadfastness in the apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers: *“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”* - Acts 2:42. They met from house to house and in synagogues (Acts 5:42; Acts 20:20). Gathering is

fundamental to the Church's identity. In Jewish culture, synagogues were small places of gathering for worship and teaching, reflecting the Church's nature as a place where people come together in Jesus' name.

Paul stressed this in 1 Corinthians 11:20: *"When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper..."* *"Come together therefore into one place"* indicates a coming from different places to a central place for a special purpose done together; in this context to eat together in remembrance of the Lord's death. But the Corinthians were divided and Paul rebuked them that the purpose of their gathering was already defeated: *"For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another."* - 1 Corinthians 11:21-22,33

When they gathered, people did their own thing. He said *"every one taketh before other his own supper"* i.e., all did their own thing without considering the others. So he told them in 1 Corinthians 11:33 NIV: *"So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together."* So we could apply this to meaning that when you're gathered, do together what you've gathered together to do.

In Acts, the Church gathers for doctrine, prayer, fellowship, worship, and ministry. Together, they share spiritually and physically. *"All who believed were together and had all things in common."* - Acts 2:44. Just as the Old

Testament saints had congregations and tabernacles, the Church today dwells as one unified people. The nation of Israel in the wilderness was a singular nation made of tribes living together (Numbers 1:1-3; Deuteronomy 5:2), and similarly, the Church is a people coming together to live, learn, grow, and serve as one: *“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.” - Ephesians 2:19 ESV*

The Synagogue and the Local Church

Definition of Synagogue:

A synagogue is a Jewish house of worship and assembly. It serves as a place where Jews gather for prayer, reading and studying Scripture, teaching, and community fellowship. The word “*synagogue*” comes from the Greek *synagōgē*, meaning “*assembly*” or “*gathering together*.”

In biblical history, the Temple in Jerusalem was the central place of worship for the children of Israel—the dwelling place of God’s presence on earth (1 Kings 8:10-11). All Israelite worship, sacrifices, and major religious festivals were centered there.

However, when the Israelites could not always come to the Temple—for example, during exile or dispersion—they established synagogues. Synagogues were smaller local places of assembly scattered throughout towns and villages. These served as accessible centers for worship, teaching, and community life.

Historical purposes of the synagogue included:

- 1. Worship and Prayer:** Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for communal prayer and worship, especially when the Temple was inaccessible. This included reading and reciting Scriptures (Psalm 122:1).
- 2. Teaching and Study of the Torah:** Synagogues became schools for teaching the Law and the Prophets. The scrolls of Scripture were read and explained (Nehemiah 8:1-8).
- 3. Community Gathering and Fellowship:** They functioned as social and judicial centers where the community met to discuss matters, settle disputes, and support one another.
- 4. Preserving Identity and Faith:** Especially during periods of exile and dispersion, synagogues helped preserve Jewish religious identity and practices far from the Temple.

This background helps us understand why the early Christian Church naturally followed a similar pattern in establishing and growing the local churches. Since Jesus and the apostles taught and preached in synagogues (Luke 4:16-20; Acts 17:1-3), the Church's gatherings for worship, teaching, fellowship, and prayer continued in this cultural form, adapted for the new covenant community. Thus, when we speak of the Church as a gathered assembly—the Ekklesia—we are speaking of a spiritual “*synagogue*,” a place where the people of God come together to worship, hear God’s word, encourage one another, and live out their faith as a community. The Church is not merely a collection of individuals but a living, unified assembly built

around these purposes—just as synagogues historically served as local centers of God’s presence and community.

Interpretation of the Torah in a New Order

The Torah was interpreted in a Christocentric way by the early Church, marking a radical shift from the old order. Worship was no longer centered on rituals, ceremonial purifications, or animal sacrifices. As Hebrews explains, under the old covenant there were external regulations—rituals and washings that pointed to a greater reality (Hebrews 9:1–10). But now, in Christ, worship consists of spiritual sacrifices: *“You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”* (1 Peter 2:5). We are to give our bodies to God: *“Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship”* (Romans 12:1).

There was a clear understanding that a New Covenant had been inaugurated through the blood of Jesus: *“This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you”* (Luke 22:20). The Hebrews writer also said; *“Christ is the mediator of a new covenant... now that he has died as a ransom”* (Hebrews 9:15).

This new covenant also brought a transition from the Levitical priesthood to the eternal priesthood of Melchizedek: *“If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood... why was there still need for another priest to come, one in the order of Melchizedek?”* (Hebrews 7:11). The same book says; *“You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek”* (Hebrews 7:17).

This Christ-centered re-reading of the Torah shaped the early Church's life, worship, and mission. Everything revolved around Christ—the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets: *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets... I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them”* (Matthew 5:17). *“Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself”* (Luke 24:27).

This was the foundation of Stephen's preaching—he interpreted Israel's history and Scripture as culminating in Christ. For this, he was falsely accused of speaking against Moses and the Law. *“Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, ‘We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God’”* (Acts 6:11). *“They produced false witnesses, who testified, ‘This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us’”* (Acts 6:13–14).

Stephen's bold message—affirming Jesus as the Righteous One foretold by Moses—provoked intense opposition: *“Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him”* (Acts 7:52).

This led to his martyrdom and ignited a wave of persecution against the early Church: *“On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem”* (Acts 8:1). *“Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went”* (Acts 8:4).

This New Covenant understanding was most clearly and systematically developed by Paul the Apostle. He revealed how the Law pointed to Christ and how righteousness now comes through faith in Him: *“But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known... This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe”* (Romans 3:21–22). *“A person is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ”* (Galatians 2:16).

In this way, the New Testament Church found its identity and practice not in external observances, but in the finished work of Christ (Hebrews 10:14; Romans 10:4) and the internal work of the Spirit in and through the Church (2 Corinthians 3:3,6). Their Scripture, worship, and mission were all reoriented around Him—the fulfillment of every promise (2 Corinthians 1:20). A new order was introduced, where men are washed not by rituals but by the washing of regeneration by the Spirit (Titus 3:5–6). It is an era marked by the outpouring of the Spirit upon all, without social barriers or cultural limitations (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17). It is a time where all of God’s people have come into the Abba’s desire: they are all prophets, they all know Him, and they no longer need an intermediary (Jeremiah 31:33–34; Hebrews 8:10–11). They now access God by the Spirit (Ephesians 2:18; Romans 8:15). This is what God is doing everywhere today. It is a new order—where His name is praised, and His presence is present and working amidst His people (Matthew 18:20; 1 Corinthians 14:25).

Gifts and Service in the Church

One significant aspect of the Church is the place of gifts and service. In the New Testament, spiritual gifts are the expressions of the Holy Spirit's work in the life of a believer, empowering them to serve others and build up the Body of Christ. Paul writes, *"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all"* (1 Corinthians 12:7 NKJV; cf. 1 Corinthians 14:12, 26). These gifts are not for display or self-glory but for edification, encouragement, and practical ministry (Romans 12:6–8; 1 Peter 4:10–11).

Every believer has received something from the Lord and is a steward of that grace. As Paul teaches: *"This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that one be found faithful."* (1 Corinthians 4:1–2). Thus, spiritual gifts and service go hand in hand, because the ultimate goal of all ministry is to build up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12; 1 Corinthians 14:3–5). Having received God's mercy in salvation, we are called to consecration—to offer our lives fully to God's will and service.

Romans 12 begins with this call to consecration: *"Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."* - Romans 12:1. From there, Paul moves directly to spiritual gifts and service (Romans 12:3–8), emphasizing humility as the foundation of all ministry. Just as every part of the human body has its function, so too does every member of the Church. Each one has a responsibility that may differ in form, but is directed toward the edification and blessing of others, as members belonging to one

body (1 Corinthians 12:12–27). Therefore, we must ensure that we use our gifts with the right passion, the right motive, and the strength God supplies (1 Peter 4:10–11)—for the glory of God and the growth of His people.

Paul encouraged Timothy to *“stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands”* (2 Timothy 1:6 NKJV), while Peter instructs, *“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms”* (1 Peter 4:10 NIV). Jesus also highlighted the principle of stewardship in the parable of the talents, reminding that we are accountable for how we use what we have been given (Matthew 25:14–30).

Many believers today struggle to discover where and how to serve, yet ministry is most effectively expressed within the Church. As Paul writes, *“the Church of the living God [is] the pillar and foundation of the truth”* (1 Timothy 3:15 NIV). The writer of Hebrews adds, *“Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together...”* (Hebrews 10:24–25 NIV). Every believer is uniquely gifted, and these gifts are meant to be exercised in the context of the community of faith (1 Corinthians 12:18; Romans 12:4–5).

The Church is one Body with many members. As Paul says, *“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another”* (Romans 12:5, NKJV; cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12–14). No part is inferior or unnecessary.

Leadership and Service in the Early Church

The New Testament teaches that some are specially gifted for leadership—Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers—commonly referred to as the fivefold ministry (Ephesians 4:11). Yet others are organically gifted to minister in various ways throughout the Body (1 Corinthians 12:28; Romans 16:1–2; Acts 13:1). These leadership roles are not positions of domination but of equipping and nurturing (2 Corinthians 10:8; Ephesians 4:12–13).

In Acts, we observe Apostolic leadership giving oversight to the churches (Acts 15:6, 22; Acts 20:28), while men like Stephen and Philip, who were not Apostles, were appointed to serve both practically and spiritually (Acts 6:5–8; Acts 8:5–6). Their ministries were filled with wisdom, power, and the Holy Spirit, resulting in miracles and conversions (Acts 8:6–8). This illustrates that service is not inferior to preaching but is a powerful avenue for God’s Spirit to work.

The Role of Every Believer

Ministry was never limited to those in formal office. Believers such as Ananias (Acts 9:10–17), the church members in Antioch (Acts 11:19–26), and those scattered by persecution (Acts 8:4) were all instrumental in advancing the gospel. Acts 8:4 says, *“Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went”* (NIV). This means that ordinary believers—not just the Apostles—were pivotal in church planting and mission.

Aquila and Priscilla, tentmakers by trade, took aside the eloquent Apollos and *“explained to him the way of God more accurately”* (Acts 18:26 NKJV). Their example shows how teaching and discipleship were carried out by laypeople, not just ordained leaders.

Lesson From Timothy as Young Minister

Where Was Timothy First Found? Timothy is first introduced in Acts 16:1–2 ESV: *“Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium.”* This is the first mention of Timothy, and it gives us several key insights: What Was Timothy Likely Doing in the Local Assembly?

Though the text does not list Timothy’s specific activities, we can reasonably infer from what is said that:

1. He was already a disciple – indicating a life of active faith and spiritual formation.
2. He was well spoken of by the brethren – both in Lystra and Iconium, suggesting his reputation for godliness, character, and possibly service.
3. He was recognized by more than one community, implying that his devotion and gifting were evident beyond his immediate local assembly.

Timothy likely was:

1. Actively involved in the life of the church, possibly teaching, serving, or helping in leadership.
2. Living in such a way that his gifts, humility, and consecration stood out.
3. A young man who had submitted to discipleship and had been tested in his local context, earning the commendation of the saints.

A Pattern of Ministry: Discerned, Prayed For, and Launched

Timothy's story shows a pattern of healthy, Spirit-led ministry formation:

Gifts and calling are discerned in the community: This is how you know what you have been called. He was known and affirmed by the church (Acts 16:2).

Endorsement and laying on of hands: Paul refers to the prophetic word that came over Timothy and the laying on of hands by the elders (1 Timothy 4:14) and Paul himself (2 Timothy 1:6), likely during a commissioning moment. Those Prophetic words were ministry directions and engagement. We need such Spirit filled community.

Ongoing Mentoring and Sending: Paul took Timothy with him (Acts 16:3), signifying a kind of apostolic launching, after community validation.

The Biblical Principle

Ministry is not self-appointed. The body discerns it, affirmed through prayer, and released through commissioning. This is the New Testament pattern—seen in Timothy, the appointment of deacons in Acts 6, and the sending of

Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:2–3: *“Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.”*

YOU NEED A COMMUNITY TO FULLY UNDERSTAND YOUR GIFTINGS, CALLING AND MINISTRY AS A YOUNG MINISTER. BE SERIOUS! GET IN!

Growth, Maturity, and Faithfulness

Apostolic oversight involves recognizing and nurturing those with gifts. Philip and Stephen began as deacons but their influence expanded (Acts 6–8). Paul instructed that those serving should be tested first: *“Let these also first be tested; then let them serve...”* (1 Timothy 3:10 NKJV). Faithfulness is the key to increasing responsibility: *“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much”* (Luke 16:10 NIV).

Romans 16 is full of names—Phoebe, Priscilla, Aquila, Andronicus, Junia, Urbanus, Tryphena, Tryphosa, and others—people who were vital in ministry but were not Apostles (Romans 16:1–16). In Colossians 4:7–14, Paul mentions Epaphras, Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, Justus, Luke, and even Demas—all members of the Body who served with him.

Paul wrote, *“Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, a teaching, a tongue, a revelation...”* (1 Corinthians 14:26 NKJV), and, *“From Him the whole body, joined and held together... grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work”* (Ephesians 4:16 NIV). This means ministry is not reserved for a few—it is the responsibility and privilege of every believer. The body grows

by the contribution of each members. Paul said, *“Do not neglect the gift that is in you...”* (1 Timothy 4:14 NKJV), and *“Fan into flame the gift of God...”* (2 Timothy 1:6 NIV). Ministry is discerned, developed, and deployed within the Church (1 Timothy 5:22), not in isolation.

Community and Brotherhood in the Moravian Movement

"There can be no Christianity without community." - Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf

We often speak of the Moravians' revival. We marvel at their 100 years of unbroken prayer. But rarely do we ask: what kind of people sustained such a work for so long? What kind of church made such a mission possible? What is the engine room?

The Moravian movement is rightly remembered for its zeal for prayer and passion for missions. The sight of two young Moravians selling themselves into slavery to preach the gospel is unforgettable. The story of the 24-hour prayer watch that lasted for over a century is remarkable.

But behind these outward expressions of power and devotion was something just as miraculous—and just as necessary: a way of life, a community structure, and a church reality that upheld it all. This is the part we often forget. This is the part we rarely study.

Our Focus: Church Life as the Heartbeat of the Moravian Movement

What gave them strength? What shaped their inner life? What disciplined their children into fire-bearing saints? What made them one body across class, status, and nationality?

The answer: They practiced the church not just as a place to gather, not as an event centre but as a way to live, a covenant relationship. We live in an age of radical individualism, where community is weak, optional, or online. Even most churches are built more like viewing centres, cinemas or events than families. If we want to see God do again what He did in Herrnhut—if we long for missional churches and praying people that will be impactful and outlast. We must recover the life that made it possible.

1. The Foundation of Herrnhut (1722–1727): The village of Herrnhut (*"The Lord's Watch"*) began as a refuge for persecuted Protestants from Moravia and Bohemia. These believers, fleeing Catholic oppression, settled on the Saxony estate of Count Zinzendorf. Though welcomed, the early years were marked by doctrinal disputes, cultural tensions, and internal strife. Zinzendorf, sensing the danger of disunity, stepped in with pastoral leadership. He taught the Scriptures, mediated reconciliation, and called the people to a shared life under the Lordship of Christ.

2. The Brotherly Agreement (Brüderliche Vereinbarung): The Brotherly Agreement was a spiritual covenant created under Zinzendorf's guidance to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Rather than a legal code, it was a commitment to live in Christ-centered

harmony. Each adult member of the community signed this document, which emphasized humility, forgiveness, accountability, and love. This led to a transformation and a renewal that was called the Moravian pentecost.

Core Values in the Agreement:

Christ as the Only Head – *"We will hold to the Lord Jesus as our only Savior and Head."*

Daily Fellowship and Mutual Edification – *"We desire to live together in love and truth, serving one another in humility."*

Refusal to Gossip or Slander – *"We will guard our tongues from evil and not speak against one another."*

Willingness to Forgive – *"When wronged, we will forgive, even as Christ has forgiven us."*

Accountability – *"We agree to exhort one another and receive correction in love."*

Service and Simplicity – *"We will not seek status or wealth but serve the Lord and one another."*

"We will speak the truth in love; strive for peace and unity; forgive one another readily; and encourage each other in love and good works."

— Excerpt from the Brotherly Agreement

3. The Choir Grouping (Life-Based Discipleship): The Moravian community innovatively organized itself into "*choirs*" or life groups, not based

on music but on age, gender, and spiritual status. These groups provided intentional discipleship, spiritual care, and a rhythm of accountability.

Types of Choirs: Single Brothers, Single Sisters, Married Couples, Widows and Widowers, Youth Choirs, Children's Choirs

Each choir met regularly for prayer, Bible study, confession, and mutual encouragement. Leaders were appointed to shepherd the groups, promoting growth in personal holiness and communal love. *“Let every soul be watched over with love, and no one be left to walk alone.” - Zinzendorf*

4. The Daily Watchword (Losungen): In 1728, the Moravians began the practice of the Daily Watchword, selecting a Scripture verse each morning for meditation and communal reflection. It became a spiritual anchor for their daily life.

Key Features:

A verse was randomly drawn from the Old Testament each day.

A matching New Testament verse was later added.

It was printed and distributed starting in 1731.

Today, the Watchword continues in over 50 languages worldwide.

“A word from God each day is better than many without Him.”
— Zinzendorf

5. Worship and Shared Life: Daily life in Herrnhut revolved around worship, prayer, and communal love. Practices included: Morning and evening devotions, Lovefeasts (communal meals celebrating fellowship), Hymn singing (often original compositions), Prayer vigils and confession.

Spiritual and practical life were seamlessly integrated. Everyone worked, prayed, and worshipped together. Decisions were made with prayer, and sometimes by "*the Lot*," trusting the Spirit's guidance.

The distinction between clergy and laity was minimal; all believers were seen as ministers of Christ (1 Peter 2:9).

6. Summary: Essentials of Moravian Community

Element	Practice	Spiritual Purpose
Brotherly Agreement	Covenant to love, forgive, submit, and grow	Fostered unity and spiritual integrity
Choir System	Life groups by age and status	Accountability and discipleship
Daily Watchword	Scripture-led devotion every morning	Communal hearing of God's Word
Shared Worship	Daily gatherings, hymns, prayer	Constant communion with Christ and each other

Lovefeast Simplicity	and	Meals and lifestyle of equality	Embodied fellowship	spiritual
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Simple Implementation Plan

Why This Plan? To help you live out what you've read—step by step, together with others.

1. Know Who You Are

Goal: Understand your identity as part of God's people.

Do This: Read Acts 15, 1 Peter 2:9–10, and Ephesians 2.

Write down what it means to be part of God's people.

My reflection: _____

Share one thing you learned with someone this week.

Name of person shared with: _____

2. Make a Commitment not to be individualistic. Join a Life Group

Goal: Grow through real relationships.

Do This: Find or start a small group based on age or season of life (e.g. singles, couples).

Group name: _____

Meet weekly to pray, read Scripture, and encourage one another.

Weekly meeting time: _____

3. Use Your Gifts

Goal: Serve in your church or community.

Do This: Ask: What area can I serve?

My gifts/skills: _____

Join a team: e.g. teaching, music, tech, prayer, children.

Team joined: _____

4. Step Up in Leadership

Goal: Be faithful and grow in influence.

Do This: Develop a system of accountability

5. Go After the Fire of God

Goal: Live a life full of prayer and power.

Do This: Set a time to pray for the manifestation of spiritual gifts and power with a group.

My prayer time: _____

Join monthly prayer and fasting days.

Next date I'm committing to: _____

Step out in faith to pray for healing.

How would you do this? _____

6. **Pass It On**

Goal: Multiply what you've received.

Do This: Get a younger believer and walk with them.

Mentee's name: _____

Help others join Young Ministers' Forum

Names of two people I'll invite: _____

ABOUT THE YOUNG MINISTERS' FORUM

The Young Ministers' Forum (TYMF) is a parachurch movement committed to strengthening and equipping young ministers to fulfill God's purpose. Our goal is to inspire and train a new generation of Gospel-driven leaders who will actively advance the Great Commission in every sphere of influence. We provide mentorship, teaching, and fellowship to help young ministers navigate challenges such as distractions, ministry decadence, loneliness, and balancing life responsibilities.

Vision: "Strengthening and Equipping Young Ministers to Serve God's Purpose."

MISSION

Mentorship: We connect young ministers with experienced leaders who provide biblical teaching, practical ministry insights, and personal guidance to foster spiritual growth and effectiveness.

Training and Equipping: Through workshops, seminars, and structured training sessions, we enhance ministerial effectiveness, doctrinal understanding, and active ministerial engagement.

Fellowship and Camaraderie: TYMF provides a network for like-minded ministers to connect, share experiences, and strengthen one another in faith and ministry.

Resources and Support: We produce resources like tracts, booklets, ebooks, evangelistic and study materials for outreaches and strengthening local churches.

Personal and Spiritual Development: We emphasize character building, spiritual disciplines, and holistic growth, ensuring that ministers are well-grounded in faith and integrity.

Mission and World Evangelism: With a strong passion for evangelism and cross-cultural ministry, we encourage young ministers to embrace their calling to spread the Gospel globally.

TYMF invites young ministers seeking growth, mentorship, and alignment with God's purpose to join our community and benefit from its resources.