

And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won:
Oh, happy ones and holy !
Lord, give us grace, that we.
Like them, the meek and lowly,
On high may dwell with Thee !

HYMN 16. Be gone Unbelief

1. Be gone, unbelief,
My Saviour is near,
And for my relief
Will surely appear:
By prayer let me wrestle,
And He will perform;
With Christ in the vessel,
I smile at the storm.

2. Though dark be my way,
Since He is my Guide,
'Tis mine to obey,
'Tis His to provide:
Though cisterns be broken,
And creatures all fail,
The word He hath spoken
Shall surely prevail.

3. His love, in time past,
Forbids me to think
He'll leave me at last
In trouble to sink:
Each sweet Ebenezer
I have in review
Confirms His good pleasure
To help me quite through.

4. Why should I complain
Of want or distress,
Temptation or pain? -
He told me no less;
The heirs of salvation,
I know from His Word,
Through much tribulation
Must follow their Lord.

5. How bitter that cup
No heart can conceive,
Which He drank quite up,
That sinners might live!

His way was much rougher
And darker than mine;
Did Christ, my Lord, suffer,
And shall I repine?

6. Since all that I meet
Shall work for my good,
The bitter is sweet,
The medicine, food;
Though painful at present,
'Twill cease before long,
And then- oh, how pleasant
The conqueror's song!

HYMN 17. Bringing in the Sheaves

1. Sowing in the morning, sowing seeds of kindness,
Sowing in the noontide and the dewy eves:
Waiting for the harvest, and the time of reaping,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the shelves!

*Bringing in the sheaves!
Bringing in the sheaves!
We shall come rejoicing,
Bringing in the shelves!*

2. Sowing in the sunshine, sowing in the shadows,
Fearing neither clouds nor winter's chilling breeze;
By and by the harvest, and the labour ended,
We shall come rejoicing bringing in the shelves.

3. Go then ever, weeping, sowing for the Master,
Though the loss sustained our spirit often grieves;
When our weeping's over, He will bid us welcome,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the shelves!

MLR'23

MINISTERS LEADERSHIP RETREAT



Hereafter You shall See
Heaven Open
John 1:50-51

Ministering:
Bro. Gbile AKANNI
& LIVINGSEED Team

6-9 DEC 2023

ALL
MLR CENTERS
NATION WIDE

SATURDAY 9TH ENDS 9PM



FOR MORE DETAILS, Contact Peace House Offices Nearest To You
REGISTER @ www.livingseed.org

BURDEN AND VISION

"Hereafter You shall see heaven open..."

"Jesus answered and said to him, Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, 'do you believe? You will see greater things than these.' And He said to him, Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." " John 1:50-51 NKJV

All we have seen and heard God declare to us since we entered into this decade has been very prophetic and all the words He has sent to us and the various MLR themes He led us into for 2020 (Fill the earth, subdue it: Preach the word), 2021 (Rehoboth: Abiding, Abounding and Abundant Fruitfulness) and 2022 (Pursue, overtake and recover all: maximizing our Rehoboth) have all been directional. They are not topics per se, they are prophetic directions and guideposts to what we must do now in this season of His visitation. While disciples must multiply from nation to nation, it is clear that the time has come, our day has broken and the Lord is still holding the sceptre to us in mercy to rise and shine His light into the nations of the earth.

Hence, this year again, He has taken away the veil to show us what we must hereafter enter into even as the season of our Rehoboth continues with a very strong assurance and declaration: *"Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."* This has come to us as we waited upon Him seeking His wisdom and further strategy of the "Pursue, overtake and you will surely recover all" which has guided our steps since the beginning of this year.

The Lord has come again to declare to us with utmost assurance that henceforth, we shall see heaven open and we shall see the traffic of the heavenly on the Son of Man who indeed is our stairway to glory. It is on Him that we shall see the move of God and the release of the outpouring of the showers of blessing from heaven to overrun and overwhelm our earth.

We perceive the Lord is about to open the heavens unto us corporately and particularly to you as an individual more than we

Sound of abundance of rain.

3. There shall be showers of blessing-
Send them upon us, O Lord:
Grant to us now a refreshing;
Come, and now honour Thy Word.

4. There shall be showers of blessing-
Oh that to-day they might fall,
Now as to God we're confessing,
Now as on Jesus we call!

HYMN 14. The Comforter has come

1. Oh, spread the tidings round, wherever man is found.
Wherever human hearts and human woes abound;
Let every Christian tongue proclaim the joyful sound:

The Comforter has come!

The Comforter has come, the Comforter has come

*The Holy Ghost from heaven, the Father's promise given;
Oh, spread the tidings round, wherever man is found:
The Comforter has come!*

2. The long, long night is past, the morning breaks at last;
And hushed the dreadful wail and fury of the blast,
As o'er the golden hills the day advances fast:
The Comforter has come!

3. The mighty King of kings, with healing in His wings,
To every captive soul a full deliverance brings;
And through the vacant cells the song of triumph rings:
The Comforter has come!

4. Oh, boundless Love Divine! how shall this tongue of mine,
To wondering mortals tell, the matchless grace divine"
That I may with Him dwell, and in His image shine!"

The Comforter has come!

5. Oh, let the echoes fly above the vaulted sky,
And all the saints above to all below reply,
In strains of endless love, the song that ne'er will die:
The Comforter has come!

HYMN 15. The Church's One Foundation

1. The church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the Word:
From Heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.

2. Elect from every nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth;
Her character of salvation-
One Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy Name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food;
And to one hope she presses,
With every grace endued.

3. Though with a scornful wonder
Men see her sore oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder
By heresies distressed:
Yet saints their watch are keeping,
Their cry goes up, "How long?"
And soon the night of weeping
Shall be the morn of song.

4. 'Mid toil and tribulations,
And tumults of her war,
She waits the consummation
Of peace for evermore;
Till with the vision glorious
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great church victorious,
Shall be the church at rest.

5. Yet she on earth hath union
With God the Three in One,

Glory excelling soon, full soon I'll see
Christ, only Christ, my every wish fulfilling
Christ, only Christ, my all in all to be.

HYMN 10. Give us O Lord,

1. Give us O Lord, Thine unction,
Anoint us for Thy work;
Arise and set us in motion,
O Lord the man of war.

2. Baptize us Lord with Thy fire,
And set our souls aflame;
To burn and shine for Thy cause,
Revive your zeal in us.

3. Refine us Lord and cleanse us,
Clothe us in holiness;
Transform our thoughts and nature;
Till we Thy glory show.

4. New hearts, more love, more passion,
For souls in Satan's train;
With hook or net use us still,
Make us fishers of men.

5. Not gold, not power, not knowledge,
Will thy heaven unlock;
But prayer and faith and unity,
Will bring the latter rain.

6. With tears and groans and fasting
O Lord, help us to pray;
Travailing as in birth for souls,
Till you revive the church.

HYMN 11. I'm pressing on

1. I'm pressing on, the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining everyday;
Still praying as I onward bound,
"Lord plant my feet on higher ground"

*Lord lift me up, and let me stand,
By faith on heaven's table land;
A higher plane, than I have found,
"Lord, plant my feet on higher ground"*

2. My heart has no desire to stay,
Where doubts arise and fear dismay;
Tho' some may dwell where those abound,
My prayer, my aim is higher ground.

3. I want to live above the world,

Tho' Satan's darts at me are hurled;
For faith has caught the joyful sound,
The song of saints on higher ground.

4. I want to scale the utmost height,
And catch a gleam of glory bright;
But still I'll pray till heav'n I've found,
"Lord, lead me on to higher ground."

HYMN 12. God is Here!

1. God is here, and that to bless us,
With the Spirit's quickening power;
See, the cloud already bending,
Waits to drop the grateful shower.

*Let it come, O Lord, we pray Thee!
Let the shower of blessing fall, |
We are wait...ing, we are waiting,
Oh revive the hearts of all.*

2. God is here! we feel His presence,
In this consecrated place;
But we need the soul refreshing
Of His free, unbounded grace.

3. God is here! Oh, then believing,
Bring to Him our one desire,
That His love may now be kindled,
Till its flame each heart inspire.

4. Saviour, grant the prayer we offer,
While in simple faith we bow;
From the windows of Thy mercy,
Pour us out a blessing now.

HYMN 13. Showers of blessing

1. There shall be showers of blessing-
This is the promise of love;
There shall be seasons refreshing,
Sent from the Saviour above.

*Show...ers of blessing,
Showers of blessing we need;
Mercy-drops round us are falling,
But for the showers we plead.*

2. There shall be showers of blessing-
Precious reviving again;
Over the hills and the valleys,

have ever known in all our years of labouring with Him. Several of us are the "Nathaniel(s)" of our day, who are seeking genuine visitation from on high, who cannot make do with mere stories and routine religious activities... We have mused in our hearts over and over again, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

We have been drawn into discipleship seeking to see the reality of Christ's life and His work in our lives and in our generation... We have come to know Him in a way and we could say, He is our Lord and our God, He is the King of our lives... But He is taking us into the next dimension of His dealing with us. He says, "Most assuredly, I say unto you, 'Hereafter, you shall see heaven open...'. 'Hereafter' means, 'henceforth; from now on.'"

Whatever He will do to open the heavens over our heads and for us to walk daily under the open heaven and minister under the open heaven, experiencing divine carriage ascending and descending upon the Son of Man, we shall sit at His feet in this year's MLR to experience. Our hearts are full of expectation of what the Lord is surely bringing us into. There are several instances in the word of God when it pleased the Lord to open the heavens to a person or a people and the result was unmistakable.

As we gather together at His feet for this encounter, just as our Lord had to go to Jordan, to be baptized of John for the heavens to open unto Him, and for the Spirit to come as the dove to rest upon Him and for the voice of the Father to be heard authenticating Him and commanding people to hear Him, such that He could finish the work His Father gave Him to do in the years allotted to Him, we trust God to help us get down to the place where we can individually see heaven open unto us, empowering us and opening the door for us to also accomplish the greater task laid on our lives in this our Day.

Jacob came to Bethel and saw it as a dream but could not enter into it then, as he went his way into many conflicts because of his nature. It only remained a mirage or a faint promise in his heart. He could not perpetuate that experience until He came back, twenty years after, to Peniel where God terminated the "Jacob" in Jacob and then the heaven opened unto him and the sun rose upon him and he walked the rest of his pilgrimage on earth with the sun risen upon him, while leaning on the staff of grace.

You may be the one whom God has signalled to use for the past several years, but you have not been able to enter the promise due to your own “Jacob” nature. I perceive this MLR may be your ‘Peniel’ where you will look unto God to permanently deal with your personal hindrances and set His sun to rise upon you, so that you can then walk into His promise in Isa. 60:1-3 and all the promises that prophecy holds for us: “Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the Lord will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.” *Isaiah 60:1-3 NKJV*

It is the set time. The day now breaks... The heaven must open to you and your light must shine now and the glory of the Lord must rise upon you now in this your day and in this your time of visitation. May the Lord help you so that you will not miss out. Hereafter, you shall see heaven open... After here, after this MLR, you shall see the ‘Son’ rising upon you. You shall see heaven open and angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. Do not come after the event! May the Lord help you to be at the right place at the right time in Jesus Name, Amen.

As you have come, you have come to the Lord Himself. Prepare and settle your heart to indeed come and come you yourself apart, away from all distractions to meet Him and be there with Him who is waiting on top of this ladder to open His heaven unto you. Do not let Him go, until He has blessed you.

Your brother,

Gbile Akanni

Programme Shedule

Wednesday, December 06, 2023

4:00pm-4:30pm	Registration And Local Mobilization	Onsite
4:30pm-4:40pm	Opening Remarks And Prayers	Online
4:40pm-5:10pm	Recognition And Introduction Of Mlr Centres	Online
5:10pm-5:30pm	Worship, Praise, Hymn	Online
5:30pm-5:45pm	Prayer Uproar	Online
5:45pm-6:00pm	Special Song Ministration From Nations	Online
6:00pm-7:20pm	Opening Charge And Prayers	Online
7:20pm	Closing Remarks, Announcements And Prayers	Online

Let our whole soul an offering be,
To our Redeemer's name.

4. Come as the dew- and sweetly bless,
This consecrated hour;
May barrenness rejoice to own,
Thy fertilizing power.

5. Come as the dove - and spread Thy
wings,
The wings of peaceful love;
And let Thy church on earth become,
Blest as the church above.

6. Spirit Divine attend out prayer;
Make a lost word Thy home;
Descend with all Thy gracious powers,
Oh, come, Great Spirit, come!

HYMN 7. Grace, thy grace alone

1. Grace, Thy grace alone,
Has brought me to Thy will;
Stranger and alien I had been,
'Till grace brought me so nigh.

*Grace, Thy grace alone,
Is all I plead for;
Grace to serve Thee aright Lord,
O! Grace to love Thee more.*

2. 'Tis grace that teaches me ,
Thy path for me to know;
And grace day by day leads me on,
My call not to let go.

3. I longed for this grace Lord,
To be faithful a steward;
To lay my all down for the church,
Till her glory bursts forth.

4. Make me Thy battle axe,
Kept Lord in Thy quiver;
Tried, Trimmed, sharpened in
Thy furnace,
Meet for my Master's use.

HYMN 8. Enlarge my heart,

1. Enlarge my heart O Lord,
That I may rightly perceive;
Help me to understand

What the true burden of the Lord is;
That I may not slack any more
Nor withhold myself from holy use.

2. Perfect my sight O Lord,
Help me to see as you see;
Right value for eternal things
Lord give me cause my eyes to see;
That I see not men as trees,
Nor lose sight of my duty and call.

HYMN 9. Not I But Christ

1. Not I but Christ, be honored, loved, exalted;
Not I, but Christ, be seen, be known, be
heard;
Not I, but Christ in every look and action,
Not I, but Christ, in every tho't and word.

*O to be saved from myself, dear Lord,
O to be lost in Thee,
O that it might be no more I,
But Christ that lives in me.*

2. Not I, but Christ, to gently soothe in sorrow;
Not I, but Christ to wipe the falling tear;
Not I, but Christ, to lift the weary burden;
Not I, but Christ, to hush away all fear.

3 Not I, but Christ in lowly silent labour;
Not I, but Christ in humble earnest toil;
Christ only Christ, No show, No ostenta-
tion;
Christ, none but Christ, the gatherer of the
spoil.

4. Christ, only Christ, no idol ever falling;
Christ, only Christ, no needless bustling
sound;
Christ, only Christ, no self-important bearing;
Christ, only Christ, no trace of 'I' be found.

5. Not I but Christ, my every need supply-
ing;
Not I, but Christ, my strength and health to be;
Christ, only Christ, for body, soul, and spirit;
Christ, only Christ, live then Thy life in me

6. Christ, only Christ, ere long will fill my
vision;

5. When Christ shall come, with shouts of acclamation,
To take me home, what joy shall fill my heart;
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration,
And there proclaim, my God how great Thou art.

HYMN 3. Rock of Ages

1. Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save me from its guilt and power.

2. Not the labour of my hands,
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

3. Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy Cross I cling!
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace:
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

4. While I draw this fleeting breath,
When mine eyes shall close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy Judgment-throne;
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

HYMN 4. Pass Me Not,

1. Pass me not, O gentle Saviour,
Hear my humble cry;
While on others Thou art calling,
Do not pass me by.

*Saviour, Saviour,
Hear my humble cry;
While on others Thou art calling,
Do not pass me by.*

2. Let me at Thy throne of mercy,

Find a sweet relief;
Kneeling there in deep contrition,
Help my unbelief.
3. Trusting only in Thy merit,
Would I seek Thy face;
Heal my wounded, broken spirit,
Save me by Thy grace.

4. Thou the spring of all my comfort,
More than life to me;
Whom have I on earth beside Thee?
Whom in heaven but Thee?

HYMN 5. I am praying

I am praying, Blessed Saviour,
To be more and more like Thee,
I am praying that Thy Spirit,
Like a dove, may rest on me.

*Thou who knowest all my weakness,
Thou who knowest all my cares,
While I plead each precious promise,
Hear oh hear and answer prayer.*

2. I am praying, Blessed Saviour,
For a faith so clear and bright,
That its eye will see Thy glory,
Through the deepest, darkest night.

3. I am praying, to be humbled,
By Thy power of Grace divine,
To be clothed upon with meekness,
And to have no will but Thine.

4. I am praying, Blessed Saviour,
And my constant prayer shall be,
For a perfect consecration,
That shall make me more like Thee.

HYMN 6. Spirit Divine,

1. Spirit Divine attend our prayers,
And make our hearts Thy home;
Descend with all Thy gracious powers,
Oh come, Great Spirit, come!

2. Come as the light to us reveal,
Our emptiness and woe;
And lead us in those paths of life,
Where all the righteous go.

3. Come as the fire - and purge our hearts,
Like sacrificial flame;

Thurs, Friday Morning & Saturday Dec 07- 09, 2023

7:00am-8:15am	Prayer Mobilization, Praise & Worship And Devotional Charge Remarks	Onsite
8:15am-8:25am	Opening Remarks Prayers And Hymn	Online
8:25am-9:15am	Devotional Challenge 1, 2, 3	Online
9:15am-9:40am	Prayer Up roar Tips	Online
9:40am-10:00am	Prayer Up roar	Onsite
10:00am-10:10am	Song Ministration From The Nations	Online
10:10am-11:30am	Message And Altar Call	Online
11:30am-1:00pm	Bible Study 1,2,3	Onsite
1:00pm-1:35pm	Bible Study Summaries	Online
1:35pm-3:20pm	LUNCH/REST/COUNSELING	Onsite
3:20pm-3:30pm	Worship And Prayers	Onsite
3:30pm-5:00pm	Professional Workshop/Group Meetings	Onsite
5:00pm-5:10pm	Praise And Worship Hymn	Online
5:10pm-6:10pm	Ministerial And Mission Challenges	Online
6:10pm-6:20pm	Song Ministrations From The Nations	Online
6:20pm-7:30pm	Message And Prayers	Online
7:30pm-7:35pm	Closing Remarks And Prayers	Online
7:35pm	Onsite Logistics	Onsite

Friday Afternoon, December 08, 2023

3:30pm-5:30pm	Milert Commissioning	Online
5:30pm-6:30pm	Ministerial And Mission Challenge	Online
6:30pm-6:40pm	Song Ministrations From The Nations	Online
6:40pm-7:30pm	Message And Prayers	Online
7:30pm-7:35pm	Closing Remark And Prayers	Online
7:35pm	Logistics	Onsite

Please Note:

1. Friday afternoon program is peculiar because of MILERT commissioning.
2. The workshop slot is twice: Thursday and Saturday

SUNDAY DECEMBER 10

Departure

Bible Study

PURSUING THE ONENESS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

Pre-amble

This unstoppable move of God for which God has positioned us and called us to be involved in will require the unity of the body of Christ to bring it unto its full strength. This is why we have been so instructed and led over the years in the way He has called us so that we do not do anything on our own. We have been called to bear the burden for the entire body of Christ. We must belong to them and be in their midst. We must not pull apart as if we are superior to them. We must bear their burdens and challenges on our hearts till Christ is formed in each of them and until they come to the measure of the full stature of Christ Jesus. **Eph. 4:11-14.**

till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; Eph. 4:13

"[That it might develop] until we all attain oneness in the faith and in the comprehension of the [full and accurate] knowledge of the Son of God, that [we might arrive] at really mature manhood (the completeness of personality which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ's own perfection), the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ and the completeness found in Him." Ephesians 4:13 AMPC

There is the crucial need for the oneness of the BODY OF CHRIST: we all must come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man. It is a labour for which God is equipping His people through the ministry gifts. This was what Paul expended all the energy God so lavishly provided in his life to pursue. And this move of God must bring us individually and corporately to this. While we trust the Lord for the increase, labouring for the church to be one is one key goal and pursuit of this move of God. It is not ecumenism or organisational unity or uniformity we are labouring for, it is the **oneness in the faith and in the comprehension of the full and accurate knowledge of the Son of God...**

3. Verification and completion of the attendance register of participants in the Onsite Workshop Group.

Other useful discussions related to the future plans of the group in order to continue pursuing with passion and personal commitment.

CONGREGATIONAL HYMNS

HYMN 1. Holy, Holy, Holy

1. Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God mighty!

Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;

Holy, Holy, Holy, Merciful and Mighty!
God in Three persons, Blessed Trinity

2. Holy, Holy, Holy! All the saints adore thee,
Casting down their golden crowns
around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down
before Thee,
Who wert and art, and ever more shall be.

3. Holy, Holy, Holy! Tho' the darkness
hide Thee,
Tho' the eye of sinful man Thy glory may
not see,
Only Thou art holy; there in none beside
Thee,
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

4. Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!
All Thy work shall praise Thy name, in
earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and Mighty!
God in Three persons, Blessed Trinity!

HYMN 2. How Great Thou Art

1. Oh Lord, my God, when I in awe-
some wonder,
Consider all the works Thy hands
have made;

I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to
Thee,
How great Thou art, how great Thou art,
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to
Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art.

2. When through the wood and forest
glades I wander,
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the tree;
When I look down from lofty mountain
grandeur,
And hear the brook and feel the gentle
breeze.

3. And when I think, that God His Son not
sparing,
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;
That on the cross, my burden gladly
bearing,
He bled and died, to take away my sin.

4. When burden press, and seem beyond
endurance,
Bowed down with grief, to Him I lift my
face;
And then in love, He brings me sweet
assurance,
My child for you, sufficient is my grace.

- a. When you catch up with the **'invaders'** of your workplace, how practically should you **'overtake'** the enemy and begin to recover what is under his bondage? Discuss with reference to the peculiarities of your profession.
- b. We **'Overtake'** when we **"take over"** the control and can begin the process of **'recovery'**. How should you go about the **'recovery'** of the losses you have suffered in your professional environment? Discuss the recovery of the following losses:
 - i. Salvation of the souls of men and women who are either colleagues or clients.
 - ii. Strategic raising of disciples among influential colleagues in the profession.
 - iii. Envisioning all disciples who are professional colleagues for Kingdom service in the workplace.

Deliberate posting of envisioned disciples in strategic positions to take over, fill and subdue the professional landscape.

- i. Aggressive rewriting and replacing the unrighteous principles and practices in our professions with those of the Kingdom of Christ.

SUMMARY OF CONVICTIONS AND PRAYERS

- A. Assign one of the leaders of each Onsite Workshop Group to take notes during the sessions. At the end of the session, he or she should present a summary of the convictions and strategies arrived at during the discussions. Participants may offer corrections and additions if they have any.
- B. The leaders of the group should also appoint someone to lead the closing prayers of each session.
- C. During the closing prayers of a session, a brief moment of time should first be given for individual prayers on the fresh convictions each person may have contracted during the session. Corporate praying may then follow, drawing each point of prayer from the group's summary of convictions and strategies.

CONCLUSION

1. The final Workshop Group session may conclude with the following useful items:
2. Presentation of upcoming events and any other information of relevance to the particular professional hub.

In this Bible study, we shall explore this mandate God has placed on us to see to the oneness of the Body of Christ and we trust the Lord to help us to faithfully honour the body and so serve her, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

A. The Rationale and Necessity for the Oneness of the Body of Christ

Oneness of the Body of Christ and in the body of Christ is not a cosmetic issue that should be treated lightly. It is a paramount matter in the heart of God and it is a very indispensable key in all that God wants to do on earth by our hands. It was the strength of the early Church and their division was their bane and downfall.

At Pentecost, the coming of the Spirit upon them with cloven tongues of fire was to inaugurate the Church in unity and oneness of spirit and purpose. Tribes and tongues, nationalities and location notwithstanding, we heard them speak...one message- the wonderful works of God. (Acts 2:4-13)

Tribe and tongue may differ; Nationalities and geography may vary; but we have been imbued with the self- same Spirit and this makes us one in every way. As we study, we shall examine the rationale and the need for us to pursue the oneness of the Body even as we see this stream flowing from the sanctuary break forth everywhere in the lands and nations of the earth.

1. Oneness is a key to an unstoppable move of God.

When people were of one mind, one speech, one vision, and one purpose, discuss and analyse what the Lord says (and still says) about oneness even when the people were pursuing a wicked agenda.

Gen 11:1-9; Matt 18:18-20 (NKJV, AMP); Acts 1:14; 2:1-2; 4:24-31.

What lessons can we learn from the apostles and the early disciples in the move of God they experienced?

In **Gen.11**, we are told that the people had one language and one speech. They said the same thing from their heart. Note what God said here. It was not an angel who said it. Even if what people want to do is evil, if they are united in it, nothing (good or bad) that they propose to do will be withheld from them. The

only way to stop them is to break their oneness. That shows the power of oneness. It is the key to an unstoppable move of God. Even God will not withhold from us whatever we propose to do, if it is particularly aligned to His will.

Whereas Satan is not divided in his kingdom, he has used this eternal truth to weaken the body of Christ by bringing division among God's people. The disciples were in one accord, (including the women) in the early church and it brought the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the manifestation of God's power. **Acts 4:24 (AMP)** says they lifted their voices together with one united mind. Division starts from the mind; so the unity must also start from the mind.

On the day of Pentecost, there was agreement; there was symphony in their prayers. People heard them speaking the same message- the wonderful works of God, even though they were speaking in different languages. So the revival lasted during their time in the Acts of the Apostles. If only we will be in one accord, God will do great things in answer to our prayers. We can achieve unity if we put our hearts to it under God.

Only oneness can defeat another oneness. The Godhead had to come together to scatter those building the tower of Babel. The God Head could have sent an angel to scatter them, but we see God Himself operating in oneness. If we are going to see His glory break forth, we need to begin to pray and plead with God for oneness of mind in our families as husband and wife and among us as disciples. Anything other than this will be a waste of our time.

2. Oneness is a strategy for unlimited answers to prayer

Matt 18:18-19 (NKJV AMP); 1Pet.3:7; Acts 12:5; Jam.5:14-16.

Look intently into these Scriptures and highlight the issue of oneness in the various situations and the unlimited answers to their prayers. What lesson have you picked from this?

For corporate prayers between two or more people, agreement brings definite answers to prayers. And to achieve agreement, we must first discuss to harmonize our minds on what we want to pray about, even between husband and wife. To pray a prayer of one accord, we must be united in what is being asked.

In *Acts 12*, it is clear that the believers were asking for one and

the effective procedure to follow in removing each "stone".

4. Jesus said: "*hereafter you shall see heaven open ...*" The word *hereafter* is an adverb of continuity. It means *following this*. Heaven will not open upon your profession or workplace in a vacuum. It only comes as you are busy believing Christ and following Him.
 - a. Discuss the need to intensify your labours in disciple-making and purging of your workplace of ungodliness as you await the unprecedented dimension of open heavens.
 - b. In what other ways can you persevere in your **pursuit to overtake and recover all** that is lost within your professional domain as you expect unusual open heavens?
5. The open heavens shall trigger the traffic of "***the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man***". What is the relevance of this to those who are seeking revival in their workplaces? This reveals to us that God is clearly not interested in doing business with any other person on earth besides Christ Jesus. The Father cannot invest on earth in anything or anyone that does not profit ***the Son of Man***. Therefore:
 - a. Do you pledge to live for Christ alone and faithfully represent Him in all you do professionally?
 - b. In what practical ways can you diligently focus on living for Christ and faithfully representing Him in all you do on your professional platform?
 - c. What could possibly hinder you from living as a true ambassador of Christ in your workplace? What is the Biblical solution to each of the identified hindrances?
6. What steps should you arise from here to take in your pursuit for recovery of all the losses in your professional domain:
 - a. **Individually**, as you personally live for the Lord and serve Him on a daily basis?
 - b. **Collectively**, in your workplace, in your various professional associations and fellowships?
7. The unusual open heavens we are stepping into by the mercy of God should not end our pursuit to overtake and recover all. We shall continue our pursuit with an even greater vigour with the aim to recover all. The unusual open heavens will rather supernaturally accelerate our pursuit and hasten our recovery of all that we lost.

This year, He has declared that **“Hereafter, you shall see Heaven open ...”**. This means that the unprecedented Divine visitation for which we have prayed, laboured and waited is now at hand. We are at the threshold of an unbroken flow of Divine grace and mercy from heaven upon the Son of Man who is at work in our lives.

The Father will open the heavens unto us to glorify Jesus, to confirm the Gospel message with signs following and to establish His Kingdom upon the Earth. This unusual open heavens is being released to sponsor the mission of Christ Jesus on our hands.

In our Professional Workshop at this MLR, we shall strategize on how to labour diligently to establish His Kingdom in the workplace. Otherwise, we shall end up wasting the unusual open heavens we have graciously received from on-High.

DISCUSSIONS

Read *John 1:50-51* again.

1. List the areas and aspects of your profession and workplace that have suffered lack or loss of godliness under “closed heavens”.
2. What change do you desire to see in each of these as you come under the unusual “open heavens”?
3. Notice that Jesus said to Nathanael: **“... do you believe?”** (Joh 1:50). This is quite similar to what He also said to Martha: **“... Do you believe this?”** Again He said: **“Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?”** (Joh 1:26, 40).
 - a. Discuss the importance of believing this prophetic Word of Christ regarding the resurrection of those aspects of your workplace where righteousness is currently considered “dead and buried” and salvation of the lost souls of your professional colleagues. **“If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.”** (Mar 9:23).
 - b. If you do believe, Jesus expects you to **“Take away the stone.”** What are the “stones” that you must arise to remove from the “dead” practices in your professional environment?
 - c. Taking the “dead” practices one by one, discuss and outline

the same thing; it was for Peter to be released from prison; and that was what God did for them. If some of them had prayed for Peter to be made comfortable and favoured in prison while others prayed for his release, they would not have received the answer they were expecting because there was already division in their ranks. But they were united in what they were asking for; so the answer came speedily from heaven.

In addition, when elders come together in agreement to pray over the sick, even their sins will be forgiven (if sin was the cause). Unfortunately, in many cases, God’s people do not take time to harmonize their hearts together and make a symphony of what they ask before praying. There is no limit to answered prayers when it is done in agreement.

“Receive this truth: Whatever you forbid on earth will be considered to be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you release on earth will be considered to be released in heaven. ¹⁹Again, I give you an eternal truth: If two of you agree to ask God for something in a symphony of prayer, my heavenly Father will do it for you. ²⁰ For wherever two or three come together in honor of my name, I am right there with them!” (Matthew 18: 18-20 (TPT))

This is an eternal truth, this is not something that is temporary, this is not sentimental – it is the truth. If two of us agree to ask God for anything in prayer, God-the Father will do it for us. This is an eternal and unshakeable truth! Wherever people agree together, God is willing to work. This shows a critical need for oneness. What has weakened the body of Christ is this matter.

The devil has focused his attention on dividing the church while he protects the unity of his own kingdom. In the Body of Christ, to get brethren to agree to work and to stand together it is a tug of war. In this move of the Spirit that God is bringing us into, one of the key issues we must trust the Lord for is the oneness: the oneness of our spirit and of our mind so that the purpose of God will not be jeopardized.

3. Oneness in love is the only evidence to prove that we are Christ’s disciples indeed.

John 13:34-35; Acts 4:32-35; 5:12-14; 1Jn. 2:9-11; 3:9-16.

Discuss this one and only evidence that we are children of God and are His disciples indeed and in reality. Why will anything else not suffice?

You cannot claim that you are a child of God when you resent or hate a brother. You are in darkness. Jesus says, “By this”...

shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another;" not "By these..." It is the enemy who sows the seed of discord among us to make sure we are not one. And when we are not one, prayers remain unanswered no matter how long we pray and even shout; and people will not know us as Christ's disciples if there is no love and oneness among us.

4. Our Oneness is what will make the world know that God has sent Christ Jesus:

Jn. 17: 11, 20 -23; Jn. 10:16; Jer. 32:39; Ezek. 37:1-3, 16-19, 22-25.

Discuss this prayer of our Lord Jesus and the burden of His heart for the oneness of His Church on earth.

The burden in God's heart for His people is that they will be one, as it is clearly evident in these Scriptures. People will not be able to know that God sent Jesus Christ to the world to save them if we are divided. Lack of oneness will hinder the effectiveness of the Body of Christ especially in soul winning in any community. The death of Christ on the cross for mankind will be wasted. But when we are one, people will know that God has sent Jesus Christ to them to save them.

The prophetic miracle of the valley of dry bones where bone joined to bone and became a great army for God in Israel was actually so that they might be one and no more two separated nations. Let each of us have done with lesser things. What is at stake is greater than what divides us.

5. Oneness (Unity) is the only guarantee for our victory in spiritual warfare:

Luke 11:16-23; Eccl. 4: 9-12; Matt. 18:18-19

Discuss this issue in the light of our pursuing to overtake the enemy and to surely recover all that has been stolen and vandalised in the Body of Christ.

Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against itself falls. If Satan is divided against himself his kingdom cannot stand. For all these years that we have been battling with the kingdom of darkness, it has stood.

Because we are divided and fallen apart, the kingdom of darkness is advancing. Churches are becoming empty, young people are being lured into darkness and we are wondering why. We

in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me." John 17:20-23 NKJV

Let us join our Lord in this crucial prayer and desire of His heart with "so be it with us, O Lord, and cause your glory to fill the earth as the waters cover the sea in this our day of your visitation."

And do not only pray about it but be God's answer to that prayer of Jesus Christ for His church. Allow nothing to make you to contribute to the division of the Body of Christ. What is at stake is greater than what we often allow to divide us. We shall see more answers to prayers when we are one. We shall see angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man! May the Lord depend on you

PROFESSIONAL WORKSHOP GENERAL OUTLINE

"LABOURING UNDER OPEN HEAVENS IN THE WORKPLACE"

WORKSHOP BURDEN

Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." Joh 1:50-51 NKJV

God called forth the **Rehoboth** of our labours at the Ministers Leadership Retreat (MLR) of 2021. This marked the beginning of the season of an abiding, abounding and abundant fruitfulness in our labours for revival. Thereafter, the LORD has commanded us to pursue the "thief" that has stolen, killed and destroyed righteousness, godliness and peace from our homelands and workplaces. He assures us that with the help of His Spirit, we shall surely overtake our adversary and recover all our losses.

word of truth and the Spirit bears witness with your spirit that you are a child of God, then God is your Father along with all others. And Jesus is our Brother.

- a. How great is Our One God and Father of all! Look at Eph. 4:6 again and discuss the implication of this on the Oneness of the Body of Christ? **Rom 11:36; 2Cor. 6:16-18; 1Cor. 12:6**
- b. How will a correct knowledge of God enhance the oneness of the Body of Christ? **Jn. 17:3-9, 21-26**

If God's children know that we have the same Father – God – and we belong to the same family of God, knowing this will enhance the oneness of the body of Christ. Note how great Jesus is as a discipler. He taught them all that the Father taught Him and exposed them to the correct knowledge of God the Father. Do not shield the Father from His children. Guide them progressively to a personal knowledge of the God. Do not cut them short. Discipleship that cuts men short as Adoni Bezek (Judg.1:7) did is not biblical. Discipleship is meant to help them to be able to take their own stand in the Family of God.

These seven dimensions of the oneness that God has arranged for the Body of Christ on earth are the basis for the prayer Christ Himself prayed for His disciples that they should be one. It is His life in us and us in Him that will make us one with one another. It is first the oneness of life, the sameness of the inner man (Heb. 2:11 NET) that will work out the oneness of the Body. As we pursue this move of God and we have heard the sound of abundance of rain, these dimensions of the oneness of the Church must be our deep conviction and experience. By our commitment to upholding it, we shall see more and more, the coming together of the dry bones again and a mighty army will arise in the nations of the earth, an army who could keep their rank and run to enthrone Jesus as the King everywhere with one undivided heart.

Finally,

" I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect

wonder why God does not answer our prayers. The answer is that every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to a desolation.

Oneness is our critical need. When we are united, there is a sure word of promise that what we are asking God to do for us will be done, even if it be victory over the enemy; a three-fold cord is not quickly broken.

6. Our Oneness Is a threat to Satan; so he is enraged and seeks to break our bands asunder:

Psa. 2:1-5; Neh. 4, 5, 6; Gal. 5: 13-17, 19-21

Looking at the story of the building of the walls of Jerusalem under the leadership of Nehemiah, bring out the strategies the enemy engaged in those three chapters to break the oneness of the workers and the people.

Could all the division that leads to breakaways in the Church be the activities of the enemy to put our bands asunder? Discuss. What role does the flesh play in breaking our bands asunder?

The kingdom of darkness normally takes counsel together before they set out to do anything. It is unfortunate that God's people do not take counsel together. We are individualistic; yet we say it is the Spirit who is leading us. We must learn to take counsel together. Also, the counsel from the kingdom of darkness has a focus; it is against the Lord, not against themselves. But we take counsel against one another and fight each other. We need to learn. Also the flesh works against the Spirit of the Lord with all his works. It is one weapon the devil uses to put our bands asunder. When we look at **Galatians 5:19-21**, we see that eight of the works of the flesh are divisive in nature. These are hostility, quarrelling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division and envy.

Mr. Flesh is the strongest divider of the body of Christ, and we need to fight 'him'. Anything originating from the flesh is only attacking the purpose of God. The flesh is contrary to the Spirit, and they are not friends. To be one with the brethren, you must be delivered from the power of the flesh.

7. Oneness is the secret of divine possibilities, unlimited flow of anointing and blessings from above. *Gen. 11:4-6; Ps. 133:1-3*

The outflow of the Holy spirit becomes unlimited when God's people are one. God is eager to bless when He sees us united. He commands His blessing where brethren dwell together in unity.

To conclude this section, you need to answer this question, "what are you doing to ensure the oneness of the BODY OF CHRIST in your area?" If you have contributed to the division among God's people, that must stop straightaway because it will hinder God's blessings and the flow of God's power to you and to the brethren. Have done with lesser things and put away anything that will break our bands asunder. You cannot live in love if it is the flesh running your life. Pray that God will create in you a passion for the oneness of the BODY OF CHRIST. Do nothing that will bring division and injure our oneness.

B. Understanding the Dimensions of the Oneness of the Body of Christ, that is, What God's people share in common

In this section, we shall seek a biblical understanding of the meaning, the implication, the basis and the means of the oneness of the BODY OF CHRIST. Several persons have talked about the unity of the BODY OF CHRIST from superficial ecumenism, where we only agree to disagree and look away from the fundamental things that create incompatibility in our bonding together.

Others think unless we achieve organisational oneness, we are not serious about unity. Unison is their own expectation of the unity of the BODY OF CHRIST. Others talk about uniformity-uniformity of appearance, uniformity of liturgical services, uniformity of our methodology, uniformity of our speech and even the dress we wear and several things that are external and outward. While any of these could be useful, they are not essential to our oneness and they are not the essence of Christ's prayer.

As we turn to the Scriptures, we will trust God to unveil to us His mind, His heart cry and desire for the oneness of His Body on earth and the provisions He has made for it to come to pass and how we must labour for it.

Read Eph. 4:1-6 and particularly verses **4-6**. From this Scripture,

baptism that qualifies the believer for water baptism and the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Note very particularly that the baptism in water is only a symbol of this. Then, He (Jesus) who comes to baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire comes to baptize **the believer**, filling him to overflowing with the Holy Spirit to empower him to be an effective witness of Christ.

a. Baptized into Christ...baptized into His death (Rom. 6:3-4).

Discuss this essential baptism that makes you a member of the BODY OF CHRIST.

This *one baptism* into Christ (His body) means baptism into His death. You cannot be said to have been baptized into Christ's body to be a member, except that you have been baptized into His death; and you died. So you were buried with Him and you were raised from the dead with him to walk in newness of life.

Those who have experienced this *one baptism*, have the potential to operate in oneness; they are in Christ and Christ is in each of them; so Christ in you and Christ in me cannot be divided.

What is the implication for the believer in Christ Jesus? Study *1 Pet 3:21-22 (NIV, NLT, AMP)*

Water baptism is only a symbol and a public announcement that you have been baptized into Christ's death and consequently, His resurrection. It is not the washing of dirt away from the body.

b. Discuss Gal 3:26-28 practically. How does this enhance the oneness of the Body of Christ? What does it imply to "have put on Christ"?

Once you are baptized into Christ and you experience death with Christ, you have put on Christ. You are in Christ and Christ is in you. This will bring unity to the BODY OF CHRIST if we ensure that every believer experiences this.

7. One God and Father of all:

Eph. 4:6; 6:23; Isa 63:16; Mal 2:10; Jn. 20:17; Jam.1:17-18.

God is the Father of all; the Father of all spirits. We have one Father. So you cannot excommunicate any child of God from the fatherhood of God. He is the Father of all, who is above all and through all and in us all. If you are born of God by the

advance their knowledge of the truth in keeping with righteousness. Any faith that promotes carelessness and sinful living is not the faith of God's elect. If we all have the same faith, we will be united. Guard this faith by not being engaged in discussions that do not bring edification in the faith. Do not get involved in any teaching that does not make people grow in their faith in Christ. Any faith that does not increase your godliness accord with righteousness, avoid it. Such will only bring division to the BODY OF CHRIST.

c. Our Common Faith: *Tit 1:4; 2Cor. 4:13 (NLT)*

It is our common faith, the same kind of faith the Psalmist had. This faith has not changed; it is our common faith both in the Old and New Testaments

d. Like precious Faith: *2 Pet 1:1(AMP)* - equally precious and of same value with the Apostles' faith.

The faith once for all delivered unto the saints... *Jud 1:3-4; Act 4:12; Tit.1:1 (NLT)*. It is not incremental, changing and improving, shifting and adjusting to accommodate new and modern theories. It is once for all delivered to the saints, to be carried on, unedited, undiluted and unadulterated to everywhere, everyone and every nation. Ancient but current, ageless but relevant for all ages. Final and perfect, need not to be revised. There are no new versions of the faith unless there be perversions of it.

e. Your most holy faith: *Jud 1:20; 2Tim 1:5; 1Tim 1:18-20; 6:12* What are the things that could contaminate our faith and make the faith a counterfeit.

The faith we are talking about is a holy faith, a faith that is accompanied by good conscience. Any faith which is not accompanied by good conscience is not holy and it is not faith in Jesus Christ.

6. One Baptism:

Rom. 6:3-5; 1Cor. 12:12-13; Gal 3:26-28; Mk. 16:15-17; Matt 28:19.

What is this one baptism and the essence of it?

This "one baptism" is the baptism into the *one* BODY OF CHRIST done by the Holy Spirit when anyone repents and believes the gospel. It is the Holy Spirit, not anyone else, who immerses the believer into the BODY OF CHRIST, thus making him a member, a part of the BODY OF CHRIST. It is this *one*

- a. Identify and outline the dimensions of oneness we share in the BODY OF CHRIST.
- b. Discuss the seven-fold oneness we essentially share in the BODY OF CHRIST as outlined below:

There is:

1. One Body but with many members:

Rom.12:3-5; 1Cor. 12: 12-27; Eph. 3:4-6

What can you explain about this fact that there is only one body? *1Cor. 12:12; Eph. 2:15-16; Gal. 3:27-28.*

The fact that we have many members does not mean we are not one body. And the fact that we do not have the same function does not mean we are not members of one Body. This Biblical illustration with the human Body clearly shows this. The human body is one body but it has many parts with different functions. No matter how many members we are, we are one Body, just as it is with a normal human body.

Many have broken the BODY OF CHRIST into small bits and ministries because they are gifted in one function; so they are trying to specialise based on that gift and cut away from other parts of the BODY OF CHRIST. When you break away lpart of His body like that, you cause great pain to Christ and His body. The BODY OF CHRIST far surpasses the individual member's function. Your function does not make you superior to another member of the body. No matter how great your function is, you are only a member, not the entire Body. God set each member in the body as it pleases Him; so humble yourself. The BODY OF CHRIST transcends ethnicity or tribalism, education or social status. Such things mean nothing in Christ (*Col. 3:10-11 LB*).

a. The Church is Christ's Body and He does not have two bodies. Explain. *Eph.1:22-23; 5:23,30; Col.1:24; 2:19; 3:15*

Explain why the diversities of members should not be the reason for disunity but for unity in the Body. You may illustrate this with the human body for our understanding.

1Cor.10:17; 12:7, 12-14, 27; Eph.4:25; Rom 12:5.

From the Scriptures above, highlight what it is that makes us one body. *Jn. 17:21-23*

By one Spirit we have all been baptised into one body, the BODY OF CHRIST; and Christ is in us. Also we are one loaf. What is inside another brother is what is in me: the same Spirit of Christ.

b. What must each one experience to make him or her a member of Christ's Body and a member of one another? *Jn. 17:21-23; 1Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:27; 2Cor. 5:17*

Christ must be in you and you must be in Christ for you to be a member of the Body of Christ. This is a provision for us to be one. He prayed for His Body that they may be one as He and the Father are one. Anyone who does not have Christ in him and who has not been baptised (immersed) into the BODY OF CHRIST by the Holy Spirit does not belong to the BODY OF CHRIST. He may belong to a church denomination; but he does not belong to the BODY OF CHRIST.

Also, the glory of God that Jesus carries, He has also bestowed it upon His Body and it is to make us one. About the glory of Christ (Col. 1:27), Christ in you is the hope of glory. The glory of Christ comes through the manifestation of the life of Christ in a child of God. The glory He transferred to us is His life in us. It is when the life of Christ is being manifested in us that the glory is seen in us and it is to make us one. If we each carry Christ life everywhere, **we shall be one**, because the life in each of us is one: the life of Christ. Christ cannot work contrary to Christ.

C. How should we relate together in the body of Christ to show that we are one body?

Jn. 13:35; 1Cor. 12:20-21, 25-26; Phil. 2:1-8(NKJV, MSG); Rom. 12:3-5, 1 Cor 3:1-5

We should relate in love in the BODY OF CHRIST; we need each other. We must be sober in our thinking, according to the measure of faith we have received. None of us should think more highly of himself than he ought to. There should be no schism in the Body but we must have the same care for one another. Do not cling to anyone though he or she was used to bring you up in the faith. It brings division.

2. One Spirit: The Spirit of Christ:

Jn.3:3-8; Rom.8:9,14-16; Eph. 2:18,22; 1Cor.12:13; Heb. 2:11 (NET, NJB)

- a.** Discuss from the Scriptures above, this One Spirit by which we are born again and the Spirit that fuses us into the Body as functional members. *Gal 4:6; 1Pet. 1:11; Ezek. 11:19-20; Jer. 24:7; 32:39, Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30*

communion, and devotion to the Lord are critical necessities to engage for the oneness of the BODY OF CHRIST. Once we lose this connection to the Lord and draw our inspiration from any other source outside Christ, we will cause confusion in the body of Christ. It is thus your personal responsibility to see that you maintain your connection to the Lord, the Head. If it is the Lord that is guiding and directing us in all things, we will be in harmony with one another.

- d.** It is only by Him and through Him and in Him we have access to the Father and to one another in the household of faith: *Eph. 2:18-22; Jn. 14: 6.*

Can you be a bad brother or sister to others and still have this access to the Father? **1Jn. 3:10-22.** What does that imply concerning our unity?

Your personal relationship with the Lord is what makes you vitally relevant in the BODY OF CHRIST. You will cause disunity in the BODY OF CHRIST if you do not maintain your connection with the Lord and with the brethren.

5. One Faith:

Eph. 4:5,13; Tit. 1:1, 4; 2Pet 1:1 (LB); Jud 1:3, 20

Taking each of these Scriptures into deep consideration, let us define the various terms in which this one faith has been expressed so as to gain further insight into the One **faith** to which we have been called.

- a.** One Faith... Not several faiths! Why not?

Eph. 4:5; Rom 3:26, 30 (NIV); 2Pet. 1:1 (LB); Gal. 1:6-10;

It is one same faith that each of us has received: faith in Jesus Christ. It is a holy faith and it will promote holiness. There is no other gospel that can bring that faith except the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ except they have perverted the gospel. Even if you were a preacher of the gospel before and then you change, preaching another gospel, you are accursed. So nobody has the right to adjust and restructure it; it is the same faith as that of the apostles.

- b.** The Faith of God's elect and the acknowledgement of the truth which accords with godliness: *Tit 1:1 (NET); 1Tim 1:4 (NLT, MSG)*

We preachers are to encourage the faith of God's elect, and to

damental beliefs and pattern of living will be the same.

4. One Lord and Shepherd of our Souls:

Eph. 4:5; Act 2:36; 1Cor. 1:2; 8:6; Rom 14:7-9; Jn. 10:14-16

a. He has been appointed the Lord of all. *Col.1:15-19; Col 2:6-10, 18-19; Heb.1:1-3*

What is the implication of this for the Church?

The entire BODY OF CHRIST has only one Lord: the Lord Jesus Christ. We can claim the lordship of Christ over all things for the purpose of the kingdom of God. Also, we should not allow anything, including angels, to lord it over us. Let Jesus be Lord over your life. If every believer allows Jesus to be the Lord over his/her life, there will be unity in the BODY OF CHRIST.

b. Jesus has been raised and seated at God's right hand far above all. *Eph.1:20-23; Phil 2:9-11; Mk. 4:41*. Explore the extent of His lordship.

Jesus Christ is Lord of all. He is also Lord over the Church, His Body. The lordship of Christ over us is for our shepherding. He is the one through whom we get supplies to bless each other. It is in Him we have authority to operate. It is in His power we have power. Submitting to His lordship over us is for our benefit because without Him we can do nothing. His lordship is vital for us and He is not a benefactor, seeking to take advantage of us.

His lordship is the kind that gives rather than receives. You must understand your need of Him and let Him be Lord over your life. If each of us accepts his lordship over our lives, we will not be divided because He is not an author of confusion.

c. He is the Vine; we are His branches and so totally dependent on Him. *Jn. 15:1-7; Eph. 4:15-16* How does this prove His lordship over us all in the body of Christ?

Without Him, we can do nothing. Our dependence on Him in all things proves His Lordship over us.

How should we then relate with one another in the BODY OF CHRIST since Jesus is the one Lord over us? *Rom. 12:3-4, Phil. 2:1-5 (KJV, MSG); Rom. 14:10*

None of us is lord over another. Jesus Christ is the Lord and judge of all. We should relate with each other humbly and soberly. Each of us must continue to realize that it is our connection to the Lord that makes us relevant. Our personal relationship, submission,

- We have one Spirit. This *one Spirit* is the **Spirit of Christ**, described as **the life of Christ** and as **the new heart** in those other Scriptures. We are of the same origin and the same stock as Christ. The Holy Spirit particularly unites and gives us the same identity in Christ. He is the stamp of ownership of the Father. He is the evidence of the life of Christ that we received and the assurance that we can live that life consistently until the redemption of the purchased possession to the Glory of God. Without the Holy Spirit, there is no assurance that one can live the life of Christ. We are one because of the life of Christ that we have in us, which the Holy Spirit operates.

Even the prophets of old had the Spirit of Christ, even when He had not yet come in the flesh. This is what makes us common with our patriarchs. It is the Holy Spirit inside of us that makes God know that we are his own.

b. How can we operate in oneness of the Spirit? *Phil. 1:27; Jn. 16:14; Col. 1:10; Tit. 1:9; 1Cor. 2:2*

- If we stand firm in one Spirit: in the life of Christ, (that is, in the Spirit of Christ), the character of Christ will be manifesting in us. It shows that we are one in Spirit. To operate as one in Spirit, each one will glorify Christ always, not the flesh or any other person; also, we will always seek to make Jesus Lord. To be one in Spirit, we should also hold fast to the faithful word of God and not depart from it; this will enable us to exhort and convict those who contradict us. Each of us must continue to increase in the knowledge of God so that we can contribute to the growth of the BODY OF CHRIST. *Read Philippians 1:27* again - Whatever happens, wherever we are, we must keep living our lives based on the reality of the gospel we received.

When we keep doing this, we will see that everywhere we find ourselves - students, teachers, doctors - there will be oneness in our midst. Cultural, ethnic, color and educational boundaries will be broken down because, in Christ Jesus, all these things mean nothing.

c. All who cause division in the body of Christ are sensual and carnal: *Jude 1:19-21; 1 Cor. 3:1-5; Gal 5:15,20-21 (NKJV, LB); Jam 3:14-17*

Every clinging to men is carnal and it will only bring division to

the BODY OF CHRIST. Even if God used brethren to help your life, you must not use that to bring division. And as one whom God uses to help others, do not take them as your personal property; they belong to Christ. Each of the works of the flesh in Gal. 5 is a sign of carnality; it will cause division. Run away from them.

3. One Hope of Our Calling:

Eph.4:4, 1:18-19; Col.1:3-6, 23,27; Act 23:6; 24:15; 26:6-8.

From these Scripture above and others hereunder, discuss your understanding of the One hope of our calling.

a. Christ Himself is our one living hope: Jer.14:8, 17:7; 1Tim 1:1; 1Pet 1:3-4, 21. Eph. 2:12.

Christ is our hope and that is common to all believers and He is the One who gives us hope. He is the hope of Israel. Unbelievers are hopeless. They are without hope and without God in this world. But we are not hopeless.

b. The Hope of Resurrection and of eternal life: Tit. 1:1-3; 1Cor. 15:12-25, 50-58; 2Cor. 4:14; I Thess. 4:13-18; Act 23:6; 24:15.

The hope of resurrection and eternal life is common to all in the BODY OF CHRIST. If the church will keep being one, we must keep preaching about the hope of resurrection to each other. We will rise again even if we die. Christ died and rose again; so we will rise again from the dead. Many, including Paul, saw the resurrected Lord. No matter what happens to us in this world, good or bad, we have the hope of resurrection and of eternal life. This is one thing that binds us together as the BODY OF CHRIST. We must keep speaking about this to each other. Anything that does not unify the Body of Christ must be dropped to preach this.

c. The Hope of His appearing that will transform our mortal bodies to be as He is and launch us into an incorruptible inheritance reserved in heaven for us. Jn. 14:1-3; 1Jn.3:1-3 (MSG); 1Pet 1:3-4; 1Cor. 15:52; Tit.2:13-14; Matt 25:34; 2Tim 4:8.

Jesus is coming back again to take us home. We have the hope of His appearing. Our unity is not because we are planning and arranging it. We already have things that bind us together. One of them is that Christians everywhere have the hope of his ap-

pearing and when He comes, He will take us to Himself so that where He is, there we will be also.

The unity of the BODY OF CHRIST is in all these dimensions of oneness. Our knowledge and understanding of all this oneness is what will restore unity to the BODY OF CHRIST.

d. The hope of the Gospel, the hope of glory: Col 1: 5, 23-27; Rom 5:2-5; Gal 5:5-6

The gospel brings us hope: the hope of glory. We have the hope that we will experience the glory of God as we allow Christ to live His life in us. We must not be timid about re-stating the true gospel. We must not be timid about preaching the gospel according to the Scriptures. This is what will bring about the unity we desire.

Col 1:5-6 says,

because of the hope, which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth.

The gospel has the power to bring the same effect on this generation as it did in the time of the early church. It produces the same result everywhere! We must be committed to teaching it because this is what will make the church what God wants it to be. We must avoid teaching empty philosophies but give ourselves to teaching the word of God. This is what has the capacity to bring about oneness in the body of Christ.

e. How should we behave ourselves as members of the BODY OF CHRIST to show the oneness of our hope? 1Thess. 4:13-14, 18; 1Jn. 3:3 (MSG):

"All of us who look forward to his coming stay ready, with the glistening purity of Jesus' life as a model for our own". 1Jn. 3:3 MSG

The hope of His appearing makes us to have Christ's life as our pattern and model of life and this model unites us and brings us together. And if all of us pattern our lives after Christ, we will be united. If this hope is in us, then we will be one in our pursuit, even if we belong to different denominations. Our fun-