WHAT IS ECCLESIA?

Rediscovering God's Original Purpose for His People



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— The Ecclesian Foundation Series • Volume 1 —

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The Ecclesian Foundation Series, Volume 1.

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Scripture references are presented as part of the author's teaching. Readers are encouraged to read each passage in its full biblical context.

This booklet presents a concise exploration of the nature, life, and purpose of the Ecclesia, with particular attention to the words of Jesus in Matthew 16:18: "I will build my Ecclesia."

> *The Ecclesian exists to keep placing before God's people the revelation of Christ and His Ecclesia, so that His Kingdom may be birthed and expressed in us and through us.*

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Introduction

Recovering the Meaning

The burden behind this booklet is more than the recovery of a word. It is the recovery of a reality. At the heart of that reality is the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, because the revelation of Christ is foundational to the revelation of His Ecclesia and, ultimately, to the expression of His Kingdom on the earth.

Christ is the Head of the Ecclesia, and the Ecclesia is His Body. Scripture also presents His people as a Bride being prepared for Him. If Christ is to be visibly expressed through His people, then His Body must be properly constituted and built together under His headship. This is why the restoration of the Ecclesia matters so deeply.

The issue is especially important in our day because the meaning of what Christ intended when He spoke of His Ecclesia has become obscured. For many believers, the word church immediately brings to mind a building, a place of worship, an institution, a denomination, or somewhere people go on certain days of the week. There is nothing inherently wrong with having a suitable building in which believers can gather. The problem begins when the building, organisation, or programme becomes our definition of what Christ said He would build.

Matthew 16 takes us back to the foundation. Jesus asked His disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus told him that flesh and blood had not revealed this to him, but His Father in heaven. Then He said, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

That order is important. First there is the revelation of Christ. Then there is the building of His Ecclesia. The Ecclesia

cannot be separated from Christ Himself. It is His Body, His assembly, and He is its Builder and Head.

When Jesus said, "I will build my Ecclesia," He was not speaking primarily about constructing a physical structure or establishing a religious institution. He was speaking about building a people. The original New Testament word is ekklesia, and throughout this booklet I will often use the word Ecclesia, or assembly, because I want us to hear again the corporate reality behind the word.

> *This is not an attack on believers, ministries, congregations, or traditions. It is an invitation to return to the words of Christ and ask what He intended. What is the Ecclesia? What exactly is Christ building? Why did He use this word? What did He mean when He said that the gates of hell would not prevail against it? And what does all of this require of those of us who belong to Him today?*
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> *These are not merely academic questions. If our understanding of what Christ is building is wrong, our labour can easily become centred on structures, programmes, systems, and activities while the people themselves remain unbuilt. A meeting place may serve the Ecclesia, but the meeting place is not the Ecclesia. The people are the Ecclesia, and Christ is building His people together upon the revelation of Himself.*
>
> *As we proceed, I encourage you not simply to take my word for these things. Search the Scriptures. Read the history. Examine the words and their context. Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, to open our understanding. The desire is not merely to defend terminology, but to recover*

truth and to become in reality the people Christ said He would build.

So the issue goes beyond learning a Greek word. We need to ask whether Christ is being revealed among us, whether His life is being expressed through us, and whether we are actually becoming part of the assembly He is building for the expression of His purpose and His Kingdom on the earth.

"The true habitat for every genuine lover of the Lord Jesus Christ is His Ecclesia."

REFLECTIONS

1. What picture first comes to your mind when you hear the word church?

2. How might a wrong definition produce a wrong practice?

3. Are you willing to allow Scripture and the Holy Spirit to challenge inherited assumptions?

Chapter 1

When Words Lose Their Meaning

If something is not properly known, its purpose will not be properly known. And when purpose is not known, abuse becomes possible. Before asking what the Ecclesia should do, we must ask what the Ecclesia is.

The word church has accumulated many meanings in common Christian speech. For some, church is a building. For others, it is a Sunday gathering. For others, it is an institution with a name, a constitution, a hierarchy, a programme, and a property. These things may be associated with Christian activity, but they do not by themselves define what Jesus said He would build.

This distinction matters because the way we define church affects what we expect from it. When church is understood mainly as a place, attendance can become the main measure of faithfulness. When it is understood mainly in terms of programmes or institutions, activity and institutional preservation can gradually receive more attention than the formation of people in Christ.

We therefore need to begin with the definition. Christ is building His Ecclesia, an assembly of people rather than a physical location. They may meet in a house, a hall, under a tree, or in any other suitable place. The meeting place is useful, but it is not what defines the Ecclesia. What matters is the people Christ is building together.

Recovering the meaning of Ecclesia is more than a matter of vocabulary. We need to ask what the word meant to the people who first heard Jesus use it, and what that understanding can show us about the calling, authority, formation, and shared life of God's people.

An important qualification must also be made: this recovery is not an excuse for judgment. It is possible to discover a truth and then use it as a weapon against others. That would contradict the very life we are trying to recover. The purpose is to come under the light ourselves. Before asking whether another group qualifies as Ecclesia, we should ask whether our own life is being joined to Christ and to His people in the way the New Testament describes.

When a word has come to mean many different things, going back to its earlier meaning can help us examine our practice. It may show us where habit has shaped us more than Scripture, and it may also awaken in us a desire for something deeper than simply attending meetings.

The question “What is Ecclesia?” brings us back to the purpose of Christ. Whether we normally use the English word church or the Greek word ecclesia is secondary. What matters is whether the reality Jesus intended is actually being formed among us.

REFLECTIONS

1. Have I reduced church to attendance, a building, a programme, or an institution?

2. What would change if I understood the church primarily as a people Christ is building?

3. Where do I need to exchange inherited assumptions for a fresh reading of Scripture?

The history of English Bible translation also shows that words are never entirely neutral. The choice between church and other ways of rendering ekklesia became a

visible issue in the Reformation and early seventeenth century. That history does not by itself define the New Testament meaning of Ecclesia, but it helps explain why it is worth slowing down and examining the word carefully.

Chapter 2

The Word Ecclesia

From Tyndale to the King James Bible

The history of the English word used for ekklesia deserves attention. Long before the King James Bible, William Tyndale translated the New Testament directly from Greek into English. When he came to ekklesia, he did not use the word church. He used congregation. In this booklet I prefer the word assembly because it keeps before us the picture of a people gathered and constituted together, but Tyndale's actual historical wording was congregation.

Tyndale's choice was deliberate. In his own defence of the translation, he explained that he wanted the word to point to the whole company of those who believe in Christ rather than to an ecclesiastical class. Whatever conclusions one draws from the wider controversy surrounding Tyndale, this much is clear: the translation of ekklesia was already connected to the question of what, or who, the church actually was.

The issue became especially visible in the events surrounding the King James Bible. At the Hampton Court Conference in 1604, during the reign of King James I, the proposal for a new English translation of the Bible was accepted. Rules were subsequently established to guide the translators. One of those rules specifically required the old ecclesiastical words to be retained: the word church was not to be translated congregation.

That instruction is significant. It shows that the choice of church rather than Tyndale's congregation was not simply an invisible or automatic translation decision. The terminology was consciously preserved within the ecclesiastical language of the period. At the same time, we should be precise: the English

word church existed long before King James, and other English Bibles before 1611 had already used it. King James did not invent the word. The historical point is that the translators of the Authorized Version were expressly instructed to retain it rather than return to Tyndale's wording.

For our purpose, the question is not whether every use of the English word church is wrong. The question is what picture the word now creates in our minds. Over time, church has come to carry associations with buildings, institutions, denominations, clergy, and organised religious activity. Those associations can make it difficult for a modern reader to hear the force of Jesus' words as referring to a people - an assembly He Himself would build.

This is why I use Ecclesia and assembly so deliberately. I am not trying to introduce novelty for its own sake. I want us to recover the people-centred reality of the word. When Jesus said, "I will build my Ecclesia," we should hear, "I will build my assembly" - a people joined to Him and, through Him, joined to one another.

The historical translation question therefore serves the larger biblical question. It brings us back to the Greek word itself and to the world in which that word was already understood. From there we can ask what the picture of an ekklesia would have communicated to those who first heard it.

The historical picture carried by the word ecclesia takes us into the world of the Greek city-states, where the term described a convened assembly of citizens. A definition attributed to William Barclay helps us see some of the civic and governmental associations the word carried.

The emphasis begins with convening. Ecclesia speaks of people brought together as an assembly, with a shared identity, responsibility, and purpose. In the Greek civic setting, citizens

who retained their civic rights participated in the assembly and shared responsibility for the affairs of the city.

The breadth of responsibility associated with that assembly is striking: magistrates could be elected or dismissed, policies directed, war and peace addressed, treaties and alliances considered, military officers appointed, campaigns assigned, and funds raised and allocated. The point of rehearsing these functions is not to turn the New Testament church into a political institution. The point is to feel the weight of the word Jesus chose.

When Jesus said, "I will build my Ecclesia," the word already carried the idea of an assembly in which people participated and shared responsibility. It was not the picture of a passive audience. This historical background helps us appreciate something of the weight His hearers could have attached to the term.

Two further features in Barclay's description are noteworthy: the meetings began with prayer and sacrifice, and participation was marked by equality and freedom. The Christian Ecclesia is not simply a copy of a Greek civic body. Christ gives the word its own kingdom content. Yet the historical picture helps us understand why the term could communicate much more than the modern idea of a weekly religious service.

The religious setting of Greek civic life is also worth noticing. The assembly did not function in a world where public affairs and the worship of the gods were neatly separated. Athenian assemblies were at times held in major sacred or theatrical spaces, and the proceedings themselves included purification, sacrifice, and prayer to the gods. Ancient descriptions also place the assembly in view of the temples of the Acropolis. This background does not make the Ecclesia a religious temple; rather, it helps us see that the word belonged

to the public life of a people whose civic, social, and religious worlds were closely connected.

There is another important implication. The Greek ecclesia was local. There could be an ecclesia in different city-states. This becomes a useful bridge into the New Testament pattern of local expressions of the Body of Christ. The universal people of God must become visible somewhere. The life of Christ must take shape among actual brothers and sisters in actual places.

This background helps us see that ecclesia referred to an assembled people who participated and carried responsibility together. That is a different picture from the common idea of church as mainly a building, an audience, or a religious programme.

We should not press the historical comparison too far. Christ's Ecclesia is not a civic government, and its authority does not come from political status or human power. Its authority comes from Christ and is exercised under the direction of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of God.

REFLECTIONS

1. What aspects of the historical picture of ecclesia challenge your present understanding of church?

2. Where have you become a spectator rather than a participating member of the Body?

3. How can authority remain spiritual and Christ-centered rather than becoming a pursuit of worldly power?

Chapter 3

A Convened Assembly with Authority

The phrase “unlimited power,” drawn from the historical definition, can easily be misunderstood if separated from its context. It does not grant individual Christians unlimited personal power. Rather, it draws attention to the corporate calling of a properly convened assembly under Christ.

Spiritual authority should not be centred in isolated individuals. Ephesians presents the Ecclesia as a corporate people through whom the wisdom and authority of God are made known. This gives us a different picture from the idea of a few unusually powerful individuals carrying the whole work.

Ephesians says that the manifold wisdom of God is made known through the church to principalities and powers. The emphasis is on the Ecclesia as a body. God's purpose includes forming a people in whom Christ can be expressed together.

This also helps us avoid two errors. One is individualism, where a believer assumes that private spirituality is enough and deep relationship with other believers is unnecessary. The other is institutionalism, where membership in an organization is taken as proof that body life is present. Ecclesia involves a shared life under Christ.

There is also a relationship between what we see in Christ and what He is forming in His Ecclesia. Christ is the Son of Man and the Son of God. The Ecclesia is made up of ordinary men and women who have received His life and in whom He dwells by His Spirit. Whatever spiritual capacity the Ecclesia has comes from Him.

This does not make us less human. God's people still have histories, personalities, limitations, and weaknesses. But natural identity is no longer the whole story. Christ has come to

dwell in His people, and His life is meant to find expression through them together.

For this reason, spiritual authority cannot be produced by titles, branding, numbers, noise, or claims. It develops as people remain joined to Christ, obey the Holy Spirit, stand on the right foundation, and are actually built together.

This brings us to the words of Jesus, “I will build.” If the Ecclesia is to carry the responsibility Christ gives it, then it must be formed and built for that purpose.

REFLECTIONS

1. Do I think of spiritual authority mainly in individual terms or corporate terms?

2. What is the difference between organizational membership and shared life in Christ?

3. How might genuine authority grow out of formation rather than titles or claims?

Chapter 4

“I Will Build My Ecclesia”

The words “I will build” are central to our understanding of the Ecclesia. A meeting can be arranged, a programme can be organized, and an institution can be registered, but these things do not in themselves produce the Ecclesia. The people themselves have to be built together.

Jesus Himself is the Builder. The work belongs to Him. Yet throughout Scripture God works through human vessels. Christ was sent by the Father, and the New Testament speaks of workers who are called, prepared, and sent to participate in the building work.

This is where apostolic ministry has an important place. I am not speaking primarily about titles. I am speaking about workers whom God has prepared to lay Christ as the foundation, care for the saints, and help a local body grow into a shared life.

Such workers should know this life by experience. They should know what it means to live among brothers and sisters, to receive correction, to serve, to grow, and to be known. Information alone cannot prepare a person for this kind of work.

The example of Antioch is important. Paul and Barnabas were part of a living local context before being sent. Their going was not the independent launch of personal ministries. Acts 13 presents the Holy Spirit speaking in the midst of a worshipping, fasting community and setting apart workers for a work to which He had called them.

This takes time. Our age is accustomed to quick results and visible platforms, but people are not built that way.

Relationships, character, and the formation of Christ in a community all require time.

The words “I will build” are also an encouragement. Human failure and our incomplete understanding have not cancelled the promise of Christ. He is still committed to building His Ecclesia.

Our part is to yield to Him as the Builder. We allow Him to correct our foundations, reorder our relationships, raise the workers He needs, and join His people together according to His wisdom.

REFLECTIONS

1. Am I more interested in gathering people or in seeing people built together?

2. Have I allowed God to form me in community before seeking to lead others?

3. Where do I need to trust Christ again as the Builder of His own Ecclesia?

Chapter 5

The Building Process of the Ecclesia

If the Ecclesia must be built, then we need to consider what is involved in that process. Three things are especially important in this teaching: workers who understand the building, room for the Holy Spirit to work, and a people willing to be joined together.

First, there must be workers. Scripture shows people who are called, prepared, and sent to serve God's purpose. Their work is not to build something around themselves, but to help build Christ's people.

Second, there must be room for the Holy Spirit. We have to be willing for the indwelling Spirit to work beyond some of our fears, programmes, and inherited boundaries. This does not mean that truth or sound doctrine is unimportant. It means that our formulations must not become a substitute for the living government of the Spirit.

The life of the Ecclesia is the life of Christ, made present among the saints by the Holy Spirit. We cannot produce that life by technique, structure, or terminology. The Spirit must be allowed to form Christ in the people.

Third, the people must be committed to one another. Ecclesia cannot be only a collection of believers who attend the same event and then continue with unrelated lives. If they are to be built together, their lives have to become connected.

That commitment will involve patience, forgiveness, correction, service, hospitality, vulnerability, and the willingness to remain in relationship when it becomes difficult. This is part of what it means for a body to grow through living connections.

These things need to work together. Workers need the direction of the Spirit, spiritual experience needs to lead into actual building, and community needs Christ as its foundation. As these come together among people who are committed to one another, a local expression of the Body can begin to take shape.

So it is not enough to ask whether we have meetings. We also need to ask whether we are actually being built together, whether the Spirit is forming Christ among us, and whether our relationships are becoming real enough to carry the life God intends.

REFLECTIONS

1. Which of the three emphases - builders, liberty of the Spirit, committed relationships - is weakest in your present experience?

2. Where might programmes or dogmas be restricting genuine responsiveness to the Holy Spirit?

3. What practical act of commitment to another believer is the Lord asking of you?

Chapter 6

The Gates of Hell and the Gate of Heaven

What Are the Gates of Hell?

When the Lord Jesus said, “I will build my Ecclesia; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18), He spoke about the Ecclesia in the context of conflict. His words show that what He is building will meet opposition, but that the opposition will not overcome it.

It is also worth noticing the setting in which Jesus spoke these words. Matthew places the conversation in the region of Caesarea Philippi. This was not an Old Testament Israelite temple setting. By the time of Jesus it was a Hellenistic and Roman city, and the area around the spring and cave was well known for pagan worship. The strongest and clearest association is with Pan, the Greek god connected with wild places, caves and nature. Worship of Pan had been established there for centuries, and the place itself was known as Panias, later Banias. Herod had also built a temple in the area in honour of Augustus, so the imperial cult formed part of the religious atmosphere of the place.

There were other forms of Greco-Roman worship in the wider sacred complex as it developed. Archaeological evidence connects the site particularly with Pan and also with Zeus. We should be careful, however, not to turn this into a catalogue of temples that cannot be established with certainty for the precise years of Jesus’

ministry. Gods such as Hera, Apollo and Artemis belonged naturally to the wider Greek religious world, but the evidence at Caesarea Philippi is not equally clear for each of them. The important point for us is the setting: Jesus spoke about building His Ecclesia and about the gates of hell in a place where pagan worship, imperial power and the religious culture of the Greco-Roman world were plainly present.

That background does not by itself define what Jesus meant by the gates of hell, and I do not want to build the teaching on an archaeological detail. But it helps us hear His words in their setting. He was speaking of His Ecclesia in a world where other powers, loyalties and objects of worship were already making claims upon people. Against that background He said, “I will build my Ecclesia; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

I do not understand the gates of hell simply as a physical gate somewhere in the unseen world. In Scripture and in the ancient world, a gate could also speak of access and authority. The fall opened human life to sin and death, and the effects of that disobedience spread far beyond Adam himself.

In that sense, I use the gates of hell to describe openings through which darkness, sin, corruption, bondage, and evil find expression in human affairs. Human beings can yield themselves to darkness, just as God desires a people who yield themselves to Him and through whom His life can be expressed.

This gives weight to what Jesus said. He was not describing a community whose only concern was to

survive the darkness around it. He said He would build His Ecclesia and that the gates of Hades would not prevail against it. His answer involves a people in whom His own life is present.

The first Adam opened the way for sin and death. Christ, the last Adam, came to deal with what entered through the fall and to bring forth a new humanity in Himself. He is the Head, and the Ecclesia is His Body. His life and victory are therefore to find expression through that Body.

The Ecclesia is called to express the life of Christ in a world affected by darkness and corruption. As God's people are built together in Him, His light, life, and liberty can be seen through them. This is one way I understand the building of the Ecclesia as God's answer to the operation of the gates of hell.

REFLECTIONS

1. How does understanding a gate as a point of access, authority, and expression deepen your reading of Matthew 16:18?
2. Where do you see darkness, corruption, or bondage seeking expression in human life and society?
3. What does it mean practically for the Ecclesia to confront darkness by becoming light, salt, and an expression of Christ?

What Is the Gate of Heaven?

Genesis 28 gives us another picture. While Jacob was on his journey, he slept and saw a ladder set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending on it. When he awoke, he said, “Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.” He then said, “This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven” (Genesis 28:16–17).

Jacob connected the house of God with the gate of heaven. This gives us a helpful picture of a place where God finds expression and where heaven touches the earth. When we bring that picture into the revelation of the Ecclesia, the house is no longer primarily a physical building. It is a people being built together as God's dwelling.

In this sense, the Ecclesia can be understood as the gate of heaven when it is being formed according to God's intention: a many-membered Body built on the revelation of Christ, formed by the Spirit, and joined together in living relationship. Through such a people, something of the life, character, and authority of Christ can be expressed in the earth.

This is why I do not separate the revelation of Christ from the revelation of the Ecclesia. Christ is the foundation of the house. The Ecclesia is not built simply by gathering correct information about Him. His life has to be formed in a people and worked out among them. As that happens, God's will can find expression through His house on the earth.

What Jacob saw at Bethel therefore gives us a picture that reaches beyond his personal experience. It points to God's desire for a house in which His presence is a living reality. In that sense, the Ecclesia becomes a gate of heaven, a people through whom the reality of God can touch life on the earth.

This brings the contrast into view. The gates of hell speak of darkness finding an entrance and expression in human affairs. The gate of heaven speaks of God finding expression through His house. This helps us see why the building of the Ecclesia matters.

When Christ has a people who are truly being built together in Him, His life can find a corporate expression on earth. The question, then, is not only whether we attend Christian gatherings. We should also ask whether Christ is forming us into a people through whom His will and life can be expressed.

REFLECTIONS

1. In what sense does Genesis 28 connect the house of God with the gate of heaven?
2. What does it mean for the Ecclesia to become a point where the life and authority of heaven find expression on earth?
3. How can your local fellowship become more fully a people through whom Christ is revealed and the will of heaven is expressed?

Chapter 7

The Indwelling Life Shared Together

One of the clearest ways to understand the Ecclesia is as a body of people who are experiencing the indwelling life together. That understanding moves the discussion from structure to life.

We may begin by knowing Christ personally and learning to experience Him as the indwelling life. But that life is also meant to be shared with other believers. In the Ecclesia I learn to recognize and receive the life of Christ in my brothers and sisters, while they also encounter His life in me.

This changes the way we relate to one another. If I see another believer only in terms of personality, education, tribe, nationality, age, economic status, or natural compatibility, I may fail to receive what God has placed in that person. Body life teaches us to recognize Christ in one another.

This shared life is practical. We listen to one another, receive from one another, and learn to recognize Christ in one another. His life can come to us through ordinary things such as encouragement, correction, service, patience, prayer, generosity, wisdom, and love.

For this reason, the Ecclesia cannot be reduced to an online group or a weekly cell meeting. These may be useful, but they do not by themselves create body life. The real question is whether lives are becoming connected and whether people are being built together by the Spirit.

Meetings still have an important place, but they should serve the life of the people. They should provide room for that shared life to be expressed, strengthened, and, where necessary, corrected.

This also affects the way we understand ministry. Ministry should not be reduced to a few people doing everything while the rest remain spectators. Since Christ indwells His people, every member can supply something for the good of the others. Gifts and workers remain important, but their work should contribute to the equipping and building of the whole body.

We learn, therefore, to value what God has placed in one another. I need to be able to receive the measure of Christ that comes through my brothers and sisters, and I also have a responsibility to supply what the Lord has placed in me. This mutual giving and receiving is part of the growth of the Ecclesia.

REFLECTIONS

1. Do I recognize and receive Christ through other believers, or do I mainly evaluate them naturally?

2. Are my Christian relationships deep enough for genuine giving and receiving of life?

3. How can meetings become an expression of shared life rather than a substitute for it?

Chapter 8

The Local Expression: A People Joined in Life

The universal Body of Christ must find expression in actual places. Matthew 16 speaks of Christ building His Ecclesia in the larger sense, while Matthew 18 brings us into the practical relationships of brothers who can offend one another, speak to one another, involve others when necessary, forgive, reconcile, and remain accountable within a recognizable community.

This is why vulnerability matters. Forgiveness, patience, burden-bearing, and correction become practical when people are close enough to affect one another. In a local expression of the Ecclesia, Christ deals with us not only through what we believe, but also through the way we relate to one another.

This is what I mean when I speak about people doing life together. Their relationships extend beyond a scheduled meeting. They know one another, share joys and pressures, face misunderstandings, speak truth, repent, forgive, and carry one another. The life of Christ is worked out in these ordinary relationships.

For the same reason, a label does not by itself make a group an Ecclesia. A denomination, cell group, home gathering, online group, or large congregation may provide a setting for Christian activity. The deeper question is whether the people are actually being built together in Christ, on the right foundation, and under the work of the Spirit.

The early believers often met in homes, and that setting could provide room for participation and relationship. But the house itself was not the definition of Ecclesia. The question remains whether Christ is building the people together.

Living closely with other believers also becomes part of our formation. It exposes pride and self-centredness and gives us

practical opportunities to learn patience, forgiveness, service, and love. What we believe is tested in the way we actually treat one another.

We should not imagine that this kind of community will be without difficulty. The closer people become, the more opportunities there are for misunderstanding, offence, and disappointment. When these matters are dealt with under Christ, however, they can become part of the way He forms us.

Many believers seem to carry a desire for this kind of life even before they have language for it. They are looking for more than another programme or meeting. They are looking for a place among God's people where Christ can be known, shared, and expressed in real relationships.

REFLECTIONS

1. Are there believers who know your real life and with whom you are learning Christ relationally?

2. How do you normally respond to offence - withdrawal, gossip, avoidance, or biblical reconciliation?

3. Is your present Christian environment helping people become joined in life, or mainly helping them attend activities?

Conclusion

Becoming What Christ Is Building

The main thought of this booklet is that the Ecclesia is a people Christ is building together in His life and for His purpose.

We began with the meaning of the word Ecclesia and the historical picture of a convened assembly carrying responsibility. We then returned to the words of Jesus, “I will build my Ecclesia,” and considered what is involved in that building. We also looked at the gates of hell and the gate of heaven, and then at the shared indwelling life and the local expression of the Body.

The local expression is important because body life has to be lived somewhere. It is lived among people who are close enough to serve one another, disappoint one another, forgive one another, correct one another, and receive Christ from one another.

In the end, using the word Ecclesia is not enough. We can change our vocabulary without changing our life. What matters is whether Christ is actually building us together, bringing us under the government of His Spirit, grounding us in truth, and making us available for His purpose.

My prayer is that the Spirit of wisdom and revelation will continue to open our understanding, and that the Lord will build us together as His Ecclesia. May His purpose find expression in us and through us on the earth.

> *“Our heart is to see the Kingdom of God come, to see the Ecclesia built.”*

Final Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, build Your Ecclesia. Give us eyes to see, hearts willing to be formed, and grace to live the indwelling life together. Make us a true expression of Your Body and an instrument of Your purpose in the earth. Amen.

Key Truths to Remember

"What the Lord Jesus Christ is building is His assembly - His Ecclesia."

"The Ecclesia must be built; it does not just happen."

"No house builds itself. Every house is built by someone."

"The most powerful ground of spiritual warfare is not isolated individuals, but a properly convened assembly of God's people."

"The Ecclesia is not a denomination."

"It is not about the physical structure. It is about the content, the revelation, and the foundation."

"The Ecclesia is a body of people experiencing the indwelling life together."

"It is one thing to know Christ as an individual; it is another to experience His life in a shared environment with other believers."

“The local expression is a people whose lives are connected and are being built together.”

“Vulnerability is one of the keys: we are willing to forgive one another and deal with issues with one another.”

“The true habitat for every genuine lover of the Lord Jesus Christ is the Ecclesia.”

“Our life is not just about external activities and programmes; our life is about knowing the indwelling life and living together as God’s people.”

About The Ecclesian

The Ecclesian is a teaching and discipleship ministry committed to placing before God’s people the revelation of Jesus Christ and His Ecclesia, with the desire to see the Kingdom of God birthed and expressed in and through His people.

Through biblical teaching, discipleship, church planting, training resources, and The Ecclesian Podcast, the ministry seeks to serve the building of believers into a living expression of Christ’s Body.

The Ecclesian Foundation Series presents concise, accessible teachings designed for personal reading, reflection, and small-group use. Each volume is intended to lead readers beyond information into participation in the life and purpose of Christ.

About the Author

John Damilola is a teacher of the Word of God and an apostolic worker with a passion for the revelation of Jesus Christ and the restoration of the Church according to the Scriptures.

His ministry is focused on helping believers understand the true nature of the Ecclesia - the called-out assembly of God's people - and their place within the Body of Christ. Through teaching, discipleship, and church planting, he seeks to see the people of God properly grounded in the Word and aligned with the purposes of the Kingdom.

John is also the host of The Ecclesian Podcast, where he explores biblical truths about Christ, His Church, and the manifestation of God's Kingdom on the earth.

His burden is to see believers deeply rooted in the revelation of Christ and the Church restored as a living expression of His life and authority in the world.

Revealing Christ. Building His Ecclesia.

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