

Apostolic Centers | Taking Territory

Session One

By Glenn Bleakney

A. INTRODUCTION:

The current model of “doing” Church must change or face extinction. It is built on the foundation of pastors rather than the foundation of apostles and prophets. Ephesians 2:20; 4:11; I Cor. 12:28

B. CURRENT TRENDS IN THE USA: (Researched by R.J. Krejcir, the Francis A. Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership Development)

1. Every year 4,000 churches close their doors compared to 1,000 church starts
2. Barna Research reported that perhaps 50% of people who go to a church are not even Christians. At least 20% in Evangelical churches are not Christians.
3. Every year more than 2.7 million people leave the church.
4. Only one church in America grows more by salvations than by attrition. And that is a church that has never had a permanent facility.
5. In the 1980s, membership in the church dropped 10%; in the 1990s, another 12%, now they are dropping even more, with some denominations reporting a 40% drop in their membership. By 2025 only 15% of Americans will be attending church.
6. The church, in the most churched city in America, Dallas, TX, has statistically made no difference in the city. (From: **HIS KINGDOM COME
An Integrated Approach to Discipling the Nations/Fulfilling the Great Commission**)
7. Other than the ancient church traditions of the Orthodox and Catholic Church, Christianity has rarely retained a lasting influence on a nation more than a few centuries. (Research by Larry Titus)
8. Half of all US churches did not add any new members to their ranks in the last two years.
9. The average church attendance in America is between 100-300, with 20% less than 70.
10. Only two denominations in the US are growing.
11. The church in the nations without buildings grows exponentially faster than those with buildings.
12. In contradiction to Jesus’ prayer for unity, the Church has produced thousands of new divisions and denominations.
 - 200 denominations in the US are all called, The “Church of God”
 - Church splits are still a major contributor to church plants in the US
 - Denominational and doctrinal divisions have replaced the “Jewish/Gentile” divide as a major wall of hostility

C. THE PASTORAL MODEL

1. Bring everyone into a building called (The church)

2. Retain a spectator of church involvement
3. Center the life of the congregation around the “program” of the church.
4. Consider that to grow your church you must increase the size of your building or multiply services
5. Have staff that is only operational in the building or through the church program.
6. Make the pastor responsible to do all or the majority of ministry
7. Have the pastor micro-manage, controlling every aspect of the church
8. Have the pastor consider himself the “head” of the Church.
9. Stimulate church growth by bringing more people to the Church building and church service.
10. Establish a hierarchical (pyramid) style of leadership rather than a linear style of servant leadership
11. Teach program rather than make disciples
12. Make people’s spiritual growth dependent on only what they hear at the corporate gathering
13. Encourage fellowship with only your denomination or sphere of churches.
14. Discourage interaction.
15. Authority is retained rather than delegated.
16. The highlight of the week is the Sunday worship service.

D. THE APOSTOLIC MODEL

1. View the size of your church being the size of your geographical sphere of influence
2. See everyone in your congregation as “called” and “anointed” to preach. Every believer must bear fruit! See John 15:16
3. Release/delegate your authority to others on your staff and corporate body, which will allow many pastors, teachers, evangelists, deacons, etc., to operate freely in the Church. You’re the umbrella, “covering,” for many ministries.
4. Spend the majority of your time discipling your leaders and let your leaders do the work of the ministry. This was the pattern of Jesus, the Apostle of God.
5. Change the mentality of your people so that the building “never” means the church and they see the Body of Christ as the Church.
6. Teach your people to do the work of the ministry daily in the community
7. Interact with civic leaders, civil leaders, leaders in the art community, leaders in the economic community and leaders in the educational community
8. Bind territorial spirits.
9. Release all the offices and gifts of the spirit through your people into the community.
10. See your greatest calling being that of releasing people in their gifts
11. Discipleship must be a greater value than good services or programs.
12. Recognize other ministries, especially the prophetic and teaching ministries, and include them in your speaking schedule. Don’t consider yourself God’s only method of reaching your people.

13. Be a “networker,” connecting other ministries or members of the Body of Christ with those of similar gifting.
14. View the Body that you lead as God’s tool to reach the city, nation and world.

E. KINGDOMS IN CONFLICT

The call of the Lord during times of spiritual declension is that His people would arise and shine forth the light of the glory of the gospel. Isaiah cried out, “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” (Isaiah 60:1-2).

The Church, rather than shining in the darkness, seems to be asleep in the light. Many of the cities in our nation that boast the highest churches per capita ratio, ironically, are plagued by the highest crime rates! Take the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex for example. Dallas has more churches per capita than any other American city, but it also has one of the worst overall crime rates for cities with more than 1 million people.¹

F. THE ORIGIN OF THE KINGDOM

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world’ (Matthew 25:34, NLT).

The term “kingdom” in English is literally, “King’s Dominion.” The dictionary describes ‘dominion’ as the **“authority and power to govern and exercise control.”**

In the beginning, when God created humankind, it was His original intention that they would reproduce and fill the earth and exercise dominion over all of creation. We read in Genesis 1:28, **“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”**

Psalm 8:6 reiterates this truth, **“You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.”** Once again we read: **“The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD's; But the earth He has given to the children of men” (Psalm 115:16).**

In addition to being given a dominion destiny, Adam and Eve were also created after the image and likeness of God. Genesis 1:26a – 27 declares, **“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in our image, according to Our likeness.... So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.’”**

Adam and Eve when they were created by God Almighty were given “glory garments.” Psalm 8:5 says, **“man was...made... a little lower than the angels”** and was **“...crowned...with glory**

¹ <https://www.neighborhoodscout.com/tx/dallas/crime>

and honour.” The word ‘crowned’ in Hebrew means ‘encircled,’ ‘surrounded’ or encompassed. The implication is that the glory of God of was their covering, their cloak and garments!

While dwelling in the Garden, Adam and Eve were naked and yet they were not embarrassed. **“And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (Genesis 2:25).** After their transgression, they immediately became conscious of their nakedness. **“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings” (Genesis 3:7).**

Why is it that all of a sudden, this Genesis couple suddenly became conscious of their nakedness after their sin? Was it due to their innocence of evil being violated? I am sure it was! However, let me submit

As a result of their sin, Adam and Eve were no longer covered by the glory of God. Sin literally strips of the glory. How do we know this? Romans 3:23 gives us the answer: **“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).** They were stripped of their glory garments!

Not only did Adam and Eve experience the loss of God’s glory as a result of sin, their spiritual authority or dominion destiny was also forfeited. Hence, Satan now became the “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4). Elsewhere we are informed that the devil is the ruler or “prince of the world” (See John 12:31).

G. RECOVERING WHAT WAS LOST

The Gospel of Luke 19:10 says, **“The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.”** that the text states *“that which was lost.”*

When Jesus came to the earth, He came to restore to man the glory and authority that was lost. The devil knowing this attempted to strike a deal with Jesus at the very beginning of His ministry. **“Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, “All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours” (Luke 4:5 – 7, Emphasis Mine).**

Of course, Jesus would not negotiate with Satan. He was well aware that such a transaction would not be legal in nature as it failed to address the root cause of the forfeiture, namely, sin. There was no short cut to reclaiming the authority and glory. Christ must go the way of the Cross becoming a sacrifice for our sins and paying the price of our redemption. **“For without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin” (Hebrews 9:22).**

After Jesus’ resurrection, a permanently binding, legal transaction occurred which resulted in the authority and glory being restored to humankind. Jesus cried out, **“All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18).**

Paul said elsewhere, that God the Father **“raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the church (Ephesians 1:19-22).**

H. GLORY CARRIERS

What is the result of this? The person that is truly born–again and filled with the Spirit has access to both the authority and glory of God.

Paul reveals this to us. He says, **“God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).**

Jesus confirmed this: **“And the glory which You gave Me I have given them...” (John 17:22). We have been created to share and display His glory and authority to the nations of the world! The truth is the authority is in the glory!**

The truth is that the authority is in the glory! The Bible says, **“The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD” (Psalm 97:5).** The word translated “mountains” can also be used figuratively referring to anything that opposes our God’s will. For example, Zechariah 4:7 declares, **‘Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain!’**

Paul reminded the Ephesians that God is **“...able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us” (Ephesians 3:20).** Notice, he says it is the power of the Spirit **in us** that is limitless!

The glory of God fully manifested in and through the Church is unstoppable and will bring transformation to the nations!

The Church is the Body of Christ today on the earth the fullness of Him who fills everything everywhere with Himself! Paul’s prayer for the Church in **Ephesians 3:19** is that we would perpetuate what Christ began. **“that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”**

Amplified Bible: **“that you may be filled [through all your being] unto all the fullness of God [may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself]!**

Ephesians 1:23 – “the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

- *The Message*, **“The church is Christ’s body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.”**

- *Amplified Bible*, **“Which is His body, the fullness of Him Who fills all in all [for in that body lives the full measure of Him Who makes everything complete, and Who fills everything everywhere with Himself].”**

In the Body lives the full measure of Him! In other words, we should be able to say to the world, **“Do you want to see what God is like? Look at us!”**

I. CONCLUSION:

We are called to take territory and advance the Kingdom of God on the earth so that the Kingdom of God. “Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is near. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received!” (Matthew 10:7-8, NLT).