

# Connexions International

“Future”

Jer 29:11 Niv For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Apostolic  
Relationship  
and  
Government

## Connexions Ltd.

-Welcome to our online get together.

The way church is run today looks a lot different for each of us. We will probably need to do more online things from here on in.

-It has been two years since we have been able to gather.

And two view points on what we should do about covid.

Whether to have, the vaccine or not.

-But like, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

Whether I live or die I will serve the Lord. Whether I have the vaccine or not I will trust in my Lord, for my health.

Our commission is to preach the gospel.

**Dan 3:17 Niv** If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, **the God we serve is able to save us**

**-It is, the last days before the return of our Lord.**

The theme for this; season/ gathering is **"Future"**

**Jer 29:11 Niv** For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, **plans to give you hope and a future.**

The nation shall not come to an end; the exile shall be followed by a restoration.

What is the future for Connexions:

1. It is my privilege to announce that that the directors of Connexions have asked Ps Ronald Gunzon and Ps Stephen Smith to be organizational Development offices.
  - **So what does that mean.**

- Steve and Ronnie will be giving of themselves two days a week, to minister to you.
- They will receive a small amount of money to assist their churches to release them for this ministry.
- So where possible, I am asking for your church/ ministry to sow into Connexions for this.
- There are a number of things that need to be improved on. Time limits.

## Connexions

### About Our Organisation

Connexions International Ltd was formally established in **October 2008** when the Directors prayerfully determined to take the former Australian Fellowship of Faith Churches and Ministers International (AFFCMI) into a new stage of development.

We felt that it was important to the membership of our fellowship and network to rename the organization and focus on our connection as kingdom people, so with a new board of Directors and a refreshed outlook, Connexions International was born.

Connexions International succeeded the Australian Fellowship of Faith Churches and Ministers International which commenced in **July 1988** to provide a ministerial organisation for independent churches and ministers.

**Now we are in this new season.**

We will see greater growth and direction.

One that we know will provide an outstanding network of support and fellowship that is reflected in the very name itself of our organisation.

Connexions is a recognized denomination which gives a voice at government level. And we have received marriage license accreditation.

Connexions International is here to provide you with an avenue for assistance, fellowship and ministry that is relational based and God inspired.

So please take full advantage of what we have to offer whenever you need to.

The Directors would like to thank you for joining with us to build a wonderful relationship with your fellow ministers and ministries, the Lord will reveal himself in an even greater way and your ministry will prosper in every way.

### **Apostolic Relationship and Government.**

When it comes to Apostolic revelation, we need to keep humble, open, teachable spirits, owing to the fact that on-going revelation will very likely change some of our cut and dried ideas about the whole area of **Apostolic restoration**.

**The whole Godhead, is relationship.** One

When the reformers reacted against the hierarchical government of Catholicism instead of going to the scriptures

to discover God's principle of Government they went to the philosophers and brought the *democratic principle of government* into the church.

The **basis of success** in the democratic city-state was numbers because the more **numbers** they had *the bigger the army* they would field and *the bigger the Kingdom* they could build.

When we attend Conferences today the first question you will often be asked is;

**“How many do you have in your church?”**

Then they don't relate to those with smaller churches.

We still have a numbers concept of success in many areas.

*With this concept of success, there comes government by: domination, control, manipulation and intimidation.*

Much of the best in church government today is still based on these principles. There are strengths and weakness in all the structures.

**The Hebrew basis for success, was never numbers, but the quality of blood covenant relationship.**

Out of the Hebrew mindset of blood covenant the basis of rulership came **Government by “spiritual authority.”**

When God began to restore the prophetic ministry gift, we then had groups of prophets wanting to run everything and everybody. Out of this situation came *the same domination, control, manipulation and intimidation* called **Prophetic Government.**

We are now in danger of having groups of **Apostles** operating out of the same principle of control and domination and calling it **Apostolic Government**. It is now the “in thing” to call oneself an Apostle.

Real scriptural **blood covenant relationships** can never be built on this foundation.

They must be built on the foundation of government by “Spiritual Authority” and all;

**Apostolic ministry, Apostolic churches and Apostolic people must be built on the unshakable foundation of covenant relationships.**

With the **Apostolic restoration** based on blood covenant relationship resulting in government by spiritual authority, we will also have a real restoration of Apostolic signs wonders and miracles together with Apostolic authority to change cities and nations and gather in the last days harvest.

Even more, the Apostolic mantle will then come upon our people so that they move in Apostolic Authority, signs, wonders and miracles (not just a few healings) as we now see so many villages in Asian, African and South American. This is accompanied by a ingathering of the harvest in their nations.

Western Christianity has to rediscover and restore the reality of blood covenant relationships.

In the east they sit down and eat a covenant meal together, pass salt (Covenant of Salt 2 Chro 13: 5), which speaks of the

loyalty of the covenant, break the covenant loaf together and drink from a single covenant cup together.

Leonardo da Vinci in his painting of the Last Supper correctly depicts Judas spilling the salt of the covenant showing that he was a covenant breaker.

For anyone to cut covenant together and then go out and betray or in any way dishonour a covenant brother was to be treated as a covenant breaker.

**The whole Apostolic restoration**, if it is to fulfil God's purpose, must be built on the foundation of blood covenant relationship; **loyalty, faithfulness and servanthood**, which will lay down our lives for each other.

Out of this will come "Apostolic Government"; operating in real **spiritual authority** there will be men and women of a different character who are **humble, gentle** (not weak).

They will also function like King David out of a shepherd heart and a spirit of servanthood, faithfulness, loyalty and commitment.

To this quality of Apostolic leadership and people the manifested glory of God will be restored; which will trigger cities and nations coming into the Kingdom as **Isa 60:1-2** says "**The Gentiles will come to our light.**"

**What or who is an apostle?**

“One sent forth (messenger) to act for and on the authority of the sender”

There are four groups of apostles recorded in Scripture:

1. Jesus sent from God the Father (Heb 3:2)
2. The twelve, sent out by Jesus (Matt 6:2)
3. Renowned people of the Apostolic fellowship (Rom 16:7 Remember me to Andronicus and Junias, my tribal kinsmen and once my fellow prisoners. They are men held in high esteem among the apostles, who also were in Christ before I was.)
4. Other workers (2 Cor 8:23 As for Titus, he is my colleague and shares my work in your service; and as for the [other two] brethren, they are the [special] messengers of the churches, a credit and glory to Christ (the Messiah).)

*Evidence of their work were: miracles, wonders and mighty works.*

**The origin of the word Apostle** – The Greek word “Apostolos” means “one who is sent forth”.

The word Apostolos was used in the classical Greek world to refer to a representative or ambassador.

It was used of a fleet of ships that was sent out with the purpose of establishing a new colony.

It was used of the Admiral, who led or commissioned the fleet and it was used to refer to the new colony that he had established.

*From this we see that the Admiral, the fleet of sailors and the people of the new colony were all Apostolic.*

*We today we must have Apostolic people in apostolic churches with apostolic leaderships.*



*The word Apostle, therefore, in its usage implied a faithful relationship to the ones by whom they were sent, and a faithfulness to the commission and purpose for which they were sent out.*

*Hebrews 3:1-2 Therefore holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest whom we confess. He was faithful to the One Who appointed Him, just like Moses was faithful in all God's House."*

## **"Mighty Men of Covenant"**

*"For he was waiting expectantly and confidently, looking forward to the city which has fixed and firm foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God" Hebrews 11:10*

### **Introduction**

There are many people in the Church who are looking for what Abraham was looking for. *What did it look like?* None of us know! However, we all have this sense that when we see it, we will recognize it.

**We certainly seem to know what it does not look like.**

-We are searching for true Christianity, genuine relationships, the keys to the kingdom of God.

We are looking for Heaven on earth.

We are looking for what we saw in Jesus' life and ministry.

-There is an ache in every heart for a different kind of Church and a different kind of relational experience.

We are looking for a cause, but it is more than that.  
We are looking for a cause that is worth living and dying for.

Abraham was not settled, and neither are we.

We are looking for a "kingdom that is firm and stable and cannot be shaken..." (Heb 12:28). We are looking for a kingdom experience that expresses the character and the power of God, and sees His Kingdom come to earth (Lu 11:2).

### **An Introduction to Covenant**

See Joel 2:1-11; 1 Cor 16:13-14; 1 Pet 1:22; Phil 1:28-29

**1Cor 16:13 Niv** Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. 14 **Do everything in love.**

The Day of the Lord **Joel 2:1 Niv** *Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand*

**1 Peter 1:22 Niv** ...love one another deeply, from the heart.

**Phil 1:28 Niv** without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God.  
29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him,

-One of the most incredible passages in scripture has to do with the anointing of a young man named David for king over Israel.

It is found in **1 Samuel 13:14b: RSV "The Lord has sought out (David) a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be prince and ruler over His people."**

**I want to be** "a man after God's own heart" (1 Sam 13:14), a man that He too can seek out to use mightily in this day (2 Chro 16:9). When God said that concerning David, He was referring to something in David's character or nature that was just like God.

Over the years I have attempted to discern just what that quality of heart was.

I initially thought that it would be "praise and worship," being a Psalmist, singing the song of the Lord: however, *others are more renowned for their impact in this area* and in their generation (**Josiah**, 2 Kings 22-23 - incredible call and testimony of faithfulness, for...

**"there was no king like him before or after Josiah, who turned to the Lord with all his heart and all his soul and all his might, according to all the law of Moses" (2 Kings 23:25)**

I used to think that it was his sincerity and transparency, but I see aspects to David's character that attempt to hide his sin from the Lord. His repentance, in view of the Prophet Nathan's rebuke, seems after the fact of being caught and found out (2 Sam 12).

The consequences that follow in his life do not speak well of the condition that was in his heart!

## What was it about David?

There could be many observations made about his life.

However, I believe, after years of studying his life, that the dynamic that made David so different than any of his peers up to that point was his "**covenantal heart!**"

***From the beginning of his experience in shepherding, to the development of relationship with Jonathon, then Saul, then Mephibosheth, we see a man of covenant.*** (The Key of David Rev 3:7)

The men that came around him were transformed by something in his life that grasped destiny, that had a revelation of a higher spiritual order, which could see prophetically into the purposes of God.

### Let's think about covenantal lifestyle.

A. The Biblical Base - the life of Saul, David and Jonathon

**1. The Covenantal Relationship of Jonathon to God** demonstrating him to be a man of covenant in: (1 Samuel 14:6-15)

**-1Sam 14:6 - 15 Niv 6 Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, "Come, let's go over to the outpost of**

**Those uncircumcised fellows.** Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few." 7 "**Do all that you have in mind,**" his armor-bearer said. "Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul." 8 Jonathan said, "Come, then; we will cross over toward the men and let them see us. 9 If they say to us,

'Wait there until we come to you,' we will stay where we are and not go up to them. 10 But if they say, 'Come up to us,' we will climb up, because **that will be our sign that the LORD has given them into our hands.**" 11 So both of them showed themselves to the **Philistine outpost.**

"Look!" said the Philistines. "The Hebrews are crawling out of the holes they were hiding in." 12 The men of the outpost shouted to Jonathan and his armor-bearer, "Come up to us and we'll teach you a lesson." So Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Climb up after me; the LORD has given them into the hand of Israel." 13 Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer right behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer followed and killed behind him. 14 In that first attack Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre. 15 Then panic struck the whole army—those in the camp and field, and those in the outposts and raiding parties—and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God.

- \* note the character of covenant in the armour bearer v7
- \* note the use of the word, "uncircumcised" (vs 6)
- \* note the sign of the covenant (vs 9-10)

**2. The Covenantal Relationship of David to God**  
demonstrating him to be a man of covenant (1 Sam 17:34-47)

**1 Sam Niv 17:34** But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, 35 I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. 36 Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. 37 The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you." 38 Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. 39 David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. "I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off. 40 Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine. 41 Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. 42 He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him. 43 He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!" 45 David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, **but I come**

*against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. 47 All those gathered here will know that not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands."*

- \* note the growing, covenantal heart with sheep (vs 34)
- \* note the use of the word "uncircumcised" (vs 36)
- \* note the sign of the covenant (vs 45-47)

### **3. The Covenantal Relationship between Jonathon and David (1 Sam 18:1-5)**

**1Sam 18:1 Niv** After David had finished talking with Saul, *Jonathan became one in spirit with David*, and he loved him as himself. 2 From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house. 3 And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. 4 Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt. 5 Whatever Saul sent him to do, David did it so successfully that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the people, and Saul's officers as well.

- \* note the exchange of princely apparel ("stripped himself")
- \* note the love and bond of heart (vs 1)
- \* he spoke well of David (19:4)
- \* he protected David's integrity (20:2)
- \* a willingness to help in any way (vs 4)
- \* honesty of heart (vs 9)

#### 4. The Expansion of that Covenant to the house of Saul (1 Sam 20:12-17)

- \* no cutting off of kindness to each house (vs 14-15)  
1Sam 20:14 Niv But show me unfailing kindness like that of the LORD as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, 15 and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family—not even when the LORD has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth."

#### 5. **The Habit of Covenant-affirmation** (1 Sam 23:16-18)

- \* strengthening each other's hand in God (vs 16)
- \* not concerned over protecting position but with the relationship (vs 17) - willingness to play second fiddle

#### 6. **David's honours the Covenant and does not kill his enemy** (1 Sam 24:1-17)

- \* he could have 'broken covenant' but didn't (vs 4-5)



- \* his heart smote him for touching Saul (vs 5)
- \* he checked his men from acting in vengeance, training them in covenant (vs 6-7)
- \* he refused to do anything that would interfere with God's righteous order (vs 17), even if it had been prophesied (vs 4)

**7. David honours Covenant again (1 Sam 26:1-25)**

**8.** David truly laments Saul's death with his men (2 Sam 1:6-27)

**9.** David fought those who fought against Saul's house, out of covenant (2 Sam 4, regarding Ishbosheth's murder)

**10.** David showed kindness because of Covenant to Mephibosheth (2 Sam 9:1)

2 Sam 9:1 Niv David asked, "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

- \* he shows kindness for Jonathon's sake (vs 1,13)

**An Introduction to Kingdom Building  
Through Covenantal Relationship to Leadership**

*Jesus went from Bethlehem to Zion and it cost Him His life.*

It's going to cost you everything to live in this city built by God. The life of David parallels this life purpose of Christ, and

it not only covers the life, but the ministry, and the kingdom building experience he had. Let's look at it together.

**A. BETHLEHEM (1 Sam 16) -**

**"faithfulness is small and practical matters"**

Don't look for the good, old days, as Samuel mourned over Saul. If something is dead or over, bury it! Do not permit new wine to be poured into old wineskins (Matt 9:17). Bethlehem represents David's faithfulness in the small and practical affairs of life.

90% of our service to God will be found to concentrate on practical matters. Learn to be faithful in the small (Lu 16:10-12), and God will honour you.

This matter is critical to kingdom building.

It is the foundation for the raising up of leaders.

The natural things of the temporal kingdom must be taken care of before God will permit your oversight of the spiritual things of the eternal kingdom.

David risked his life for another man's sheep! This is where the process of covenant and kingdom building begins.

Jesus demonstrated His trustworthiness in temporal matters for 90% of His lifetime of service to the Lord (30 years) (Lu 2:51). He was obedient.

You can't change the world when you can't balance your finances. Bring the kingdom of God to the various areas of your life.

You must be found faithful in the service of someone else's dream and vision before God will give you a vision of your own.

**B. ADDULUM (1 Sam 22:1) -**

**"faithfulness in need situations"**

Success will bring out the jealousy of ambitious people. Truth won't disturb truth, only error. Light only exposes the darkness. When you are fulfilling God's purposes, and experiencing His favour, it exposes the hearts of those around you. It will bring out the fears and issues of people's hearts. It will test every one of your relationships.

Addulum attracted many disenfranchised people to it. They were seeking a kingdom experience, and so were in the right place, but they were need-oriented. The Bible says that "everyone in distress, or in debt, or discontented, gathered to him; and he became commander over them; and there were about 400 men" (1 Sam 22:2).

God does not call many wise, influential or of noble birth kind of people to enter into His purposes (1 Cor 1:26-28). We come filled with need, and we come to have those needs met. It doesn't matter to God what our needs are, He will meet us where we are. However, He has other plans for us. **He will not permit us to remain there cultivating a need-oriented kingdom.** He has called to minister, and not spend our life being ministered unto.

Many individuals, churches, or ministries remain in Addulum their entire spiritual experience. They produce managers in the kingdom and not leaders. Mighty men cannot emerge if they stay in Addulum. The kingdom cannot be built if we remain preoccupied with ourselves.

Crisis management and vision talking will be the order of the day. "In the kingdom of the blind, the one-eyed man is king!"

God has more for us than remaining in infancy.

He wants us moving from having our needs met to meeting other's needs. Leaders are needed to help make kingdom transitions from dependency to independency to inter-dependency. Like a true father, the Church must raise mature sons and daughters who have a vital, vibrant relationship to the Father themselves and choose out of honour to maintain relationship with dads and moms.

Jonathon chose to stay in a need-based covenantal situation with his father, King Saul when he knew in his heart transition had taken place. The anointing had lifted and the kingdom was being birthed through another. He gave his heart to David but his life to his father on the battlefield. He missed seeing the kingdom established.

Addulum can be typified as the place of alliance, as compared to a place of covenant!

**C. HEBRON (1 Chro 11:1) -  
'faithfulness in covenant'**

**Hebron was the place of covenant**, where covenant relationships were forged and the kingdom was born in each heart. **"They came to David at Hebron..." (1 Chron 11:1).** They made a covenant with him there (vs 3). And, it was from that place that David moved against the Jebusites (A religious Mindset – never defeated before) at Jerusalem, and established the kingdom of David (vs 4-7).

### **You don't just show up at Hebron.**

You must "gather" and make a quality decision to go there. Need driven people do not make it there: it is too costly.

- If you have a need you are negotiable to the enemy.
- If you try to walk the walk of the cross without the work of the cross being done in you, you will not go there.
- If you can be offended, you will be, by the "Rock of offence."

### **People who get to Hebron consider themselves dead men.**

It's "die or be killed!" They are people who are not looking at their needs but at a larger picture, the cause of the Kingdom. They are broken men who are seeking the authority of God and His leaders.

They want to be commissioned.

They want to be makers of history, not just readers of it.

(Unless a cornel of wheat die it abides alone)

In 1 Chronicles 11, we read that they "came to David" at Hebron. *(Seven years after Addulum)* They saw something in

David. They committed themselves to him there. They became selfless in their desire to see him become king. They were covenanted to him and covenant recognizes headship. **David had shown them that their lives needed to be anchored in something deeper than need.** Hell doesn't know what to do with these kinds of dead men.

They realised that they existed for something far greater than themselves. Their lives were expendable in this cause. They experienced a divine connection that we will allude to as "the spirit of covenant!" They could not shake the relational strength that was emerging. They were together and liking it!

Addulum was on the plains. Everyone could get there. All roads lead to Addulum, a need-oriented style of ministry. Many of our churches and organizations are stuck here. However, only one road leads to Hebron (3,000' above sea level). There they were:

- \* "gathered"
- \* "trained"
- \* "equipped"
- \* "ranked"
- \* "covenanted"
- \* "evaluated"

Twenty-six translations: "No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment - a patch of unshrunk cloth (Rhm), for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment - the shrinking of the new patch tears away at the garment

(Wey), and the rent is made worse - the patch makes the hole worse than ever (Gspd). Neither do men put new wine into old bottles - wineskins (ASV): else the bottles break and the wine runs out - the skins burst and wine is spilled (ASV), and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles - unused skins (Rhm), and both are preserved....No man also having drunk old wine straightway desires new: for he says, 'The old is better' - is good enough (NASB), is preferable (Ber), the old suits me (Rieu)"

- Matt 9:16-17; Luke 5:39

**The trend in recent years is to** "consider church attendance a mere rest-stop on their religious pilgrimage...and the local church a convenience, not a home" (Bruce and Marshall Shelly, *The Consumer Church*). "People are identifying with a local church (denomination), but rarely attending or supporting it!" Every church is instructed to find its niche, to specialize, formulate a well-oiled market strategy, implement the plan to meet the consumer's needs, and keep doing it. Christian consumers are pictured as "Macca's Churches'", shopping around to find churches that will meet their needs.

The goal: to locate loyal customers that will keep on coming back rather than convenience shoppers who are there to check out the benefits of "**switching allegiance!**"

## **RESULTS**

1. Ministers wind up pandering to the individual needs - "pampering" the saints rather than equipping them
2. Christ is treated as a product rather than Lord
3. Ministers are "forced" into merchandising the gospel rather than delivering it in the power of the Holy Spirit
4. "Consumer loyalty" (participatory attendance) is conditional on continued, successful, immediate delivery of the goods rather than a covenantal heart - eg. "Choose the church of your choice!"
5. Decisions for Christ/Christianity are made on the basis of self-interest, not the denial of self
6. Churches are placed in a comparative mode and caught up in the spirit of competition where only the most creative and innovative survive - eg. Newspapers, TV are not relevant but net is.
7. An entire generation is growing up with a "minister to me" attitude, receiving the best Christian training any generation has ever received, and still, ungrateful - eg. Instead of bringing the Presence of the Lord, they wait to be led into the Presence; instead of seeking out those to love, waiting to be loved
8. Entire church leadership are under judgement to perform rather than being prayerfully undergirded - eg. Failure to perform, results in loss of pastor or loss of "customer"



9. Numerous churches are closing the doors through-out the week, through loss of interest and/or commitment - eg. Youth meetings undermined by lethargic parents  
God does not ask from us what He does not give to us (Judson Cornwall).

**We are urged** in scripture to "leave the preschool finger-painting exercises on Christ and get on with the grand work of art: growing up in Christ" (The Message, Hen 6:1) - to "go on past the elementary stage in the teaching of Christ, and advance steadily toward the perfection that belongs to spiritual maturity" (Amp).

**The Apostle Paul** had something to say about that in Hebrews 5:11-13: "I have a lot more to say about these things, but it is hard to get it across to you since you have picked up this bad habit of not listening. By this time you ought to be teachers yourselves, yet here I find you need someone to sit down with you and go over the basics on God again, starting from square one" (The Message).

We recognized that "we [were] not morally imperfect creatures who [had] to be improved [but that we were] rebels who [had to] lay down our arms [and surrender]...." (C.S. Lewis).

**A quote from William MacDonald's book, True Discipleship** establishes this truth:

"True Christianity is an all-out commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The Saviour is not looking for men and

women who will give their spare evenings to Him - or their week-ends - or their years of retirement. Rather He seeks those who will [count the cost] and give Him first place in their lives. 'He looks today, as he has ever looked, not for crowds drifting aimlessly in His track, but for [individuals] whose undying allegiance will spring from their having recognized that he wants those who are prepared to follow the path of self-renunciation which He trod before men (H. A. Evan Hopkins)'" (pg 5).

**William Law** made the statement that "self is the root, the branches, the tree of all the evils of our fallen state!" "God says that the tree must be cut down and uprooted, and left to die, not merely trimmed back. All self-righteousness, self-esteem, self-vindication, self-glory, self-pity - these and 10,000 other manifestations of the self-life, fleshly foliage....To trim back only means that the very life of self will go deeper underground, develop more rugged roots, and develop into a more vigorous tree"

(L. E. Maxwell, Born Crucified). Self can never overcome self. And, because God will not transgress Himself, war against and dominate man's self-will, man must come to a point where he chooses, of his own volition, to terminate self-control. The acceptance of Christ can be likened unto signing on the dotted line a consent form to my execution, to the death sentence. However, suicide, killing myself, is not God's way or plan: but, death is!

Self must die for the purposes of God to be revealed in the life. To follow Christ one must be willing to die to self.

**Testimony of George Mueller:** asked concerning the secret of his spiritual success, he replied, "There was a day when I died....Died to George Mueller, his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will; died to the world, its approval or censure; died to the approval or blame even of my brethren and friends; and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God."

Any saving of self, even our "best self," is a rejection of the cross. All efforts to excuse, defend, protect, vindicate, justify, or save self, is to run at cross purposes to God's intention for the life. Self-pitying is not acceptable. **The only place of ultimate power and usability in the kingdom is in the cross.** The only part of our nature that Satan cannot touch is that which has come to the cross, been crucified, and remains, under the blood. We are defeated only in the areas of our own lordship, where we are living unto ourselves. As Maxwell states: "Christ came not to straighten us out, but to 'cross' us out; not to trim us back, but to cut us off; not to get us doing, but to be our undoing" (pg 62).

**Paul warned the Roman church to** "be on their guard concerning those who would create dissension and difficulties and cause division, in opposition to the doctrine you have been taught...avoid them. For such persons do not serve the Lord Jesus but their own appetites and base desires, and by ingratiating and flattering speech they beguile the hearts of the unsuspecting and simple-minded people" (16:17-18).

"Are we going to be a uni-generational church?" or "Are we going to be a multi-generational church?"

"a time(s) of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).