

#### 4. Who leads a House Church?

A distinctive feature of a House Church is that the ministry gifts in each person can be discovered and developed

House Churches see (or at least ought to) that the Lord Himself builds the church and is therefore able to take good care of it. Consequently, those who attend a House Church do not feel the need to appoint a man, or men, to an office of Pastor. God gives the gift of pastor to whomever He pleases and that ought to be enough for us.

Most House Churches reject the need for an authoritative type leadership that expresses man's desire for control, rather than Biblical precedence. However, that being said, there are House Churches that do have a "Pastor" or "Facilitator" that does take control of the meetings. At AGCC, we reject this type of leadership regardless of what it is called and we hold to the biblical view of servant leadership.

God has placed the responsibility of oversight on godly, mature men but not authority as we see it practised in the mainline Churches. Those in oversight are servants to the Church, not the other way around.

However, elders must be placed in the local Church by God and they must meet the criteria laid out in 1 Timothy 3. If this hasn't happened yet, just wait. When Paul wrote to Corinth, he didn't mention any elders. This is probably because the Church there was young and God hadn't developed any of the men there at that time. But they were still a Church. Even though not all House Churches have elders, it would be foolish to think that God given elders are unimportant. They are to the local Church, what fathers are to a family. Qualified elders provide direction, teach, disciple, help the church achieve consensus, promote the saints' growth into maturity, lead by example and guard the truth.

The only authority we have, as Christians, is the Word of God, therefore, the only authority the elders, as teachers/pastors (note: I use the terms teacher and pastor in the biblical sense of gift and not office) in a House Church has is the Word of God. A teacher must be able to explain the Word of God in such a way, that each one can comprehend what it is saying and come away with the correct understanding of its meaning, so that the Word of God does the influencing and not the teacher.

This being said, there are times when the Church (not any one member) may have to act in a way that appears authoritative, however, we must never confuse obedience to the Word of God as a legalistic authoritative spirit.

Just because we meet in homes, does not lessen the necessity or responsibility of the local Church to behave properly in the Church of the Living God which is the pillar and ground of truth (see 1 Timothy 3.15) but may actually increase it.

#### 5. How is a Home Church different from my weekly church study group?

Mid-week fellowships, Bible Study Groups, cell groups all have an important place in the life of the traditional Church and from outward appearances; many people would think that they are the same as a House Church, like the one we enjoy. However, the differences are huge.

In a traditional Church everything is centred on the Sunday gathering in the Church building with the Vicar/Minister/Pastor in charge. In many cases, the teaching that goes on in the homes during the week, are based upon the "Pastors" sermon from the previous Sunday. The home meeting of the Church has little or no authority apart from the "Pastor". Even if the "Pastor" doesn't attend that particular home group, the "Pastor" is still in charge because the home based group is simply an 'off-site' meeting under the umbrella of the "real Church".

A House Church on the other hand, is all that the Church is. There is no larger, well organized, CEO lead group overseeing the House Meeting. Each House Church is autonomous and responsible to the Lord directly without interference from outside.

However, before I finish with this question, I would like to emphasize that at AGCC, while we do view ourselves as autonomous, we do not see ourselves as independent. The local Churches are, biblically speaking, interdependent. We need one another.

When Paul wrote his epistle to the Church at Rome or in Corinth, he wasn't writing it to one large group of people that met in a large Church building. He wrote it to a large group of people who met in many homes throughout the city; and, even though they did not meet in one building, Paul viewed them as one Church.

***Ro 16:5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house.***

***1Co 1:11 .... them which are of the house of Chloe***

***1Co 16:15 ...ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints***

***1Co 16:19 Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.***

Each locality is made up of one local Church. The fact that we are so divided today is a result of our worldliness and pride.

***1 Co 1.10 Brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, I urge all of you to be in agreement and not to have divisions among you, so that you may be perfectly united in your understanding and opinions. 11 My brothers, some members of Chloe's family have made it clear to me that there are quarrels among you. 12 This is what I mean: Each of you is saying, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to the Messiah." 13 Is the Messiah divided? Paul wasn't crucified for you, was he? You weren't baptized in Paul's name, were you?***

This does not mean that House Churches ought to receive everyone including false teachers and false doctrine, however, we must strive to walk in unity with all sound believers whenever possible, remembering we are one in Christ Jesus our Lord.

# Chronicles of Grace

With another year upon us, for many of us we will end up getting caught up in the thought process of coming up with a New Year's Resolution. From experience, any plan I start in January seems to fall through long before the next January rolls around. And from what I see around me, I'm not alone in this. So, perhaps this year instead of coming up with ideas of things to do, let's focus again on who we are, and what we are in Christ.

In Romans 6:11 it says: Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The word reckon means to conclude something, to be aware that it is a matter of fact. Paul instructs us from verses 1-10 on our standing in Christ; that we died with Him and are alive in Him. In verse 11, he tells us again to be aware of this. Our state before Christ is that we are dead to sin, and we are alive through Jesus Christ. As we continue to read the chapter it's made very clear that we need not struggle with failure or allow sin to weigh us down, for we are liberated in Christ. We need to rest in Him.

Understanding portions of Romans 6 and the fact that we truly are liberated is one thing; and we may come to mental assent of the facts, but how do we truly live this out on a daily basis in a world that is full of sin and reminders of our sinful nature? Colossians 3: 1-3 explains it: If ye then be risen with Christ, **seek those things which are above**, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. **Set your affection on things above**, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and **your life is hid with Christ in God**.

We have the opportunity to live a life of resting in Christ and obeying His word from ability given to us only from God (2 Peter 1:3) and not of ourselves. But we will never reach the point of rest and total dependence in Christ until we realize we can do nothing without Him. The end of John 15:5 Jesus says: "without me ye can do nothing".

So, with 2012 now upon us, let us think less of what we think we need to do and more on simply resting in Jesus; in growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18)

Christianity is not a formula, but the Person of Jesus Himself. Never think that Christianity is a matter of adjusting behaviour, but rather, of letting Christ live through us in His strength and power. --Malcolm Smith

Gal 6:14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

## What is the Gospel of Grace?

Paul defines the Gospel which he preached in 1Cor 15.

*I declare unto you the gospel...Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures*

The word gospel means, good news. And the Good News isn't simply that Jesus died. That would be awful news! The Good News is that Jesus died **FOR OUR SINS!**

His death wasn't simply the result of the anger of a group of people, made up of both Jew and Gentile, but it was the result of the very plan of God! (Acts 2.23)

And it wasn't for anything that He did that He died. He died to pay the penalty that we deserve because of our sins.

**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. Acts 16.31**



## About AGCC

### Where we stand:

**Soteriology:** Modified Calvinistic

**Hermeneutically:** Pauline Dispensationalist

**Grace:** Absolutely Free

**Ecclesiology:** Jesus has only one church, His Body, formed in the book of Acts with Paul, extending until the rapture.

We, at **Amazing Grace Christian Church**, are at this time, a small assembly of Christians who desire to meet together in a simple, New Testament pattern, for the purpose of glorifying our Lord Jesus Christ. We began meeting together officially in January 2009. We meet in homes in Halifax Nova Scotia.

If there is any way, in which we can serve you, or if you want to come and meet together with us at one of our regular meetings, please feel free to contact us.

www.agcc.ca

## Answers to Common Questions about House Churches

### Quick answers to ten questions about House Church

In our last edition and the next few editions of Chronicles of Grace, we are going to attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What is a House Church?
2. Isn't it just another denomination?
3. What happens at a House Church?
4. Who leads a House Church?
5. How is a House Church different from a church Bible study or cell group?
6. What stops House Churches from falling into heterodoxy?
7. How do you celebrate the Lord's Supper?
8. Can a House Church get too large?
9. Is there a danger of a House Church become inward looking (Exclusive)?
10. How can I find out more about starting a House Church?

In our last issue, we looked at questions 1 to 3.

**In this issue, we will look at questions 4 and 5.**

It is our desire, that by taking the time to answer these questions, that more people will come to see the biblical basis of the House Church.