

GRACE & TRUTH



**FOR GOD SO LOVED
THE WORLD**

JOHN 3 : 16


TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH
 N A I R O B I

Editor's Desk

We welcome you to read and profit from 'Grace & Truth,' a publication of Trinity Baptist Church, Nairobi. It is being re-published after a gap of 4 years because we believe there is a very great need for serious Biblical literature to be produced in our country of Kenya. We trust your soul will be fed and that you will be challenged by the Word of God. We welcome feedback from you by letter, phone or email. Please also visit us on the web at:

www.trinitybaptistkenya.org

Keith Underhill

GRACE & TRUTH
 Magazine


Cover: John 3:16 is the best loved and most well-known part of the Bible, and rightly so! The Christian message is about God, who in His love for the world of sinners, sent His own Son to save a multitude of them. Sinners from every part of the world will be in heaven (see Rev. 7:9).

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Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV).

Why Grace & Truth? *Keith Underhill*

“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17)

GRACE refers to the source of all the blessings of salvation that we receive in Christ. We receive nothing except by the grace of God (Rom. 3:24, 5:20-21, 1 Cor. 15:10, Eph. 1:6-7, 2 Tim. 1:9, etc.). This means that we have these blessings only because God decided to give them to us and not because we have deserved them in any way. Therefore, Grace & Truth seeks to firmly lay before you that salvation is not dependent on man but on God – beginning with election, fulfilled in time in calling and justification, and finally consummated in glory (so Rom. 8:30). It is our desire to wean you from that all too common man-centred religion that emphasizes that God cannot bring a person to full salvation because it depends on the person’s ‘free-will’. This false emphasis on man has robbed God of His glory, and His people of their comfort in a God who is sovereign.

TRUTH came with Christ because He Himself is the revelation of God (Jn. 1:18, Heb. 1:1-2). In Christ God has spoken His last words. We believe in the vital importance of truth (2 Cor. 4:2, 6:7, Eph. 1:13, 4:21, Col. 1:5-6, 2 Thess. 2:9-13, etc.). We emphasize truth as far more valuable than relating experiences that people have had. This truth is brought to you in many ways in Grace & Truth, but especially by a careful explanation of passages of Scripture, and by studies in particular doctrines. In a day when many are claiming revelations from God that by-pass the Bible, it is so important that we test everything by the Scriptures and that we seek to gain the fullest possible understanding of the Scriptures. It is our desire that you deal with the truth in the Bible as your final authority in all matters of faith and practice, because it is God’s completed word in Christ.

May the Lord bless you as you read Grace & Truth!

Why Ephesians Is Important for You *Keith Underhill*

In every issue of Grace & Truth we propose to explain consecutive verses and chapters of Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

Why should we want you to pay attention to this letter that was written 2,000 years ago? Because "all Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16).

Why is Ephesians in the Bible? It was written by a man named Paul, a prisoner in Rome (3:1), about A.D. 60, to Christians in Asia Minor (western part of modern day Turkey). But it is not only of historical interest but also because Paul was a very special person, God's spokesman.

Why explain it verse by verse? Why not pick just a few interesting verses like 2:8 and 5:25? Because it is a letter with a beginning and an ending that can only be understood by reading through it. By considering the whole content you will be exposed to new things, and old things will be more deeply understood.

EPHESIANS IS WRITTEN BY AN APOSTLE OF CHRIST JESUS

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God" (v. 1)

According to custom, Paul identifies himself at the beginning (we sign off at the end). We know much about Paul's life before he became a Christian – he was a pure Jew, brought up in Cilicia, educated in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, a Pharisee, a persecutor of Christians (Phil. 3:5-6). Then he was appointed by the risen Christ to be His apostle (Acts 26:14-18). As an apostle he was sent as an ambassador of the Lord, to bear witness of Him, especially of his resurrection (see Acts 1:22, 4:33). Paul was not self-appointed, not by the other apostles or by the church (so also Gal. 1:1). The herald of the great king Nebuchadnezzar proclaimed the king's command in Daniel 3 and those who disobeyed reaped the anger of the king himself. Paul may be an ordinary human being, but as an apostle he speaks in the name of Christ Jesus who sent him. When you read this letter you are reading Christ's word, and if you refuse it you refuse Christ. What a privilege we have to have this letter and many others from Christ's apostles. It has wonderful teaching about what God has done in Christ for our salvation (chs. 1-3), and how this works out in our daily lives (chs. 4-6). It is about God, His glory and sovereignty, His will and His grace. It is about Christ, how both Jews and Gentiles are saved by Him and united into one body (the church).

Without such words we would not know what to believe, who God is and how we can come to Him, what pleases or displeases Him, or the work He has given us to do. Come to grips with Ephesians! You will be sure what it means to be a Christian, and you will grow in maturity as a Christian to the glory of God.

EPHESIANS IS WRITTEN TO CHRISTIANS GENERALLY

“To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus” (v.1)

Although the letter is addressed to Christians in the town of Ephesus there is evidence that it was intended for a wider audience.

Although Paul had spent 3 years there (Acts 19 and 20:31), the letter has no personal references, no greetings, and the only individual name is Tychicus, the bearer of the letter (6:21). Many exclaim that it is one of the most wonderful parts of the Bible. “One of the most significant documents ever written” (O’Brien). Christians are described in 3 ways:

(1) *As saints:* All Christians are commonly described this way (1:15,18, 2:19, 3:8,18, 4:12, 5:3, 6:18). It is Biblically wrong only to refer to ‘special’ Christians like Paul as saints. A ‘saint’ is a holy one, one set apart by God and for His service, one whose life is devoted to God. Just as many Ephesians were devotees to the pagan goddess Artemis, so all Christians are devotees to God in Christ. Is this how you see yourself as a Christian? One purchased by God through Christ’s blood, God’s eternal possession, who lives only to do God’s will (see Ex. 19:5-6)?

(2) *As faithful:* This word may be translated ‘believing’ as opposed to not believing (as in Jn. 20:27). Out of the population in Ephesus Christians have responded to the gospel message with faith, and have continued in faith. Note that Christians are both saints and faithful. No one is a true believer who is not also devoted to God with the appropriate changes of lifestyle. Imagine someone claims to be building a house but there is no evidence that he has any money, he is never on site, and he never talks about its progress. It is equally doubtful if someone just says he is a believer. If you put your trust in Christ you will be fully and lovingly devoted to Him.

(3) *As in Christ Jesus:* Christ is not so much the object of faith here, but the One “in” whom Christians live. Just as the branch gets everything from the vine, so Christians get everything by being united to Christ (the language of “in Christ” is repeated from vv. 3ff., see Jn. 15:1-5). The Christian is one who is totally dependent on Christ, and who glories in Him and His cross (Gal. 6:14). If you are a saint and a faithful one, it is only because of Christ, for every spiritual blessing is in Christ (1:3).

EPHESIANS HAS THE ANSWER TO OUR BASIC NEEDS

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 2)

Paul completes his introductory words by a wish that combines the Greek (Jas 1:1) and Jewish greetings (3 Jn. 15). Pay attention to these words as having deep Christian meaning.

- Our basic problem. As Paul goes on to explain, by nature we have no spiritual life; we are very active in serving the world, the devil and the flesh; and we are opposed to God and objects of His wrath (2:1-3).
- We must receive grace. Deserving only wrath we are without hope, unless God deals with us apart from what we deserve. Praise be to God! He is the God of all grace (1 Pet. 5:10), and He saves by grace (1:6, 2:8-9). If God deals with us according to grace and not demerit, then all blessings can be ours.
- We must have peace. We need peace with God, peace in ourselves, and peace with our neighbour. It is a great need in Kenya. Tribes cannot coexist, and this is an extension of lack of peace in homes, originating in a heart that does not have peace with God. Peace is exactly what God gives in the gospel of His grace (2:13-17, 6:15).
- God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give them. It is God alone who gives, not even the apostle. God gives as our heavenly Father; Jesus Christ gives as our exalted heavenly Lord. Grace and peace are given out of the fullness of divine resources, and with divine power to guarantee reception. Note how easily the risen Lord is made equal with God the Father, equal in person and work. It is Christ who links all together: who appointed the apostle, who makes Christians and blesses them.

Grace and peace are what you need and they are freely available. If you desperately need a medicine, but it is too expensive, you will struggle all you can to purchase it. As a sinner before God you are in desperate need, you have nothing with which to pay, but you may simply ask God and you will receive (Matt. 7:7-11).

NOTE: The apostles of Christ are special; there are no such apostles today.

1. Apostles are the foundation of the church (2:20). Christ appointed apostles to give an inspired and thus infallible interpretation of His work of redemption. For this reason the Spirit taught them in a special way (Jn. 14:26, 16:13-15). So the doctrine of the apostles is the only faith of the church, and has the same authority as the Old Testament (1 Thess. 2:13, 2 Thess. 2:15, 3:6, 2 Pet. 3:15-16).
2. Apostles had special powers, confirming they were sent by Christ with His true message (Acts 14:3-4, Rm. 15:18-19, 2 Cor. 12:12, Heb. 2:1-4)
3. Apostles have spiritual authority over all churches (2 Cor. 11:28). Paul wrote letters with commands to churches he had never visited, such as to the Romans.
4. No one today can have the necessary qualifications to be an apostle (see Acts 1:21-22). Their work as foundation was completed when the Scriptures were completed.

God Made All Things *Chris Kiagiri*

The following is a summarized transcript of part 1 of a 14-part seminar by Don Carson entitled “The God Who is There” aimed at simultaneously evangelizing non-Christians and edifying Christians by explaining the Bible’s storyline in a non-reductionistic way. The original content is available in its entirety in both audio and video form at <http://thegospel-coalition.org/thegodwhoisthere>

I. The God Who Made Everything (Genesis 1-2)

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” Gen. 1:1

However complex the debates over the symbolism and literary genre of Genesis 1-2, and however debated their relationship to contemporary science may be, there is an irreducible minimum that these chapters must be saying about God and human beings for the Bible to have any coherence at all.

God

He Simply Is. The Bible does not begin with a long set of arguments to prove the existence of God. It just begins “In the beginning God” (Gen. 1:1). Now, if human beings are the test of everything, this makes no sense at all because then we have the right to sit back and judge whether it is likely that God exists, to evaluate the evidence and come out with a certain probability that perhaps a god of some sort or another exists. Thus we become the judges of God. But the God of the Bible is not like that. He simply is. He is not the object whom we evaluate. He is the Creator who has made us, which changes all the dynamics.

He made everything that is non-God. God made everything else. This introduces an irreducible distinction between Creator and creature. God is not a creature; correspondingly, in this absolute sense, we are not creators. If someone were to ask, “Yes, but where did God come from?” the answer the Bible gives is that his existence is not dependent on anything or anyone else. My existence is dependent, finally, on him; his existence is self-existence. God has no cause; he just is. He always has been. By contrast, everything else in the universe began somewhere. God made it all. That means that everything in the universe apart from God is finally dependent upon God.

There is only one of him. This emerges strongly in the Bible. God openly says, “Let there be this,” “Let there be that,” “God made everything,” “He saw that it was very good.” Later on in the Bible this point is stressed again and again. For example, in verses that Jews reverently recite to this day called the Shema, we read the words, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one” (Deut. 6:4).

There is only one of him. Yet even in the first chapter of the Bible, there is a hint of complexity to God's oneness. We read through the account of creation "God said this," "God said that." Then when it comes to human beings, we read, "Then God said, 'Let us make human beings in our image, in our likeness'" (Gen. 1:26, emphasis added).

He is a talking God. The first action that is described in the creation account is "God *said* 'Let there be light'" (Gen. 1:3, emphasis added). Once Adam and Eve are created, he addresses them and gives them responsibilities; he speaks to them. He has personality and dares to reveal himself in words that human beings can understand. This recurs throughout the Bible.

Everything he makes is good. There is no hint in chapters 1-2 of death, decay or destruction; rather everything is very good. Regardless of all the complexities of God's sovereignty in a world where there is suffering - and we'll cover this in future editions of this series - constantly, the Bible insists that God is good, and the foundations of this are found here in the creation account.

He comes to an end of his creative work and he rests. This doesn't mean that God is tired and needs to put his feet up, rather that he comes to the end of his week of creation - however we understand it - and stops and designates it in a special way.

Human Beings

They were made in the image of God. In one sense, human beings are creatures and thus they have in common the attributes of other (non-human) creatures which also die and return to the dust. However, Genesis insists that human beings and human beings alone are made in "the image of God" - an expression which has generated much discussion and debate. Taking it as a master concept which is filled in as we go along, we understand that we reflect God and the ways in which we reflect him will be filled out as the Bible unfolds. We've seen that God is a talking God and that man speaks back to him. So there's a commonality in communication. Human beings have a creative ability that is not characteristic of the rest of creation, and that comes from God. We also have the ordinance of work, which reflects God.

They were made male and female. In Genesis 2, the differences between man and woman are expounded on, and the institution of marriage is introduced.

They were innocent. The man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. Today we hide our nakedness because we have much to be ashamed of.

The foregoing is a necessary introduction to Genesis 3. Without understanding how good everything is in Genesis 1-2, we won't have a proper understanding of what we will call 'The Fall' to show what rebellion looks like.

In the next issue of *Grace & Truth* we will examine part 2 of this series: **The God Who Does Not Wipe Out Rebels.**

Why the Local Church? *Nelson Munjiri*

Why the local church? What is this local church in meaning and practice? What are the marks of a true and healthy local church? Where is this local church to be found? These among many other questions arise when you think about this issue. These questions bear even more weight in our society which has been so intensely but falsely ‘evangelized’ that it has become so familiar to the ‘gospel’ and, “the sound of its doctrines” and has insensibly become “dead to its power” (Ryle, 1879). The church, the body of Christ, the beautiful bride of Christ, is casually spoken and thought of, often with disdain from the world, and an increasing muddiness from professing Christians. The fear J.C Ryle had that religion would sink down into a little vague talk about our own weakness and corruption, and a few sentimental expressions about Christ, while real practical fighting on Christ’s side is altogether neglected, has become the norm. With this in mind I implore you to spare a thought on the issue of the life of the local church. This article seeks to offer insight to the question: why the local church?

To begin with, the local church is simply but profoundly to be understood as the immediate expression of the universal church/body of believers. ‘Gathered and fully organized according to the mind of Christ, consisting of officers (elders and deacons) and members’ (The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689, 26/8 1975 ed.). Therefore, to handle the local church as separate from the universal church or the universal church separate from the local church would be erroneous. So why the local church?

Eph. 3:10-12 “...so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.”¹¹ This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,¹² in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.”

1.BECAUSE GOD.

God has bestowed it upon the church to make known His manifold wisdom. He has made plain His divine nature and eternal power ever since creation in the things that have been made, Paul the apostle wrote, and the Psalmist testified of the same saying, “The heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.” But now, it is clear that of the many purposes that we may give for the existence of

the church, the one most undeniable and necessary purpose would be, “to display God and his glorious gospel to His creation....to reflect the-out-of-this world and glorious character of God” (Dever, 2007). Anything other than the display of God is not in accordance to His eternal purpose, and this eternal purpose is not just a futuristic, yet-to-come, in-the-pipeline kind of purpose, but rather “*it has been realized in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Eph. 3:11). Anything else is amiss. ‘Mixture in sacred things is like a dash in the wine, which though it gives it a colour, yet only adulterates it....Whatever is not of God’s own appointment in His worship He looks upon as ‘strange fire’ Lev. 10:1-2.’ (Watson, 1666). Nadab and Abihu were consumed by fire for offering an unauthorized fire, Saul was deserted by God for offering a sacrifice when obedience was required (1 Sam. 13), Ananias and Saphira slain for withholding part of their property (Acts 5), and need I mention the Pharisee who prayed with the tax collector (Luke 18)? “...No wonder God is so incensed at it (Nadab and Abihu’s offering) as if He were not wise enough to appoint the manner in which he will be served.” (Watson, 1666).

What are we displaying in our churches? Is it the manifold wisdom of God or the communal beliefs and personal values of some select few?

It is then of paramount importance for us who claim to be part of this church to pursue the will of Him who instituted it, His will to display Himself. Do our churches display God as *Holy, Holy, Holy* (Isaiah 6:3)? As a God of love, who without prejudice or condition has reconciled such wrath-deserving, depraved, helpless sinners such as us to Himself at a great cost to Himself. As the Supreme authority so that it is His word that is the final authority in teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness? This is not the logic of man, and definitely not history or culture.

What are we making known, we who call ourselves the church? What are we displaying in our churches? Is it the manifold wisdom of God or the communal beliefs and personal values of some select few? Is it God’s holiness, love and authority or some fashionable spiritualism that makes one seem closer to God and heaven on account of how much you have been materially blessed. What are we displaying?

Has the wisdom of God in the cross of Christ been the very stronghold of our engagements as a church or has it been a means to an end? As we meditate on these questions let us keep in mind this sobering warning:

*Heb. 10:29 “How much worse punishment, do you think, will be **deserved** by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?” (emphasis added)*

2.BECAUSE MAN.

Men have sinned. We are all wretched sinners deserving no lesser punishment than the fullness of God's wrath in Hell. And He would be just in doing so. But in His great love He chose to display through the church his manifold wisdom in saving man. Sadly, in this state of sinfulness we have destroyed this beautiful display so much so that the importance of it is put to question. The beautiful body of Christ, the bride of Christ, looks defaced and dismembered to factions and denominations and movements. This I say with all reverence to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

How have we destroyed this display? 'Men....try to direct Him (God), and as if the rules for his worship were defective, they will attempt to correct the copy and superadd their inventions.' (Watson, 1666) Like the Israelites we have begged to have a king so that we may be like the nations, rejecting God, taking the unwise counsel of other men to be the standard for our engagements as a church. Instead of the infallible, unailing word of God, we follow human precepts and teachings that have an appearance of wisdom commonly called 'depth', and all they do is promote a self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh (Col. 3:23).

If all this seems like an overstatement I ask that you meditate with me for a moment on a few matters. Are you a member of a local church? If so, is your answer based on convenience, fitting in, history, liking? ('I've never liked how they do things,' or 'I like how they do,' or 'I've always been going to')? Or is it a matter of Biblical truth? How much emphasis has been laid on denomination and practices over the word of God? How much do you know of your denomination? Have you ever read the statement of faith of your denomination and studied it against God's word?

In our society, are we the church or do we go to church? Church is a place to go to on Sundays and if it is a people, it is limited to convenience and temperaments. Worse still some have turned to make the meeting of believers a place of trade, where the successful buyer is the one with the most faith measured in scale to your giving to this salesman. The cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches have choked us and the zeal that consumes us is not for the house of God, but for an ease in this life, a security and comfort and laid-back-ness, in the thick of the greatest war. . The Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) is no longer great and consuming in this war. Making disciples who are taught to observe *all* that God has commanded has become secondary to our vocations and dispositions. The thirst for ease and security, health and wealth, has put back that veil that was torn down when Christ died, so that our engagements as a church are an earnest seeking after God's hand not heart. Oh, how much

can be said of why we need to be taught, reprov'd, corrected and trained *in righteousness* (2 Tim. 3:16)!

For those honest with themselves it is clear very little attention is given to understand the purpose for which God established the church and how He intends it to be. But rather much more effort is on the more visible practices. How often do our congregations suffer from the pretences and self-righteousness of its members, that the thought of confessing our sins one to another is unimaginable, because of the fear of being seen less righteous? How sad is it that we know so much about the manner in which services are conducted, and very little of sound theology upon the subject of the church. Finally I commend to you the words of Christ to Peter:

Matt. 16:22-23 “And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.”²³ But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! **You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.**” (*emphasis added*)

3.BECAUSE CHRIST.

Why the local church? Because Christ has founded it. “Do we belong to the church which is built upon a rock? Are we members of the only church in which our souls can be saved? These are serious questions. They deserve serious consideration.” (Ryle, 1879) These questions posed more than a century ago, still plead today. In them one truth firmly stands, on Christ will the church be founded; by Christ will the church be sustained. How precious Christ is to the church.

1 Cor. 3:11 “For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Matt. 16:18 “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

This is the first time that Christ explicitly refers to the church, and he does speak purposely to make clear on what the church will be founded on. In the 13th chapter of his book *Holiness*, J.C Ryle gives insight to understanding what Christ meant when he said “on this rock I will build my church” (Matt. 16:18). In context, it is clear that Christ wasn’t making reference to Peter as being the foundation but rather the good confession which the apostle had just made in verse 17. “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” “It was not Peter, the erring, unstable man, but the mighty truth which the Father had revealed to Peter. It was the truth concerning Jesus Christ Himself which was the rock. It was Christ’s mediatorship, and Christ’s Messiahship. It was the blessed truth that Jesus was the promised Saviour, the true Surety, the real Intercessor between God and man. This was the rock, and this the foundation upon which the church of

Christ was to be builtNo other foundation could have met the necessities of lost, guilty, corrupt, weak, helpless sinners.” (Ryle, 1879) All other ground is sinking sand. Hold this truth against the rest of Scripture and see how every bit of it is true, consistent and inseparable.

Furthermore, the church not only has its foundation in Christ but its sustenance. The growth (in size and maturity) and the preservation of the church even under the greatest persecution, disease, disaster, false teaching and even death, is assured *only* in Christ. It is not anything of ourselves that holds the church together, gives it growth or preserves it; not our eloquences and methodologies, not our programs or skills, not our personalities or education even if all these have their place. A few verses to fan this flame of truth ablaze in our hearts:

Col. 1:17; 2:19 “And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church.holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, **nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.**” (emphasis added)

Eph. 1:15-16 “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,¹⁶ from whom the whole body, **joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.**” (emphasis added)

John 15:5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever **abides in me** and I in him, he is that bears much fruit, for **apart from me you can do nothing.**” (emphasis added)

John 10:29-30 “My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and **no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.**³⁰ I and the Father are one.” (emphasis added)

John 6:39 “And this is the will of him who sent me, that **I should lose nothing** of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.” (emphasis added)

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God's Design for the Family *John Muketha*

Throughout the world, families are disintegrating with divorce, immorality, homosexuality, and adultery. Physical and emotional abuse, single parenthood, disobedient children and abortion are becoming the order of the day. When a society upholds the family and family life it will be morally preserved. However, the neglect of the family unit coupled with permissive sinful influences results in moral decadence in society.

God's design for the family is clearly spelt out in His Word, the Bible. In the book of Genesis, it is evident that the family was God's initiative at creation. God created man and woman and established marriage and the family relationship on which every society is built. Genesis 2:18-25 is God's blueprint that provides guidelines to a fulfilling marriage relationship. The family, and not the government, or even the church, is God's first human institution. This demonstrates the great importance that marriage and family holds in the sight of God. No wonder this institution is subjected to serious attacks by the devil and the world more than the institutions of government and the church. We can safely conclude that the society is only as strong as the families that make it up. This also applies to other human institutions like the church.

Today the family is under attack. In the West, about half of marriages end in divorce. We have single parent families while others cohabit without any marriage whatsoever. Marriage infidelity and sexual activity before marriage all take their toll on the family. Homosexuality is the most recent of the devil's attacks on God's first institution as some seek recognition of same sex marriage. This clearly is an abomination in the sight of God (Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:26, 27), which all boils down to nothing more than human rebellion against God. God in His wisdom established the home for the protection of the human race.

God has much to say concerning the sanctity of marriage. The Word of God begins with a marriage (Gen. 2:18-25) and also closes with a marriage (Rev. 19:7). The very first miracle that the Lord Jesus Christ performed in His ministry was at a wedding (Jn. 2:1-11). The LORD God himself said, "Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." (Gen. 2:18) God also tells us that if a man finds a wife he finds a good thing and obtains God's favor or grace (Prov. 18:22). This shows the great delight and blessing which the Lord bestows upon those who enter into a marriage relationship (Ps. 128).

When a man and a woman come together in marriage they become one flesh (Gen. 2:24). God's perfect design for marriage is one man and one woman for life. This is the natural order of creation as established by God. Christ said that from the very beginning it was one male and one female (Matt. 19:3-7). We were not meant to have multiple wives. Neither is it God's will for two men to make a marriage or for two women. They will never fulfill the purpose which God assigned to Adam and Eve then, and husbands and wives today. God's plan for marriage is that there would be no di-

The family, and not the government, or even the church, is God's first human institution.

vorce. God takes marriage seriously and so should we and not seek to break marriages apart (Matt. 19:3-9; Mk. 10:2-12). God's design for the family is clearly spelt out in His Word, the Bible. In the book of Genesis, it is evident that the family was God's initiative at creation. God created man and woman and established marriage and the family relationship on which every society is built. Gen. 2:18-25 is God's blueprint that provides guidelines to a fulfilling marriage relationship. The family, and not the government, or even the church is God's first human institution. This demonstrates the great importance that marriage and family holds in the sight of God (Hebrews 13:4). As a young man hoping to get married one day, are you looking up to the Lord to provide a companion comparable to you? As a lady looking forward to marriage, put your trust in the Lord to provide the man with whom you will share the rest of your life.

It is only in the security and stability of the home that children can be properly nurtured and prepared for life in order to be able to carry the torch to the next generation (Exodus 20:12). As parents, what kind of examples are we to our children? Are we truly faithful to our spouses? The home is the first school where our children will learn how to love and care for their spouses. As a husband, you should love your wife even as Christ loved the Church. Love, cherish and nourish her as you love yourself so that your son will learn to love and cherish his wife in the next generation. You are also setting the standard for the kind of husband your daughter expects when her time for marriage comes. As a mother, you are by your life teaching your daughter how she should treat her husband when that time comes. You are also setting the standard for the kind of wife your son expects when his time for marriage comes.

Sin messed up the first family. We fail in many ways because we inherited the sinful nature from our first parents. It is in Christ alone that our sins can be cleansed so that we are able to fulfill God's design for the family. We must pray for our families, that each member comes to know and love the Lord, and that Christ may truly be the Head of the home and the unseen Guest at every meal and silent Listener in every conversation.

Imitating Christ's Humility *Sakwa Buliba*

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:5-8).

If you asked parents what character traits they would like their children to display in life, you'll certainly hear something like: “praised by others, aggressive, self-reliant, self-confident, having self-esteem and ability to manipulate others for personal profit....” This pictures the nature of the society we live in, particularly when we consider that Christians are no different in aspiring to be always on top of others, using others, receiving praise and seeking self-exaltation more often at the expense of others with lesser means.

We see in Him poverty of spirit, meekness, patience, lowliness of mind, soul-abasement, self-depreciation.

In His earthly life and specifically at the Cross; we meet our Lord Jesus manifesting godly humility in all His character. We see in Him poverty of spirit, meekness, patience, lowliness of mind, soul-abasement, self-depreciation. In the Gospel of John, we have the inner life of Christ laid bare regarding His relation to the Father, the motives and power by which He acts: “The Son can do nothing of his own accord” (Jn. 5:19,30; 6:38; 8:28); “I do not seek my own glory” (Jn. 5:41; 8:50); “My teaching is not mine” (Jn. 7:16; 14:10, 24); “I have not come of my own accord” (Jn. 7:28; 8:42). This is the message Christ displayed before the disciples, who were preoccupied with debates of who should be greatest in the kingdom.

1. The very God becomes man

“...Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped....” (v. 6).

For the sake of His enemies, He leaves the realms of heaven to come and dwell on earth. He accepts to be born in an animal’s feeding trough, of a woman, breathing human oxygen, getting tempted (Heb. 4:15), feeling sorrowful (Matt. 26:37-39), mourning (Jn. 11:35), thirsting, becoming hungry, tired and sleepy (Lk 14:1; Matt. 8:24). Instead of holding onto His Godhead and evading human suffering, He voluntarily chose to undergo all the pain and humiliation in order to secure the eternal welfare of His enemies: the sinners.

2. The very Master becomes a servant

....“but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant...” (v. 7)

Jesus cautioned His disciples against taking any place before God or man except that of a servant, clearly demonstrated by the Master washing their feet (Jn. 13:5, Lk. 22:27). Although He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, our gracious Savior delighted not in the praise of men. He pleased not Himself and made Himself of no reputation despite the glory that He had with the Father from the creation of the world. Christ would continually deny Himself in order to minister to others. He would be patient under venomous insults. He would think more of godly beggars than of worldly kings. With no home to call His own and getting His upkeep from alms, He mingled with beggars and rendered service to all as though He was not the Master (Lk. 9:58; Matt. 20:28; Lk. 22:27).

He pleased not Himself and made Himself of no reputation despite the glory that He had with the Father from the creation of the world.

3. The giver of life succumbs to death

...“And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (v. 8).

Think of how many cripples Jesus enabled to walk, how many blind whose eyes He opened, how many terminally ill he healed by word of His mouth, how many dead He called forth from death to life. Mockers and scoffers sarcastically urged Him to come down from the Cross, if indeed He was the Son of God. Others told Him to save Himself as He saved others. Yet He willingly gave up His spirit and died at the Cross for the sake of sinners, including those who nailed Him on the Cross.

4. Christians' attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus." (v. 5)

The question is often asked, "How can we count others better than ourselves when we can see that they are below us in knowledge, natural gifts, wisdom and in their walk with God?" The question itself is sufficient evidence that we indeed esteem ourselves above others. We should rather be wondering how Christ Jesus would count us, worthless sinners as we are, better than Himself to the point of dying for us when He knew that we were but rebels, blind, deaf, lost, bound and dead in sin and trespasses! If a righteous Man can die for His tormentors and His enemies, who are we?

He taught, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matt. 11:29).

Jesus' attitude was that of counting Himself the servant of men. He never for a moment thought of seeking His honor or exercising His enormous

He teaches us that our role is to yield to God in perfect resignation and dependence, in full consent to be and to do nothing of ourselves.

power to annihilate His enemies. He lived a life yielded to God to work through Him. He teaches us that our role is to yield to God in perfect resignation and dependence, in full consent to be and to do nothing of ourselves. Our gracious Lord urges us to learn of Him! Learning of Him implies an actual increasing conformity to the likeness of Christ. It means a crucifying of self. He teaches a sinking every moment into deep humility and a rise every moment into recognition of Christ as our all in all.

A Christian needs to desire lowliness of mind, to esteem others more than himself. He will see more evil in his own heart than in any other person around him. He feels his utter unworthiness and sinfulness in the sight of God's holiness every day. A Christian understands when Abraham says, "I am but dust and ashes" (Gen. 18:27), he is ready to say with Jacob, "I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant" (Gen. 32:10), he is willing to cry with David, "I am a worm" (Ps. 22:6), he would willingly confess with Job, "I am of small account" (Job 40:4), proclaim with Isaiah, "I am a man of unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5) and exclaim with Peter, "I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Lk. 5:8) and with Paul, "I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle", "I am the foremost of sinners" (1 Cor. 15:9; 1 Tim. 1:15).

3,000 Sinners Saved! *Keith Underhill*

The profession, “I’m saved”, is a common one, and there is nothing more important than to be sure of one’s own salvation. Because it is so important the devil loves to deceive people into thinking they are saved when they are not (see 1 Cor. 6:9, Gal. 6:7, 1 Jn. 1:8). We must carefully examine the Bible to understand what true salvation is. One way to do this is to examine the accounts in the Bible of those who were saved. We are going to take some examples from Acts, starting with the sinners in Jerusalem who were saved on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

This Day of Pentecost marks the beginning of the Christian church as we know it. The gift to the apostles of speaking in other tongues (languages) brought a great crowd together. Peter had the opportunity to preach (2:14-36). By way of response the crowd desperately asked, “What shall we do?” The inner workings of the Spirit that prompted the question and the two things they were told to do clearly inform us as to the nature of salvation.

This conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 16:8-11). Until He works in our hearts we are not aware of our need, so we have no interest in a remedy.

SALVATION IS THROUGH CONVICTION OF SIN

Peter had been preaching that the very One they had recently clamoured for the Romans to crucify was none other than “Lord and Christ” (v. 36). When they heard these words they felt an inner pain like a man that has been stabbed. Before, they had steadfastly refused to believe that Jesus of Nazareth was their promised Messiah (Christ). But now it was clear to them that all their hopes of salvation rested in Him who they had killed. What anguish they felt! They were guilty of judicial murder – Jesus was innocent. They had committed blasphemy – they had denied His divine mission. Their act was treasonable – they had revolted against God in His Messenger.

This conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 16:8-11). Until He works in our hearts we are not aware of our need, so we have no interest in a remedy. We may be sick without feeling it; but as soon as we feel it we look for the medicine! This

conviction is not part of the saving change in a sinner, as not all who experience conviction are saved. Judas was convicted (Matt. 27:3-5). Jews resisted the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51). There is a grief that does not lead to salvation (2 Cor. 7:10). Are you being convicted in your heart about your attitude to Christ? Of course you have not shouted “Crucify Him!” But at best you have paid Him only lip-service. He commands, “Follow Me”, and you would follow, but... ‘I am not willing to prejudice my education. Surely I cannot be expected to go through life without some corruption. I will get opposition from my family.’ You resolve it by performing some religious duties, but for the most part you live as if there was no Jesus Christ. May the Spirit convict you of your Christ-less life, the very One of whom God bore testimony, “This is My Beloved Son”, and on whom He set His approval by exalting Him to His right hand. You ask, How much strength of conviction is required? Enough to bring you to repentance and baptism. Conviction and guilty feelings are not enough. Herod heard John the Baptist gladly but never repented (Mk. 6:20). Felix was alarmed by Paul’s reasoning but never repented (Acts 24:24-25).

SALVATION IS THROUGH REPENTANCE

Peter’s authoritative response is simple and clear. What must they do having been convicted? “Repent and be baptized” (v. 38). Repentance is often neglected in today’s preaching about salvation. It has never been a popular message. More people will follow a message that Jesus is there to fulfil all felt needs, than a message that speaks about dealing with sin. Repentance was the message of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:2), of Jesus (Matt. 4:17), of the apostles (Acts 20:21). Repentance is nothing less than a total change of thinking resulting in a change of direction of life from sin towards God:

- **Specifically.** Like a volcano sin usually erupts in one particular place. The type of sin depends upon character and upbringing. For those in Jerusalem it was the sin of crucifying Christ. What is your sin? It may be public such as an immoral relationship, habitual lying, corruption, disobedience to parents. It may be more secret being clouded by an outwardly respectable life, such as pride and self-trust or a love of money. Whatever it is it must be repented of. This is how John the Baptist preached repentance (Lk. 3:7-14). Paul refers to his specific sins (1 Tim. 1:13). Strive to see the evil in your sin, forsake it, and turn to God. In Christ’s name you will be forgiven and receive the Holy Spirit to enable you in the fight (Acts 2:38).
- **Generally.** Repentance is turning from all sin, anything God calls sin, in order to follow Christ. It is a confession before a thrice holy God that your whole life is sinful from the depth of your inner being to all your actions (see Gen. 6:5, Ps. 51:5,

Repentance is turning from all sin, anything God calls sin, in order to follow Christ.

Jer. 17:9, Matt. 15:18-19). You have done nothing good, so that every aspect of life must be brought into submission to Christ and His will. Christ becomes your light, your shepherd, your very centre. The basic change is that now Jesus Christ is your Saviour and Lord. Do not wait for repentance to come to you from ‘somewhere’. It is your responsibility. God has commanded you to repent. “Save yourselves from this crooked generation” (v. 40), the world of unbelievers.

SALVATION IS THROUGH **BAPTISM**

Before you reject this as heretical, it is Peter himself who puts baptism together with repentance, forgiveness and the receiving of the Holy Spirit (v. 38). It is not that forgiveness and receiving the Spirit happen at baptism; rather that a professed repentance that does not lead to baptism is perhaps insincere. There are 2 lines of evidence:

1. The Bible constantly teaches that forgiveness goes with repentance and not baptism (Mk. 1:4, Lk. 17:3-4, 24:47, Acts 5:31, 8:22, 26:18, Jas. 5:15, 1 Jn. 1:9).
2. Baptism does not automatically lead to salvation. Simon was baptized but was not saved (Acts 8:9-24). Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 16:30-31, Rom. 10:13-14, 1 Cor. 1:21, Eph. 2:8).

If you have repented why have you not been baptized according to the command of Christ and example of the early Christians?

If you have repented why have you not been baptized according to the command of Christ and example of the early Christians? The baptized person declares, ‘I have turned my back on my old life, and I am now a new person in Christ’. The New Testament knows nothing about an ‘unbaptized Christian’. Peter proclaimed, “Be baptized every one of you” who repents. The 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost all heeded that command and were baptized (v. 41). Possibly you have been ignorant of this until you have read what has been written. Perhaps you have been putting it off. But do not refuse. Surely there is a legitimate question as to whether you are genuinely saved if you are not willing to submit to baptism. What other commands of Christ, who you say is your Lord, will you not be willing to submit to? No, let it be your greatest privilege to identify in baptism with your despised Lord. How powerful was the word of God on that day. Let us have renewed confidence and pray it will be again in our day, that we will witness multitudes being baptized.

Introduction to Trinity Baptist Church *Murungi Igweta*

Who is Trinity Baptist Church (TBC)?

We are an independent Baptist church in Eastlands, Nairobi next to Donholm Primary School in Greenfields Estate. We have been here for over thirty years, where we have been seeking to faithfully preach the whole counsel of God. We hold that the Bible should be preached as a whole, not just in bits and pieces. Therefore, we preach expository sermons through the whole Bible. The church is founded on the tenets of the 16th Century Reformation – following behind the footsteps of historic church reformers such as John Calvin and Martin Luther, and believe that the work of reformation carries on. We believe that only the Scriptures, the infallible Word of God, are able to lead a sinner to salvation through faith in Christ alone (2 Tim. 3:15). This is because we are saved only by grace (apart from any of our own good works) as we read, “For by grace you have been saved through faith...” (Eph. 2:8). This way of salvation is of the Lord (Jn. 2:9) so that all the glory goes to God. Therefore, those who are saved are debtors of God’s mercy – if you are to be saved you must ask God to be merciful to you, a sinner and He would definitely do it as He has promised (Jn. 6:37).

It is the Bible which reveals God’s redemptive plan...therefore, the proclamation of Biblical truth is central in our Sunday Worship.

If you are to be saved you must rely on the Bible, which is the authoritative and inspired Word of God as opposed to traditions or words of men because they make the Word of God to be of no effect (Matt. 7:9). You must trust in Christ alone who saves freely only by His grace. Your part is to respond with faith alone in Christ, who has taken your place to die on the cross and pay the penalty for your sins. Imagine, in return for your sins He has given His righteousness so that God acquits you of any sinfulness – only if you would be willing to trust in Jesus Christ!

Have you known a church where the Word of God is a priority?

TBC has a high view of the Scriptures because God has revealed Himself by His Word – the Bible. It is the Bible which reveals God’s redemptive plan, through

which men are saved – the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16). Therefore, the proclamation of Biblical truth is very central in our Sunday Worship and is given the largest portion of time in the service.

Just to give you a taste of how the services looks like: we have the opening passage from the Scripture that sets the pace and theme of the whole worship service. This is followed by an opening prayer and singing of hymns. Then there is

If people are to be saved, then it must be in response to the life-giving Word of God (1 Peter 1:23).

consecutive Bible reading (Paul told Timothy not to neglect it in 1 Tim. 4:13) through a particular book of the Bible (this time we are reading from the book of Jeremiah). After that, we have a time of public prayer, since we highly regard prayer as God's appointed means of accomplishing His purposes. Then we have the Preaching of the Word.

Have you known a church where the whole counsel of God is preached (Acts 20:27)?

Because we take the Bible very seriously, we are committed to preaching through it in its entirety, verse-by-verse, chapter-by-chapter, book by book. In the past ten years, we have preached through 33 books in both the New and Old Testament systematically. Portions of all other books except 9 have been preached. The books which have not been preached through have been covered by reading publically and other ministries of the church. If people are to be saved, then it must be in response to the life-giving Word of God (1 Peter 1:23). If believers are edified, then it must be because of the inspired Word of God, which is profitable for teaching, correcting, rebuking and training in righteousness so that Christians are thoroughly equipped for every good work of ministry. The church will grow spiritually to maturity when the Word of God is treated with the seriousness that it deserves. We do not only preach the Bible, but also teach it so that besides these services there are Sunday School classes for all ages which starts at 9.30 to 10.40 a.m. Both the Adult and Youth classes are studying the famous 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith, which contains the faith we profess and believe since it is based on Scripture. Various groups of children's classes are studying different books of the Bible in their Sunday school lessons. The effect of this is that believers are well grounded on the Bible so that they are not tossed around and about by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14).

Are there any other locations for Bible Study?

There are mid-week meetings in various parts of the city. On Wednesday nights there is a meeting around Donholm Phase 5, 8 and Harambee Sacco estates studying the book of Hebrews and prayer in the homes of various brethren. On Thursdays there are four meetings; around Donholm, the ladies have their Bible study at 10 a.m. where

they are studying the book of Acts; at Greenfields, Savanna they are studying the Psalms; at Tena, Umoja and Innercore estates, they are studying the book of Habakkuk. The Bible study group in South 'C' is studying the book of Romans. The resulting Christians are people who are well nourished in the meat of the Word, and so strong and suited to face the enemy and his forces with the full armor of God including the Sword of the Spirit!

Have you been to a church where people find it a delight to spend the whole of Sunday in church?

The Sunday meetings are spread throughout the day so that the brethren have a time of both public worship and fellowship. This is in accord with the custom of the early church who devoted themselves to teachings, fellowship, prayer and breaking of bread (Acts 2:42). Sunday is the Lord's Day and so it belongs to the Lord (Matt. 12:8, Mk. 2:28, Lk. 6:5). We are to delight in the Sabbath (Isa. 58:13). For this reason the church has graciously provided lunch so that those brethren who wish can stay over and fellowship. This makes the brethren to be closer to one another as we look forward to eternity when we will be forever with the Lord and one another.

Are you a Christian? Do you have your life centered around a local church?

Many Christians in Kenya do not have their lives centered around a local expression of the Body of Christ – the Church. This is not an accusation but the way of life many are accustomed to although they profess faith in Christ. It is for this reason that we as a church have stepped in to fill this gap and show that there is something big lacking in these Christians.

How is the leadership of Trinity Baptist Church?

In terms of the leadership of the church, the church constitution says: "The Lord Jesus Christ is the only head of the church (Col. 1:18), governing it by the Word of God. This government is exercised in particular local churches through elders who apply the Word of God in their teaching and ruling ... Scripture recognizes two kinds of officers in the church: elders (also called bishops, presbyters or pastors) and deacons (Phil. 1:1). In normal circumstances the church should be governed by a plurality of elders (Acts 14:23). There is no fixed number of elders or deacons, but men should be appointed to these offices as they are called and gifted by Christ. They will remain in office indefinitely until such a time as they no longer fulfill the duties of their respective offices."

Are there other likeminded churches?

Yes we have other sister churches in various parts of the country and all over the world who also subscribe to the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith.

To know more about Trinity Baptist Church, please log on to our website:

www.trinitybaptistkenya.org