

CHURCH FOR ALL GENERATIONS

THE CHURCH AS GOD'S PLAN

Neil Gallagher

'Plan': *aim, design, goal, idea, intention, objective, proposal*

The Bible reveals God to be the ultimate master planner

- God's plans far-excel the plans of man (Proverbs 19:21; Isaiah 55:8-9)
- God's plans are eternal in purpose (Psalm 33:11; Acts 15:18)
- God's plans can never fail or be thwarted (Isaiah 14:27; Job 42:2)
- God's timing is always accurate and precise (Galatians 4:4)
- God incorporates the participation of mankind into his plans (Genesis 1:26-28; Amos 3:7)
- God intends man to be the great beneficiary of His plans (Jeremiah 29:11)

God's masterplan is to establish and extend His Kingdom on the Earth

- Adam failed
- Israel failed
- The church is God's masterplan that Jesus Christ is building and will therefore never fail

God's masterplan for the church was absolutely central to the vision of Jesus

- Jesus promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18a)
- He declared that the church will be victorious and unstoppable (Matthew 16:18b)
- The church was commended to the disciples by Jesus Himself (Matthew 18:17)
- Jesus demonstrated His love for the church by laying down His life for it (Ephesians 5:25)
- The church is so precious to our Lord that He purchased it with own blood (Acts 20:28)
- Jesus and the church are inseparable (Acts 9:4)
- One day Jesus will return for His bride, the church (Ephesians 5:27; Revelation 19:7-8)

'Anything that is of central importance to the Lord Jesus Christ must be central to the Christian.'

– Sinclair Ferguson, *Devoted to God's Church*

God never planned the church to be:

- A material building (1 Peter 2:4-10): The word 'church' in the Bible actually means 'called out ones'. It refers to people, not buildings or traditions; those who have been marked by God and called by Him. The Bible refers to such people as 'a chosen generation', a special people' and 'His precious'.
- A denomination (1 Corinthians 3:1-6)
- A nationalistic enterprise
- An extension of Judaism (John 10:16; Matthew 9:17)
- His plan B / temporal dispensation of His original intent to extend His Kingdom (Acts 15:18; Ephesians 3:10-11)

God intends the church to be:

- Built upon the rock foundation of Christ Himself (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 2:20)
- Christ-centred (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23)
- An assembly composed of those who are called out for Christ (1 Corinthians 1:2)
- Free from social, racial, cultural or gender barriers (Galatians 3:28; Revelation 7:9)
- Holy (Ephesians 5:27)
- United (Acts 2:44; John 17:21)
- Militant and victorious (Matthew 16:18)
- Glorious (Ephesians 5:21, 27)
- A house of prayer (Matthew 21:13)
- An inhabitation of His glory through the praise and worship of His people (Hebrews 2:12)
- A house of spiritual edification, covering and accountability (Hebrews 13:17)
- Both Word- and Holy Spirit-based (Micah 4:1; Ephesians 5:23; Acts 9:31; Acts 10:44)
- Fully functional in the gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:9-13)
- A place of refuge and where lives are restored (Psalm 27:4-5)
- Supportive to the Christian home (Colossians 4:18-21)
- A family, where life-long relationships are formed and nurtured (Ephesians 2:19; Colossians 2:2)
- An instrument to implement the rule of heaven upon the Earth (Matthew 16:19; Matthew 6:10)
- An influential presence to the people of its locality (Acts 2:47; Acts 5:13)
- A centre where new souls are both outreached and enriched (Acts 2:47)
- A place where destinies are unfolded and are blessed (Psalm 23:6)

God's plan for our lives is **never** independent of the local church.

'Church is God's plan: to be outside of church is to be outside of God's plan.'

– Chip Kawalsingh

How can we align ourselves to God's plan, the church?

- Be fully committed, loyal and faithful to the house of our planting (Ephesians 4:2)
- Don't just attend church, but rather belong to it by being rooted and planted (Psalm 92:12-13)
- Be passionate and love where God has planted you (John 2:17; Psalm 122:1)
- Behave with good conduct in the house of the Lord (1 Timothy 3:15)
- Submit to and highly esteem those who govern the church (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:13)
- Don't just be a taker, but be a giver of your 4T's (Acts 20:35; Psalm 116:18)
- Serve in whatever way you can (Ecclesiastes 9:10; Psalm 84:10; Psalm 100:2)

References:

The Church in the New Testament, Kevin Conner

Partnership Guide, Chip Kawalsingh

Devoted to God's House, Sinclair Ferguson

Keys to Building a Great Church, Cooper, Tose, Kawalsingh, Sakellariou, de Jong