

The Heavenly Father's desired plan from before the world's foundation was that each one born again would become...

# God's Dwelling Place

✦ by Dr. Victor Paul Wierwille

Ever since the fall of Adam at which time man lost God's created spirit, God throughout many centuries sought a permanent dwelling place. In Old Testament times, God gave instructions to Moses for the building of a tabernacle. Later on He directed Solomon to build the temple. But none of those abodes was satisfactory. They were only temporary types of dwellings or meeting places for God and His children. Throughout the centuries God waited for the Age of Grace which began on the day of Pentecost. As you know, most of the knowledge of the greatness of the occurrence of Pentecost was lost in a relatively short period of time after the death of the Apostle Paul. Christians didn't lose the spirit which was a gift from God, but they didn't crystallize the truth of God's revelation to the end that they really believed the greatness of it in their hearts. That is still frequently the case among knowledgeable Christians today. We never get a great enough vision of the immensity of that dwelling place of God which — on Pentecost and ever since — is within every believer.

Isaiah 57:15 says:

**For thus saith the high and lofty One [God] that [who] inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.**

"For thus saith the high and lofty One [speaking of God] that [who] inhabiteth eternity . . ." shows that heaven is not great enough for God. He also inhabits eternity.

The psalmist wrote in Psalms 27:4 and 5: **One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire [find out about Him] in his temple.**

**For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.**

Thus the temple was a place to gain knowledge and love of God, as well as a refuge from troubles.

God dwelled in the tabernacle and the temple during the Age of Law, and with the ending of the law on Pentecost, Peter, speaking by revelation, summarized these former meeting places.

Acts 7:37—50:

**This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me [as of myself]; him shall ye hear.**

**This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively [living] oracles to give unto us:**

**To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which [who] brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot [know] not what is become of him.**

**And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.**

**Then God turned, and gave them up to wor-**

**ship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness?**

**Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.**

**Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen [which God gave him by revelation].**

**Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob [Israel].**

**But Solomon built him an house.**

**Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?**

Throughout the centuries God always revealed as much of Himself as people were capable of perceiving. Because the Israelites could not remain faithful to their leader, the Prophet Moses, and to the revelation that God showed him, God gave His children an added, tangible assist by having Moses build a tabernacle. After that, God dealt with David and then

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had Solomon build the temple, again as a witness of the love of God doing His best for His people.

God was always seeking a dwelling place, a place where He would be revered, respected, obeyed, committed to and have man's absolute worship. But a temple was not big enough for God's extensiveness. God needs both heaven and earth, thus Moses' tabernacle and Solomon's temple were not truly satisfactory. These structures were only provisional arrangements. These were temporary measures until God could bring about in due time a permanent, perfect dwelling place.

It is important in proceeding toward an understanding of God's finding a permanent habitation that we note the three different parts of the temple and their significance. One part was made up of the sacred courts and the colonnades of the temple. Another part included the court of the Gentiles, that court where the moneychangers were seated when Jesus came in and overthrew the tables and drove out the animals. The third was the innermost part of the temple, the holiest of holies. A wall separated these various sections of the temple. On the day of Jesus' crucifixion, the wall was destroyed between the court of the Gentiles and the Jews. But more important, the wall or veil between the Jews and the Holy of Holies was also destroyed. Ephesians 2 tells the beauty of this act.

## **Ephesians 2:14:**

**For he [Jesus Christ] is our peace, who hath made both [Jew and Gentile] one, and hath broken down [destroyed] the middle wall of partition between us [between Jew and Gentile].**

Jesus Christ brought peace in tearing down the partition separating Jew from Gentile and also the partition separating the common Jew from the high priest. God no longer held one person or group of persons in higher esteem than any other. As Peter observed much to his amazement at Cornelius's house in Acts 11, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." Jesus Christ made all people, Gentile and Jew, equal before God.

The temple had had a wall separating the Gentiles from the court of Israel and another wall separating the court of Israel from the Holy of Holies, thus signifying the preferred treatment of high priests from the rest of the body of Jews. That entrance into the Holy of Holies was the veil which was torn from top to bottom on the day of the crucifixion.

## **Mark 15:38:**

**And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.**

**B**y his sacrifice, Jesus Christ brought about the torn veil between the court of Israel and the Holy of Holies and he also utterly destroyed the temple's separation between Gentiles and Jews. What did Jesus Christ accomplish in ending these separations? He brought peace. There would no longer be discrimination between Jew and Gentile. Jesus Christ made them coequal in God's sight.

## **Ephesians 2:15:**

**Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.**

"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity . . ." means that Jesus Christ totally destroyed the inability of man personally to know God. To state it in the positive, Jesus Christ made it possible for man to know God personally. Jesus Christ abolished in his flesh the enmity and "the law of commandments." The enmity specifically relates to the natural men of body and soul who were basically the Gentiles. The law of commandments contained in ordinances was given to Israel, the Jews. Thus when Jesus Christ abolished the enmity for the Gentiles and the law of commandments for the Jews, he tore down the obstacles which were separating each group from God and then he created of twain, from these two types, one new man.

Jesus Christ took the Jew and Gentile and broke down the partitions separating them, ". . . so making peace." Why did Jesus Christ abolish the enmity and the ordinances? This was all done in order that God might create — and the word "create" is absolutely accurate. And that creation is the spirit. What Jesus Christ brought about was the new creation of God in Christ in every believer, regardless of their previous label as Jew or Gentile. There were no longer the two classifications, but a new creation in Christ Jesus, ". . . so making peace."

## **Ephesians 2:16:**

**And that he might reconcile [bring back together that which has been separated] both [Jew and Gentile] unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.**

Israel was never able to keep the law, so they were without God. The Gentiles were also without God. So Jesus Christ had to reconcile both sinners "unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." So the Gentiles were not only enmity to God, but Israel, who couldn't keep the law of commandments, were also enmity to Him. Jesus Christ needed to reconcile both to God.

## **Ephesians 2:17:**

**And [Jesus Christ] came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.**

**T**here are several kinds of preaching in the Bible, but this preaching is the good news of the destruction of enmity and commandments and of Christ's making peace and reconciling Jew and Gentile to God in one body. The good news came ". . . to you which were afar off [Gentiles], and to them that were nigh [Israel]." Israel had had God's goodness constantly available to them, so they should have been grateful. But they weren't. Israel was stiffnecked, obnoxious, destructive and insulting to other people. They had had God's truth and His way at hand. So they could have walked His way, but they didn't.

## **Ephesians 2:18:**

**For through him [Jesus Christ] we both have access by one Spirit unto [pros] the Father.**

There is only one God to whom both Jews and Gentiles have to be reconciled. Once the reconciliation was accomplished, He became Father to both. When Christ's accomplishments were complete, God could then have a permanent dwelling place, not in temples made with human hands, but in temples made by His own work. And these temples were His very own children.

The greatness of this fatherly relationship continues to unfold in the next few verses of Ephesians 2 by the usage of certain words whose Greek root is *oikos*, meaning "house" or "household" or "family."

## **Ephesians 2:19:**

**Now therefore [since we have a Father] ye are no more [no longer] strangers and foreigners [sojourners], but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.**

The word "foreigners" is *paroikos*. We are no longer strangers and *paroikos*, sojourners, outside the household, moving around like bedouins having no certain living place, no definite home. We are no longer strangers for we are known by Him and we know Him. We are fellowcitizens. "Fellowcitizens" is *sumpolitites*. All of we saints are God's townspeople. Not only are we fellow-citizens but better still, we are of the household, *oikeios*, of God because He is our Father.

## **Ephesians 2:20:**

**And are built [epoikodomeo from the root oikos] upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.**

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. . . ." That is true apostolic, prophetic succession. The apostolic succession never came through the Apostle Peter. That's a story someone made up, not what God's Word states.

Apostolic succession, prophetic succession, evangelists, teachers and pastors included, are for those called out from among Jews and Gentiles who are part of the household of God and remain faithful to God's Word.

The household of God is built upon "... the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ ['Christ Jesus' is the text] himself being the chief corner stone [foundation stone]." Christ Jesus is the stone. He's the solid rock. That is what that verse says.

**Ephesians 2:21:**

**In whom all the building [oikodome] fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.**

**T**here is only one building on that foundation. Those who are born again of God's Spirit, whom He knows as sons of God, they make up the building, the family.

"In whom [Christ Jesus] all the building [is] fitly framed together" is literally, "... harmoniously fitted. . . ." How can the building be harmoniously fitted if you and I as Christian brothers argue all the time or if one of us is unfaithful in the household? How can it be fitly framed?

"In whom the whole building is harmoniously fitted together and it grows. . . ." because new people are continually being born again. That's the growing. And this "... groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."

**Ephesians 2:22:**

**In whom ye also are builded together [sunioikodomeomai] for an habitation [a housing place, a location, katoiketerion] of God through the Spirit.**

"In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." God does not dwell in temples made with hands, but the God-in-Christ-in-you is the habitation of God. This habitation is something that the true God wanted from before the foundations of the world. But because of God's justice, He wasn't able to bring it to pass until His Son Jesus Christ had finished His work. Then it was legally possible for God to have a certain dwelling place within a person when that person would confess with his mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised Jesus from the dead. What God had desired from before the foundations of the world He got at Pentecost and thereafter when His spirit is created in each believer. That is God's certain permanent dwelling place. But what can we believers do with this creation of God-in-Christ-in-us? We can't feel God. Therefore, the only way God can be magnified is to worship Him in Spirit and in truth, "truthfully via the Spirit," which is speaking in tongues.

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# TRUTH NEEDS NO DEFENSE



**W**hen you tell the truth you can forget about it. Truth needs no defense because it is its own defense. However, when you tell a lie you must remember it so you can tell the same lie in the same way the next time.

An expression I have heard natural man use too often is, "I do not agree with you." It is his privilege in this Administration of Grace to disagree, but every time he disagrees with the truth he must set up a defensive argument. When you agree with truth you need no defense.

When it's raining and you tell Nat U. Ralman (natural man), "It is raining," and he says, "I do not agree with you," then he must defend his position by explaining those numerous drops of water falling from the sky. However, you do not need to defend anything. On the other hand, if it is not raining you must defend your position by explaining the lack of precipitation which normally accompanies the phrase "It is raining."

The Word says Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. But Nat U. Ralman says, "I do not agree with you." You do not need to defend the truth. But Nat must defend his position by saying the Bible is man-made, not God-breathed. Then he must explain the dominance, effects and results of Christianity, not to mention speaking in tongues and the other manifestations at work in your life.

Truth needs no defense. It is its own defense. The Greek word for "defense" is *apologia*. The corresponding verb form "to defend" is *apologeomai*. From these words come the English "apology" which is a defense for a wrong you have said or done. We also get the word "apologetics"

from these Greek words, which is supposedly a system used by trained theologians for defending Christianity. However, in the New Testament *apologia* and *apologeomai* are used primarily of defenses at public trials. For example, when Paul was sent to Rome for his trial he was required to make a defense for *himself*. He did not defend the truth of Christianity. Truth is its own defense.

Ten of the nineteen occurrences of these two words are in reference to Paul's public trials.

**Acts 22:1:**

**Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defense [defense — *apologia*] which I make now unto you.**

**Acts 24:10:**

**Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for [answer for — *apologeomai* — should be translated "defend"] myself:**

**Acts 25:8:**

**While he answered [answered — *apologeomai* — should be translated "defended"] for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended anything at all.**

**Acts 25:16:**

**To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself [to answer for himself — *apologia* — should be translated "for defense"] con-**

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## Rev. Walter J. Cummins

## THE TFI STORY



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fortably under any conditions, that he can take care of himself anywhere and that he can help and lead others also. A strong, totally fit person is capable of helping others; a weak person cannot even help himself.

Romans 12:1-3 provide a summation of a total approach to the life that is more than abundant.

Romans 12:1-3:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

The physical aspect of total fitness is found in verse one. The mental aspects of the renewed mind are found in verse two. Verse three deals with the spiritual. These three interwoven phases of a person's life are what the Total Fitness Institute is designed to strengthen, in order that people may truly enjoy lives that are more than abundant because they are totally fit. And the strength of a nation is in its individual citizens. ↘

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Now do you see why I fervently encourage my people to speak in tongues often. Much less frequently do I talk about interpretation of tongues and prophecy. Why? Because interpretation of tongues and prophecy don't worship God. God is Spirit and can only be worshipped via the spirit and that can only be done by speaking in tongues. When we speak by the spirit we absolutely know that God dwells in us for we show His spirit which He gave us.

We simply have to get to the point where we unstintingly practice the Word of God

as the will of God. God, who is holy and who is Spirit, even the heavens can't contain. Remember the scripture that says, "the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool" [Isaiah 66:1]. Imagine how immense He is, how great He is! That very God is in us and we are that household of God, that temple, harmoniously fitted, the habitation of God by spirit. And whenever we speak in tongues, we are worshipping God and thereby He is getting what He has worked to bring about from the very beginning.

When we understand the building built on the foundation, Christ Jesus, then we can more fully understand the Body of Christ which is explained in I Corinthians 12:

I Corinthians 12:12-22:

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized unto one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink in to one Spirit [same spirit of God in each].

For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body?

But now are they many members, yet but one body.

And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

How can the building spoken of in Ephesians 2:21 be harmoniously fitted if each Christian has the same assignment? If your function in the Body is to prepare a room for fellowship, your reward is as great before God as when I teach the Word, if we both work as unto the Lord. But if either of us works with resentment and bitterness in our hearts, wishing that somebody else would do our jobs, we have denied ourselves the reward.

Verses 23-25:

And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.

For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part

which lacked.

[Then comes this great phrase.] That there should be no schism [no break, just harmony] in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

All that I have ever seen in my life, ever since some of these things have been known to me, are constant breaks within the Body. The Word says there should be no schism in the Body "... but that the members should have the same care one for another." Whether we teach or pray or sweep the floors, the members are to have the same care — tenderness, forgiveness, helpfulness, understanding, mercy — one for another. When one of the members coughs, all the members cough with him because he is a part of that Body. We are to be fitly framed together. At the point where we are unfit is where the Body gets hurt, that's where we are vulnerable. And if you don't feel that, you don't understand the greatness of the Mystery.

This entire section of I Corinthians 12, verses 12 through 27, is an illustration using the human body to represent the spiritual Body which has been set forth in the opening eleven verses of this twelfth chapter. The Church is one Body and every member is complete as one in that Body. But each member or person has a specific function, every believer has a particular ministry to perform. And without everyone's carrying out his or her function, the Body does not operate perfectly.

It is this Body of Christ with each member having God-in-Christ-in-him that was God's desired plan from before the world's foundation. What an unspeakable privilege it is to have God permanently within — to be a son of God. And what a great challenge and goal it is to keep the Body of Christ harmoniously working together and continuing to grow upon the foundation of Christ. ↘

Blessed Is  
The Nation  
Whose God  
Is The Lord

—PSALMS 33:12

