



# The Sharon Star

# Hope

*By Mervin Sundbo*

One word that we are all familiar with in scripture is the word "hope." The dictionary provides us with the following synonyms for "hope" and they include: expectation, desire, longing and confidence. There is one main emotion that stirs in the hearts of Christians everywhere and that is hope. The hope that lies within may vary according to the degree of light that the Spirit of God has bestowed upon each group or individual. However, I think it is safe to say that born-again Christians come together to reverence and acknowledge the death of their Lord and Savior and, more importantly, to celebrate His glorious resurrection. What a hope we have in Christ! He suffered and died and rose triumphant over death, hell and the grave. Hope is what brings us together Sunday after Sunday, week after week, year after year. We stand in expectation. There is a desire and a longing in our hearts and a confidence that what we hope for will be reality. There is little point in hoping for something that has no possibility of coming to fruition. There is great comfort, however, in hoping for the promises of God for we know they will come to pass. 1 Peter 3: 15 urges us to "Sanctify (hallow, glorify, exalt) the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (NKJV). In 1 Thess. 4: 13 & 14, Paul says, "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that

Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus" (NKJV).

We often sing "He's My Lord." The words are as follows:

"He's my Lord, there is no other one,  
Who can calm the storms of life like  
my Lord.

He gives rest to the weary, gives new  
life to the hopeless,

There's no doubt about it, He's my  
Lord."

Another song that comes to mind is the one that includes the words, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness."

A Chinese proverb says this: "It is better to light one little candle than to curse the darkness." Hope is the light at the end of the tunnel; the illumination in a dark place. We can be a light by the attitude we display. We do not need to curse the darkness; we just need to let our light shine to dispel the darkness. Hope is what propels us. Hope keeps us from despairing and from not giving up. We can find ourselves in very dire circumstances, but hope can keep us from being overwhelmed. Is. 60: 1 & 2 says, "Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people: but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you" (NKJV). When we become discouraged and shadows are cast across our path, let us turn to such scriptures as 2 Cor. 4: 6-14, "For it is the God who commanded light

to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure (Christ) in earthen vessels (mortal bodies), that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed - always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifest in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you. And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, I believed and therefore I spoke, we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart (hope). Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen (this is what we hope for). For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (NKJV). Paul

said in Phil. 3: 10, “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death” (NKJV). We find the theme of being raised up or restored also in Hosea 6:1&2, “Come, and let us return to the Lord; for He has torn, but he will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight” (NKJV). We can see there is nothing to hope for in the flesh, but there is much to look forward to in the realm of the Spirit. We have an advocate; an intercessor; “A great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God” (Heb. 4: 14, NKJV). His love is unfathomable as we see in Rom. 8: 35-39, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (NKJV). What a promise!

Now let us look at 1Cor. 15: 17-22 where we see that our hope is not only in the here and now, but also in that which is ahead. “And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive” (NKJV).

In Titus 2: 12, we are admonished to “...live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present age looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed (all iniquity – KJV) and purify unto Himself His own special (peculiar or belonging exclusively to) people, zealous (fervent) for good works” (NKJV).

What is “the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ?” I

am not interested in a theological discourse here. However, I will refer to how Bro. George Warnock expresses the Lord’s appearing in the

Feast of Tabernacles: The Hope of the Church. “True, there shall come a day when the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea; when every eye shall see Him; when the same Jesus that was taken up into Heaven, shall come in like manner as they saw Him go. But first there is the Appearing of Christ in the midst of His people by the Spirit, to establish the Kingdom of God within, and that is the hope of the church.” Is this not the day we are looking and hoping for? The day when the present indwelling Christ shall no longer be in part, but shall be manifest in His fullness in His many – membered body. This is maturity in Christ! This is Sonship! The whole creation waits for this dramatic event to unfold as is expressed in Rom. 8: 19-26. “The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own. The world of creation cannot yet see reality, not because it chooses to be blind, but because in God’s purpose it has been so limited – yet it has been given hope. And the hope is that in the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God! It is plain to anyone with eyes to see that at the present time all created life groans in a sort of universal travail. And it is plain, too, that we who have a foretaste of the Spirit are in a state of painful tension, while we wait for that redemption of our bodies which will mean that at last we have realized our full sonship in Him. We were saved by this hope, but in our moments of impatience let us remember that hope always means waiting for something we cannot see, then we must settle down to wait for it in patience. The Spirit of God not only maintains this hope within us, but helps us in our present limitations” (Phillips).

It is time to “...look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near” (Luke 21:28 – NKJV).

Abraham “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God” (Heb. 11: 10, KJV). We should be so thankful for the foundation upon which God has set our feet. Eph. 2:19-22 says, “Now therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of

the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone” (NKJV). And in 2Tim. 2: 19 we read as follows: “Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure (steady), having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His. And let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (KJV). “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it” (Psalms 127:1, NKJV). This foundation is unshakable. All that is built on man will eventually crumble and fall like the walls of Jericho. The shakable is temporary; the unshakable is permanent. We read in Heb. 12:28, “Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved (unshakable), let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (KJV).

Yes, Abraham “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God” (KJV). And we look for a city (a dwelling place in the Spirit) that shall not pass away, “For here (in this temporal) we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come” (Heb. 13: 14, NKJV).

In Rom. the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter and 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> verses, Paul encourages us to serve the Lord with diligence and with a fervent spirit, to rejoice in hope, to be patient in tribulation and to continue steadfastly in prayer.

In Lamentations 3:21-26 & 31-33, we see that although Jeremiah was downcast due to all the destruction in Jerusalem, he had not lost hope. “This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul, therefore I hope in Him! The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord” (NKJV). Then in verses 31-33, “For the Lord will not cast off forever. Though He causes grief, He will show compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men” (NKJV).

We see at the beginning of the book of Habakkuk that the prophet is distressed at why the chosen people of God were so oppressed by their enemies. He questioned God and wondered why a just God would allow so much injustice and God answered Habakkuk. And at the end of the book the prophet finds peace in his own heart and

understands that God is completely in control. This is what we read in Habakkuk 3: 17-19, "Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls – yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength; he will make my feet like deer's feet, and he will make me walk on my high hills" (NKJV).

Paul says in 1 Cor. 13: 13, "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (NKJV). I cannot help but believe that all three are important and are all dependent upon each other. If we lose hope, can faith and love really flourish in our lives? Similarly, if one of the others is absent, there will be incompleteness and a void in our walk

with God. Even in the natural, hope keeps us going; it helps us get up each morning and it sustains us as we do our daily tasks. If this is true in the natural, how much more it should be true in the Spiritual. We have much to hope for. The night is far spent and the dawning of the new day is on the horizons of time and eternity. Darkness is only the absence of light. Darkness is no match for light. In the presence of light darkness flees. There is no struggle, for it has no option. Let each one of us be the light that dispels darkness. John 1: 4 says, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it" (NKJV).

The only hope of degenerate man in his degenerate state is in the flesh. He hopes in the material; in riches and the intellect; in physical strength and

armaments and in fame and the pleasures of sin for a season. This hope is built on the shifting sands of the transitory; that which is here today and gone tomorrow. That which is built on carnality will never satisfy the inner longings of the heart of man. The flesh will fail him as it has done through the centuries.

Regenerate man, on the other hand, has his hope built on a solid foundation, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. His hope is that He (Christ) will increase and he will decrease, so much so that the indwelling Christ will transform him into the nature and image of Christ, his Savior, even by the renewing of his mind. What a hope we have in Christ; a hope that will be reality as He bestows upon His people the full and complete salvation for which He gave His life.

# Members in Particular

*By Markus Hansen*

As we endeavour to be led by the Holy Spirit, God continues to enlighten our hearts with a greater understanding of His plan and purpose for the redemption of sinful man. Since the outpouring of His Holy Spirit in 1948 God has been moving us on. He has been revealing little by little, His order, His blue print for the coming together of the Body of Christ. Like a rose as it unfolds from a bud into a beautiful flower, God has been showing us more and more of His great plan of redemption. How our hearts leap for joy when God shines His light upon us allowing us to understand and know more about His truths.

The coming together of the Body of Christ is a tremendous truth that plays an essential part in God's plan for the end times. It culminates in an event prophesied by Daniel; "But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." (Daniel 7:18.) Glory to God, praise the Lord, "the saints of the most High SHALL take the kingdom." Hallelujah. It is an event that shall take place and we anxiously await the fulfillment of this prophecy. Until this does happen, God will continue to teach us of His ways and unveil His truths if we continue to seek Him. One specific aspect of the teaching of the coming

together of the Body of Christ is that we are members in **particular** of the Body of Jesus Christ. It is a subject that God is helping us to understand more and is worthy of our earnest consideration.

Let us begin looking into this subject by turning to the word of God. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 12: 13-14: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many."

The New Living Translation uses these words: "The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up only one body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into Christ's body by one Spirit, and we have all received the same Spirit."

It is important to understand that God never intended for Christians to be divided into the many sectarian groups or factions we see in the world today. Jesus said, and if He said it, we as Christians must believe it: "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And **other**

**sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.**" (John 10: 14-16.) There are millions of sincere Christians in the world today but not all have had the same spiritual enlightenment. Many are satisfied with being born again, but do not feel to be baptized in water. Some are satisfied with both being born again and being baptized in water but do not believe or see the need to be filled by the Holy Spirit. But there are those who want all that God has to Offer. Glory to God. They have been born again from above, went under the waters of baptism, have been filled with the Holy Spirit, speak in the heavenly language, have had spiritual gifts imparted and still they hunger and thirst for more. Regardless of the level of spiritual experience, every man, woman or child who repents of their sins, accepts Jesus Christ as their personal saviour is a member of the Body of Christ. This may be a surprise to many but the scripture is very clear on this subject. That is why we must be so very careful that we do not think less of, or judge Christians who may or may not fellowship with us.

Yes, God's plan for the future is that all may be **ONE** in Him. However, until this is realized, Christ expects us to walk

in the light that God has shed on our hearts. Let God take care of all believers wherever they are in their walk and relationship with Him and let us continue to press on into our calling and election. “Wherefore the rather, brethren, **give diligence to make your calling and election sure**: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (II Peter 1:10-11.)

Returning to I Corinthians 12: 13-14, notice that it says: “we have all received the same Spirit.” It is the Spirit of God that draws us to Him and it is the Spirit of God that has opened our hearts to this present truth of the coming together of the Body of Christ. It is the Spirit of God alone that has drawn us and imparts faith for us to believe the revelation of the coming together of the Body of Christ. We should thank God sincerely, every day, for His grace and the Holy Spirit for opening our eyes to this wonderful truth.

The Apostle Paul concisely writes in I Corinthians 12:27: “**Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.**”

That is a wonderful statement. Paul didn't say that only the travelling elders and deacons or the local elders and deacons are members in particular. He said YOU, yes YOU are a member in particular. Whoever you are, and wherever you are as you read this, please realize with all certainty that if you have accepted Jesus Christ into your hearts and are endeavouring to walk by the Holy Spirit, **YOU** are a **particular** member of Christ's Body, you are a son of God! “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Romans 8:14.) Oh Hallelujah. Yes, YOU are **particular** to God, not just some insignificant number amongst the masses of humanity. You are known to God. He knows you personally and He has called you to be His son. God has called you by your name and you responded, glory to God. Moses reminded the nation of Israel before they crossed over into the promised land: “For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a **peculiar people** unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.” (Deuteronomy 14:2.) Yes, a peculiar people, a special people. In the New Testament, Peter reminded the Church: “But you are a chosen

generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a **peculiar people**; that you should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (I Peter 2:9.) But Paul takes it to a more personal level when he says, “**you are a particular member of the Body of Christ.**” Oh Hallelujah, this is something to shout about - just to think that God, who created everything that exists, has called us out of a life of sin, given us eternal life and ultimately considers us to be a special, peculiar and **particular** people unto Himself.

It is wonderful to know that we are loved and that we are special. We often tell our children and grandchildren that we love them and that they are special. They love to hear it too, even though we repeat it over and over again. I love to hear my wife tell me that she loves me, and I like to remind my wife that I love her, too. Even as we have been reading in the scriptures that we are special in God's sight, the Holy Spirit has been bearing witness in our hearts that this is true. Amen. That is why it is so important to read the word of God, and attend our local services on Sunday mornings. We need to continually hear the Lord tell us, whether it is by the reading of the word or prophecy, that He loves us and that we are special. But beyond being loved by God, and just as important, is the fact that we are a **particular** member of the Body of Christ. This is significant because being a **particular** member implies that we have a purpose, a God given purpose in His Kingdom. Hallelujah, praise the wonderful name of Jesus.

In the natural realm, people who do not have a purpose in life often suffer from depression, feelings of worthlessness and low self-esteem. Often they are not successful in holding a job and drift from one position to another. In extreme cases it can even result in people taking their lives as they lose their reason for living. Very sad but true. But when we find what our aptitudes are, and do the thing that God has enabled us to do, whether it is being a carpenter, an at home mom, a secretary, teacher or doctor, or whatever, then at the end of the day we have a feeling of accomplishment and self worth. We have a reason for living that gives us hope for the future and motivation to launch out and aspire to realize our dreams and goals. This is well pleasing unto God but do we realize that we also have a spiritual purpose as well? We do, because being a **particular**

member implies that we have a **particular** purpose or vocation to fulfill in the Body of Christ.

The Apostle Paul in his writings compared the human body to the Body of Christ. “The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up only one body. So it is with the body of Christ.” (I Corinthians 12:12, New Living Translation.) Our human body is composed of many thousands of individual parts and each individual part has an important part to play in how we function as a human being. If just one part ceases to function we can be in a lot of trouble in a hurry. Take as an example your right knee. If it were crushed in an accident your ability to walk in a normal manner would be hindered. That in turn may mean that you would be unable to carry out certain routine functions in your job or play with your children like you are accustomed. You can say that your right knee is a particular member in your human body. Your right knee has a particular function, it has a specific purpose and when it functions as it is supposed to, you feel just fine. But, when it does not function, as it should, your whole body suffers. Your whole body feels the effect and it is not a good feeling. The same can be said about all the parts of our body. When any one part ceases to work as it should, we might say that we are not whole. Something is missing, something is wrong. And when some of our body parts fail to operate in the manner they are designed we suffer and become disabled.

Looking now from a spiritual point of view as it relates to the Body of Christ, Paul said that the Body of Christ is like the human body, made up of many parts. And, each of us is a part of that Body of Christ; “For the body is not one member, but many” verse 14. Not only are we individual members of His Body but we are given by God a specific part to play, a particular job, a particular ministry in the Body of Christ. “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it has pleased him” verse 18. Our particular place in the Body of Christ is not of our choosing. It is not something we decide. God help us to understand this very important point because it is so essential to the health and welfare of the Body of Christ. We do not choose our ministry or office; it is God who gives us certain natural abilities to suit our personality and He is the one that imparts spiritual gifts.

*“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, - - - But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”* (Ephesians 4:1,7.) It is wonderful to have a vocation, a particular field of interest in which we can excel. Being trained and knowledgeable in a particular vocation gives us confidence to be able to carry out our responsibilities. But we also have a spiritual vocation, a **particular** ministry in the Body of Christ and it needs our attention as well.

By prophecy and the laying on of the hands of the travelling and local elders (the presbytery), God imparts His spiritual gifts to us. We are also born with certain natural gifts and talents. It is the combination of our Spiritual Gifts (which can only operate by the Holy Spirit) and our natural talents, yielded and operating under the auspices of the Holy Spirit, that forms our ministry, our spiritual vocation. We have heard many times when the brethren have prophesied over someone that the Spirit of God imparts not only some of the spiritual gifts but also mention is made of the individual’s natural talents and abilities that will be used of the Lord. It may have happened to you. Besides being given spiritual gifts the brethren under the unction of the Holy Spirit may have said that you will sing before the Lord or teach, be given to hospitality, be one who shows mercy, or be a cheerful giver. It may not have been a surprise to you if you were already aware of your natural abilities. What is important to realize is that when we yield our natural talents and abilities to the Holy Spirit, as well as operate our spiritual gifts under the unction of the Holy Spirit, then we are ministering in our particular place in the Body of Christ. *“And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it.”* (Colossians 4:17.) Hence Paul wrote that we are members in **particular**, because each ministry is unique to the Body of Christ.

Since each member of the Body of Christ is unique, and has a particular purpose, then each member of the Body of Christ needs all the other members of the Body of Christ, for one member can not function on its own. The reasoning behind this truth is that in the human body each part depends upon all the parts of the body functioning as they should. My hands perform a very important

function as I write this article. It enables me to type efficiently and quickly. Now if my hands were severed from each arm, they would die and cease to be of any value. **THEY CAN NOT FUNCTION ON THEIR OWN!** They depend on the wrist, the elbow, the shoulder, the connecting bones, the tendons, the muscles, the blood flowing through veins, the heart to pump blood and on and on. All these parts mentioned make it possible for my hands to type, none being more important than the other. *“Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, “I do not need you.” The head can’t say to the feet, “I do not need you.” In fact, some of the parts that seem weakest and least important are really the most necessary.”* (1 Corinthians 12:21-22, NLT).

It is foolhardy to think that our ministry is more special than another’s, or that we play a more important role than another’s in the Body of Christ. **Many very talented men and women have missed the way when they have given in to these kinds of thoughts.** *“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to everyman 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 everyman the measure of faith.”* (Romans 12:3.) That is why there will never be a chief apostle, a head elder or deacon, a chief musician or teacher in the Church of God. Yes, God has established certain offices in the Church; travelling apostolic brethren to the universal level and local elders and deacons in the local Church who we must honour, respect and obey. They are set by God, and for good reason, we need them. They are shepherds or fathers to the Church: *“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; **For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which***

*every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”* (Ephesians 4:11-16, KJV.) And in the New Living Translation: *“He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. **Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ, until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ.”***

**It is equally essential to realize that our particular ministry is as important to those who have been designated a certain office of authority in the Church as their ministry is to us.** My heart, as vital as it is to my human body, can do nothing, **ABSOLUTELY NOTHING**, without all other members of my body functioning as they should. Our very spiritual existence depends upon that life flowing stream that flows from member to member.

There should be no pride in recognizing that we are a **particular** member of the Body of Christ. When we come to this realization, we will know and understand that we need every other **particular** member of the Body of Christ for their uniqueness and what they contribute to the furtherance of God’s Kingdom.

Paul in giving instructions to the Church in regards to partaking of the Lord’s supper wrote this: *“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep (or die).”* (1 Corinthians 11:28, KJV). The phrase “not discerning the Lord’s Body” has often been explained to mean that anyone that partakes of the Lord’s supper irreverently is not recognizing individual members as being equally important to the Body of Christ. Yes, this is true but it has an even deeper meaning. It also means that he does not fully recognize his own uniqueness, the important part that he plays in the Body of Christ and his dependence on all members of the Body of Christ.

When we fail to function in our ministry, miss our local Sunday services

for trivial reasons, neglect our personal worship time, become slack about tithing and head covering becomes a bother, etc. we are showing that we really do not understand that all the members of the Body of Christ **TRULY** need us and that we **TRULY** need them. When this attitude creeps in Paul says “*many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep (or die).*” This is a very sobering thought. We can all think of those in our local assembly that are suffering from an illness or some weakness in not being able to overcome a bad habit. Yes we pray for these dear saints, and we should continue to do so, but also it is incumbent upon us all to look to the Author and Finisher of our faith and ask HIM to help us to be faithful in the ministry that He has given us so that we can supply that stream of life from the Eternal One to each member.

It is expedient that we search our hearts and ask the critical question: Are we fulfilling our spiritual vocation in the Body of Christ? If given the gift of prophecy, are you prophesying in the local assembly when prompted by the Holy Spirit? Or has it been some time since you obeyed the Holy Spirit's prompting? If you were told that you would sing in the Spirit have you been standing ready to sing when the heavenly choir begins to sing? Or, have months gone by and your voice hasn't been heard in spiritual song? If given the gift of hospitality, are you inviting folks into your home and making them feel welcome? Has the Holy Spirit indicated that you would exhort the people of God

or that you would be an intercessor, or one to show mercy to the downtrodden? You know your gifts, you know your spiritual vocation. Paul writing to Timothy wrote: “*Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*” (2 Timothy 1:6,7.) How do we stir up the gift of God? By waiting on God, reading His word and speaking in the heavenly language until we become lost in the Spirit. Hallelujah. Glory to God! There is no need to go to Bible College, no need to attend classes to learn how to prophesy or take professional singing lessons to sing a new song in the Spirit. God has given us gifts to edify, comfort and build up the Church. All we need to do is seek the One who gave us our gifts, God the Eternal One. Since God is the one who gave us our gifts, He is the one who will help us to exercise our gifts for the welfare of His Church. “*The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.*” (Romans 10:8.) There is no doubt that if you sincerely seek God about your gifts, God will in turn give you the faith and the power to function in your ministry.

If you have not received your gifts I admonish you to wait on God and ask Him to reveal them to you. Also tell your elders that you haven't been prophesied over and that you are looking to the Lord for that blessing. It is vital to know your spiritual gifts as it will allow you to function to the full potential that God has

intended.

I believe with all my heart that if we do ask the question sincerely, AM I FUNCTIONING IN MY MINISTRY, and if we come up short, then we can rededicate our lives afresh now and God will send His Holy Spirit to help us.

“*From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*” (Ephesians 4:16.) Yes, Hallelujah, by what “**EVERY JOINT SUPPLIES,**” not just those who hold an office or the ones that have walked with God for many years, but by what “**EVERY JOINT SUPPLIES.**”

Saints of God, the one-man ministry is a thing of the past. Everyone has a place and a ministry to fulfill in the Church of the Living God, the body of Christ. Let us by the help of the Holy Spirit endeavour to do our part. AMEN.

When you're moving Lord, move in me,

When you're moving Lord, help me to see,

That I'm part of the plan, that you have made for man,

When you're moving Lord, move in me.

I'll be here shining like a beacon in the nighttime,

Holy Spirit set your guiding light on me,

That my heart may be a blessing in this lifetime,

'Til we're united on that day of Jubilee.

# A Chosen Generation, a Royal Priesthood, an Holy Nation

*by Albert Hannigan*

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9.)

A chosen people - What a privilege to be called and chosen of God. It is hard to understand why you or I should have been chosen of God out of the many in the world. Why should He choose to

reveal the tremendous truths of the Kingdom of God to such as you and I.

In speaking of the children of Israel in Duet. 7:6-8, He said "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth."

Why should we be chosen, for we are no better than anyone else. However it is

God that does the choosing, and not us. "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people; But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers."

In 1 Cor. 1:26-31, "For ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many

mighty, not many noble are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise: and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; And the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are:

That no flesh should glory in his Presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That as it is written, He that glorioth, let him glory in the Lord."

Praise God that He is the one to receive all the glory for He alone is worthy. If we do anything, we realize that we are but unprofitable servants, we have just done that which is our duty to do. Without Him we can do nothing, but we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Praise His Name!

Eph. 1:3 and 4, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blest us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Christ Jesus to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

James 2:5 "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"

What a tremendous privilege to be called and chosen to God, not only to receive salvation, and be washed in the blood, but also share in the blessings of His Kingdom, to share in His calling to Sonship. We are exhorted to give diligence to make our calling and election sure, for if ye do these things you shall never fall, (2 Peter 1:10.)

May God help us not to remain as spiritual babes, but rather that by His grace we will grow and mature...Jesus said, "Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48) Paul said "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man PERFECT in Christ Jesus." (Col. 1:28) It will not be by our own strength and wisdom that we can become perfect, but only as the 'Perfect One' fully

dwells within us.

Royalty - a royal priesthood. Royalty speaks of kingship or rulership. 2 Tim 2:12 says - "If we suffer we shall also reign with him." The natural man loves the idea of rulership, power, authority. To be number one. Pride can enter into it. But it will be the humble and the lowly that will reign with Him in His kingdom. For He has taken the things that are not to bring to nought the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His Presence. "But of him are ye in Christ, Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption: That according as it is written He that glorioth, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Cor. 1:30-31).

Rev. 1:5,6 —"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and forever. Amen."

He hath made us to be heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. The only way that we can ever reign with Him is that He be fully formed within us. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5) "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (Rom 8:17).

Moses had to be on the back side of the desert for forty years before he was able to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt to the promised land.

Joseph had to suffer the reproaches of his own brothers, be sold as a slave into Egypt, be falsely accused of fornication, and suffer in a dungeon as a criminal before he was finally vindicated. But, praise God, after that he entered into rulership in Egypt, next to the king. And he was instrumental in saving many lives, including those of his own brothers.

The difficulties and trials we go through do more good for us than the good times. If we suffer, and take it patiently, it is then that we grow spiritually. It is then that we have compassion for others.

David was pursued by Saul, though he had done nothing wrong. He was only striving to do that which was right. He showed tremendous respect and honor to the Lord's anointed, and would not harm Saul when he had every opportunity to do so. Daniel and the three Hebrew

children rose to great authority in the land because they were faithful to God. Shadrach, Meechach and Abednego could most surely have perished in the fire. Daniel could have perished at the mouths of the hungry lions, but God closed their mouths.

Do not all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose. How we thank God for revealing the order of His glorious Kingdom, where God is over all, and where Christ and His Body, the Church, function in their ministry of love and reconciliation to the world. What a glorious calling, to serve and bring deliverance to this groaning creation. Halalujah!

### **A Royal Priesthood**

Jesus is our Great High Priest. The office of a priest is to bridge the gap between God and man, and that is exactly what Jesus has done. He has reconciled us unto God. He has made it possible for us to become ONE with the Father and the Son, and He has sent the Holy Spirit to lead us into all Truth. The work that Jesus our High Priest has done is but a pattern and example for us, the Body of Christ, to follow. We as the members of the Body of Christ have the unspeakable privilege of reaching out to God, on one hand, and reaching out to the fallen creation on the other hand, and reconciling them the one to the other.

God has given to the members of the Body of Christ gifts and ministries whereby we can together with our Head lift this groaning creation. That ministry is to "Heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to open the prison doors, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19)

Is not the whole creation longing for the deliverance in Christ Jesus? "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of the strongholds [of the enemy.]" (2 Cor. 10:4) Christ overcame at Calvary, through the shedding of His precious blood, and also when He rose up from the dead, triumphant over death and hell and the grave. And us as His Body, by faith, we share in that victory. Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20)

No longer do we live unto ourselves, "Forevery high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God," (Heb. 5:1) Jesus said. "He that is greatest among you will be your servant." (Matt 23:11) It is the anointing from the Anointed One that breaks and destroys the yoke. What a privilege and blessing to behold the working of the power of the Holy Spirit through the members of the Body of Christ and to see the chains fall off from those who are bound and to see them set free. That is what God is doing and as we press on with Him we will see this happen more and more. Praise God!

**An Holy Nation**

God desires a people who are holy and without blame before Him in love. Only as we lose our identity in Him can we become a holy people. Rom. 13:14, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof."

1 Thess. 3:12,13--"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."

Eph. 1:4-5 — "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

Eph. 5:27 — "That he might present unto himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Col. 1:21-23 "And you that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.

In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard."

1 Peter 1:13-16, -"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

Holy is the Lord, and mighty is his name, King of heaven, yet down to earth He came,

Angels sing His praise, all earth shall do the same,

Holy is the Lord and mighty is His name.

O God cause that we as your people might truly be that Chosen Generation, that Royal Priesthood, an Holy Nation, for your honor and your glory. AMEN

**Your brother in Christ -  
Albert Hannigan.**

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**RETIREMENT**

It is with our sincere love and thanks that we, as brethren, extend our blessings in the Lord to our dear brothers Peter Siemens, Gilbert Price and Jerome Cornell on their retirement from the active duties of Travelling Elders and Directors to the church.

We express our appreciation to you brethren for the many times we have been privileged to travel and minister with you, to the Body of Christ. The desire that has been in your hearts to expound upon the Word of God, to teach, to prophesy, to pray and to sing has been welcomed by all. We are confident that your ministries will continue to be a blessing in your local assemblies.

It is our desire that you and your dear wives will enjoy regained health and strength. Their contribution, along with yours, has been a great value to the church. The long years of self sacrifice and dedication is not without its reward.

May He, who has brought you this far, guide you as together we "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

**God bless you all.  
Your fellow brethren in Christ.**

The Sharon Star is a monthly paper, published and mailed out on the free-will offering plan, as a medium of information for all who are interested in the unfolding revelation of the Word of God.

Published by Sharon Children's Homes and Schools, Box 878, North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada, S9A 2Z3.

Sharon Star on line [www.thesharonstar.org](http://www.thesharonstar.org)  
Office (306) 445-2733.

Publications Mail Agreement 40012206