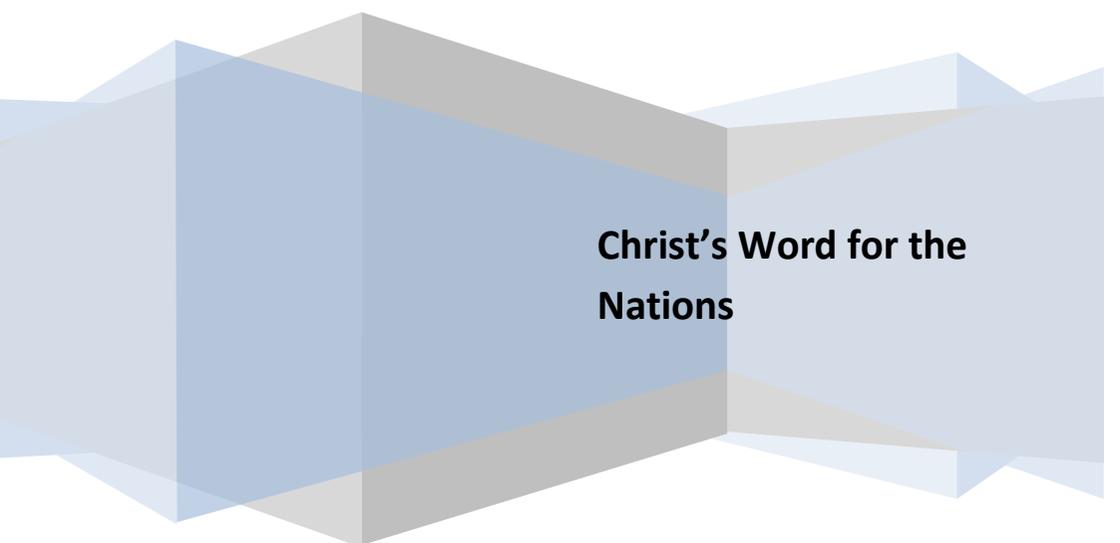


1. THE INDWELLING FATHER
*the High-Priestly prayer of
Jesus*

2. THE INDWELLING CHRIST
the teaching of Paul

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**Christ's Word for the
Nations**

Preface

I can vividly recall preparing a Bible study in June 2013 on this amazing chapter in John's Gospel. I was staying in the home of Eduardo and Jane, a missionary couple from Brazil who work in a church in Albania where I have taught for the past ten years. The church was founded by my friend Najua Diba who is also from Brazil. This amazing missionary spent some time in our church in Smethwick as she prepared for cross-culture mission before attending Pristina University in Kosovo – she is a wonderful evangelist talking about Jesus to people she meets; where ever she happens to be. Najua with others was one of the first missionaries to enter the country of Albania which had been under the control of a communist dictator called Enver Hoxha since the Second World War; he declared the nation totally atheistic. When the country was eventually opened to the outside world, there were only a very few Christians remaining there.

On my first visit to Albania we met in an old dilapidated building, but my attention was fixed on a number of young people in the meeting; I resolved to put aside a message I had prepared to share my own experience of coming to the Lord Jesus as a child and my testimony of the Lord's dealings with me throughout my teenage years and beyond. I gave an appeal for people to give their lives to Jesus. Immediately these young people rushed forward and knelt down at the front of the meeting. Today they are the backbone of the church and in key leadership roles. Of course, they are very special to me and I to them.

Introduction

Before Jesus begins His prayer, John reminds us of those things which He had spoken immediately preceding that this prayer conversation with His

Father – His teaching about Father, the vine and the Holy Spirit. This chapter reveals to us the divine Sonship of Jesus Christ. It is not stated as such but it is clearly revealed in Jesus' conversation – just in the way He speaks to His Father, the things He says to Him and the way in which he views Himself in relationship to Father. This is true of course regarding all of His conversations to the disciples about His Father in John's Gospel. Father does not respond in vocal conversation, but it is clearly understood by those who are listening to these conversations that Father is engaged with every word His Son speaks. Let me illustrate this from an incident which took place in my home many years ago. We had a man of God staying with us; about 3.30 a.m. one morning I got up and was walking along the landing from our bedroom when I heard an animated conversation taking place in the bedroom of the man of God. I was taken aback and curious; I tip-toed to the bedroom door of my friend who continued to talk aloud to a person who was present with him in the room. The fact was that there was not another human person with him! He was talking to God and holding a conversation with Him. I know he was talking to God because I know what a conversation with a person sounds like. It was the same with those who witnessed this prayer conversation of Jesus with His Father. They had no doubts about Father's presence and His listening as Jesus spoke to Him.

Where did this conversation take place and who was present to hear Jesus? This prayer preceded Jesus' agonised prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (John has chosen to omit any account of Gethsemane). The prayer of intercession follows Jesus' teaching about the Holy Spirit and would have been witnessed by the disciples of Jesus who had been with Him in the Upper Room. He prayed to Father in the presence of His disciples. Some commentators believe that Jesus left the Upper Room and was making His way to the Garden when He prayed His High-Priestly Prayer. It would seem like that because we read that Jesus raised His eyes to heaven as if He was about to pray before an open sky. If this is true then His path would have

been illuminated by the Passover moon. I imagine a moon shining upon Jesus as He lifts His eyes heavenward to Father but I see a moon suddenly hidden by dark storm clouds as He entered the Garden of His agony.

The first thing which I want to affirm in John ch.17 is the divine Sonship of Jesus demonstrated in His living relationship with His Father. The second thing I want to emphasise is the teaching (which originates with Jesus), of “the indwelling God.” This is demonstrated and displayed in the context of triune fellowship and is now extended to include redeemed men and women. This is the over-riding subject of Jesus’ High-Priestly prayer. This truth of indwelling is fully developed in the teaching of Paul to become his central paradigm for a Christ-centred experience. It is because of this that I have extended my essay to include Paul’s understanding of Christ’s indwelling the Christian which begins of course by a genuine new birth.

I would also say that this prayer not only demonstrates Jesus’ divine sonship but also His humanity; the fact that He was a human person. John had declared at beginning of his Gospel the truth of Jesus’ incarnation, “He became flesh and dwelled among us” (Jn.1:14). The first evidence of this is found in the opening verse of ch.17, where we read that Jesus lifted His eyes to heaven. Father is located in heaven while Jesus is located on earth. By taking flesh the attribute of omnipresence no longer is part of His experience. His human personhood precludes Him being present everywhere at the same time. He is confined to a body just like us. The second evidence of this is found in v5, where Jesus prays for Himself *as a man* to experience the glory of triune fellowship that He had enjoyed prior to His incarnation and prior to the creation of the world. He is praying that as a man He will be glorified which took place in His exaltation. The saying is true “that we have a man at God’s right hand.” In His exaltation as a human person, he is lifted into deity. I believe this is the correct understanding of this verse because it fits exactly into the rest of Jesus’ prayer. I quote from

Bishop Henley Moule who paraphrases this verse: "Give me now that exaltation in My Human Nature; let Me be *"the Son of Man* at the right hand of God," upon "the throne of God *and of the Lamb.*" Jesus seeks for the glorification of His human person and later seeks this same privilege for His disciples and those who are to follow. This prayer for future glorification took place in His exaltation to Father's right hand, an exaltation which was unique because He was the Son of God and because He had won salvation for men and women. The exaltation was Father's affirmation of that accomplishment; and then, as I have said it was the glorification of His human personhood and anticipated a rich harvest of souls who would be likewise glorified in their bodies and in their humanity; men and women with redeemed bodies fitting them to dwell eternally with God in triune fellowship. Our bodies await this ultimate reality; the glorious conclusion of salvation which began with the regeneration of our heart. The Writer to the Hebrews describes Jesus' exaltation but begins with His coming in God's strategic timing and describes Jesus' divine credentials and the fact that He is God's final and complete word to humanity. His description of the Person of the incarnate Christ is beautiful, profound and theological: *"Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, **when He had purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high**" (Heb.1:3).*

A further recurring emphasis on the glory of God is prominent in the prayer of Jesus which must therefore engage our attention. I have often defined glory as the outshining of God's inner nature and attributes.

This pamphlet consists of two parts: (1) "The Indwelling God" which is an exposition of Jesus' High Priestly Prayer (Jn.ch.17); and (2) "The Indwelling Christ" which is an exposition of Paul's primary teaching regarding Christ indwelling the Christian.

1. The Indwelling Father

THE HIGH-PRIESTLY PRAYER OF JESUS: JOHN 14:10, 20, 23; 15:5; 17:21-23, 26

Even Jesus Himself could not live without being indwelt by Father, “Jesus gave them this answer: *“I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by Himself; He can do only what He sees the Father doing” (5:19)*; and again: *“Of Myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear; and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please Myself but Him who sent Me” (5:30)*. Jesus lived His life by the indwelling Father.

Jesus teaches His disciples about Father’s indwelling, *“Do you not believe that **I am in the Father, and the Father in Me**? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but **the Father who dwells in Me** does the works. Believe Me that **I am in the Father and the Father in Me**, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves” (14:10, 11)*. Three times He speaks of His being indwelt by Father, and twice He speaks of indwelling the Father in the space of two verses!

Jesus speaks a third time about indwelling Father and our indwelling Christ and His indwelling us, *“At that day you will know that **I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you” (v20)***.

Jesus speaks of the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son in us, *“Jesus answered and said to him, **“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him” (v23)***.

Jesus made it clear that we could not live the Christian life without being indwelled by Father, *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing” (15:5).*

Jesus’ High-Priestly prayer comes to a conclusion with a final prayer for unity among brothers and sisters which is synonymous with indwelling, *“That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me” (Jn.17:21-23).* For Jesus equality with God is not “something to be grasped” (Phil.2:6 NASV/ESV); or even held onto. He was God: *We are one.*” He speaks of himself with Father as “Us.”

The final reference to indwelling refers to love, *“And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them” (v26).* Love is God and God is love. Paul writes, *“because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Rom.5:5).* In the love of God is the indwelling of both Father and Son; the indwelling is only possible through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the heart.

The above references all refer to “indwelling” – the mutual indwelling of Father and Son and the prayer of Jesus that we also enter into a similar experience of oneness together with triune God as Jesus enjoys with Father (Ch.17:11, 21). Indwelling is also envisaged by Jesus as taking place between the “men You have given Me,” and “Us” referring to both Father and Son. The mutual indwelling of the first and second Persons of the trinity is envisioned by Jesus as extending to us!

What does Jesus mean by saying, *“that they may be one, as we are one”* (v11)? Father and Son are one because the Scriptures state that God is one – three in one; as the hymn writer states it, “God in three Persons, blessed trinity!” There is one God, but there are three Persons in the Godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is not unity in diversity, but unity in oneness. Experimentally they are one by mutual indwelling. Another word used by Jesus to describe this indwelling is “abiding.” We have found a place of abiding in God resulting from Jesus departing from His disciples to go to the cross. Jesus said I go to prepare an abiding place for you. In My Father’s house there are many “abiding places.” This brings great assurance to our heart because Jesus has provided an eternal abiding place for us in the heavens. Our future lies secure in the bosom of God, *“In my Father’s house are many abiding places: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also”* (Jn.14:2. 3).

Jn.ch.17 begins, *“These words spoke Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven.”* This statement would suggest that Jesus literally lifted up His eyes to the skies and that He had left the upper room and was walking to the Garden in the company of His eleven disciples.

He looks *towards* (πρός) Father (v1). John used this same preposition at the very beginning of his letter (1:1), he says in the first verse: *“In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with (πρός) **God**, and the **Word** was **God**. **He** was in the beginning with **God**”* (Jn.1:1-2). (ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος). Here is an indication of the divinity of the Word; note how the difference in word order between the first and second clauses serves to accentuate “God” (or “divine”). Here also we find the idea that while the Son is distinct from the Father, yet there is fellowship between them, for the preposition πρὸς does not connote merely physical proximity

to the Father, but an intimacy of fellowship as well (the preposition πρὸς appears again in 17:1).

Thus, Jesus recollects the intimate relationship that characterized their fellowship together before creation, “*And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was*” (Jn.17:5). Jesus cannot envisage any glory apart from intimacy and union with Father. He addressed these words to His Father, to whom He speaks to with intimacy and love - “*Yourself.*”

Glory is the outshining of the inner essence or being of God. Here it is described by Jesus as the glory resulting from the Father indwelling His Son. It is the glorious outcome of the Son in communion with the Father *prior* to Jesus leaving heavens glory. Jesus had not yet become incarnate; in fact Jesus had not yet made the world. The glory of God was further manifested in the life of Jesus; shown to us through His humanity and not His deity. His divine nature shines through His human nature in all his dealing with men and women. He was the firstborn son of Mary, “*And she brought forth her firstborn son*” (Lk.2:7; see also Rom.1:3); but He was also the first begotten Son of Father in His incarnation (Heb.1:5). He is also the first begotten from the dead by His resurrection (Rom.1:4; Col.1:18; Rev.1:5). We may therefore speak of the resurrection as His second “*begetting*” - His second birth. As sinful men and women we experience a second birth. Our first birth brought us into sin and our second birth brings into righteousness. Our sinful life is replaced by a glorious resurrection life by the power of God.

This prayer of Jesus cannot be understood except in the light of the imminent betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus. We are shown this in the constant references by Jesus to God’s timing; suggesting that according to God’s calendar things are coming to a head and that Jesus is deeply conscious of this. He says, “*the hour is come*” and He is referring to the

sufferings of the cross which lie before Him. In the Gospel of John the main instances where He refers to his “hour” are found in the following verses:

1) *“Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come” (Jn.7:30).*

2) *“Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come” (8:20).*

3) *“And Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified” (12:23).*

4) *“Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour” (12:27)*

Following His “High-Priestly” prayer He speaks to His three disciples in the Garden, *“Sleep on now the hour is come;”* He says, *“Let this hour pass from Me;”* and then He says, *“This is your hour.”* He then faced the hour of His trials and scourging followed by His hours of suffering on the cross.

The glory of God is a recurring theme in Jesus’ prayer. If we look back at the glory of God associated with the tabernacle it was symbolized by the cloud and the fire - the outward tokens and evidences of *the abiding presence of God* in the Holy of Holies. We may associate this abiding presence of God as inactive, unmoving, or perhaps passive; but this is far from the truth. God has indeed taken up residency there, “between the cherubim” but this does not mean that He is not fully focused on the needs of His people. He is the one who neither slumbers nor sleeps. You will recall that Mount Sinai was on fire due to the presence of the LORD. God’s presence is ALIVE with burning reciprocating love, loud praises, adoration and worship. The interrelating of the three Persons represents a fellowship of interactive

devotion and tenderness. I do believe that this was in the mind of Jesus as He contemplated the prospect of an eternity of divine contentment and joy.

The one appointed Day in God's calendar when the High-Priest was commanded to enter the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle was called the Day of Atonement, when blood was taken from a bowl and sprinkled on the mercy seat, thus anticipating the appointed hour of Jesus' atonement for the sins of the world.

To shed His own blood for a sacrifice for our sins Jesus had to leave the glory of heaven's fellowship and come as a babe into our humanity and live as a man among men. Of course He did not forfeit His deity (but He may well have veiled it)¹ – He is eternally God; the "I am" of John's Gospel. He was God as He walked in His humanity among "His own" who rejected Him (N.1:12). John declares the deity of Christ in the first chapter of his Gospel, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn.1:1)*. He glories in His divine sonship, in His new found humanity and His presence among them, *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (Jn.1:14)*.

In John ch.1:1 he speaks of the pre-existence of "the Word" (*λογος*) in fellowship with Father and he speaks of His deity as God. He then speaks of Him as sole creator of everything, *"All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (v3)*. He is also the original source and pattern of life, *"In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (v4)*.

¹ Charles Wesley writes: *"Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail the incarnate Deity."*

John gives to us the most simple, but complete statement concerning the incarnation of God's Son. It follows on from John's statement about the deity of Christ in v1. Having named the Son of God as the Word John states that the Word is God and then he speaks of the incarnation of the Word, *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (v14).*

As I stated earlier – the glory of God was manifested to His disciples *through* His humanity; the human nature of Jesus was not an impediment to the manifestation of His divine nature as the only begotten Son of the Father. God's nature shone through Jesus, His glory was undimmed by Jesus' humanity. The glory of God was manifested in His miracles - power was unlimited and unhindered in the ministry of Jesus and it was now accessible and available to those who would simply believe in Jesus. His coming meant that the needy and the poor could touch His garment and be healed!! The abused could weep before Him and find love and acceptance in His presence. However, that wonderful ministry had come to an end and now Jesus faces His final hour by engaging in prayer. We see clearly that Father's indwelling is purposeful: to reproduce through Jesus His own nature, and to manifest through Him His own power (Father is Almighty God!); and to accomplish through Jesus His sovereign will. Indwelling must 1) always be viewed from an interior perspective of love communicating and being reciprocated, and 2). Viewed from the perspective of God accomplishing His purposes through the one He indwells.

You may recall that God revealed to Moses the name of God which was LORD/Jehovah/YHWH; it was the embodiment of who He was in all His attributes, *but* this holy Name was also given to Moses at a strategic moment so that Moses could declare that name of the LORD before Pharaoh and all the evil powers of Egypt and perform mighty judgments in

that name. Similarly, the Lord comes to reveal Himself in us; to show to us His glorious nature in fellowship with us, but He also indwells us so that he can accomplish His will through our lives. He does this through indwelling. This is how he accomplished His mighty works in Jesus by indwelling Him. All power comes from here and all love originates in our fellowship together with Him.

Was there something that Jesus had forfeited or relinquished in order to come and to rescue our fallen creation? Why was Jesus looking back to a former time and a former glory? A possible solution to this question may be found by considering Paul's *κενοσις* teaching regarding the self-emptying of Christ, *"And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled (emptied) Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Phil.2:8).*

The incarnation of Jesus (1:14) enabled men and women to see the mirror image of God in the face of Jesus Christ, nevertheless there was a former condition that Jesus sought after – the glory of fellowship with Father alone.

Perhaps I have missed something, but I have made a straightforward statement which I believe is true. The experience of intimate love, the words that were spoken, the depths of divine worship, the adoration, and the tenderness was all part of their fellowship together – but who can begin to truly grasp what Jesus meant when He spoke those words of desire; reflecting back and recollecting those days of intimate fellowship before creation?

Perhaps we may draw a further analogy from the tabernacle. The short time of Jesus' sojourn on earth among humankind we may associate with the Holy Place where Levitical priests ministered to God 24/7 and the Holy of Holies we may associate with the High-priestly ministry of Jesus to Father that reached back into the past eternities of God. Suppose we imagine the

outer court as representing His ministry to the Jews and then perhaps we should view Jesus' leaving the tent of the tabernacle through the only opening in the perimeter fence facing eastwards to the unreached nations of the world. This took place after His death and resurrection when He commissioned His disciples, *"to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mk.16:15 see also Mat.28:19, 20; Acts 1:8). Without doubt, this was God's original plan in sending His Son, *"For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (Jn.3:16).

We must be careful not to overemphasize any possible change that may have taken place in the context of deity due to Jesus' incarnation. The creation of man entailed God in responsibilities and obligations to His creation. The deity is now functional in a new way. God not only creates the universe but He also sustains His creation. Resulting from the fall of our first parents God is faced with sin and the need for salvation. The only way of meeting the problem of sin in humanity entailed Christ's incarnation and death. Christ had to become a man in order to redeem men from their sin and to change their sinful nature. With divine foreknowledge the fall of humankind by sin and rebellion against God was known to Him and provided for by His divine love before the world's creation, resulting in Father sending His "only begotten Son" into the world, that the world through Him might be saved (Jn.3:16).

Jesus' desires for deepest intimacy with Father does not divert His attentive care for His beloved disciples who are to be separated from Him resulting from the resurrection and His ultimate departure to Father. Deep concerned love characterizes His prayers to Father for His own men (His first disciples include both men and women) who are individually Father's gift to Him. These precious gifts of disciples have been led into the pastures of God by their *"Shepherd who is the overseer of their souls"* (1Pet.2:25). In Jesus'

prayer conversation with Father He simply tells how He has shepherded His sheep, *“I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me”* (vv6-8).

Now Jesus petitions Father for these first disciples who are His gift from Father, but Jesus reminds Him that they are actually His! We are mutually owned by both Father and Son (Jn.10:28, 29). Due to the anticipated departure of Jesus He therefore prays to Father to keep His beloved disciples because, *“I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep through Your own name those whom You have given me, **that they may be one as we are**”* (v11). It is this oneness by indwelling that is the focus of our study.

The Bible replicates God’s clarity of statement, leaving us always without doubt about His teaching and will. This verse reminds me of Peter’s admonition, *“but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,”* (1Pet.1:15), this is a quotation from Lev.11:44, *“because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy”* (v16). The Bible is very clear that the holiness which must characterize our daily walk is no less than the Lord’s own holiness. And so here, when we read of our unity together, Jesus is speaking of a corresponding unity between Father and Son (v11). This oneness in God is not theoretical or theological, but the reality of the two Persons of the Godhead enjoying union in being and essence, in will and purpose, and in union of divine love. This union is founded on truth and holiness; it is a union of mind and heart and a mutual abandonment in worship on the part of each Person in the Godhead. Such inter-relationship between Father and Son is only made possible by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who is the third Person of this triune fellowship. This loving

interrelationship between the three divine Persons in the Godhead is later manifested in the interrelationship between the brothers and sisters in the early church and is called “fellowship” (Acts 2:38; 4:32). The wonder of wonders is that we also are seen to be included and to participate in this holy fellowship/communion with God and each other.

This prayer conversation of Jesus with Father pulsates with the utter devotion of Jesus for His Father. The replies of Father are unheard by us, but Father’s responsiveness to His Son’s irresistible prayers are surely answered. One is reminded of the LORD’S words concerning His servant Abraham, *“For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him”* (Gen.18:19).

Abraham found in His own “beloved son” submissive and obedient even unto death. Isaac’s sacrifice foreshadowed the future sacrifice of Jesus who similarly submitted Himself to His Father and to a life of self-emptying and complete obedience; even to the sacrificial death of the cross that “emptied Him of all but love, expressed in Charles Wesley’s hymn, *“And can it be that I should gain an interest in My Saviour’s blood,”*

*He left His Father’s throne above
So free, so infinite His grace—
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam’s helpless race:
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For O my God, it found out me!
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For O my God, it found out me!*

Jesus was not spared by the urgent cry of the delivering “Angel of the Lord” who delivered Isaac from death but was Himself eventually delivered unto the death of the cross. There was no provision of a lamb for Jesus – He was the Lamb provided by God. We have been redeemed, *“with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1Pet.1:19)*. The holiness of Christ was anticipated and prefigured in the Pascal lamb which had to be free from physical imperfections, *“Your lamb shall be without blemish” (Ex.12:5; Heb.9:14; 1Pet.1:19)*. The paschal lamb had to be observed for several days to show that it was “without blemish” (Ex.12:5); similarly Jesus’ holiness had to be proved through a life of obedience and trust. His faultless, sinless life qualified Him to suffer on our behalf. He experienced the crucified life before He was actually crucified.

After Jesus’ High-Priestly prayer was ended He proceeded immediately to a garden (18:1), where He was met by Judas His betrayer. John recorded the moment when Judas became possessed by satan (Jn.13:27). He is accompanied by a band of men from the chief priests and Pharisees. The following conversation takes place, which is as vivid to John as the time when it took place, *“Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, “Whom are you seeking?” They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I AM HE.” And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, “I AM HE,” they drew back and fell to the ground. Then He asked them again, “Whom are you seeking?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus answered, “I have told you that I AM HE. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,” (Jn.18:4-8)*.

Jesus is taken captive at His own will - Father’s Son will be abused, mocked and falsely charged and condemned, scourged and eventually crucified and killed. What a contrast to the holy intimacy of Jesus’ High-priestly prayer to Father which was concluded only a very short time before His arrest. Unlike

Jesus we have no awareness of future events. When it comes to omniscience we are devoid of such foreknowledge of immanent events. In these last days of Jesus it is clear from Scripture that He had full knowledge of impending circumstances, a knowledge He communicated to His troubled disciples to assure them that He was in control of events and circumstances (18:4). Despite Jesus' foreknowledge of Judas' betrayal this prayer of intimacy is unspoilt by such prior knowledge because the heart of Jesus was not troubled or fearful because His trust in Father removed all fear from His heart and prevented the intrusion of impending trials. However, in the Garden of Gethsemane the floodgates of evil were unleashed on Him. His peace shattered, His soul bowed down by crushing sorrow; He faced immediate death there in the Garden (Mat.26:37-38; Lk.22:43)! Such was the burden that fell upon Him that He sweats great drops of blood. God did not protect His Son from pain and suffering because of the immediate need of salvation. Father was deeply moved by the demeanour of His Son under deep provocation He endured with great fortitude His indescribable sufferings and never ceased to love those who abused Him and tortured Him.

With our Bible before our eyes, without the need for foreknowledge, we know well in hindsight the chronology of events related to these final hours of Jesus' life. I want you to return with me to Jesus' praying. My purpose is still to explore the words of Jesus because behind them there is a simple theology (simple to understand – but impossible to explain satisfactorily). I have referred to this teaching as “mutual indwelling.” This fellowship between the Father and Son is described by Jesus as “oneness.” The amazing petition of Jesus to Father is for these His disciples, and those Christians of future generations, that, *“they all may be One, as we are one”* (v21). Such a request originates in the nature and conditions revealed in the divine relationship of Jesus and Father. Look At the entire verse, *“that they*

all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me” (v21).

The Father indwells the Son, the Son indwells the Father and we corporately as the children of God are viewed as one in them. Jesus’ prayer is for our incorporation into the Godhead which I maintain is the highest view of Scripture concerning our salvation. To view fellowship in the context of deity lifts it to another level. Our fellowship together is realized in the context of the triune God. These are the aspirations of Christ for us together and for us in relationship to Him. The prayers of Jesus will not fail in their fulfilment, but God will grant these petitions of Jesus – they perfectly reflect His own desires for His Son and His desires for us: *“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph.2:4-7).*

2. The indwelling CHRIST

The “indwelling Christ” is the centre of Paul’s theology of the Christian experience. This profound truth of Father and Son’s indwelling (which became possible through Christ’s death for us, Gal.2:29) is taken up by Paul who makes this teaching his central paradigm with regard to the subject of Christian experience. Bible teachers have continually searched for a single phrase or teaching that would provide the key to Paul’s whole system of teaching. The Reformers were convinced that his teaching on “justification by faith” in Romans and Galatians provided the key to his entire system of teaching. Others have looked for the key in his many references to the Holy Spirit in the context of Christian experience (Gordon Fee “God’s Empowering Presence). Of course, the Pentecostal theologians never found in Paul what they were looking for in terms of Christian initiation; rather, they believed that the book of Acts demonstrates that the manifestation of tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. They may however, with some justification, point to the example of Paul in Acts ch.19 where he prays for a number of people who immediately begin (and continue to) speak in tongues and to prophecy. Reading 1Cor.ch.14 no one would conclude that the manifestation of tongues was Paul’s primary gift! Rather than establish its use in the assembly, instead he views it in the context of intimate fellowship with God and proceeds to establish the priority of the gift of prophecy due to the fact that it is intelligible to the members of the church. However, my question is not about spiritual gifts but about the central paradigm of Paul’s teaching; what is at the core of his thinking and what is the key to his theology of Christian experience?

I believe that the Holiness theologians discovered the heart of Paul's teaching and correctly understood his central paradigm expressed exactly in the words of Jesus' prayer. The phrase we discover in Paul is that we are "in Christ," or that "Christ" is "in you." Paul is not particularly interested in Christian initiation – we have to turn to Luke to have the only example of Paul bringing believers into an immediate experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit (this is not a phrase that Paul ever uses to describe the reality of Christian experience). I am referring of course to Acts Ch.19; although I am not suggesting that this example of Paul praying for disciples to receive the Holy Spirit is by any means an isolated event, although I think that Luke's inclusion of this event in Acts was important for Paul's standing as an apostle in that Luke was demonstrating his apostolic mandate from God to minister the Holy Spirit to men and women (cf. Acts 8:15).

Paul's understanding of God's indwelling is primarily Christological – it is Christ who indwells us. When Paul writes to the Galatian's he shares with them his call to preach and says, *"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood"* (Gal.1:15-16).

Notice how he describes how God (Father) called him with the express purpose for Christ to indwell him, *"to reveal His Son IN ME."* The indwelling Christ provided the basis for Paul's preaching. We are back in Jn.ch.17 and the theology of "indwelling." Paul speaks of God "in me." He repeats this same teaching in v24, *"And they glorified God IN ME."*

Nearly all Bible translations are inconsistent here because the construction is the same as in v16, and yet they translate this verse, *"and they glorified God on behalf of me."* This is an example of how translators may fail to grasp the significance of Paul's theology regarding Christ's indwelling the

Christian. See also Paul's further statement, *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but **Christ lives in me**: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"* (Gal2:29).

Paul's great chapter on "the victorious Christian life" or "the Spirit filled life" is Romans Ch.8. There are 14 references to "the Spirit" in the first 16 verses; one of these references refers to "the Spirit of Christ" (v9). Paul extends the indwelling of the Christian to include the Holy Spirit, but Jesus' teaching about the Holy Spirit also includes teaching on the indwelling Spirit; Jesus said, *"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may **abide** with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be **in you**"* (Jn.14:16-17).

The word "abide" means to indwell. The promised Holy Spirit will be "in you." Thus, we speak of **the indwelling Father (Jn.17), the indwelling Christ and now the indwelling of the Holy Spirit**. This is the same vocabulary employed by Jesus to describe the mutual indwelling of Father and Son in the Christian. The triune God abides in those who are His children. The indwelling God sanctifies the heart and fulfils the promise of holiness (1Pet.1:16). No true Christian would deny the genuineness of the indwelling Holy Spirit, nor must we deny the true nature of holiness He brings to our heart. Where else could the LORD abide but in the Holy of Holies? (2Cor.6:19). The soul cleansed by the blood of Jesus is the abiding place of the eternal God, *"Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully"* (Ps.24:3, 4).

Father did not compromise His holiness when He indwelled the incarnate Christ. We read these amazing words, *"For **it pleased the Father** that in Him*

all the **fullness** (πληρωμα) should dwell” (Col.1:19). Paul continues in the following chapter, “For in him dwells all the **fullness** of the Godhead bodily (2:9). Not only does He not compromise His own holiness by indwelling Christ, nor does He not limit Himself by indwelling Christ in His humanity. The whole of God indwells the human Christ. Deity is not incompatible with humanity as we see the fulness of God manifesting itself through Christ’s human person. This was God’s chosen means of revealing Himself to us humans.

Charles Wesley has recognized the significance of Father’s pleasure as He fills the incarnate Christ with all the fullness of God,

*Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”*

*Christ, by highest Heav’n adored;
Christ the everlasting Lord;
Late in time, behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail th’incarnate Deity,
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
*Jesus our Emmanuel.**

Charles Wesley.

Paul does not stop here but in the next verse he says that the Godhead indwells us in all the fullness (πληρωμα) of God, “And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (v10). The translators for some unknown reason chose not to translate (πληρωμα) as fullness, as in the previous verse and 1:19 but choose the word, “complete.” I think as a result of this inconsistency the impact of Paul’s teaching is watered down. God’s fullness in the person of Christ indwells the child of God. Similarly, it was the same fulness which indwelled Jesus Christ’s humanity. Fullness

describes the inner life of God; “God in Himself.” His personal attributes define His life and reveal to us who He is in regard to His character. Remember that we have been created in the image of God. This makes revelation possible for us and enables us to relate to God, making fellowship with God possible through a full salvation which restores the image.

Glory represents those same attributes in action, reaching out transitively to creation and to humankind. Glory also speaks of His presence among His restored and sanctified people. If fullness refers to God’s inner being, glory refers to the outward manifestation of His presence as symbolized by the fire and the cloud. The words “presence” and “glory” are the tangible tokens that God is present in the place. We feel His presence and see His glory.

Paul’s teaching regarding “fullness” originates in Ephesians where Paul teaches about Christ’s headship in His church: *“(Father) gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the **fullness** (πληρωμα) of Him who fills all in all” (Eph.1:22-23)*. Alongside this verse we put Col.1:19; and 2:9; the verses we have already considered. We noted how Paul viewed fullness in the context of the human person of Jesus Christ and how he followed immediately by the truth of the indwelling of Christ in the Christian all His fullness. This verse in Ephesians views the fullness of God in the context of His body the church. This represents a corporate fullness shared by the members of Christ’s body. Paul also refers to fullness of love which is the corporate manifestation of our oneness in Christ. Significantly, this divine love results from Christ’s indwelling (1:17-19).

God in the Person of the Holy Spirit, sent from Father, *“descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice from heaven which said, “You are my beloved Son; in You I am well pleased” (Lk.3:22)*. Each Christian must experience the descent of the Holy Spirit and hear the affirming voice of

Father declaring his sonship. The anointing that assures me that I am truly a son abides within me, assuring me that I am in Christ and Christ is in me, *“God willed to make known what are the riches **of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is CHRIST IN YOU, the hope of glory” (Col.1:27).***

It would be a significant exercise to review Paul’s repeated use of the phrase “in Christ” in his extensive portfolio of correspondence. We will now consider the references in Rom.Ch.8 to Christ’s indwelling. We must pray over these verses in the presence of God. Truth must determine experience.

Rom.8:1 *“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are **in Christ Jesus**, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”* This is a straightforward definition of those who are “in Christ Jesus” and answers directly the questions raised in Ch.7.

Rom.8:2 *“For the law of the Spirit of life **in Christ Jesus** has made me free from the law of sin and death.”* Here we see the life of the Holy Spirit active and powerfully working in the Christian who is in Christ. The law of the Spirit has replaced the law of sin and death (see 7:4).

Rom.8:9 *“But you are not in the flesh but **in the Spirit**, if indeed **the Spirit of God dwells in you**. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.”* The indwelling Spirit of God is the one absolute proof of our sonship. Again, this verse directly answers the issues raised in chapter seven.

Rom.8:10 *“And if **Christ is in you**, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”* The result of Christ’s indwelling means those activities of the sinful nature are dead.

Rom. 8:11 *“But if the **Spirit of Him** who raised Jesus from the dead **dwells in you**, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His **Spirit who dwells in you**.”* The Christ who dwells in us is

no less than the power of the risen Christ. We are promised that our mortal bodies will be quickened by the Spirit who indwells us. There are many saints who testify to the quickening of their physical bodies by the Holy Spirit but this promise will be fulfilled in the second coming of the Lord Jesus. (Note the reference here to the indwelling Spirit).

Rom.8:39 *“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.”* Christ who indwells the Christian cannot be separated from His attributes which work for us and in us. His love is unconquerable love working powerfully on our behalf. Paul triumphs in the power of Christ’s love to keep him in the midst of fierce temptations and trials. The qualities and attributes of God’s love is the focus of the prophetic song in 1Cor.13.

The issue of Christ’s indwelling is a personal issue that must be resolved between you and God with your Bible open in His presence. The Hebrews writer urges us to, *“Pursue peace with all people, and **holiness, without which no one will see the Lord**” (Heb.12:14)*. I suggest that before you get hung up on any doctrinal issue regarding holiness that you consider the example of Jesus in His baptism. Allow the dove of God to descend and light upon you. Yield yourself up to the descending gentle dove - the Holy Spirit who comes to You, mediated by Jesus from Father. His descent is purposeful and His intention is to indwell your heart and there abide forever. I love the picture of the wounded man on the road to Jericho rescued by the “good Samaritan.” That dying man had somehow to raise himself up and allow his saviour physician to pour into his wounded body the oil and the wine of healing. We similarly have to yield ourselves up to the in pouring of our Saviour’s oil and wine. What little strength was left in that broken body was employed in one desperate and final act of *yielding* to the healing oil and joyful wine of the Holy Spirit,

*Oh, spread the tidings 'round, wherever man is found,
Wherever human hearts and human woes abound;
Let every Christian tongue proclaim the joyful sound:
The Comforter has come!*

***The Comforter has come,
The Comforter has come!**
The Holy Ghost from heaven,
The Lord's dear promise given;
Oh, spread the tidings round,
Wherever man is found—
The Comforter has come!*

*The long, long night is past, the morning breaks at last;
And hushed the dreadful wail and fury of the blast,
As o'er the golden hills the day advances fast!
The Comforter has come!*

*Lo, the great King of kings, with healing in His wings,
To every captive soul a full deliverance brings;
And through the vacant cells the song of triumph rings:
The Comforter has come!*

*O boundless love divine! how shall this tongue of mine
To wondering mortals tell the matchless grace divine—
That I, a child of hell, should in His image shine!
The Comforter has come!*

Frank Bottome (1823-1894)

The entire Trinity is directly involved in the coming of God to your soul as it was in the baptism of Jesus. You have been remade by God to be indwelt by Him. He comes to you in perfect love to fill and possess you with Himself. When you receive Him you receive Him who is endowed with all the

attributes of God - perfect love, perfect holiness, perfect truth – He comes in all the fullness of His Being, but it takes time and responsiveness to God to see the beautiful character of the Beloved reproduced throughout your personality and nature, but this is His glorious purpose to reveal Himself in you so that you can reveal Him to others. You are called to be the mirror image of God; to be the incarnation of God to men. As Jesus Christ indwells you, He reproduces Himself through your nature.

*Come, Holy Ghost, life-giving fire,
Come, and in me delight to rest!
Drawn by the lure of strong desire,
O, come, and consecrate my breast:
The temple of my soul prepare,
And fix Thy sacred presence there!*

*If now Thy influence I feel,
If now in Thee begin to live,
Still to my heart Thyself reveal;
Give me Thyself, for ever give
A point my good, a drop my store:
Eager I ask, and pant for more.*

*Eager for Thee I ask and pant,
So strong the principle Divine
Carries me out with sweet constraint,
Till all my hallowed soul be Thine;
Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea,
And lost in Thy immensity.*

*My peace, my life, my comfort now,
My treasure, and my all Thou art!*

*True witness of my sonship Thou,
Engraving pardon on my heart:
Seal of my sins in Christ forgiven,
Earnest of love, and pledge of heaven.*

*Come then, my God, mark out Thy heir,
Of heaven a larger earnest give,
With clearer light Thy witness bear;
More sensibly within me live:
Let all my powers Thy entrance feel,
And deeper stamp Thyself the seal.*

Charles Wesley

It is clear from Jn.17 that the immanent Father indwells His Son and that He also has a transcendent reality outside of Christ. We read that Jesus *“lifted up His eyes to heaven”* to where Father dwells - He addressed Him as a person outside of Himself who is located in heaven. We recognize that Christ is immanent and indwelling us and we also pray to Christ who is seated on Father’s right hand exalted in the heavens. The words of Jesus regarding the Holy Spirit, anticipates the time when He will indwell us immanently, *“The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells **with** you and will be **in** you” (Jn.14:17).*

Jesus’ perspective in this conversational prayer regarding Father’s indwelling is totally focused on personal relationships in God and in us. Then Jesus prays for His disciples expressing His pastoral concern for their future. There is no reference to salvation, or any activity of Father’s indwelling such as the exercise of His will in Christ or us. Gethsemane’s agonized praying immediately follows Jesus’ High-Priestly prayer. Raising us into God was indeed going to be costly. Paul shows to us that Father’s indwelling of Christ was decisive in the work of salvation, *“**God was in Christ reconciling the***

world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation” (2Cor.5:19). Father’s indwelling of Christ was a passive abiding but was shown to be God actively willing, doing and accomplishing His plan of salvation.

One is reminded of the significance of the name of the LORD which was given to Moses. The theologians tell us that it refers to God’s eternal existence, but the Name that was given for a strategic purpose beyond its meaning. Yes, the name LORD is an amazing revelation of God, but there is also power in the name of the LORD. It was given to Moses for him to declare the name LORD/Jehovah and thus defeat the gods of Egypt, to pronounce judgment on the nation and deliver God’s people from slavery. It was not only a revelation about the nature of God but it was primarily a declaration about the actions of God in powerful judgments, *“Therefore my people shall know my name” (Isa.52:6).*

The indwelling of Father in His beloved sons must be where we begin our life in the Spirit but we will soon discover that Father has possessed us and indwells us to do His will, *“For it is God who works in you both **to will and to do** of His good pleasure” (Phil.2:13).* The coming of God brings interior holiness but the indwelling of God means that He intends to accomplish His “greater works” through us.

The contrast between this gracious pastoral prayer of Jesus in Jn.ch.17 and the trauma and agony of His Gethsemane prayer where He cries *“abba Father”* and sweats as it were great drops of blood has something to teach us about Father’s indwelling of His Son and therefore about His indwelling of us. Hence, we must speak of the purpose of His indwelling! He indwells the Christian to accomplish His glorious will, whatever that will might be.

Inward holiness must precede works of righteousness and works of power. God’s purpose and intention was to abide in us and to accomplish His

eternal purposes through us. Holiness is not an end in itself but without the Holy Spirit's sanctifying presence and power we cannot see God, or please Him, or accomplish anything in His Name, *"For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure"* (Phil.2:13).

I believe that Jn.Ch.17 should stand as it does uniquely on its own, separated from the ministry of Jesus which has come to an end, and undisturbed by the tumultuous events that will very quickly envelope Jesus in the next chapter. But having understood the profound meaning of this prayer of Jesus we must then proceed to the narrative of the crucifixion as it unfolds in the Gospel of John. I believe also that as we have understood the truth of Father's indwelling of Jesus we must go back to John's account of Jesus' ministry and teaching about His relationship with Father with a new understanding. In Ch.14 we find three references that may now be viewed in the light of Jesus' teaching in Ch.17.

In the first reference Jesus speaks of Father's indwelling resulting in Father's words being spoken through Him and by Father's works being done by Him, *"Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works"* (Jn.14:10).

In the second reference Jesus alludes to the future day when the indwelling of Father and Son in the Christian will be a true reality through the advent of the Holy Spirit, *"At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you"* (14:20).

In the third reference Jesus teaches the mutual indwelling of the Christian by Father and Son, anticipating the full exposition by Jesus in His conversational prayer to Father in Ch.17; *"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him"* (14:23).

In conclusion, I would like to remain focused on the indwelling of God in the Christian because I have no desire or will ever to move from this place of holy intimacy. Surely the yardstick or test of a growing work of God - personally in one's own life and in the context of the body of Christ must be a growing intimacy with Him which results in men and women drawn to Father by the attractiveness of His beautiful nature reproduced in His children. They are select ones who have been chosen because they are each one Father's personal gift to His Son Jesus.

This teaching of Christ's indwelling gives the necessary theology for the Christian life and also provides the highest theology of worship. The source of worship comes from within us, but we worship a holy God who has a transcendent reality outside of us. This teaching roots worship within the heart so that we are not spectators of other men worshipping and singing to God but the Holy Spirit rises from within us as we return worship and thanks to Father as we spontaneously and fervently worship with others who similarly discover God rising from within them, returning devotion and thanks to Him.

This teaching of the indwelling Christ also provides us with our theology of fellowship. We now understand how God lives in the context of Trinity by mutual indwelling and we have seen in Jesus' prayer His desire and will for us to be incorporated into that fellowship too. This takes fellowship and roots it in God. From there it can extend outwards to embrace the common and the ordinary, the unnoticed and the insignificant but makes possible the sanctification of every detail of life. Many people only fellowship in the trivialities of life, the surface things, but the true saint is, *"He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High"* and *"abides under the shadow of the Almighty"* (**Ps.91:9**). The Christian who abides in Christ will bring holiness into everything, simply by His breathing the fragrance of his abiding fellowship with God. Brother Lawrence discovered that by abiding in Christ

he could be as blessed by doing the menial chores of life in the monastery as by prayer.

Our fellowship together as the family of God is the result of abiding “in Christ.” It is a corporate reality, the realization of Jesus’ prayer, *that they might be one as we are one.*” The trinity represents a corporate unity of three Persons.

The figure used by Paul of the church as “*the body of Christ*” is a very useful concept because it requires that there be a head to the body; as Paul states in Ephesians and Colossians – Christ is the head of the church. Not only are we resident in Christ but Paul’s teaching about the body of Christ shows us how as a corporate body we function in Christ. His teaching about the corporate indwelling of Christ in each individual member of His church provides us with our theology for the function of spiritual gifts and forever establishes the priority of fellowship and indwelling above the functioning of spiritual gifts in the church.

There is a perfect co-ordination between indwelling and functioning in the body of Christ, a perfect consistency between the nature of God and the Spirit’s articulating spiritual gifts. Jesus’ life and ministry demonstrates this. God’s works are all works of righteousness because He is holy. It is significant that spiritual gifts are freely given to each member of the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit and thus the hallmark stamp of the Holy Spirit is upon each one of those who minister spiritual gifts. It is also true that the functioning of spiritual gifts is sparked by the holy love that characterizes our fellowship with each other and God. Thus, we can see how our understanding of spiritual gifts and their function in the body of Christ is determined by our understanding of God’s indwelling based on Jn.Ch.17.

To summarise: to be indwelt by God means that we have been incorporated into God to enjoy fellowship with Him. This takes place when we are made a

new in Christ, “*Therefore if any man be **in Christ**, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*” It also means that God is indwelling us to reproduce His character in us and to accomplish His purposes through us. There is a missional challenge facing those who are in Him to believe God to accomplish His works through us.

There is also a pastoral challenge which faces each one of us. To be indwelt by God means that we will encounter trials, discouragements and rejection but we will by abiding in Christ find an inner resource that does not remove the temptations from without, but enables us to find inner strength from the indwelling God of infinite strength and resource. Therefore, we sing triumphantly,

Resting in Jesus, abiding in Him,
Gladly my faith can avow,
Never again need my pathway be dim:
Jesus saves me now.

Jesus saves me now,
Jesus saves me now;
Yes, Jesus saves me all the time;
Jesus saves me now.

A. C. Downer

To be “in Christ” means that we have a continual source of supply from within us; a river of flowing, gushing water that never runs dry. Jesus described this infinite resource of the Holy Spirit, “*out of his belly (“innermost being”) will flow rivers of **living water***” (Jn.7:38). The outflowing of this mighty river of life is the direct result of Christ living in me.

The final outcomes of Christ abiding in me have a corporate dimension. I am now able to enjoy God in unity of heart with others who are similarly indwelt by God. I am now able to worship in the body of Christ, to function in the church with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and to work for God united

with others in the mission of God. Fellowship with Father is the ultimate reality, but does not preclude Jesus leaving Father's side and seeking to rescue lost humanity in an alien world. The objective of mission is to bring men and women back to God - their God, Creator and Saviour, but the ultimate objective of the church is to bring men and women into God: *"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ"* (2Cor.11:2 see also Eph.5:27).

The evangelist has a missionary mandate to save souls but the church has a pastoral mandate to sanctify souls. Holiness is a necessary condition of heart; it is a necessary prerequisite to dwell in deepest communion with God, *"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart"* (Ps 24:3, 4a). The salvation of souls is a priority, it is an imperative, it is the message we proclaim *but equally important* is the priority, the imperative of holiness. It is the message we must proclaim. This double priority must impact the way we function as church and the way we preach and pray as church. Worship is the expression of holiness; of intimacy, of indwelling. Both preaching and prophesying brings the word of God from the inner dwelling place of God to the public venue of the church. Our praying takes place in the holy place of the Lord's intimate presence. The evangelist comes from the inner sanctuary where he has been melted by God to preach with passion and emotion about the love of Jesus which took Him to the cross to die for lost souls.

The High-Priestly prayer of Jesus has very far reaching consequences which will not fail in their accomplishment. They require the future for their full realization. Eternity begins for the child of God the moment when those who are alive on earth hear the trumpet sound heralding the return of Jesus. Then the promise of Isaiah will be realized in full, *"He shall*

see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied” (Isa.53:11). His satisfaction will be the full realization of His prayer in John ch.17 that they “be one as we are one.” In that moment we will discover the full significance of fellowship in the context of God; divested of the limitations of our “body of humiliation” and possessed of our resurrection body. Christ in His exaltation possesses a glorified human body. Similarly, our glorified body will be incorruptible and immortal; all glory to Jesus and His total salvation. Our body now is unredeemed hence its vulnerability to sickness and its captivity to inevitable death. We will all die. But as the children of God we will all be raised in glory at the return of Jesus!

By faith we take hold of the truth of Jesus’ prayer which is now possible through the salvation Jesus has accomplished through the cross. We can actually extend the teaching of Jesus expressed so powerfully in His prayer regarding the glory of God and with Paul we can view the cross in the context of the glory of God, *“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal.6:14).*

I suggest to you that this teaching which originates with Jesus and is the direct result of His fellowship with Father must be at the centre of our understanding of salvation and sanctification. This teaching is clearly understood by Paul as representing the central paradigm of his teaching. I

suggest to you that it is the highest teaching regarding salvation; originating as it does, in the very centre of God’s heart. His desire is for union with His beloved children. Union precedes unity. Of course, the *full* extent of our fellowship is an ever-deepening experience which will know no end even in eternity.

Union with Christ is a living experience which we cannot explore in this essay. I have stated the truth of it, shown where it comes from and how it is affirmed in Paul's teaching but to live in God demands all our heart's devotion, our mind and our will. It requires faith in God and in His promises. Christ has pioneered the way for us in His prayers. Because it is His heart for us and because it is His will, we must not hold back from Him –

“Dear Lord Jesus you have specifically prayed for me to dwell in You as the Father dwells in You. I believe You died to make this possible for me to dwell in You. I believe in You and in the integrity of your prayers for me that I be indwelt by You. I do believe that You do that for me and that you have brought me Yourself. Let me dwell there with You in holy fellowship.”

This is not a prayer of aspiration, but a prayer that expresses amazement and incredulity that such a possibility is open to me! But it shows a person who does not hold back from believing the truth of Jesus' words when He speaks of us being indwelt by Father and Son. Believe it my friend! Possess for yourself what Jesus Christ has already obtained for you when He died on the cross. In His believing prayer He put you there with Himself and Father. He then left His disciples to go and prepare a place for them. He left them to go to the cross. It was there that an entrance was made for us into the very heart of the Godhead. We must dwell there, in God.

The Westminster Confession begins with this wonderful statement: “Man's chief end is to glorify God *and to enjoy Him!* We are in God, not outside of Him. We could not nearer be. In actual fact “near” is close, but we are “in Him!” God indwelling us refers to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit living in us. Jesus says categorically in His discourse on the Holy Spirit in John ch.14-16 that father will give to you the Holy Spirit and that He will indwell you, *“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world*

*cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him: but ye know Him; for He dwells with you, and **He shall be in you**" (Jn.14:16-17).*

Before Jesus prayed for Father to indwell His beloved disciples, He had taught about the coming of the Holy Spirit. Significantly, Jesus had used the same language of indwelling; He says that when the Holy Spirit comes, He *indwell* His beloved disciples. The Holy Spirit "*shall be **IN** you.*" He is the indwelling Spirit alongside Father and Son. Charles Wesley writes,

*Come, Holy Ghost, all-quickenning fire,
Come, and in me delight to rest;
Drawn by the lure of strong desire,
O come and consecrate my breast;
The temple of my soul prepare,
And fix Thy sacred presence there.*

*Eager for thee I ask and pant,
So strong the principle divine.
Carries me out with sweet constraint,
Till all my hallowed soul be Thine;
**Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea,
And lost in Thine immensity!***

Wesley concludes his hymn entitled, "Lord I believe a rest remains" by calling Father, Son and Holy Spirit to come and indwell the Christian who is thirsting for all of God to possess them,

***Come, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,**
And seal me Thine abode!
Let all I am in Thee be lost,
Let all I am be God!*

Charles Wesley deals with the theology of the heart and not the intellect. He shows how the heart is to engage with the truth and to gain possession of the truth. Just as the prayer of Jesus engages with God and gives absolute clarity to the truth of indwelling, the very first impulse of God to include and incorporate humankind in the fellowship of trinity was born out of the reality of the joy and intimacy enjoyed by God Himself. I would suggest that the original purpose of creating men and women in the first place was to bring them unspoilt and untainted by sin into the inner chamber; the holy of holies of God's own life. Sin prevented that happening, but redemption by Christ now opens up for us the glorious possibility of fulfilling the desire of God's heart for fellowship with His beloved Bride, the church.

*“Within the veil I now would come,
into the holy place
to look upon Thy face.
I see such beauty there,
no other can compare,
I worship Thee, my Lord,
within the veil.”*

Derrick Harrison