

**2013**

**Capstone Christian Fellowship**

**Apostolic Family Building**

**Jeff Reynolds, Sr. Leader**

*“Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?”*

*Jeremiah 23:29*

Apostolic Family – Words for Discerning and Building

**Word of Discernment: Apostolic Family**

**Jeff Reynolds – Capstone Christian Fellowship**

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Jeff Reynolds is the Sr. Leader of Capstone Christian Fellowship. Capstone carries a Fivefold ministry directive as a presence driven community of devoted lovers of Jesus Christ. Our mission is to live the ***Presence, Power, and Peace of Christ*** and see the transformation of lives, cities and nations in the coming Kingdom of our LORD.

The following are a few analogies / interpretive stories to help with understanding apostolic family and the hindrances, points of discernment and conflicts that arise in seeking to build it. These are a few of the simple things that come up. It is critical that the Church and churches exercise ***discernment*** and take ***ownership*** of the health of the Body. Spiritual discernment is challenging and difficult in the current environment of the American spiritual landscape and in the building of churches that seek to be the prophetic people of salt and light. The nature of the Church is described by images in the New Testament and through Jesus words to the churches in Revelation. The Epistles give excellent examples of the issues that confront the development of a church healthy in the Spirit and advancing the Kingdom by faith.

**The Bride of Christ.**

This metaphor speaks of his great love for the church (Mark 2:18-20; John 3:29; Romans 7:1-4; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-33; Revelation 19:7; 21:2\*).

**Vine or Vineyard.**

The emphasis here is on the need of the members to maintain a close relationship with Christ if they are to be fruitful (John 15:1-8; cf Mark 12:1-12)\*.

**Flock**

Jesus is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11), the Great Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20) and the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4) who knows and watches over his sheep and gives his life for them. They know his voice and follow him (Luke 12:32; John 10:1-16; 27,28; Acts 20:28, 29; 1 Peter 5:2-4)\*.

**Household or Family**

This is the most pervasive metaphor for the church in the New Testament. The Fatherhood of God is constantly in view, whose children we become by faith in Jesus Christ and receiving the Spirit (Galatians 3:26; 4:6, 7). Baptism is the symbol of our adoption into the family of the triune God (Matthew 28:19). "Brother" or "brethren" (sisters included!) is the most common word for Christians in the letters of the New Testament. Jesus is our elder brother (Romans 8:29; Hebrews 2:10-18).\*

**Building or Temple**

God's people are a building **"not built by human hands"** (2 Corinthians 5:1) which God is constructing. The Old Testament temple has become the people in whom he now dwells by his Spirit, Jesus Christ being the foundation or cornerstone (1 Corinthians 3:11, 16; Ephesians 2:20-22). Individual Christians are stones built into this temple (1 Peter 2:4-8).

**Body**

This is the most prominent image in Paul's letters and the only one with no Old Testament equivalent. Christ the Head rules and nourishes the Body, its only head, and the Holy Spirit is the breath to animate it. There is a strong emphasis on the relationship of all the members of the body, diversity and equality within unity, as we have seen above. Every member is to be a functioning member (e.g. Ephesians 2:22, 23; 4:4, 15, 16).

If there is anything common to these images of the church it is *relationships*. In each image the stress is *either* on God's gracious initiative as Husband, King, Father, Builder, etc., *or* on his people as a community, both in relation to him as his bride, flock, family, body, etc., and in relation to each other as branches in the same vine, sheep in the same flock, children in the same family, members of the same body. In every instance *there is only one church*. From God's perspective, all who have received the Spirit are members of it, whether they acknowledge it or not. It is **"the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven"** (Hebrews 12:23).

The above material regarding the images of the church in the Scripture was taken from Exploring Christianity – The Church at <http://www.christianity.co.nz/church9.htm>

**Parable/Analogies of Family – sometimes not so good family**

The following are “pictures” of family that may shed light on the issues that emerge in the Kingdom Church/apostolic family requiring understanding and discernment.

1. **You’re in your kitchen** – cooking dinner for your family and an acquaintance walks in the front door. You know them as an acquaintance so it is a bit odd that they are so free in your home and kitchen. You’re generous and you do know them somewhat so you go along. But they don’t really acknowledge you as they come into the kitchen and start grabbing up pots and pans and looking through the fridge for ingredients. OK. So you feel a bit awkward but you are generous and so you try and strike up a conversation and get some info. They flatter you and say, “What a beautiful kitchen. And, “ you are an exceptional cook.” In the back of your mind you are thinking, “how do you know I am an exceptional cook you have not been over for dinner.” Once they have gathered what they need to cook their dinner, they begin to misuse the pots, pans and utensils. They do not seem to care about how they are taken care of or if they are used in the way they were designed. These are expensive pots and pans. High quality items that have a specific purpose. This kitchen is well organized and purposeful. The guest continues to misuse the pots and begins to grab a mixer to mix in a beautiful Teflon large pot. But the mixer has metal mixers. Just before the guest slams the mixer into the pot and ruins it, you say, “Can I show you how to use the pots and pans and utensils of this kitchen. Each one has a specific purpose and design and we have spent considerable time responding to the Master of the Kitchen and how he has organized and prepared the kitchen for maximum effectiveness and excellent cooking? I’m glad you’re here and it appears you love cooking. So do I, but this is where we make food for the entire family and we have painstakingly gathered what we need to cook freely and with the most excellent tools. The Master of the House has provided us the very best and we want to honor Him in how we work in his kitchen. “ The guest acted as if the host said nothing and continued to grab items and mix in the Teflon pot with metal mixers. Before the host’s eyes, the pot was ruined. The metal mixer tore holes in the Teflon of the beautiful pot. The host realized that if this guest was allowed to continue in this way the function and beauty of the kitchen would be ruined. Eventually all the pots would be ruined and no cooking could take place. The host would have to explain to the Master of the House why the pots and pans and utensils were allowed to be ruined in this way.
2. The guest appeared to have no respect for the host or care about the pots and pans or utensils in the way the host did. They just wanted to cook something and were determined to do it without the host but with the supplies of the kitchen. The problem is the supplies of the Kitchen and did not belong to the host. They were the Masters. The Master set up the kitchen provided the pots and pans and utensils. They were perfect for making the kind of food the kitchen was tasked with. The Master had plans for everyone who entered into the freedom of the House, but not all would be cooking in the kitchen. Some were tasked with cooking up new kitchens. The freedom the guest experienced in the House was real but misinterpreted. It appeared that they thought the House existed for them. That the resources were up for the grabbing and that they could freely cook using the resources as they pleased. In truth, they understood half of the truth. The Enemy of the house is one who speaks half truths and lies. They sound like wisdom but represent only part of the truth. Truth mixed with lies becomes devastation, ruin and broken relationship. The guests were free to cook, to dream, to experiment in love, honor and service, but not free to disrupt the Masters plan for the house. And they were free to love, honor and dream in the freedom of the House. The new found joy and the return of dreaming in their lives was directly related to the type of Kitchen the Master of the House had prepared. A kitchen that reached to the nations and was intended to be a master kitchen that helped produce hundreds more kitchens of freedom and joy. There was something different in this house. It had Kingdom builders that were releasing freedom, vision, joy, glory and power for a whole region of houses. It was both a local House and a Regional House. The kitchen was to bring transformation to house building and to awaken the dreamers again.
3. The host’s heart was broken by the actions of the guest and the loss of the treasured pot. The host realized that the guest was going to ruin the kitchen if they did not listen or learn the value the Master of the House had placed on each pot and the purpose he had created them for. The deep problem was the kitchen did not belong to the host. They were stewards of the Masters plans for the kitchen. The pots, pans and utensils were gifts from the Master for the Kitchen. The guest did not understand the purpose of the pots, pans and utensils of the kitchen or the value of each. They had no idea what the Kitchen was made to cook. It appeared that they did not care, though they may have, but their actions spoke something different. This direction and course could not remain. Something had to be done. The guest dishonored the Master of the Kitchen. The host had to draw a boundary, create some options, invite the guest into something new, and explain the value of the kitchen and what it was set up for. The host had no choice but to limit the freedom of the guest and create some boundaries for them. The understanding the guest carried of the Body was not adequate to allow them unlimited freedom in the house. Through the establishing of boundaries for the guest the righteousness of Christ is given an opportunity to enter into the situation and the teaching that supports the “understanding” can be worked through. With the establishment of healthy relationship the healing and transformation of the guest is possible in the house. Everyone is truly a guest in the house because the house belongs to Christ, is fashioned from his heart, metron (calling/race to run) and kronos (time / season). Transformation, healing and expansion of the Kingdom are consistent working dynamics of the Spirit in the house. All are changed through love, devotion and service to Jesus. (by Jeff Reynolds)
4. **Worker – in the market place**

So a worker and their unsaved employer are talking about the workers unannounced project which is underway and using people resources from within the company. After hearing about the details, of which the employer was not so happy, the manager asked them to stop. He explained that the activity was not authorized by the company and that it’s resources could not be used in this way. Upon hearing this, the worker exclaimed to their unsaved boss, “You can’t tell me what to do. I only do what God tells me to do. I don’t submit to earthly authority. He hasn’t spoken to me about this. We are not stopping. In fact we are protesting and leaving with everyone involved to do what we are doing anyway. God told us to do it. You have no jurisdiction over us in this because it is not part of the company.” So the manager politely fired every worker involved. This demonstratied that he did in fact have authority to stop activity within the company. All that was not authorized within the scope of the company’s mission or in partnership with it did not carry any authority of the company or its mission. (Adapted by Jeff Reynolds from Kris Vollotton’s Book, ***Heavy Rain***)

* 1. “Some people who seem to have the greatest resistance to spiritual authority wouldn’t dare tell their unsaved employer, “You can’t tell me what to do. The Lord is my shepherd. Instead they go to work at the time their boss tells them to get there. They wear whatever the uniform or corporate code demands. They carry out the tasks that are required of them five of six days a week. But on Sunday, they come to church and won’t work in the nursery or perform some simple job that is asked of them. Can you imagine what your income would be like if you extended that way of thinking into the market place? It troubles me when Christians will do for money what they won’t do for love. “ pg 54 Heavy Rain Kris Vallotton
1. **The Volunteers**

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| [Mat 13:25](http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.cfm?b=Mat&c=13&t=NIV#comm/25) | ***But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away.***  |

My mom is an outstanding Gardener. Her summer garden could be in Sunset magazine every year. Fruits, vegetables, flowers, are her backyard eye candy. So, I discovered that I loved gardening as well. Mom came over and helped me start my first garden. Top to bottom we set it up in a day and when she left that afternoon we both stood over it with a smiles and dirt all over us.

Meandering through the garden tasting things and eating tomatoes, is one of my favorite things about gardening. Coming home after work to the cooling of a summer evening to wander around in the fragrance and fruit of the garden is a deep joy. My favorites are the yellow pear tomatoes. Eating them ripe off the vine is amazing. So over the years my mom has groomed me along as a gardener. One of the things she always talks about with me and I’ve learned to watch for is ***volunteers.*** In a garden, volunteers emerge right after the ground is prepared and everything is ready for planting. Once you put water on the garden volunteers start springing up all throughout the garden. Volunteers come from the seeds of ripe fruit or the fruit that has fallen off the vine. When the season ends they work into the soil. Once the soil is stirred and water applied, they sprout up like carpets of green.

 It is fun seeing green sprouts all over the garden. Rejoicing in the volunteers that are new plants from the amazing fruit of last season is a rewarding part of returning to the garden in spring. What’s interesting is that at this stage one cannot tell if the sprout is a weed or a viable plant or vegetable. Sprouts look very similar. There are some different varieties of leaf formations that can be grouped and identified, but many look the same for some time. The temptation is to start picking and pulling out weeds and unwanted sprouts before there is absolute surety that one is pulling up weeds. The Master warned against it because the Kingdom is an eruption of life. An infusion of something new into “weeds” and “bad soil” the Kingdom overcomes evil with good. At the heart of what Jesus does is transformation. The Spirit grows fruit in the worst soil possible….us. (Graham Cooke).

As the volunteers develop they take on the look and distinction that helps with identifying their quality. The gardening process, if one wants to incorporate all the volunteers, entails identifying the plants, separating them as they get bigger and replanting them in a new and healthy spot that perfectly supports the character and identify of the plant. With plenty of room to grow, good soil, water and fertilizer, most plants thrive and produce fruit. In the process of identifying the vegetables, flowers and herbs one also identifies the weeds. The weeds get plucked up and thrown out. Pulling weeds is part of the process of keep the garden healthy.