

GRACE GOSPEL CHURCH MINISTRY

The Scriptural Role of the Grace Testament Church Ministry

by Pastor George D. Cutler

The spiritual perception of the word "Church" in the Grace Gospel does not refer to buildings where professing Christians gather or to denominational groups. Informed Scriptural identification of this word references those who were "called out in eternity by God." In this light, the Grace Covenant Ministry is really the earthly manifestation of "assemblies of called-out-ones before creation." Hence the Apostle Paul states therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, exhort you to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called" as "There is one body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling" (Ephesians 4:4). The propagation of the Gospel of Grace, the "Mystery Writings" through "local assemblies" was instituted as the primary functioning of ministering for the purpose of supplying the earthly spiritual needs of 1 members of the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:7,11-15). In the beginning of the Grace Dispensation, 1 Apostles provided teaching and guidance to the churches (Acts 13:48-49). We have the same format in 1 Church today, i.e., ministry in the inspired Word of God to guide us. Hence this should lead us to a "According to Scripture, what is the role and function of the local Grace Testament church today?"

The consideration of this question engenders the following:

What should be the Attitude of the Grace Assembly?

It should be similar to the Apostle Paul's description of the Bereans, i.e., "and these were nobler than those Thessalonica, they received the word with all readiness of mind every day examining the Scriptures (Writings) whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). This must be our attitude and approach to search out TRUTH. Human reasoning, experience and tradition must not direct our thinking, as all such must give way to God's Word. "For what does the Scripture say?" must be our chief (and only) concern (Romans 4:1). These are the instructions and directives that should be inculcated into our hearts and they are indelibly impressed in our spirits to dominate our daily activities, as we function in the administration of God's grace. In effect, this should become the underlying mindsets of all recipients of the Grace Message in identification with such being eternally positioned in the Body of Christ. In this sense, God's process of growth and development is that it is our knowledge-base that shapes our spiritual attitudes and minds and it is to this end that we should dutifully attain!

What are the Scriptural Characteristics of the Grace Ministry?

In referencing the Scriptures of the Grace Gospel, there are four things, which were consistent traits of 1 early Grace Testament Churches. These are still present in any assembly, which is functioning in accordance with the instructions from the Word of God today:

- 1) The **Grace Scriptures** are its **Charter**.
- 2) The **Grace Recipients** are its **Circumference**.
- 3) The **Head (Christ)** is its **Center**.
- 4) The **Holy Spirit** is its **Conductor**.

A brief examination of these characteristics engenders the following:

1. The Grace Scriptures are its Charter. This is basically structured in the Apostle Paul's instructions to Timothy wherein he states, "Hold the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus; guard the good deposit through the Holy Spirit dwelling in us" (II Timothy 1:13-14). The context of the writings, in these verses, extends Paul's commands to Timothy, as he orders him to "hold the pattern of sound words." The Greek word *etele* (**ehkh-eh**) rendered "hold," is in the present tense a

imperative mode, which exudes the directives to continuously hold, have and possess the pattern of sound words (Titus 1:9, 13; 2:1). Here the Greek word *u`potu,pwsin* (**eep·ot·eep·o·seen**) rendered "pattern," derived from *u`po* (**eep·o**) and *tu,pow* (**teep·o·o**) and indicates that this is the sketch, imprint, model formula for sound words today. The pattern, form, model and example of sound words to be adhered to that "which you have heard from me" or which was revealed by revelation to Paul. This is an excellent definition of what the sound words are for this present economy of Grace, i.e., that which is contained in the Mystery, which are the contents of Paul's Epistles. This is certified by I Timothy 1:10-11, which states that sound teaching is synonymous with the Gospel of Glory entrusted to Paul.

What is the scriptural meaning of the phrase, "Living by Faith?" Much has been written concerning the need for God's people to live by faith yet many have little idea of what that really entails. Many view faith as a force by which they can make things happen that are beyond their ability and control. Others simply view faith as believing in the unseen and often used the term "blind faith" in that regard. It is in this sense that they relate their faith to God's Word with this quote, "so then faith (is) out of hearing and the hearing through the word of God" (Romans 10:17). The conveyance of this context actually depicts the process of being caused to believe God through what He has spoken or in effect, "taking Him at His Word." This is corroborated by testimonies in both the Old and New Testaments, portraying those who were caused to faithfully respond to God's Word. In Isaiah 55:8 and Hebrews chapter 11, there are numerous accounts of individuals who were caused to believe God; resulting in them doing things that were contrary to human reasoning, as they acted according to His Word. Hence, living by faith is simply living according to God's Word as it guides our thoughts and actions despite what the world around us may construe or even what our own minds and hearts may cogitate and desire.

Human reasoning should never infuse greater weight than God's Word. This is what is referred to in the statement, "destroying reasonings and every high thing exalting itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Christ (II Corinthians 10:5). The Greek phrase *logismou,j kaqairou/ntej* (**loy·ees·moos kahth·eh·reen·dehs**) "destroying reasonings," may also be rendered "casting down false arguments and erroneous thoughts." It is the reasonings of depraved men that are contrary to God's thoughts, as they attempt to rationalize and explain away God's Word, which is really rejecting His Word. The rejection of God's Word is in fact man's disobedience, as such establish worldly "charters," special privileges, immunity and exemptions geared to the pursuance of human goals. Thus, the great lesson is that "when God has spoken on a matter there is never justification in deviating from His expressed will no, not even with good intentions! God's will must be obeyed, this is the epitome of "living by faith," even when it means giving up some "good idea" of ours. God's people must be ultimately guided by obedience to His Word above all else, even above our perceptions of prosperous "results!" Hence, in God's design, perceived human ends never justify carnal means!

What are the Scriptural Applications of Assembly Faith? The child of God's walk of "living by faith" with regard to the local assembly engenders the proper function of local gathering in accordance with God's Word (Hebrews 10:25). It should be done in accordance with faith and obedient! If focusing for a moment on the Reformation Era, note that the local Assembly of God's people sloganeered the term, "Solo Scriptura" translated "Only the Scriptures!" During that period, they spiritually assessed the fact that the ideas, practices and persuasions of men must be set aside. Hence they correctly perceived that the Scriptures, particularly the New Testament teachings on the Church, were to be embraced as their sole guide for faith and practice. At this point, there is even more abiding enlightenment in the Grace Covenant instructions and directives. In these Scriptures are couched the spiritual unseen aspect of the assembly's functions as they express external manifestations of the Body of Christ. In light of this, the Grace Testament Church's signs, programs, activities and facilities must be evaluated strictly according to scriptural assessments.

In this sense, the Head of the local assembly (Christ) is not only its Head but also its Mind! (Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 1:10; 2:16; Philippians 1:27; 2:5). This should be manifested in its interactions because despite all of its programs, it is the presence of Christ that must possess first place (Romans 1:8; I Timothy 1:7). Hence, we should comprehend the beyond things, which are the unseen things that the world deems to be inconsequential, as we appreciate the spiritual blessings in being obedient to the Word of God (Romans 1

16:19, 26; II Corinthians 10:5-6). In the infant Grace assemblies that are portrayed in the Word of God, the Apostle Paul's teachings were recorded as inspired Scriptures for directives and instructions for the present Dispensation. These give the PLAN for the Church, as they show and tell how the Church functions in its purest state. Is there any better plan today? Are these Scriptures the sole guide for the local church fellowship or are man's reasonings and traditions of greater importance? Shouldn't there be a willingness to change current practices when they do not conform to Scripture instead of deviating from the Word by simply rationalizing it away? Here it must be emphatically stated that the spiritual trait of the Grace Church is the Scriptures as its only charter. There is stark contrast between what religious traditions confirm and what the Word of God confirms. In this light, the Grace Church must hew closely to the Scriptures and function in this present day of Church crisis and Church difficulty; oblivious to every man and every system that man has set up, in seeking to learn what God says about His Church in His Word. Accordingly, the main focus must be on the Holy Scriptures for light and guidance, in that the **Grace Scriptures** are its **Charter**.

2. The Grace Recipients are its Circumference. This is thoroughly ascertainable in the comprehension of the context, "Hold the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus; guard the good deposit through the Holy Spirit dwelling in us" (II Timothy 1:13-14). Here Timothy is to hold the sound words of the Gospel of Grace "in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus." Notice the words faith and love are in the locative case in the Greek grammar, which means that the Church ministry is to be in the sphere of faith and love. It is very important to observe that the Greek word *πιστι* (*pees-tee*) rendered "faith," is better translated "faithfulness" in this context. According to this interpretation, the instruction is for Timothy to hold to the contents of the Mystery and to do it in the sphere of faithfulness and love, i.e., to make it known in the faithful and loving spirit, which is in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-2; Philippians 2:1-2). The local assembly is made up of "called out ones," i.e., believers assembled by God hence those that believe together, as "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one spirit" (Acts 2:44; 4:32; Romans 12:16; I Corinthians 1:10; II Corinthians 8:19; Philippians 2:2; 3:16; 4:2). The primary functions of the Grace Testament Assembly must not be geared to entertainment or social or political networking but for Scriptural teaching, worship and prayer. God's people should gather to be edified through the teaching of God's Word and for corporate worship, as they reverence the Lord for His mighty works of eternal salvation. They should also come together to pray as a church not simply a gathering of individuals who pray but the church comes together to pray together..... as a unit! (Romans 12:10-12).

The Grace Testament Assembly never exerts the impression that the Church that Jesus Christ died for should be attractively embellished as a gathering center for unbelievers. We are observing this simply it is the product of man's reasoning, which has resulted in many local assemblies becoming predominantly worldly. Their neglect to prioritize the teaching of the Grace Testament Scriptures, foments accommodating worldly agendas of unbelievers, as they are lured in and in doing this, the saints fail to learn the unsearchable riches of Christ (Romans 11:33; Ephesians 3:8; 4:20). In far too many cases the testimony of a local assembly is misguided, as over time, the number of unbelievers becomes greater than the number of believers and eventually this determines the direction of fellowship. Now there were no denominations in the early church. Such came about as men became followers of men (I Corinthians 1:10-17). Today, the earthly testimonial assemblies of the Body of Christ are divided into many different groups. Some have taken the name of man, e.g., "Lutherans," others have taken names of ordinances, e.g., "Baptists," others have taken names of Jewish Old and Kingdom Testaments holidays, e.g., "Pentecostals," others have rallied around a phenomenon, e.g., "Charismatics," while still others have taken names in accordance with their church structure, e.g., "Episcopalians" and the list could go on and on.

In a Grace Testament assembly, the circumference is comprised of grace recipients (the called out one whose confession of faith in Jesus Christ is evidenced by their love for the Word of God. As such ALL are welcomed but the assembly is characterized by the PARTNERSHIP of believers. Note that the Greek word *κοινωνία* (*kee-non-ee-ah*) rendered "fellowship," as in Philippians 1:5 (to the gospel) and 2:1 (the Spirit); is a noun and comes from a root word meaning "sharing," "have things in common," or "partner." In this sense, the local assembly will be a partnership of believers in the Body of Christ. Each partner in the partnership will contribute to it as enabled of the Lord (I Corinthians 12:18) and the partnership in assemblies

provides spiritual enlightenment for the individual saint. It should truly be "one for all and all for one". The local assembly in many circles has become an earthly supermarket to which God's people come to receive accommodations of what they physically want, however they want it, as they simply pay someone else to manage it. In truth, these type organizational operations are foreign to the Scriptures and in fact, inventions of a natural mindsets.

The true Grace Testament partnership is described as a spiritual family comprised of brothers and sisters of the Lord. As such, the members of the family are very close, such as were the early church: "If, then, an exhortation (is) in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill in joy that you may mind the same thing.... having the same love of one soul minding the one thing nothing in rivalry or vain-glory, but in humility of mind one another, counting more excellent than yourselves each not to your own look you but each also to the things of others; for this mind be in you that also Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:1-5). Hence, this spiritual partnership should also be looked at as a single body with each member contributing to its operation, as enabled of the Lord (I Corinthians. 12:18). This body though it is organized, is not an organization but an organism. It is a living and functioning body of believers. The only identifications that are affixed to those in this fellowship are what the Scripture denote i.e., "brethren, brothers, sisters, saints, believers," etc. There should be no emphases on titles or positions given to men except as in accordance with the Scripture, e.g., "Bishops, Deacons, Elders and Pastor" which are actually definitions of responsibilities not identifications of individuals. There should be no one who are considered "over" the saints, as all are "under" Christ. There are no special classes of privileges, i.e. the "clergy" (Philippians 2:25) but ALL are viewed simply as brothers and sisters in Christ as one's social status, education or title has no bearing on one's place in the local assembly (Philemon 1:16).

Now while grace recipients are the assemblies' circumference, all are welcomed but "fellowship to the glory and in the Spirit," according to Philippians 1:5; 2:1; can be rendered only "inclusively" to genuine partakers. In a real sense, those who are not recipients of God's grace, are not possessors of sincere faith in Jesus Christ and are thus not actually partakers, as inheritors of the partnership. Unfortunately, because of the misguided operations of uninformed assemblies, there are entire congregations of saints abiding outside the circumference of godly fellowship. Local assemblies are not following the directives of the Scriptures when they gloss over the Scriptures in order to aid and abet the comforting of mankind's depraved nature. When local assemblies should be "opened" to all its spiritual functions should only be devised to accommodate God's elect. Here some will say, "we don't know who God's elect are," which is absolutely correct but spiritual operations according to the directives of the Scriptures effectively define what fellowship of the partnership actually encompasses (1 Corinthians 14:40; Colossians 2:5). Today, too many local assemblies are merely flesh supermarket managed by carnal supervisors, who are not genuinely committed with ministering to the spiritual concerns of brothers and sisters in Christ but only with worldly benefits that can be garnered through their special titles or positions. Hence, many local assemblies ARE open to "believers" but in what?sadly, the answer is they are opened to "believers" in the prioritized cares of this present world but closed to "believer" in the eternal passion of spiritual unseen things that are sought by informed possessors of faith in testimony of those having been raised in Christ (Colossians 3:1-3). Accordingly, the traits of a Grace Testament Assembly are that its operations are geared to accommodate the spiritual welfare of God's elect because **Grace Recipients** are its **Circumference**.

3. The Head (Christ) is its Center. This is also structured in the verses of scriptures that state, "Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus; guard the good deposit through the Holy Spirit dwelling in us" (II Timothy 1:13-14). Today local assemblies face great challenges from without, as the allure of competition for recognition of so-called successful ministering, has resulted in them bringing in false teaching concerning Christ and the scripturally correct message of salvation. However, there is also great danger from within. Paul warned the Ephesians' elders of both these dangers when he spoke to them for the last time, "for I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them (Acts 20:29-30). There is constantly the temptation to prioritize those things, which ultimately results in the saints being drawn away from Christ. Even the local congregation itself, with all its programs and activities, can begin to function in the place of Christ. This is exactly what the Apostle Paul stated to the church at Ephesus, wherein He instructed them, "see that no one shall be carry

you away as spoil through the philosophy and vain deceit, according to the deliverance of men, according to the rudiments of the world, and not according to Christ, because in him does dwell all the fullness of Godhead bodily, and you are in him made full, who is the head of all principality and authority." Many today's assemblies exude the picture of a lack of comprehending this informative admonition, which has seemingly been all but lost in this Church Age. In essence, spiritual blindness is their true condition, as they erroneously foist the perception that the prioritized possessions of physical-earthly things are wonderful when in fact they are visualizing such in lieu of Christ (I Timothy 6:3-21)..

Me-ism is completely adverse to Christ as the center of the church, in that He has been and is first preeminence (He occupies first place) in all things, i.e., "And He, Himself is the Head of the body first assembly.... who is a beginning, first-born out of the dead, that He might (having) become in all (things) Himself first(Colossians 1:18). The most meaningful exercise in worship is the recognition of Christ's predetermined eternal accomplishment in the propitiation of our salvation. It is very important for first saints to never get their eyes off of Him and unto other men or things. This is the instituted benefit of the Lord's Supper, as it encourages the saints to come together and remember Him in the breaking of bread (I Corinthians 11:23-26). Now the breaking of bread was not nor is not a means of distributing God's grace, there are no inferences of sacramental transactions in the Grace Contract; nor was it simply added on to the end of another meeting of the local church. In Acts 20:7, we are clearly historically informed that the early church came together on the first day of the week specifically to "break bread." The purpose was that they were to remember or focus on the Lord, as they partook of the bread and the cup. It was not some holy thing, which brought a special grace to the partakers ... NO, it was a time of reflection and certainly and they reflected, they worshipped HIM!

In the present dispensation, the practice of Grace Testament Assemblies entails their assembling together on the first day of the week to reflect on Christ and respond in kind through worship. It is a time of honoring and giving praise and adoration to the Lord, which engenders the hearing of a message from His Word. No one must be aware that the mere formality of worshiping God on the first day of the week does not in itself evince spirituality. Colossians 2:20-23, state, "and not holding the Head, from which all the body -- through the joints and bands gathering supply, and being knit together -- may increase with the increase of God. then, you died with the Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as living in the world, are you subject to ordinances?..... you may not touch, nor taste, nor handle which are all for destruction with the use after the commands and teachings of men, which are, indeed, having a matter of wisdom in will-worship, a humble-mindedness and neglecting of body not in any honor, unto a satisfying of the flesh." Also in corroboration, the Lord spoke of those who "draw nigh unto me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips but their heart is far from me" (Matthew 15:8). In a true sense, worship is the overflow of a heart which has been occupied with Christ throughout the days prior to the first day of the week. Hence we should not assume God's approval simply because we are assembled but it is our focus on the Lord in recognition of His eternal spiritual blessings that should dominate the occasion of the gathering (Ephesians 1:3).

The Headship of Christ (the Godhead). I Corinthians 11:3 states, "but I would have you know, that the Head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the Head of Christ is God. In this light Christ should be the only One to Whom the church gathers and as such is to be recognized as the Head of the Church (Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18). Hence, no man is to take His place and represent himself as head over the church. The Head of the Church has given gifted men to the Church to build up the saints (Ephesians 4:11) but these men are not of themselves to actually rule over the saints. Those whom the Holy Spirit raises up as leaders are to function "among" the saints, not "over" them as a special class (Acts 20:28). The order of headship which God established in creation with Adam as head of the human race was reflective of His structure of ordination. This testimony evinces the foreordination of the "new creation" under Christ (II Corinthians 5:17). This order of headship under Christ, with the elect man (manifested symbolically as Christ) being head over the elect woman (a picture of the church), is to be comprehended by God's people in local assemblies.

This is all tokenism, in that this order does not imply inferiority of the woman, as is seen in the fact that Christ Himself, God in manifestation, voluntarily placed Himself under subjection in accomplishing our redemption.

(Philippians 2:8). The trait of a Grace Testament assembly is that it practices its order of headship accordance with the teachings of the Gospel Testament Scriptures. Ordained men (and women) are to lead the local church in guiding it (I Timothy 3:1-11) and instructing it (I Timothy 2:11-14; I Corinthians 14:34) God's manifested order in His New Creation. This manifested order is structured in keeping in mind the submission to God's order of headship in the local assembly testifies that the **Head (Christ)** is its **Center**.

4). The **Holy Spirit** is its **Conductor**. This fact is structured in the verses of scriptures that state, "Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus; guard the good deposit through the Holy Spirit dwelling in us" (II Timothy 1:13-14). Verse 12 of this context expresses confidence in God's ability to guard His deposit. In verse 14, Timothy is encouraged "to guard the good deposit." In the previous verse (12), Paul speaks of the deposit as being his, i.e., *paraqh, k mou (pah-ahth-ee-keen moo)* rendered "my deposit." Verse 14 references the deposit as being good, i.e., *th.n kalh.n paraqh,khn (teen kahl-een pah-ahth-ee-keen)* rendered "the good deposit." The true essence and substance of this deposit was that which had been revealed (I Corinthians 2:6-10; Galatians 1:12; Ephesians 3:2-9; I Thessalonians 2:13). As that which was given to Paul, he could legitimately refer to it as "my deposit," obviously in testimony that such enlightenment came from or through the Holy Spirit. By the same indicia, Paul through the Holy Spirit had taught Timothy the contents of his deposit and in effect, it was now also Timothy's deposit, as this verse designates it as the "good deposit," the excellent deposit, the choice deposit or the rich deposit.

The key Greek word in verse 14 is *fu,laxon (phee-lahx-on)* rendered "guard," as this verb basically means keep an eye upon or watch in order to protect and preserve. The use of the aorist tense and imperative mood certifies it as the strongest possible command. Thus, we should without any deviation, carefully watch and protect the doctrinal accuracy of the Grace Gospel, as it is our deposit as aligned in the Grace contract. The greatest danger that constantly flanked the ministry of Grace was and is apostasy in the form of false doctrines creeping into the assemblies (Acts 20:29-30; I Corinthians 16:13; II Corinthians 11:3-4; Galatians 1:6-9; I Timothy 4:1-3). There is no spiritual room for incipient compromising and deviating of the Grace Testament that was revealed to Paul. Compromise breeds more compromise, as there is no stopping place. Grace Testament Assemblies must lift up together their voices to God with one accord, Philippians 3:16 states, "...moreover, unto that which we have attained, we are to walk by the same," i.e., "speaking the same thing" (c.f. Acts 4:24). There should be no sideline agendas or prearranged worldly supplemental programs, as there are so often today. The local assembly should function as an orchestra with the Spirit of God as its Conductor constituting its unity (Ephesians 4:1-15). The truth exudes unity of spiritual power but sadly, the conveyance of truth is not a common practice in many local assemblies. The ministry of the Word of God must be the underlying purpose in the edification of the assembly (I Corinthians 14:2). However, this is lacking in many places because worldly influenced leadership and human organization comprise the order of worship. I Corinthians 14:33 states, "For God is not of confusion but of peace." The Scriptures give the order for such gatherings, "... that all may learn and all may be encouraged. (I Corinthians 14:31).

Thus in the gathering of a local assembly, there should be freedom for the Holy Spirit to lead the assembly in collective worship, prayer and in the ministry of God's Word. However, when gathered for the ministry of the Word of God, its focus should be on prioritizing things eternal and unseen (II Corinthians 4:18). In the infantile transitional Kingdom/Grace assemblies, the gifts of prophecy (direct revelation from God) and speaking in tongues (foreign languages) were present. With the pre-determined temporary setting aside of the nation Israel and the emergence of the Grace Testament Assemblies, the sign gifts ministries waned and many of their former practices actually culminated in cessation. In this light, prophesy today engenders setting of the mind of God on matters as recorded in the Grace Testament Scriptures and when this is done, the order of the gathering must follow that given in the Scripture (I Corinthians 14:26-40). Hence, the Holy Spirit's instructions that are all things must be done in an orderly fashion to the edification of the assembly. The ministering of the Grace Gospel is different from prophesying and Scriptural teaching regarding the orderliness of the gathering must be followed (Romans 12:6-7).

In the administration of the Holy Spirit conducting the gatherings of local assemblies, He manifestly raised leaders (Bishops, Pastors, Elders, Deacons, etc.) among the Lord's people (Ephesians 4:11; I Timothy 3:2).

5:17; Titus 1:5). Corroboration of this is stated in Acts 20:28, i.e., "take heed, therefore, to yourselves, and all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit made you overseers, to feed the Assembly of God" Thus, the shepherds must meet the qualifications outlined in the Grace Gospel Scriptures (I Timothy 3:1-11). In the Grace Contract there are absolutely no Scriptural requisites for ordination, as these have been introduced into the Church through the reasoning of man-made requirements. In a Grace Testament Assembly, there should be no divisions among the so-called "clergy" and "laity," as such distinctions are not only foreign to the Scriptures but even contrary to its teachings (Romans 16:11; I Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:3; 11:18). Though an individual may be recognized as "the Pastor," it is only in correlation to the order of ministering, which is the only purpose of the terms "elder or pastor" as titles. They are used to describe mature individuals attending the ministry among the Lord's people in the role of leadership, per the Holy Spirit's guidance, as Christ is the exclusive authority over the church. The Scriptures clearly teach that all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are also members of the local partnership and as such are a necessary part of the ministry. In the strictest sense of the Grace assembly, the **Holy Spirit** is its **Conductor**.

Summary

After scrutiny of the inquiry, "According to Scripture, what is the role and function of the local Grace Testament church today?" Four traits have been viewed that portray or characterize spiritual operations of the Grace Testament assembly that gathers and functions in accordance with God's Word.

Again, local Grace Assemblies of God's elect in the Grace Dispensation function in accordance with the characterization of these four traits:

- 1) The **Grace Scriptures** are its **Charter**.
- 2) The **Grace Recipients** are its **Circumference**.
- 3) The **Head (Christ)** is its **Center**.
- 4) The **Holy Spirit** is its **Conductor**.

Many man-made practices and traditions have been brought into the local Grace Assembly, which have no grounds in the Grace Testament Scriptures and are in fact contrary to its teachings. What depraved mankind has interjected into the church; has undermined the directives for the assembling of God's people, engendering added complexities in the inducements of physical/social accommodations. Despite this obvious fact, many today rigorously continue in these practices, as if such were in deed sanctioned of God. Despite the clear teachings of the Grace Testament Scriptures on these truths related to the operations of assembling, many ignore them and consider them unimportant. Ignorantly, they feel that what they are doing will certainly be pleasing to the Lord, as they fail to comprehend the fact that God desires obedience in all things even in the operation of the local assembly of His elect. It is so very important to remember that there is never any justification for deviating from God's revealed will: "and be not conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, for your proving what {is} the will of God -- the good, the acceptable, and perfect " (Romans 12:2). In this sense, God's people should search the Grace Testament Scriptures like the Bereans: ".....and these were nobler than those in Thessalonica, they received the word with all readiness of mind every day examining the Scriptures (Writings) whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). A local assembly should live by faith, believing God when He speaks; including the directives concerning what is **the Scriptural role of the Grace Testament Church Ministry!**