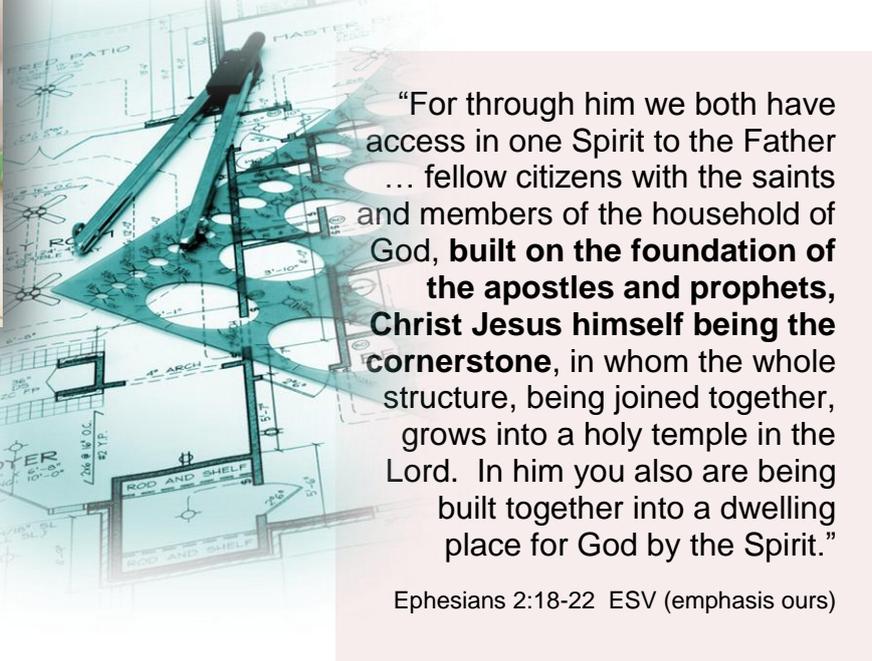




Our Vision

"... becoming a church of God's dreams"



“For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father ... fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, **built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone**, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

Ephesians 2:18-22 ESV (emphasis ours)

To be sure we are on the same page here, it is important to understand “the church” (as we use the phrase) does not equate to buildings with steeples. Nor does it include many of the religious systems, philosophies and practices that have become associated with Christianity from about the time of Constantine (early fourth century AD) right up to modern times. The church established by Jesus’ apostles in the first century AD ... *“the church of God’s dreams”* ... is something quite different. It is a distinctive community of people – people living in restored relationship with God and one another through and in God’s Son, Jesus Christ. When we say “the church”, we simply mean the household (family) of God following “the Way” revealed through the teaching of Jesus and His apostles.

According to the apostle Paul, the church – the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23) – is an integral part and expression of God’s eternal purpose being realized in His Son (Ephesians 3:1-12). The church is important! God planned it ... from eternity. God owns it ... and it cost Him dearly (Acts 20:28). With this much invested in His church, we figure that God had a pretty good idea of how He wanted His church to be ... its essential character, beliefs, practices and mission. And we also figure that God’s Spirit did a good job directing the apostles into all truth just

as Jesus promised them (John 14:26; 16:13), including the apostles' establishment of God's church according to His design and purpose (e.g. Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:22-47; 1 Corinthians 14:37; 1 Timothy 3:15). The church of Christ is no accident. It was not then, and is not now, the initiative of fallible human beings or the mere product of human culture ... indeed, many of the apostolic church's teachings and practices were, and remain, radically counter-cultural. Nor did it develop in a historical and theological vacuum. The church of Christ is rooted in God's redemptive purposes revealed to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3) and executed through the subsequent development of the nation of Israel which finds its end and purpose (*telos*) in God's restored Messianic community – the church. No surprises. No mistakes. It was and continues to be all according to God's redemptive plan which has been purposefully unfolding throughout history.

When we envision *becoming a church of God's dreams* we are therefore acknowledging our commitment to the apostolic teachings and practices revealed in the first century AD (recorded and preserved in the inspired New Testament Scriptures) as being God's normative ideal and model for His church for all time and in every place. In this sense, The Point Church shares in the heritage of Christian *primitivism* and *restoration movements* that have sought to proclaim the gospel to the world while promoting unity among Jesus' disciples based upon an appeal to honor and maintain apostolic tradition (i.e. contending for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints, Jude 3) without innovation.

Sometimes our efforts may seem as clumsy and fragile as a child building with blocks. At other times we might struggle with some of the finer detail as we try to faithfully understand and translate God's purpose and design for His church across the span of almost 2,000 years into our own modern context. We humbly acknowledge these difficulties and our own fallibility in this process.

And it is an *ongoing process*. Our spiritual development (sanctification) both as individual disciples and collectively as a community of the Lord's people must be understood to be an ongoing process of growth nurtured in the context of God's grace (as opposed to any system of law), humility, forgiveness and forbearance. Otherwise, any serious attempt to be faithful to apostolic Christianity and to restore the New Testament church will be vulnerable to legalism and division. There is a bit of a paradox here and the need for caution: as restorationists we

conscientiously seek to restore and be faithful to apostolic Christianity, but the moment we satisfy (deceive) ourselves that we have *arrived* at our destination, we cease to be restorationists ... the name of the game then becomes one of defending the *status quo* (i.e. denominational dogma), and we invariably fall prey to the very sectarianism and denominational factionalism that restoration movements have generally sought to redress.

So *becoming* a church of God's dreams – seeking to be a community of Jesus' disciples modeled upon and honoring God's original design and purpose for His church as described in the New Testament Scriptures – remains the vision and goal towards which we humbly strive as a people of faith, while recognizing that our understanding and maturity will never be perfect or fully realized before Jesus' return.

Regardless of the difficulties and challenges inherent in the restoration process, we believe that building the church upon the foundation of Jesus and His apostles, rather than upon our own wisdom or that of any others, is a God honoring vision worth pursuing ... we want to become a church of *God's* dreams, not just another church of someone else's dreams.

Steve Wilson

“Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

Acts 20:26-35 ESV
(the apostle Paul's farewell address to the elders
of the church at Ephesus)