

## ***The Exalted Work of the Local Church***

God has begun something superlative in Jesus Christ, something as astonishing in scope as it is breathtaking in glory.

He is drawing all things back under one head.

Human beings who have viewed themselves as their own heads and have spun off in myriad autonomous directions, seeking personal gain and glory, leading to the fracture of families and the wreckage of civilizations – these very people are now are being drawn back to God under the headship of Jesus Christ.

A work of vast dimensions is taking place: in Christ all things are being reclaimed for the glory of God, things in heaven and things on earth! (Ephesians 1:9-10)

But where may this lone signal of hope for our planet be observed? Where is it taking place? In one place, and one place only, or, to be more accurate, in one family, and one family alone – the family of God, the *ekklesia*, those called out of the world by God to bear his image in the world and for the world.

The apostle Paul puts it like this: ‘Jesus Christ has been given as head over all things **to the church.**’ It is in the local church (for there is no universal church without its local expression) where the headship of Jesus Christ is received willingly, eagerly and submissively. It is in this family where Jesus Christ is seen to reign supreme (Ephesians 1:22-23).

The wise plan of God for the world – a plan conceived in eternity past and by which he is putting to rights all things – is unfolding through the local church (Ephesians 3:10).

It works in this way: as those who were once strangers and aliens to God, following the passions and desires of their own heads, are drawn into a family which submits to the headship of Jesus Christ, they become the vanguard of a new race in which tide of sin begins to recede and among whom a holy God actually takes up his dwelling. The local church becomes the temple of God in the Spirit, the place where God receives glory (Ephesians 2:19-22; 3:20-21).

What an explosively glorious organism the local church is intended to be! . . .  
What an unprecedented beacon of hope it offers to a dark and lost world! . . .  
What a powerful epicenter of seismic salvation emerges from its ranks!

Those of us who are called to serve in the local church – namely, all of us in the church family! – occupy the most important seats in society! It ought to humble us profoundly, as it did the apostle Paul (‘I am the least of all’ [Ephesians 3:8].) But is also ought to ignite a love for the local church that knows no bounds.

How we must pray for Camelback Bible Church! How we must dream of what God can do among us! How we must give ourselves over to the advance of the work of this body! How we ought to reorder our priorities to serve in this strategic organ for God’s glory.